

國立中山大學政治學研究所

博士論文

Institute of Political Science

National Sun Yat-sen University

Doctorate Dissertation

何以為「家」？比利時臺灣移民日常生活之「家」的製作、歸屬感與國族認同協商

Searching for home in the migration context: Exploring small and big home-making experiences through Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' life story narratives

研究生：林顯明

Hsien-Ming Lin

指導教授：廖達琪 博士 Dr. Da-Chi Liao

彭靜蓮 博士 Dr. Ching-Lin Pang

中華民國109年9月

September 2020

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國立中山大學 eThesys

中華民國 109 年 9 月

September 2020

Verification Letter from the Doctoral Examination Committee

國立中山大學研究生學位論文審定書

本校政治學研究所博士班

研究生林顯明(學號：D046020001) 所提論文

何以為「家」？
比利時臺灣移民日常生活之「家」的製作、歸屬感與國族認同協商
Searching for Home in the Migration Context: Exploring Small and Big Home-Making Experiences through Belgian Taiwanese Immigrants' Life Story Narratives

於中華民國 109 年 9 月 11 日經本委員會審查並舉行口試，
符合博士學位論文標準。

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指導教授 Ching Lin Pang

Chinese Acknowledgement

回顧過去 5 年(2015-2020)的博士生生涯，可謂是一個開拓視野且亦極富挑戰的過程，與其他單純地在國內或國外攻讀博士學位的學生相比，攻讀雙博士學制的這條路，則顯得相對孤寂且無前例可循，但也因此使得我的博士學位攻讀之路變得更為特別且具開創性。猶記得 5 年前碩士班剛畢業時，來到西子灣畔，綠意盎然、生機蓬勃的中山大學校園，那時對於環境的不熟悉以及自己青澀樣子的記憶依然清晰如昨；當時的我，帶著忐忑的心情輕輕的敲了幾聲廖達琪教授研究室的木門，那一聲廖老師回應的「請進」即開始了我與中山大學的不解之緣。

在經過博士班的入學考試之後，我很幸運地以榜首的成績錄取了中山大學政治學研究所，並開始了我的博士生生涯。在博士班的前兩年，我修習多門與政治學和社會科學相關的專業課程與領域知識。過程中，要感謝眾多師長和我在知識的浩瀚大洋中進行思辨，而我也欲在此紀錄下授業過的所有老師，藉以感謝他們對我的提攜與指導；包括:廖達琪教授、陳至潔教授、曾怡仁教授、劉正山教授、希家玹教授、莊雪華教授等。另外，也感謝王群洋教授、陳宗巖教授、張晉赫教授以及湯家偉教授在過程當中對我的鼓勵以及在過程中所提供的支持。另外，在中山大學的 2 年期間，也很開心認識了許多好朋友，也得到許多學長姊和師長的鼓勵與支持；對此，感謝宋宥賢、林駿棋和王俐純等豐富了我的博士生活，也很開心過程中時常接到來自陳柏宇博士學長、簡赫琳博士學姊和陳月卿博士學姊的問候與關心，讓我在攻讀博士學位的過程當中不孤單。

結束了在中山大學的 2 年博士班生涯後，本人很幸運地通過了本所的考核，並且也在教育部共同人才培育計畫的支持下，成為了政治所第一位成功赴比利時魯汶大學社會科學院攻讀雙博士學位計畫的學生。在魯汶的 3 年期間(2017-2020)，感謝指導教授 Ching Lin Pang 博士在生活上的關心、學術上的交流以及論文上的指導，在 Pang 教授的悉心指導下，讓我能更快速地理解和熟悉社會文化人類學的背景與知識。另外，在魯汶大學的 3 年期間，我亦相當享受和 Patrick Devlieger 教授、Karel Arnaut 教授以及 Leen d'Haenens 教授在課餘時間在他們的研究室中，

拿著香醇的咖啡相互交換意見與研究成果與發現的時光。另外，也特別感謝 Lut Lams (Lutgard)教授在各方面所提供的協助，我也非常享受在比利時的 3 年時光當中與 Lut Lams 教授的各種聚會以及在學術和知識上的交流以及彼此在情感上的相互支持。

除了師長與朋友外，這本論文得以完成的最大功臣則當屬在過程當中參與此研究並接受觀察與訪談之比利時臺灣移民，因為若沒有他們的參與，這本博士論文和相關的研究成果即不可能得以完成。對此，我欲一併感謝所有接受過我訪談和觀察的 42 位比利時臺灣移民受訪者，感謝他們願意與我分享他們的移民生命故事；在眾多的首訪者當中，我特別想要感謝居住在列日的何姊、居住在納慕爾的呂老師、居住在布魯塞爾的張姊與何老闆和 Miko 姊等，感謝他們在我研究的過程當中，不厭其煩的接受我的訪談並回答我的問題。另外，也很開心在比利時的 3 年期間所遇到的師長與好友，包括簡梅瑩教授、涂均翰博士以及根特的徐琳老師等，以及同樣授業於 Pang 老師的兩位師姐石甜和 Jing Jing Li 等，感謝他們豐富了我 3 年在比利時的生活與日常。另外，也要在此一併感謝旅比華僑中山學校的校長以及所有的師生，感謝中山學校讓我有機會在該校擔任華語文教學的課程教師，也願意提供場地讓我進行田野調查，在此一併寫下對他們的感謝。

當然，在這個過程當中，我最需要感謝的莫過於我的家人、我的爸爸與媽媽，若沒有他們在過程中無私且全力的支持，我也不可能心無旁騖且專心的攻讀學位與撰寫論文。因此，我也欲就此機會，表達我對我最心愛的家人，以及過程中給予我鼓勵與祝福的所有親友表達感謝，感謝你們在過程中無私的付出、真心的祝福和所給予的勇氣和鼓勵。

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讀之路不虛此行，且相關的成果業已逐漸成形，並期待有一天能夠在知識的領域上有著更豐富的收成。

林顯明

2020 年 7 月 盛夏 撰於 比利時魯汶

English Acknowledgement

Looking back at my five-year journey pursuing a double PhD degree, I would like to say that it has been a wonderful, memorable and also hard-working experience. I still remember clearly my first visit to the beautiful campus of the National Sun Yat-sen University (NSYSU) located near the magnificent bay of Sizihwan. From there, I started five years of doctoral research and studying. I spent the first two years of my doctoral program at NSYSU (2015–2017) undertaking doctoral training and professional courses in both political science and social science. I would like to thank all of the teachers who taught and encouraged me during this time, including Prof Drs Da-Chi Liao, Cheng-Shan (Frank) Liu, Yi-Ren Dzeng, Titus C. Chen, Hsueh-Hua (Shay) Chuang, and Chia-Wei Tang. I am thankful for their teaching, encouragement, and strong emotional support, which has left me with many warm feelings.

After completing two years of study requirements and examinations, I was lucky to pass three phases of strict selection made by both NSYSU and KU Leuven. I not only became the first qualified student candidate to participate in the double PhD program between NSYSU and KU Leuven but also obtained full scholarships from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology. This meant that there were no financial pressures when I headed to KU Leuven to study for my second PhD degree major in social and cultural anthropology. I would like to thank both my home institution and the Taiwanese government for all the support I got during this process.

During my three-year stay at KU Leuven (2017–2020), I was supervised by Prof Dr Ching Lin Pang and I would like to thank her for her assistance in both my learning and private life. Under her supervision, she broadened my understanding and professional knowledge regarding the disciplines of social and cultural anthropology, as well as my research topic on migration and European pan-Chinese and Taiwanese immigrant communities. I would also like to thank Prof Drs Patrick Devlieger, Karel

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Notably, I would further like to thank all of my 42 research participants. Without their fascinating immigration life stories, it would have been impossible to complete this PhD dissertation. Among all of these research participants, I am particularly grateful for the participation of Aunt Zhang, Alice Ho, Miko, and Selena Lu as I frequently bothered them, and made several interviews with each of them. I am happy that, based on our frequent interactions, I have established relationships and friendships with them that go beyond the normal relationship between researcher and research participants.

However, I have to say that without the support of my lovely family, I would never have completed this impossible mission within five years. Therefore, I would like to thank my dear dad and mom, and my lovely grandparents, relatives and family members. Thank you for your understanding and disinterested support for me and for letting me do the things I want to do. Thanks Dad and Mom, I love you!

Finally, I would like to thank myself as I did not choose to give up when faced by challenges or difficulties. I am proud to have eventually completed this special and pioneering journey conducting a double PhD program between Taiwan and Belgium. I

have to say it has been so worthwhile and I have wonderful memories of all my experiences during this journey.

Hsien-Ming Lin

July 2020 Summer at Leuven, Belgium

Chinese Abstract

這本博士論文主要是奠基在作者過去 3 年(2017-2020)針對比利時臺灣移民社群所進行之田野調查(fieldwork)與質性半結構式訪談法(semi-structured)和照片引談法(phto-elicitation)的基礎和分析而來。在過去的 3 年中，作者同時採用了民族誌方法中的參與觀察(participant observation)和質性訪談法的途徑進行資料的蒐集，在此過程中，作者成功地邀請並訪談了 42 位居住在比利時的臺灣移民。而本文主要欲了解，這群臺灣移民如何在其海外和接待國的日常生活中進行「『家』的製作(homemaking)」的經驗、以及這些臺灣移民如何在其日常生活中維繫、培養或管理其在接待國和母國間雙重的家(dual homes between home and host countries)之家人與人際關係和情感聯繫。需要進一步指出的是，本文所採用之「家」的概念，並非僅限於物質或有形的家；相反地，在本文當中所呈現之「家」的概念與意涵，亦有可能是情感的、象徵的，乃至於跨域國界限制的。另外，為了能更有效地探討「家」的概念在移民生活與脈絡下的多元(重)面相與變動性意涵；作者在多元交織性的理論概念基礎下，進一步地發展並提出所謂「多元交織的家(intersectional home)」之新理論概念。對於本文和作者而言，所謂的「家」在移民的脈絡與生活經驗中，是一個不斷協商以及和生活環境與脈絡之間相互建構與互動的結果，但這樣的結果依然是會隨著個別移民的生活狀態的不同而有所改變。

關鍵詞: 臺灣移民、比利時、「家」的製作(Homemaking)、歸屬感、國族認同

English Abstract

For this thesis, I chose Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium as my research subject and examined a series of questions regarding the notion of home in the migration context and the immigrant's daily life while living in a foreign land. The main research questions guiding this study are: What are Taiwanese immigrants' experiences of homemaking (「家」的製作」) in Belgium? What are their experiences of managing dual home relationships between home and host countries? What does the concept of "home" mean for them in an immigrant context? How can they feel at home in their daily life? This research also considered other important issues related to the notion of "home" in the migration context, as well as how the immigrants identify themselves culturally and ethnonationally.

In this thesis, a new theoretical concept of intersectional home (交織的家) is proposed, which revises the concept of intersectionality (交織性) that originated from gender and black women's studies. The main argument of "intersectional home" I proposed in this study stresses that the notion and meaning of home for immigrants in the migration context is dynamic, fluid, and multidimensional, rather than static or unchangeable, and there is no single domain or factor that can cover all aspects of the notion and meaning of home for immigrants.

It is important to note that the aim of this study is not to try to provide a generalized conclusion or a scientific model. The life and homemaking experiences presented here are subjective and also inter-subjective, particular, context based, and intersectional affected by each immigrant's distinct lived circumstances and personal background.

***Keywords*: Belgium, ethnonational identity, homemaking, sense of belonging, Taiwanese immigrants**

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

This study takes Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium as research subject in examining their immigrant life and homemaking (「家」的製作) experiences while living in a foreign land. There are two main reasons for choosing Taiwanese immigrants in this study. First, most existing research literature on Taiwanese immigrants is mainly focused on English-speaking countries, especially in the United States, while few studies have investigated Taiwanese immigrants' lives and homemaking experiences in the European context. And there has not yet been a systematic study centered on this migrant community in Belgium. In this regard, the study aims to fill a research gap focusing on the above research topics as well as this minority group. Notably, the issue of immigrants' homemaking experiences is attracting increasing scholarly attention, for example, in the field of migration studies. There is interest in how individual immigrant (re)builds their notion of "home", searches for a sense of being at "home" (「家」的感覺), and maintains and manages their relations and ties both locally and transnationally while living in foreign land and during their migration journey. It is also important to note that the notion of home in immigrant lives are complex, dynamic, and multidimensional rather than static or unchangeable. The notion of home in immigrant lives can present in different forms ranging from tangible, intangible, and emotional and can locate across different layers of localities from a dwelling, community, city, or country to the transnational. In addition, the notion and meaning of home for immigrants further relates to how individuals attach and negotiate their sense of belonging and identity between/among different spaces and places, and also how they perceive and interpret their (inter-)subjective social interaction and construction experiences on a daily basis.

Accordingly, this means that the notion and meaning of home must not be taken for granted in migration studies, instead, it should be considered as a problematic academic concept deserving of further exploration and examination (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011).

Therefore, concerning the above issues, in this study, I further explore Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' life and homemaking experiences and other related issues regarding adaptation, belonging, and ethnonational identity negotiations while living in a foreign country through their immigration life stories and narratives. However, before entering into further discussion with regard to the notions of home and homemaking, I would like first to review and introduce the perspectives of mobility and mobility turn since these two predominate academic concepts provide a general background in understanding migrant/immigrant real live situations in the present days, and the relations between migrant/immigrant and their surroundings and different layers of localities in the contemporary era. The other reason to discuss the concepts of mobility and mobility turn is that both concepts make a significant impact on how scholarly communities define and understand the concepts of migration, migration flow, and the relations between human, non-human, and environments in the migration context.

1.1 Mobility and notions of home and homemaking in the migration context

Notably, due to the rapid developments of globalization and information and communication technologies (ICTs), mobility has become the most obvious globalized phenomenon in the present time, and mobiles constitute a major part of people's daily life. After the millennium, many different social science disciplines showed interest in

examining and understanding the meanings, implications, and experiences caused by different forms of mobility. In addition, as modern communication and transportation systems provide more convenient and cheaper ways for people to travel and move between places and even migrate across borders, mobility has been regarded as an indispensable part of peoples' daily life. At the present time, almost everyone is on the move across different layers of localities ranging from micro, meso to macro scales of places and spaces, for example, moving within a physical house, community, region, country, or across national borders. Accordingly, as forms of mobility have become more diverse and complex than before, in addition to human mobilities, other tangible and intangible objectives, such as commodities, information, finance, ideas, emotions, and media, also establish different forms of mobility and frequently move between different places transmitting across spaces and borders. Among these different mobility and movement forms, various social, political, economy relations, and cultural landscapes can be (re)constructed therefore (re)-shaping the contemporary world. Moreover, as mobility is the most important social and globalized phenomenon nowadays, it does make a significant impact on how people and academic scholars understand our living world and other related academic concepts including migration and the relationship between humans and places (Willis, 2010). Thus, before discussing the concepts of home and homemaking in the migration context, I will first review and discuss the concept of mobility and its meaning for migration studies and notions of home and homemaking.

As mobilities have become more dynamic and complex, more scholars have suggested that traditional social science research is no longer sufficient to capture and understand this new global phenomenon and the present mobility world. Traditional social science research is claimed to have two shortcomings in its research angles. On

the one hand, traditional social science research focuses on exploring events or social phenomenon happening in a specific place or during a period of time. This research has been criticized as being "sedentism" as it ignores the mobility and dynamic nature of peoples' real life and the present world. On the other hand, research has been affected by developments of globalization. Some scholars might emphasis the consequences of deterritorialization, however, neglecting the fact that borders do not really disappear, instead, they are still present and affect human and non-human live circumstances and relations in ways that differ from the past. Accordingly, these two traditional social science approaches do not only underestimate the importance of these processes among different forms of mobility but also omit the different relationships and meanings that are constructed by human and non-human during the movement and mobility processes. Notably, one famous scholar John Urry further claimed that traditional social science studies do not pay enough attention to examining how human and non-human mobilities further construct social and cultural phenomena, and how human and non-human objects establish different forms of relation with space, place, cultural meanings and our surroundings (Urry, 2007).

Moreover, other scholars have also claimed that traditional social science research tends to consider society, place, or space as a physical container and stripped of its social meaning. However, these previous academic beliefs gradually lose their ability to explain the contemporary world since human and non-human experiences or existing situations are no longer rooted in a specific place and are always on the move and living or existing in highly uncertain and dynamic environments. Therefore, in order to fill the research gap faced by traditional social science research, and to fully comprehend the contemporary mobile world, scholars have proposed a new research turn namely the "mobility turn." With this new understanding, scholars regard our living place or space

as “relational” and full of “social meaning” rather than considering the living world merely as a physical container. It is also important to note that the goal of this new research perspective is not aimed at constructing macro social phenomena or grand sociology theory, but scholars are expected to pay more attention to and take more seriously the social meanings of mobility and, in the process, the construction or re-construction of human and non-human relations (Buscher, Urry & Witchger, 2011; Shelly & Urry, 2006).

Accordingly, Urry (2002a) further employed the term “social as mobility,” indicating that our living world is constructed by different forms of mobilities—finances, information, technologies, images, sounds, symbols, organizations and so on that move frequently on a daily basis. These different forms of mobilities are not only a social phenomenon, they further (re)construct and dominate peoples’ living conditions and understanding of the world, and also significantly affect human and non-human, and tangible and non-tangible object relations. Therefore, under this new research turn, instead of exploring events, social phenomena, happenings or people living in a specific place, scholars, in contrast, apply “holistic” and “relational” points of view in examining experiences, meanings, and relations that are constructed or re-constructed during the processes of movement and among different forms of mobilities (Urry, 2000b).

Notable, this new research turn also influences how people and scholars define migration and the phenomenon of migration flow. For example, scholars no longer regard migration as a linear and physical moving process or having a clear direction; but instead tend to see migration as a continuous back and forth negotiation process. This is because migration is always related to how people negotiate their identities,

emotions, experiences, and different social, cultural, and life practices while on the move or between different places. Moreover, the migration process is always concerned with how the individual migrant/immigrant searches out opportunities and finds a way to integrate or embody themselves into the host society. However, the migrant still needs to maintain their connections and ties with the place they came from (Tilly, 1990). It is also important to note that the individual migrant/immigrant not only has to work hard to manage and cultivate relations between their home and host countries, they also need to discern how to make connections and gain a sense of belonging on different scales of locality from micro places such as physical homes and dwellings, meso places such as community, city, and region to macro places such as countries or across national borders. This new viewpoint on migration echoes the perspective of the mobility turn as neither consider our living place and world as only a physical container. Instead, both viewpoints believe that people are not living in an empty world, both human-human and human-non-human are connected with each other and, therefore, construct different forms of relationship and social meaning in our daily life and mobility processes (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009).

Accordingly, the concept of mobility does not only make a significant impact on how people live at the present time, but also on how scholars are concerned with issues surrounding migration and immigration. Salazar (2019) reviewed the literature with regard to relations between mobility and migration, and he concluded that the academic concept of mobility contains three vital implications and aspirations for migration studies. First, he argued that there was "no migration without mobility," which refers to the fact that migration studies are always concerned with issues of mobilities, no matter whether an individual mobility experience has been undertaken voluntarily or reluctantly. With this point of view, Salazar reminded us that it is more appropriate to

consider the status of the migrant/immigrant as dynamic rather than static since some migrants/immigrants change their living states from permanent stay to temporary sojourn or vice versa. This means that the individual migrant/immigrant has the capacity and personal agency to change their migratory status based on their own practical needs and living conditions. Second, he argued that all mobilities are meaningful, peoples' voluntary or forced mobility experiences create different meanings for the individual migrant/immigrant. Therefore, each individual migrant/immigrant can make and attach their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings to their own mobility experiences. Some scholars point out that for some groups of migrants, mobility experiences have a positive effect, however, for other groups, the experiences may have negative consequences. In this regard, the meanings of mobility and the intra/international movement journey may vary from person to person (Masso, Eamets, Mõtsmees, 2013). Last but not least, Salazar further reminded us that as everything has a double side, in this regard, when scholars discuss issues of mobility, it is always necessary to take the reverse side of mobility—immobility into consideration. The truth is that while some people have a higher capacity to be mobile, there are always others who have relatively less or lower personal agency to move or to be mobile.

In conclusion, based on the points above and the new research perspective of the mobility turn which make good examples and connections for this study, I have taken Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium as the research subject. This is not only to examine their immigration experiences and meanings of mobility, but also to explore how immigrants search for a sense of home between their country of origin and their host country, across different layers of localities, and how they negotiate their ethnonational identities in daily life experiences. It is also important to point out that the perspective

of the mobility turn not only makes a significant impact on scholars' view points and definitions of migration and immigration, it also challenges several of the traditional perspectives of migration theories concerning the relationship between immigrant and environment and also places since people living in different societal contexts may be influenced by different mobility regimes (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013).

Therefore, according to the perspective of the mobility turn, it is not sufficient to focus only on the immigrant's relations either in the host country or home country as each individual has to simultaneously manage and cultivate their place relations through different layers of locality. In this regard, traditional migration theories like the U-curve and assimilation theories have gradually lost their capacity to fully explain and understand the immigrant's real life and mobility experiences at the present time. These theories were mainly focused on the experience of living in host society and expected that immigrants would gradually lose their connections with their original homes, disconnect from their original identities and cultural belongings and eventually assimilate into the host society, becoming and acting like locals in the settlement place (Phinney et al., 2001). Moreover, in addition to the perspective of the mobility turn, another predominant migration theory in the present day—transnationalism—further reminds us that it is not enough to explore immigrant life experiences either in the home or host country since in reality, many immigrants, thanks to the rapid development of ICTs and international transportation systems, have more capacities and opportunities. These enable them to simultaneously maintain, manage, and cultivate different forms of relations and sense of belonging between their home and host countries, and sometimes even among third places. This means that immigrants, in the contemporary context, can construct or hold multiple layers of identities and develop sense of belonging beyond limitations caused by national borders. Moreover, by constructing

transnational social fields, they can establish transnational identities. In addition, with the mobility perspective, the migrant/immigrant can further attach their sense of belonging across borders and through different layers of locality (Faist, 2010; Vertovec, 2009; Levitt, 2004). The migrant/immigrant nowadays, according to this point of view, does not have to choose to settle their identity and belongings either in their home or host country. In contrast, they could root their identity and belongings in multiple places if they wanted to, and of course, obtain a sense of home from different layers of localities. For example, an immigrant might obtain a sense of home or feel at home in a community, region, city, country, or even in a transnational context (Amelina & Faist, 2013).

With the basic theoretical knowledge mentioned above, in the following sections I will introduce sequentially the related notions of home and homemaking through the lens of mobility and transnationalism, especially focusing on the migration context.

1.2 'Home' as a process and a multi-dimensional concept, rather than as a fixed object in immigrants' lives

Is a 'home' a place, space, feeling, practice, memory, or journey for individual? In fact, people in different ages and lived circumstances may have distinct thoughts and responds toward the above question. In this section, I will review and discuss the notion of 'home' in the contexts of migration and immigrant lives, and would further demonstrate that the meaning of home is not only varies from person to person, but the concept of home itself is also dynamic, multi-layered, complex, and fluid, rather than static, unidimensional, or fixed.

1.2.1 The concepts of 'house,' 'home,' and 'homemaking'

In this study, 'house' refers to a physical structure mostly used by human beings as a dwelling or a building for living. The concept of 'house' places emphasis on its material aspect, while the word 'house' is a noun used to depict a specific object, but the concept of 'home' has more complex meanings, including both material and non-material angles. Miller (1998) indicates that people construct a place they call 'home' or feel like be 'at home' (家的感覺) by organising furniture, decorations, space environment, and material structures in a specific order or meaningful way, according to their subjective preferences. In addition to material objects, people obtain home feelings by linking their place identity or sense of belonging with important social relations. For example, people may call a place 'home' because it is where their families, neighbours, and important others live. However, if these relationships no longer exist, people may no longer consider a room, house, or dwelling to be their home. Blunt and Dowling (2006) claim that a 'home' is not just a physical place where people live; it is also the attachment space that contains a range of people's emotions such as belonging, desire, and perhaps even intimacy, fear, and violence, and alienation. They argue that a 'home' is a special and complex notion, while and from the perspective of power relations, home is also a social space used to showcase people's power hierarchies within the family, or in other kinds of intimate settings.

According to the perspective of transnationalism, immigrants in the contemporary era can maintain high frequencies of communications and interactions with both of their dual homes and their family members—between home and host countries—as a result of present-day ICTs developments. Scholars have argued that contemporary immigrants often keep one foot in their home country and the other in their host country, which

means that for immigrants the notion and meanings of 'home' are no longer rooted in a specific country or place; they can manage their dual homes and social relations across national borders. Moreover, since the notion of 'home' for immigrants goes beyond the limitation of locality, scholars have claimed that the meanings of 'home' could be re-constructed, re-interpreted, and re-imagined in the context of the life transition, or as a result of international immigration. These meanings and notions are further influenced by immigrants' distinct lived circumstances and personal backgrounds (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2018; Kivisto, 2016). Differ from the notion of 'house,' the verb of **'homemaking'** refers to people's series of actions and practices performed to (re)construct a place to call 'home,' or to search for sense of home and feel like be at home in immigrant's daily life (Benjamin, 1995). That is why Massey's discussions of the concept of 'home' through the lens of homemaking asserts that the notion of 'home' in people's lives is a process of becoming and practice, rather than a state of being (Massey, 2013).

Based on discussions regarding the notions of 'immigration' and 'homemaking,' in this study, I regard these concepts as verbs since international immigration and searching for feelings of 'home' in the migration context are highly related to how people and immigrants negotiate their senses of belonging and identity, and how do they manage their distinct social relations and ties across different layers of localities and during their migration journey. Accordingly, the notion and meaning of 'home' vary for each individual immigrant because people in different circumstances or life stages may have distinct perceptions and subjective thoughts toward these issues (Blunt, 2003; Gedalof, 2003). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that different immigrants would have quite different homemaking experiences in their own immigration journey. In this regard, in this study, I accept the argument proposed by Datta (2009) that the notion of

‘home’ is problematic rather than static for people and immigrant in particular.

1.2.2 The multi-dimensional meanings and multilayers of ‘home’ in immigrants’ lives

When the literature examines ‘home’ in the migration context, a number of dimensions are frequently mentioned. The first is the physical dimension, which refers to the physical structures that are attached to ‘home.’ Here, ‘home’ can be a house, dwelling, or specific space such as a community or region, while the physical dimensions regarding the notion of home mainly concern its material characteristics. The second aspect is the social dimension since people connect the notion and meanings of home with their particular social relations. In the social dimension, a home is a crucial place or space in which people construct, maintain, and dismantle their interpersonal relationships with family members, relatives, important others, neighbours, and even friends. A home is a vital social space where people cultivate and manage their relations with others, so the meanings of home for people and immigrants are strongly related to various social relations (Bardhi & Askegaard, 2009). Third, a ‘home’ in the migration context can be a transnational social space, since contemporary immigrants can maintain high frequencies of interactions and communications with their original and host countries. Thanks to technological developments, immigrants can not only gain feelings of ‘together-ness’ via digital or online communication practices (Marino, 2015), but also attach their sense of belonging and identities across national borders, and thus obtain ‘home feelings’ transnationally (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

The notion of ‘home’ for immigrants also presents in the symbolic form; Vivero

and Jenkins (1999) argue that 'home' can not only be performed in a tangible form, but intangibly. They argue that a cultural home in immigrant life is a symbolic rather than a physical one in which people feel comfortable in locating their sense of belonging and performing their identities both culturally and ethnically. When immigrants leave their homeland and familiar cultural environment and emigrate overseas, they may find it challenging and difficult to find their cultural home and locate their sense of belonging and identity both culturally and ethnically, in cases of cultural and lifestyle differences between home and host societies. According to Vivero and Jenkins (1999), if immigrants can find and construct a sense of belonging and successfully locate their cultural home and ethnic identity, they may face fewer obstacles and struggles in their daily life adaptation experiences; however, if they fail to find a cultural home for their sense of belonging and identity, they may become cultural homeless, as noted by Navarrete and Jenkins (2011). Being cultural homeless means that a person is unable to successfully attach their sense of belonging and identity to a specific cultural affiliation or ethnic community. The above arguments indicate that the notion and meaning of 'home' in immigrants' lives can not only be presented in a tangible way, but another vital issue concerns how immigrants successfully establish a sense of belonging and identity with regard to their cultural home. Since the notion of a cultural home refers to people's affiliations in terms of their cultural and ethnical identities, scholars sometimes also apply the concept to refer to people's ethnonational identities. In this study, I use the concepts of 'cultural home' and 'ethnonational identity' interchangeably to examine how Belgian Taiwanese immigrants negotiate cultural differences between their home and host countries, and how they identify themselves, both culturally and ethno-nationally. It is also important to mention that scholars have found that when immigrants find it difficult in finding their cultural affiliation and ethnic sense of belonging, they usually apply three identity negotiation strategies—ethnonational

boundary crossing, blurring, and shifting—that assist immigrants to establish their social, cultural, and ethno-national positions in both their host and home societies (Zolberg & Woon, 1999).

Moreover, for immigrants, the notion of 'home' further related to personal and psychological dimensions since in people's daily narratives, the meaning of 'home' and its psychological effects on our well-being can be compared to a 'harbour' or 'haven' to which people can return and where they can rest, if they feel tired or get injured. This narrative shows the psychological function and effect of 'home' for people, which is why many scholars believe that 'home' is a personal space in which people can show their true self, and therefore feel safe and comfortable (Kreuzer et al., 2018). In addition to these personal and psychological dimensions, another aspect of 'home' is related to time, since people at different life stages or ages may have distinct perceptions and personal feelings toward their home. Scholars have stated that issues of time have both objective and subjective aspects. Objectively, time is the same; everyone experiences 24 hours per day and 60 minutes per hour. However, this perception only focuses on the physical dimensions of time, and ignores the fact that time is also a socially constructed outcome; people in different lived circumstances or living in different cultural environments may have distinct perception towards time. In migration studies, scholars have revealed that the meanings of 'home' for immigrants can differ from person to person and are influenced by individuals' ages and life-course stages (Kleist and Jansen, 2016; Varley, 2008). This being so, the notions of 'home' for immigrants are not static, unidimensional, or unchangeable, but rather multiple, dynamic, fluid, and changeable, since 'home' offers different functions and effects, while the relations between people and 'home' may be changed as a result of individuals' distinct lived circumstances and living environments. For immigrants, the 'notion' of home does not only refer to the

physical place or building where people live, but also to how individual immigrants negotiate and search for the sense of home, belonging, and identity while living abroad. Many scholar have indicated that it is more appropriate to regard the notion of 'home' as a series of processes that people (re)construct, (re)negotiate, and navigate with their living environments, and as the place where individuals' sense of belonging and identity are located, no matter where they live (Nowicka, 2007).

1.3 The international migrant population and the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium

Before introducing the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant community, in the following section, I will firstly review the history and development of international migration flows in Belgium and explain how Belgium has gradually developed from a non-traditional immigration country to a super-diversity society.

1.3.1 The history of international migration flows to Belgium

Prior to World War I, few immigrants lived in Belgium; at that time, the number of international immigrants accounted for only 3.5% of the total national population. Between World War I and World War II, European countries experienced a period of peace in which they sought to reconstruct their infrastructures and rebuild their economies and in order to boost economic performance at this time, the Belgian government started to develop the coal industry in the Wallonia and Limburg regions, encouraging small numbers of blue-collar and low-skilled migrant workers to arrive from Italy, Poland, and the Czech Republic. However, due to World War II, the Belgian government suspended the labour migration programme, and it was only after the war that the Belgian government re-started the programme, signing contracts with the

governments of Italy and Poland whereby workers from these countries would help Belgium to complete its reconstruction projects. In that period, Belgium accepted approximately 100,000 international migrant workers into the labour market and society, and the international migrant population came to account for about 4.3% of the total population. Moreover, prior to the first international oil crisis that took place in 1973, Belgium experienced a golden age of economic development; the country's gross domestic product (GDP) increased from 11.66 billion US dollars in 1960 to 48 billion in 1973, with a growth rate of 311%. Due to this rapid economic development, Belgian society was faced with a growing problem of labour shortages and a strong demand for human resources. To fulfil the labour needs of generated by its economic development between the 1950s and 1960s, the Belgian government expanded its international migrant worker programme, accepting migrant from Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Morocco and by the early 1970s, Belgium was home to around 700,000 migrant workers, accounting for 7.2% of the total population. However, the 1973 oil crisis slowed Belgium's economic development and forced the government to stop the worker migration programme in 1974 again, so the main types of immigration and migration flows at the time were family reunion immigrants, asylum seekers, and so on. And until the late of 1980s, there were around 1 million international immigrants living in Belgium, which accounted for 10% of the total national population (Martiniello, 2013, 2003).

In 1989, Europe experienced significant social and political turmoil; the Soviet Union and several Eastern European communist countries collapsed and were forced to engage in political, social, and economic reforms. As these previous communist countries became democratic regimes, the European Union (EU) began to propose a new EU expansion programme that allowed some of these Eastern European countries

to participate in and then gain membership of the EU. The citizens of these previous communist countries such as Slovakia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Cyprus gained the legal right to freely move to, work, and live in other EU countries, which changed the nature of international immigration flows and developments in Europe in general and in Belgium in particular. Before this period, international flows in Belgium were mainly composed of migrant worker introduction programmes that brought people from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Morocco, but due to the significant political and economic transitions that occurred in the 1990s, immigrants from other European countries became as the major migration demographic and source for the international immigrant community in Belgium. In 2017, there were 1,327,776 international immigrants in Belgium, with 68% of them from other EU countries. A total of 164,410 (12%) were from France, 156, 726 (12%) from Italy, 153,736 (12%) from the Netherlands, 80,669 (6%) from Romania, 71,457 (5%) from Poland, 63,043 (5%) from Spain, 45,816 (3%) from Portugal, 39,501 (3%) from Germany, and 10% from other EU member countries. However, the traditional immigration population from Morocco and Turkey still play an important role in Belgian society since in 2017, Morocco and Turkey were the largest and second-largest non-EU international immigrant communities in Belgium; in that year, there were 82,586 Moroccans and 36,167 Turkish immigrants in Belgium, accounting for 6% and 3% of Belgium's total international migration population, respectively. Moreover, in 2017, international immigrants accounted for 12% of Belgium's total population (MYRIA Federal Migration Centre, 2018).

Brussels—the capital city of Belgium and the headquarters of the EU—is an example of how international immigrant flows to Belgium have changed the country's demographic landscape. In 2015, more than 60% of residents in Brussels were

foreigners or had a migration background, making Brussels the first minority-majority city in Belgium. Belgium is home to more than one minority-majority city; in Antwerp, more than 50% of residents are foreigner or have an immigration background (Misra, 2015). International immigration populations have not only changed the demographic composition of cities, but also in some small and medium-sized towns. The traditional resort town of Ostend located in the northwest of Belgium, is home to around 70,000 residents. In the 1990s, the majority of foreign and immigrant residents in Ostend were from 17 countries but by 2012, it had attracted immigrants from 130 countries around the world. By 2014, the total foreign and immigrant population of Ostend accounted for 16.8% of the total population, showing how even small towns in Belgium have become more diverse and complex (Maly, 2016). As the origins and movement trajectories of international immigrants have become more complex and dynamic than ever before, both cities and small towns in Belgium have experienced significant demographic changes as the immigrant population has increased nationwide (der Bracht et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2007).

Many scholars have looked at the question as to how such massive international immigrant populations have affected host societies and the relationships between various ethnic groups. Vertovec (2007) proposed the concept of 'super-diversity' to explain and describe the demographic characteristics both at the city scale and within the same ethnic minority community. He found that in the past, migration studies used to consider that international immigrant communities from the same country or similar cultural environments would have or perform similar cultural behaviours, ethnicities, and even lifestyles, but this traditional point of view has been criticised as 'methodological nationalism,' since it asserts that people from the same nation, society, and ethnic group are homogenous (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). For example, it is

frequently said that ‘Taiwanese people are like X’ or that ‘Chinese people are like Y’, but this kind of generalisation-orientation narrative over-simplifies people who have a similar nationality or ethnicity, and does not take possible differences and diversities within the same nationality and ethnic group into account. Vertovec argued that there is frequently considerable diversity not only among different ethnic groups, but also within the same ethnic and minority group. In this regard, aspects of people’s and immigrant’s backgrounds such as place of origin, language use, religion, migration pathways, legal status, gender/sexuality, age, place of residence, and transnational networks would all possible to make immigrants have their own and distinct international migration and lived experiences (Vertovec, 2007; 2017).

1.3.2 The worldwide and Belgian Taiwanese immigrant communities

According to data from the Overseas Community Affairs Council of the Taiwanese government, in 2017, there were 1.97 million Taiwanese immigrants living around the world. Roughly half live in the United States, with around 45,000 in Europe as whole. Of the latter, there are roughly 10,000 Taiwanese immigrants in France, 6,000 in the UK, 5,000 in Germany, 3,000 in the Netherlands, and 1,000 in Austria and Spain. Compared to the high number of Taiwanese immigrants in the United States, there are relatively few in Europe, where Taiwanese immigrants only account for 2.3% of the global Taiwanese immigrant population (Overseas Community Affairs Council, 2017).

Compared to the Taiwanese communities in the US and other European countries, Belgium is not a traditional and well-known migration destination for Taiwanese people. Over the past three decades, the numbers of Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants have been as follows: in 1981, 609 Taiwanese immigrants lived in Belgium, while by 1990, the

number had decreased to 575, and then to 371 by 2006. Statistics from the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium reveal that in 2017, there were roughly 400 Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium (Pang, 2002a; Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, 2017), accounting for 0.033% and 0.0035% of the total Belgian immigrant and national populations, respectively. Because the number of Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants is fairly small, Pang (1998) has applied the concept of invisible' to describe the social position of Taiwanese immigrants, and how they have been ignored by mainstream Belgian society and are underrepresented in many societal domains such as the mass media, immigrant policies, the education system, the labour market, academic literature and research debates. Thus, Lin (2018) proposed that it is necessary to explore Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants' lived experiences and other related topics in order to fill the research gap and improve the 'invisible' social and academic positions in which Taiwanese immigrants are situated.

Table 1.1 Demographics of the Belgian-Taiwanese community

Year/Number	1981	1990	2006	2017
	609	575	371	400

Sources: Lin (2018); Overseas Community Affairs Council (2017); Pang (1998; 2002a); Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium (2017)

Despite the fact that the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium is small in number and scale, it is not appropriate to consider this community to be homogeneous, as borne out by the author's three years (2017–2020) of fieldwork and participant-observation experiences in the community. The Belgian-Taiwanese community is

heterogeneous if one considers individual immigrants' distinct migration trajectories and living circumstances. Moreover, as the academic developments of mobility turn, it is not still valid to define immigrant should always be in the permanent basis, instead, more appropriate to understand the individual immigrant's migratory states is possible to be changed since immigrant faces different live circumstances or to fill their practical needs. In this regard, as the migration trajectories have become more complex and diverse than before because of the developments of globalization and international business, in this thesis, I prefer to definite and understand the migration flow and phenomenon in broader viewpoint and consider the concepts of immigrant is the people who move from one place to another, and in most of time, they would migrate across (national) borders, between/among different places. Thus, for me and in this thesis, the main criteria to define the concepts of migration and immigrant is not based on the length of time, instead, it according to the fact of migrate conducted by individual immigrant/migrant. Therefore, in this thesis, I take both of the long-settlement and temporary Taiwanese immigrants/migrants in Belgium in to account simultaneously, although their length of stay in Belgium are not the same, their migrate behaviours are both facts. Thus, as the length of time in staying the settlement place is no longer a sufficient dominated criteria in defining and understanding migration flow and international immigration phenomenon in the present days and contemporary era, in this thesis, I take both of the long settlement and temporary Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium as research subjects and examined their both of their small and big homemaking experiences in a foreign, and how do they manage, and cultivate sense of belonging and home feeling range from different layers of localities, and how do they negotiate their ethnonational identity in migration journey (Blommaert et al, 2017).

However, it is important to point out that due to the limitations of the official

annual demographic data published by the Belgian government regarding the Taiwanese immigrant community, the sub-group categories presented here are mainly drawn from the author's fieldwork and personal experiences interacting with the community.

Taking the criteria of time into consideration, the early group of Taiwanese immigrants arrived in Belgium in the 1970s, most of whom decided to migrate because of economic reasons. In the 1970s, Taiwan was still largely an agricultural society, with a GDP per capita of less than 2,000 US dollars. The author found that many of the research participants chose to migrate overseas due to the pull factor that working in Europe and Belgium would enable them to earn much better salaries than in Taiwan. The disadvantaged economic situation in Taiwan can be said to be the main push factor that resulted in many Taiwanese people and the participants in this study to leave Taiwan and immigrate overseas for better job and personal development opportunities. According to Pang (2002), the most inexpensive entrepreneurial activities for the pan-Chinese immigrants in the 1970s were investing and operating a restaurant or entering the Chinese catering industry. Immigrants only needed to invest about 500,000 Belgian francs—equivalent to 12,500 euros—to open their own restaurant in the 1970s, and the majority of Chinese restaurants in Belgium at this time were operated by immigrant couples or relatives. The fact that the restaurant industry made it possible for immigrant family members to work together was another positive factor that attracted plenty of Taiwanese immigrants and couples to enter this industry as they sought to start a new life and develop their career in Belgium.

Taking gender's perspective into consideration, then the largest subgroup in the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium is made up of Taiwanese women and

housewives. In the course of my fieldwork, I found that that about 70% of the members of the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant community are women who migrated to Belgium via the intercultural marriages. Compared to the early Taiwanese immigrants and restaurateurs who emigrated to Belgium in the 1970s, the emigration of Taiwanese women is not limited to a specific period. Since the majority of them choose to leave Taiwan and immigrate to Belgium because of their marriage, many came to Belgium via applying the Type-D Visa (Dependent Visa) or Family Reunion Visa. Furthermore, since the national languages in Belgium are Dutch and French, which are not frequently studied in Taiwan, and most people in Taiwan could merely speak in English, the majority of these Taiwanese immigrant women do not only find it difficult to speak the local Belgian language, moreover, constraining by their limited local language proficiency, they also find it difficult to find an official or full-time job position in the host country's mainstream labour market. Many have no choice but to spend the majority of their time involved in domestic work, taking care of their husband, children, and further become as the full-time housewives. Gu (2017) proposed the concept of '*housewifeisation*' (家庭主婦化) to describe the transformation processes that Taiwanese immigrant women experience, as they turn from job-holding/professional women into full-time housewives[1].

Moreover, the rapid development in international business and economic activities and globalisation in the 1990s created more diverse immigration trajectories, and people in Taiwan had access to more ways to emigrate overseas. The most common flows that have facilitated Taiwanese to emigrate to Belgium are as professional expatriate/migrant workers and as young people on working holidays. With regard to

[1] The detail discussion with regard to the concept of '*housewifeisation*' will be presented in the Chapter 5.

the subtype of Taiwanese professional expatriates and migrant workers in Belgium, they emigrated to Belgium mainly because of them are hired by local Belgium or multinational company. And they most work in high-tech companies, particularly in the semi-conductor industry, since Taiwan is famous for its ICT hardware and semi-conductor products, while Belgium has expertise in ICT software and product design. Moreover, since Taiwan and Belgium complement each other's shortcomings in these industry, many Taiwanese and Belgian ICT and semi-conductor companies have established mutual cooperation programs as part of which they send their employees and engineers to partner companies to learn from each other, and cooperatively pursue technologically innovative projects. Some of the participants in this study chose to move to Belgium via the above-mentioned emigration approach, usually with a temporary work contract with their company, meaning that they tend not to stay in Belgium for a long time; the average length of stay for them is between three and five years, depending on their contract. Most of them are aged from 25 to 40 and earn an average monthly salary of 3,300 to 3,400 euros, which is equivalent to more than 100,000 Taiwanese dollars (Gatti, 2009). In the course of this thesis, I interviewed a number of these high-skilled migrant workers/expatriates.

Furthermore, a new migration path was created when the Taiwanese and Belgian governments signed a working holiday agreement in 2013, when the Belgian government opened its labour market to Taiwanese youths aged between 18 and 30, providing a quota of 200 per year for applicants to work and live in Belgium for one year. This scheme has become increasingly popular in Taiwan since it can be difficult for young people in Taiwan to find a job with a good salary level in the local mainstream labour market, and the hourly wage in Belgium is much higher than in Taiwan; another pull factor is that many Taiwanese young people are very happy to spend one year

working overseas and experience the exotic lifestyle while living in a foreign country. During my fieldwork, I found that increasing numbers of young Taiwanese people are seeking to emigrate, work, and live in Belgium by applying for a working holiday program (CommonWealth Magazine, 2016; O'Reilly & Benson, 2009). Last but not least, another subtype within the Taiwanese immigrant community is immigrants that mainly consist of gay Taiwanese males who migrate to Belgium because of their sexuality; most are married to male Belgian partners and live as same-sex couples in Belgium. However, it is difficult to contact and access such migrants, so the present study does not include this subtype in its discussion (Peumans, 2014).

Since the categories presented here are mainly based on my first-hand fieldwork and participant-observation experiences, the information reported is derived from each individual immigrant's circumstances when I met them. However, immigrants' classifications are not static or fixed, but can rather change when people move or decide to follow a different life plan. For example, during my fieldwork, I found that many Taiwanese young women first went to Belgium as the working holidaymaker, but many met with their Belgian boyfriend, partner, or husband, and therefore changed their situation in the host society from that as a working holidaymaker to an immigrant woman or a housewife.

Table 1.2 Subgroups within the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium

Types/ Characteristics	Restaurateurs	Immigrant women/housewives	Working holidaymakers (WHMs)	High-skilled migrant workers/expatriates
The characteristics of this immigrant subgroup	The early Taiwanese immigrants emigrated to Belgium between the 1970s and 1980s, and most decided to enter the catering industry and operated their own restaurants, working with their spouse or other family members or friends. Some of the participants in this group	Taking gender's perspective into account, Taiwanese immigrant women constitute the majority population of the Taiwanese immigrant community; I observed during my fieldwork that about 70% of Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium are female, who mainly emigrate to Belgium via intercultural marriages. However, many are limited by	In 2013, the Taiwanese and Belgian governments signed a working holiday program contract, and the Belgian government offered a quota of 200 per year to Taiwanese young people aged between 18 and 30. Many young people emigrate to Belgium via this migration scheme, through which	Following rapid developments in globalisation and international business, many Taiwanese professional workers and expatriates have chosen to work in Belgium via mutual human-resource exchange program established by Taiwanese and Belgian high-tech companies, mainly in the ICT and semi-conductor industries. However, their

	had already retired and had second or even third-generation descendants in the host society.	visa regulations and a lack of local-language proficiency, so are forced to leave the mainstream job market and become full-time housewives.	they can live and work in Belgium for one year. Some find their local or Belgian partners and some further get marry and accordingly change their states in the host society.	period of stay in Belgium is determined by their work contracts; on average, they work and stay in Belgium for three to five years, and they have an average age of between 25 and 40.
Number of participants in this study	8	14	13	7
Total research participants	42			

Source: This study.

1.4 Research questions

The discussion presented in this chapter reveals that the meaning of home for immigrants is complex, and the notion of home in the migration context is dynamic fluid and also related individual immigrant's daily practices, rather than static or consolidated. For immigrants, the meanings of 'home' could be changed and influenced by individual' distinct lived circumstances, different life stages and would be vary from person to person. In this study, I do not take the notion of 'home' for granted but prefer to consider it to be an unsolved and problematic concept in social science research in general and in migration studies in particular. Moreover, as the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium faces a number of disadvantages and has situated in the 'invisible' social status in the host society, being under-represented in both academic research, and also lack their own voices in many societal domains ranging from migrant policy to the labour market. In this regard, as I am an international student from Taiwan pursuing my PhD in Belgium, I expect that this thesis will both fill the existing research gap and improve the limitations that Taiwanese immigrants have faced in Belgian' academic debates and the status in the host society. Accordingly, the main research questions of this dissertation are formulated as follows:

1. What are Taiwanese immigrants' experiences of home-making (「家」的製作) and searching for the sense of 'home' (家的感覺) while living in a foreign land?
2. What are the meanings of 'home' for Taiwanese immigrants in the course of their life abroad?
3. What constitutes the notion of 'home' for Taiwanese immigrants in the migration context?
4. What are Taiwanese immigrants' experiences and strategies in managing their relations and searching for the sense of home between their home and host countries, and also across from different layers of localities?
5. What are Taiwanese immigrants' perceptions and interpretations with regard to their small home and big home?[2]

[2] The concepts of Small Home and Big Home will be discussed more in detail in the next Chapter.

6. How do Taiwanese immigrant identify themselves culturally and ethnically, and how do they negotiate of their ethnonational identity in immigrant life?
7. What are the differences and similarities of the homemaking experiences between the four identified immigrant subgroups?

1.5 Description of the research and overview of the dissertation

This dissertation is based on fieldwork I have conducted in Belgium from 2017 to 2020 and semi-structured, photo-elicitation interviews with 42 Belgian Taiwanese immigrants, in addition to continuous online and offline participant observation and interactions with research participants. The ethnographic fieldwork was initially conducted online by participating in online discussions and observing several Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities on Facebook. These online communities provided me with opportunities to access the emigrant community and meet new people and let me start to know some of this immigrant community members.

In addition to the online fieldwork, I also conducted offline fieldwork and participant observation as a Chinese-language teacher at the École Sun Yat Sen (旅比華僑中山學校) in Brussels every weekend from 2017 to 2019. This school is the most important and oldest Chinese language and culture heritage school in Belgium, established by immigrants from the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1965, which has made it one of the most important social gathering places for the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium. During the course of my fieldwork, I have found that many Taiwanese immigrant parents send their children to the École Sun Yat Sen to learn the Chinese language and culture. All teachers and staff members at the school are Taiwanese immigrants or their descendants and the school also has many Taiwanese immigrant students, so, as a teacher at this school, I had many opportunities to meet Taiwanese immigrants with whom I would not otherwise have been able to easily interact.

By conducting fieldwork both online and offline, I was able to regularly attend formal and informal social gathering activities organised by Taiwanese immigrants, which not only meant that I could interact with a range of people, but also enabled me

to participate in migrants' lives in both the online and offline domains. During the fieldwork, I wrote field notes, took pictures, and sometimes made short videos to document what I saw and heard as participants touched on the notion of 'home.' In addition to applying traditional ethnographical research methods to collect data, I employed the semi-structured and photo-elicitation interview methods to collect the textual and visual data shared by research participants through stories and photos about their immigration experiences. The range of ethnographical and qualitative research methods mentioned here is intended to ensure that the data collected in this study will deepen our understanding of this matter and could effectively answer the main research questions in this study. Detailed explanations of how I will conduct this study and establish relationships with research participants will be discussed in more detail in the methodological chapter.

This dissertation is composed of eight chapters. Chapter One reviews and discusses the literature and studies with respect to the concept of 'international immigration' and relative issues regarding the various models and explanations of immigrants' life adaptation experiences, as well as the theoretical concept of 'transnationalism.' This chapter also touches on topics such as the history and development of international migration in Belgium, and demographic information and diversity within the Taiwanese immigrant community. The chapter would also address the main research questions, objects, and structure of this thesis. In Chapter Two, I will further provide a comprehensive review and discussion of the notion of 'home' in the migration context and the theoretical concepts of the sense of belonging and identity. Also. in the chapter two, I will review the existing research outcomes with regard to overseas Taiwanese immigrants based on the lens of 'small' and 'big' homes, as proposed by Magat (1999). I will then introduce the concept of the 'intersectional home' (交織的家) proposed in this thesis, based on the theoretical foundation of 'intersectionality' (交織性理論). In Chapter Three, I will explain how I have conducted this study by applying a number of ethnographic and qualitative research methods to collect research data and establish relations with my research participants. I will also show and discuss my self-reflection with regard to my experiences conducting fieldwork among the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium. Moreover, the chapters Four to Seven constitute the main research findings in this thesis. In these

chapters, I will sequentially examine the four sub-groups of Taiwanese immigrants, their homemaking experiences, their experiences in searching for a sense of 'home' (家的感覺) while living in Belgium, and their sense of belonging and ethnonational identity negotiation experiences in the daily life. Last but not least, the research conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future studies will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Two
Literature Review and Theoretical Concepts

In this chapter, I will sequentially review and discuss the literature and concepts related to the notion of "home." Thus, this chapter will be divided into several sections. In the first section, following the international migration context, I will discuss the notion of home by reflecting on how different migration theories examine the relationships between the immigrants and their dual homes between home and host countries. This section compares the thoughts of the traditional migration theories (e.g., assimilation) with the new and mainstream theories (e.g., transnationalism) in terms of the notion of home. Afterward, I will introduce Magat's (1999) concept of "small home and big home" and systematically review the literature according to this conceptional lens. Based on the presented ideas and the literature review, this chapter will demonstrate the diverse ways in which previous studies have explicated the notion of home. And further argue that home is not a static concept but one that has multidimensional and negotiable characteristics. I will also review and discuss the research outcomes regarding Taiwanese immigrant through the lens of the small home and big home concepts. Drawing on the literature, I will highlight the outcomes and shortcomings of the existing Taiwanese immigrant studies through several different angles, including geography, topic choice, and their narrow focus on the concept of home. Moreover, I will further introduce the theoretical concept of "intersectionality," which originates from studies on gender and especially black and colored women studies. And by using the concept of intersectionality, I will conduct theoretical innovation and propose the new research concept of "intersectional home" (交織的家) as the analytical framework in this study.

2.1 Introduction

In the past two decades, migration studies have had significant theoretical changes and developments. The traditional and classical migration theories of assimilation and integration expect immigrants to modify their native lifestyle and cultural identity and strive to incline their sense of belonging toward the host society. Accordingly, these theories expect immigrants to gradually reduce the frequency of

their interactions and intimate attachments with their home country and relatives left behind. In this regard, immigrants' old home in their original country and new home in the new place tend to be in competition. The traditional migration theories tend to conceptualize home as a fixed location in a specific place with clear territorial and spatial boundaries. Moreover, the notion of being at home means that people are stationary and bounded to a specific location (Rapport & Dawson, 1998).

Because people can visit, move, live, communicate, and even migrate to other countries and places more easily and cheaply due to the rapidly developing globalization and transportation systems around the world, the relationships between people and place or space are no longer unique, linear, or sequential. Nonetheless, immigrants do have their own capacities to navigate and manage their sense of belonging, identity, and loyalties between different places and across national borders at the same time. Since contemporary immigrants have more opportunities for mobility between and/or among places than before, the ideas and meanings of the notion of home have become more complex and dynamic (Bonisch-Brednich & Trundle, 2010).

Moreover, the dominant contemporary migration theory of transnationalism demonstrates very different ideas regarding the relationships between immigrants and their home. Transnationalism claims that the real situation of immigrants' lives is that although immigrants have already lived in the host country; they do not have to cut off their ties and connections with their home country and the people who left behind. Moreover, international immigrants' dual lives between home and the host country are complementary and reinforcing rather than conflicting and contradicting to each other. Thus, the concepts and meanings of the notion of home among transnational immigrants are varied and dynamic. Immigrants can construct their subjective meanings, feelings, perceptions, and even interpretations of the concept of home in their international migration journeys. Accordingly, the perspective of transnationalism reconceptualized the concepts and meanings of home in immigrants' lives from a consolidated and place-rooted idea to a fluid, dynamic, and impermanent concept. This trend is because the international migration journey has always constituted a series of back-and-forth processes involving the (re)construction and negotiation of unique meanings and relations of home (Philip & Ho, 2010).

Magat (1999) argues that there are two different types of home in an immigrant's life. The first type is the small home, which refers to the immigrant's private place or micro space that could offer immigrant an environment for living, can make them to gain sense of home or make them feel like to be at home. However, Magat further remind that small home for immigrant does not necessarily root in a specific place or space, instead, which can present or exist in either physical or non-physical forms and locate across from different layers of localities –the small like as a dwelling to the big like as a community, city, region, or country. In addition, the other type of home in immigrant life is big home, however, the home I this form is refers to individual immigrant's ethnonational identity, their nationhood affiliations, and their perception or interpretation with regard to different ethnonational identity labels.

Table 2.1 Small home vs. big home in the migration context

Concept and description	**Small home**	**Big home**
	Refers to the notion of home being related to the immigrant's personal or micro domains, which could be both physical and non-physical, and could further could also present and exist across from different layers of localities where can further support immigrant for living, and thereby obtain sense of belong, home feeling, or identity.	Refers to how immigrants negotiate their sense of belonging and identity with regard to their ethnonational identity, and mostly, between home and host countries.

Source: Magat (1999).

By employing these two concepts of home, Magat compares the meanings of small home and big home among the Japanese and Israeli immigrants in Canada. Magat found that Japanese immigrants tend to describe the meanings of home in their immigrant life, connecting their daily activities and notions of home with their personal and own space. Magat further found that the Japanese immigrants do not always link their home meanings or feelings in the foreign land with the macro element of the national symbol. In contrast, Magat found that the Israeli immigrants were more likely to depict and connect their perceptions and meanings of home in their immigrant life with the grand

ethnonational identities and national images and memories of their homeland in Israel.

Accordingly, Magat states that in their entire migration journey and over the course of their life, immigrants would continually face challenge in negotiating and managing their relations and sense of belonging to both of small home and big home between their home and host country, but also across different layers of localities. Taking Magat's concepts to this study, I am curious about how do Belgian Taiwanese immigrant construct their small home and search for the sense of home in different forms (physically and non-physically), and across different layers of localities (private-public spaces, community, or even city)? Moreover, how do they root their sense of belonging in the level of big home, and how do they negotiate and perceive their ethnonational identity and among different identity labels like Taiwanese, Chinese, Belgian, and so on?

2.2 The concept of small home and big home in the immigrant nexus

After reviewing the literature on the notion of home in immigrants' lives, I summarize the main and frequently discussed themes from the lens of small home and big home.

2.2.1 Immigrants' small home as a physical place

After arriving in the destination country, an immigrant's first task involves finding a physical place for settling down. Thus, home as a physical space provides the immigrant with a living and distinguishes life between private and public domains (Oswald & Wahl, 2005). Whether an immigrant owns a house or not is a vital factor in estimating his/her level of adaptation and sense of belonging in the host country. Alba and Logan (1992) studied house ownership among 12 different migrant ethnic groups. They found that immigrants' sense of house ownership is significantly influenced by factors such as age, household composition, and socioeconomic status. They also found that whether immigrants own a house in the host society or not has implications for immigrants' acculturation and their capacities for speaking the local language. Myers and Lee (1998) examined the relationships among factors such as income, education level, English proficiency, marital status, and house ownership. They realized that Asian

immigrants in the United States perform better in these factors than other immigrant groups. This perceived success not only convinces the local Americans to regard Asian immigrants as model minorities but helps Asian immigrants enjoy the highest level of house ownership in the United States. Painter Yang, and Yu (2003) claim that Chinese immigrants are influenced by the Confucian culture and regard the house as a central element that constitutes family and home life. Thus, the loss of residence in the Chinese tradition is equivalent to the loss of roots of life and prospects. Thus, the Confucian culture facilitates Chinese immigrants' motivation for house ownership in the host society. Painter et al. further found that a lack of house ownership significantly influences Chinese immigrants' motivation for attaching their sense of belonging and identity to the host society.

As a physical space, home is defined by its physical amenities in that by decorating the interior and arranging the furniture in a specific way, people can attach and construct their subjective sense of belonging and individual and/or collective memories based on their physical space. This tendency turns the initial neutral and non-emotional space into a place that embodies considerable personal attachments and emotions. Thus, home as a physical place tends to transfer several psychological emotions to people and residents that allow them to see home as a physical and/or psychological shelter (Sixsmith, 1986). Liu and Pang (2019) took the Chinese immigrants living in Antwerp as an example and explored their homemaking experiences in their immigrant life. They found that material objects play an important role in the homemaking process among Chinese immigrants. The teapot, rice steam cooker, and food are three items that are frequently mentioned in the study. Liu's (2020) study echoed the importance of material objects in the immigrants' homemaking processes. Liu took the elderly Chinese immigrants (aged above 65) in Australia as an example to explore their homemaking experiences. For these elderly and first-generation Chinese immigrants, owning property and a residence in the new place were two vital preconditions for them to construct their identity and sense of belonging to the new land. Moreover, most of the informants in the study claimed that without having their own house and property, they would definitely not regard Australia as their home.

It is clear that human–place relationships are not static. When people, especially

international immigrants, are on the move, they tend to face great challenges in (re)finding and (re)building their spatial attachment and identity in the foreign land and during their resettlement process; this is because many previously known lifestyles, cultural schemes, and routines have to be (re)learned and (re)adapted due to new life transitions and international movements. In this regard, human–space relationships take the form of continuous negotiations (Zhan, Wang, Fawcett, Li, & Fan, 2017).

2.2.2 Immigrants' small home as a transnational space

People hardly sever their ties with their home country and the people whom they have left behind, even if they have already left their original home and started a new life in a foreign land. From the transnational point of view and immigrants' life realities, immigrants use different strategies and ways to maintain their relationships, interactions, and connections with their original home and families (Golob, 2013).

Previous studies have demonstrated that several practical daily behaviors could assist immigrants in constructing their transnational social space and further help them manage their relationships, connections, and memories with their families and friends left behind in their home country. Interestingly, many immigrant groups tend to build their home garden as the transnational social space by growing the vegetables, fruits, and plants they have brought from their home country. In doing so, immigrants try to connect memories and attachments from their old home with their new life in the host country. Li, Hodgetts, and Ho (2010) used Chinese immigrants in New Zealand to explore the role of gardening in the management of their transnational relationships. They found that daily gardening habits have multiple meanings in the immigrants' daily lives. They discovered that almost all Chinese immigrants had experienced growing Chinese vegetables in their private home gardens. The participants also stated that their gardening practices in their daily lives have assisted them in connecting their dual sense of belonging and obtaining the home feelings between China and New Zealand. Moreover, the cultivation of plants with family members turns the home garden into a focal social and emotional hub for families and relatives. Thus, gardens at immigrants' homes serve to link their old home's memories with those of the new home in the host society, hence the role of the home garden as a transnational social space for immigrants'

maintenance and management of their dual spatial identities and sense of belonging between home and the host country. The meaning of immigrants' home gardens is much deeper than the physical function, so much so that gardens have become a social space that allows immigrants to shape their self-identities, sense of belonging, and personal attitudes toward their dual old–new life scheme in real life (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017).

Make filial piety into practice by using social media is another vital and frequent way for immigrants to construct transnational social space, and therefore, showing care toward their original family or aged parents who still live in the home country. And by conducting these transnational practices, which would further assist immigrants in maintain their relations and ties with theirs family and relatives across borders, also help them to gain emotional support and sense of belonging in their migrant life. With regard to social media use, Bonini's (2011) study illustrates the importance of social media for immigrants who are far from their home country. Bonini focuses on Filipino immigrants in Milan to explore the role of social media in their daily practices in terms of transnational communication and emotional exchange. In his study, Filipino immigrants share their stories and indicate that by contacting their families and relatives in the home country through social media, not only can let they learn about the situation of their loved ones, but also can maintain their feelings of home. Moreover, in the traditional Chinese and Confucian cultures, taking care of elderly relations, especially parents, are valid cultural expectations and even obligations on the part of the youth and adults.

However, when people migrate to another place, it becomes very difficult for them to meet the expectations of filial piety. Hsu (2019) took the young Taiwanese female immigrants in Australia as an example to explore their ways of exhibiting their "daughterhood" and "care" toward their elderly parents living in Taiwan through social media. They indicated that social media has helped them stay connected with their home and relations. Moreover, in the transnational social space created by the digital techniques, the participants and their family members speak of mutual care and emotional attachment and support. By using social media, the participants manage to present themselves virtually, which not only helps them reduce their parents' worries

about them in overseas but also assists them to achieve their filial responsibilities and to display their "daughterhood" toward the elderly parents. The above discussions suggest that immigrants can remain in touch with their relations and friends in their home country through different digital platforms. This way, immigrants can easily strike a balance between their sense of belonging and interpersonal relationships between their home and host country. Thus, contemporary immigrants no longer construe the notion of home as a single entity, however it can extend beyond the national and transnational borders (Arnold, 2016).

2.2.3 Immigrants' small home as a social relationship

Alongside the physical and transnational dimensions of home, scholars argue that the notion of home may further relate to peoples' interpersonal relationships with others, especially with their families and friends. The importance of family relations in peoples' home life can easily be seen from various old Chinese sayings and idioms. The Chinese character of home is 家 and is pronounced "*Jia.*" According to the Chinese dictionary, *Jia* (家, home) contains two parts. The upper part of the character denotes the roof of the house, and the lower part of the word denotes animals. Taking these two parts together, the Chinese character of home (*Jia*) means all animals (people) tend to live within one house and under the same roof. This interpretation suggests that Chinese culture expects family members to live together rather than separately. In the traditional Chinese culture, parents play a dominant role in the family life, depicted in this old Chinese saying: "If parents are still alive, children cannot leave or go far away. Children should stay at home and accompany their parents to show their filial piety" (父母在不遠遊，遊必有方). This old saying suggests that when someone leaves his/her parents alone or refuses to accompany them, he/she will cease to be regarded as a "unfilial person." Another old Chinese saying says that "if all the family members can live together at home peacefully, then everything becomes possible. However, if the family members quarrel with one another all the time at home, then everything would become impossible, and the family would be poor" (家和萬事興，家吵萬事窮). In the traditional Confucian culture, home further contains the concepts of settlement, family, and work performance, reflected in this famous Chinese saying "peaceful living and joyful working" (安居樂業). This saying expects family members to live together

peacefully at home and avoid confrontation. If family members manage to maintain a harmonious relationship with each other, not only can make people enjoy their family life at home, but home and family members will further become each other's most powerful supporters of their goals. There is no doubt about the value of home and family life in the traditional Confucian culture; home is not a mere building or a house but a focal point in people's lives. The notion of home in the Chinese culture contains abundant meanings, ranging from relationships to obligations, responsibilities, and rituals, among others (Chiang & Leung, 2011; Philip, 2000).

The traditional Confucian culture has taught people from childhood to always consider family as their first priority. The culture expects people to strive to maintain close and harmonious relationships and avoid confrontation with family members. Moreover, filial piety takes center stage in the pan-Chinese people's life. The Chinese culture expects the young family members to show respect, care, responsibility, and even obedience toward their elderly family members and especially parents. These traditional cultural values and expectations further influence pan-Chinese people's thoughts about the appropriate attitudes and behaviors expected of children and the youth when interacting with their elderly parents and relations. Children and the youth in the traditional Confucian society are raised and educated to respect their parents and take care of them in their old age (Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2006). Some people may wonder if these traditional Confucian norms are valid among pan-Chinese immigrants. In her effort to respond to this question, Gu (2019) found that some of the Taiwanese immigrants who had migrated overseas for several decades were still struggling to achieve a balance between their heritage culture and the culture in the host society. She discovered that Taiwanese immigrants would not abandon their heritage culture. Moreover, she indicated that the traditional Confucian culture continuing to play a vital role in the immigrants' daily lives and influencing their manner of practice, thinking, and management of their family and interpersonal relationships.

In addition to the relationships with family members, friendship is the other vital component that further influences peoples' spatial feelings and relationships. Compared with the people living in their home country, immigrants may face more difficulties in making friends or maintaining their friendships in the foreign land. Eve (2010) describes international immigration as a process that involves a series of friendship

constructions and reconstructions. Immigrants' quality and quantity of friends and social networks further influence the construction of their sense of belonging and identity toward the host society. It is difficult for people and immigrants to construct their identity and sense of belonging toward a place or society where they do not have any friends or do not know anyone around them. Liu's (2020) study showed that the maintenance of regular interactions with other co-ethnic friends can assist Chinese immigrants living in Australia to find their identity and obtain sense of belonging to Australian host society. Accordingly, the meaning of home for immigrants can also extend to social relationships since the above studies reveal that family and friends are two important elements that affect immigrants' construction of their sense of belonging and identity toward the host society.

2.2.4 Immigrants' small home as a symbolic meaning

In peoples' real lives, the notion of home is tangible as a dwelling, building, or house, although it can also be intangible. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, people can construct their own and subjective meanings by interacting with symbols regardless of whether they are material or not. Symbols can be varied, including language, text, behavior, culture, food, material or non-material elements or space, and even memory. Doyle (1992) argues that the notion of home is also full of symbolic meanings; people can construct their feelings of home through some specific symbols. The symbolic homemaking practices are significant for people who are on the move. In this regard, the meaning of home for different groups of people holds various meanings, since people can construct their own and subjective meanings and perceptions toward the notion of home via different symbols (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017).

In migration studies, language, culture, food, and memory are four important symbols that immigrants can use to attach their sense of belonging and construct their home feelings toward place or space. Ang's (2017) study illustrates the significance of language for people's construction of their ethnic identity and sense of belonging to a place. In her study, she demonstrates how Mandarin has become a symbolic contestation field between Chinese-Singaporeans on the one hand and Chinese immigrants Singapore on the other concerning the extent of their ethnicity of Chinese-ness and sense of belonging toward their lives' circumstances in Singapore. In her study,

many Chinese immigrants thought that Chinese-Singaporeans were unable to speak standard Mandarin nor fluently and accurately. Thus, they regarded local Chinese-Singaporeans as "less Chinese." In response, local Chinese-Singaporeans indicated that because very few Chinese immigrants in Singapore can speak English fluently, they are then considered as "low-class Chinese," and hence are not eligible to belong to the community of local Chinese-Singaporeans. Ang's study shows that both language and mother tongue have vital symbolic significance for both immigrants and local residents in their effort to distinguish the similarities and differences between "self" and "others." The segregating attitudes between locals and immigrants further affect both parties' attempts at constructing and presenting their identity and sense of belonging toward their place of residence.

In addition to language, ethnic food is another important symbolic component in immigrants' homemaking processes (Hage, 1997). Lin (2019) interviewed 17 Belgian Taiwanese immigrant women and examined the role of ethnic food (referred to as "Taiwanese food" in the study) in the immigrants' everyday lives; Lin also probed the meanings of cooking and consuming the ethnic foods in the participants' daily food practices. Lin found that original home/ethnic foods convey multiple meanings for Belgian-Taiwanese female immigrants. The food practices involved buying, growing, making, and sharing food. Buying Taiwanese food ingredients presented a genuine challenge, as Chinese and Asian supermarkets in Belgium do not sell all Asian/Taiwanese food items. Consequently, the participants began growing food ingredients in their home gardens. Taiwanese female immigrants enjoy preparing and sharing food with their husbands and children while imparting Taiwanese cultural values through personal stories. To reconnect with the home country, they also like to organize food gatherings with other Taiwanese housewives and friends. Many Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant women indicate that by preparing, sharing, and eating Taiwanese foods with their relations and other Taiwanese friends, they can construct and enhance their ethnic and collective identities of being ethnic "Taiwanese" and "immigrant women" in the Belgian society. Moreover, by sharing and consuming Taiwanese foods with other Asian and/or Taiwanese families and female immigrants, the participants can share their living and migration experiences with one another. In so doing, they can construct a sense of "copresence" and collective identity of being "Taiwanese women"

and “immigrant mothers” in the host society. Elsewhere, Gunew (2000) reveals that consuming home/ethnic foods is a crucial strategy for immigrants to connect their previous life memories with the present ones, allowing them to (re)construct a transnational identity and sense of belonging. Furthermore, Duruz (2006) points out that food can help people associate memories with specific places or spaces; these memories are important components for immigrants’ formulation of identity and a sense of belonging when living in or moving between different places.

Moreover, culture has always influenced how people construct their sense of belonging and identity in the homemaking process. Regarding the culture–home relationship, Vivero and Jenkins (1999) propose the concept of “cultural home,” meaning that cultural home is a cognitive and symbolic concept rather than a real physical place. When people successfully find their cultural home, they begin to feel safe and comfortable about presenting their true selves and identity in their own cognitive, cultural home. However, when immigrants move from one place and cultural environment to another, they may find it is hard to re-find an appropriate cultural home in their new environment due to the cultural differences. After having landed in the destination country, most immigrants spend much of their time on negotiating the cultural differences between their place of origin and new ones and trying to find a balance between their own cultural identity and sense of belonging with those of the new environment. If immigrants successfully re-find their sense of belonging and cultural home, they are less likely to encounter obstacles regarding their cultural identity and belonging in their minds. However, if immigrants fail to find their cultural home in the host society, then they may be become as the “culturally homeless,” as indicated by Navarrete and Jenkins (2011), who explain that cultural homeless refers to people who cannot find their identity and sense of belonging to any specific ethnic or cultural group. Liu (2015) investigated Chinese immigrants’ experiences of (re)finding and negotiating cultural home in their daily lives in Australia. Her study shows that different generations of Chinese immigrants apply distinct strategies for finding and negotiating their cultural identity and situating their sense of belonging to the cultural home. She found that most of the first-generation Chinese immigrants present their cultural and ethnic identities differently in their public and private lives. In their public life and in response to the cultural expectations of the locals, the first-generation

Chinese immigrants tend to behave like Australians. In contrast, in their private life, they feel more comfortable to act according to their Chinese identity. Her study further suggests variations in the second-generation Chinese immigrants' understandings of cultural identity and sense of belonging in their different life stages.

With regard to the relationships between immigrants' memories and homemaking experiences, Maggi Leung (2008) claims that immigrants cannot entirely cut off their connections with their home country, even if they have already been fully settled in the new place for years; immigrants will still have to grapple with the issue of old and new memories of their life experiences between/among different places. In other words, even if immigrants have physically left their home country, psychologically, their old experiences and memories of living in their homeland always stay with them when moving across national borders, cultural boundaries, and homemaking experiences. Fortier (2000, p. 157) states that "memory becomes a primary ground of identity formation in the context of immigration, where 'territory' is decentered and exploded into multiple settings." She claims immigrants' memories affect how people regard, structure, and articulate their social world, living circumstances, and relationships with others, as well as how they define their role in society. Thus, drawing on different memories, immigrants construct distinct senses of belonging and identity toward places and personal roles. Accordingly, immigrants' memories may have different impacts on immigrants' homemaking processes and daily living experiences. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, home can exist in many forms and beyond the limitations of materials or national borders since immigrants can resort to various kinds of symbols to construct and attach their sense of home and feeling of being at home.

2.2.5 Immigrants' small home is a time issue

In anthropology and migration studies, time is an important yet tricky concept, mainly because time contains a simultaneous dual objective–subjective natures. From the objective viewpoint, time treats everyone equally since all of us have 24 hours per day and 365 days per year. However, anthropologist Appadurai (2013) claims that people may construct their subjective meanings toward the notion of time because of people's different ages and living circumstances. In this regard, people may hold very different senses and perceptions toward the issue of time and the time concepts of past, present, and future. For example, because of their abundant life experiences, the

elderlies are more willing to talk about the past and less willing to outline their future plans. On the contrary, the youth may show more interest in explaining their ambitions in the further rather than talking about their past. Kleist and Jansen (2016) state that different demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, class, and socioeconomic status, are vital factors that can influence how people experience time and construct their perception of time. Thus, different people may have different conceptions of time, meaning that time may no longer be a linear or numerical description but a social construction with multiple meanings.

Scholars argue that immigrants' varied perceptions of time may influence their daily lives and motivation for engagement and integration into the host society. If immigrants regard themselves as mere sojourners who will not stay in one place for a long time, they may begin to construct an attitude that discourages them from participating in the affairs of their current place of residence. In this regard, the status of temporality may reduce immigrants' willingness and intentions to learn local languages and gain insights into the new culture, lifestyle, and the motivations to adapt to mainstream society (Robertson, 2015). In short, time in people's lives is not only a number but a feeling that can influence their perception of their position and role in society and context-appropriate behaviors.

The issue of time is also important when discussing the notion of home concerning immigrants' international movements and homemaking experiences. As homemaking is a temporal concept in immigrants' lives, the meaning and individual perceptions of home are situated in and shaped by time and peoples' distinct living circumstances. Ryan (2018) investigated Polish immigrants' ways of constructing their sense of belonging and feeling of home in the ethnically diverse city of London. In this study, Ryan claims that immigrants' level of integration and sense of belonging toward their new place are not static, however they may change depending on different living circumstances. Ryan found that time is a critical issue for immigrants to construct their sense of belonging and feeling of home toward their place of residence. As immigrants live in the host country longer, they may gradually establish more diverse social networks and get to know their surroundings better, helping them to participate in the host society more meaningfully. The once unfamiliar place of settlement turned into a

new home for these Polish female immigrants, hence scholars' argument that the meaning of home for immigrants is fluid and dynamic and that it also changes over immigrants' lifetimes and in their different living circumstances. In this regard, Boccagni (2017) indicates that immigrants' homemaking experiences involve a dialogical negotiation stretched over immigrants' life course regarding the issues of identity and belonging about home between the place of origin and settlement.

2.2.6 Immigrants' big home is an ongoing negotiation of ethnonational identity

Magat's (1999) proposed concept of the small home and the big home are two sides of the same coin. Thus, immigrants not only have to grapple with the challenges of (re)constructing their small home in the new place, but they also have to negotiate their identity and sense of belonging to different ethnonational identities between their home and the host country. Magat argues that the notion of big home and the issue of ethnonational identity may have more influence on the people who come from or live in a country that has complex political relationships with others; the impact may also be profound if people have different attitudes toward their own ethnonational identity. The situation in Taiwan and its relationships with Mainland China perfectly fit Magat's argument, especially given that Taiwanese society also faces significant challenges and struggles with the issues of ethnonational identity and sense of belonging to the notion of big (national) home due to the complex political and historical relationships between Taiwan and Mainland China. When discussing the developments of ethnonational identity in Taiwan, there remains no choice but to review the historical relationships between the Republic of China (R.O.C. in Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China (P.R.C. in Mainland China).

When Dr. Sun Yat-sen successfully subverted the Qing Dynasty, he established the first democratic and republic nation in Asia in 1911, known as the Republic of China (R.O.C.). From 1911 to 1949, the regime of R.O.C. was governed by the ruling party of Kuomintang (K.M.T.). During this period, the Chinese Communist Party (C.C.P.) emerged as a challenge to K.M.T. So as to seek governing power, K.M.T. and C.C.P. fought decades of civil war. K.M.T. lost the civil war and took the R.O.C. regime from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949. Since then, there have been two "Chinas" in the world, one being the Republic of China (later called free China or democratic China)

in Taiwan and the other being the People's Republic China (P.R.C. or communist China) in Mainland. Between 1949 and 2000, K.M.T. ruled Taiwan for nearly five decades, during which the K.M.T. government educated Taiwanese people to identify themselves as ethnic "Chinese." Such a narrative of Chinese national identity can commonly be seen in different places, ranging from educational textbooks to government policies, political propaganda, and people's everyday conversations. However, this narrative and political propaganda in Taiwan was challenged in the 1970s, when the K.M.T. government began to lose its legitimacy internationally and among its diplomatic allies. In 1971, the Republic of China ruled by the K.M.T. government was compelled to leave the international organization of the United Nations (UN), and the original seat of R.O.C. in the UN was replaced by the regime of P.R.C. ruled by the C.C.P. Since then, most of the countries in the world have recognized P.R.C. as the only authorized regime to represent the sovereignty of China. Hence, the regime of R.O.C. in Taiwan rapidly lost its diplomatic allies when Belgium, Japan, and the United States decided to sever their diplomatic ties with R.O.C. in 1971, 1972, and 1979, respectively. To date, the regime of R.O.C. in Taiwan has only 15 diplomatic allies, and the Vatican is the only European country that has maintained its diplomatic relations with R.O.C. in Taiwan (Pajtinka, 2017). These political developments have had a profound impact on people in Taiwan since the majority of countries only recognize the legitimacy of P.R.C. in Mainland China rather than that of R.O.C. in Taiwan. Consequently, the Taiwanese wonder how they should identify themselves. Are they ethnic "Chinese" or "Taiwanese?" Moreover, what is the correct name of our country? Is it the "Republic of China" or "Taiwan?" These sensitive and controversial questions tend to preoccupy people in Taiwan, having forced them to search for their unique ethnonational identity for decades.

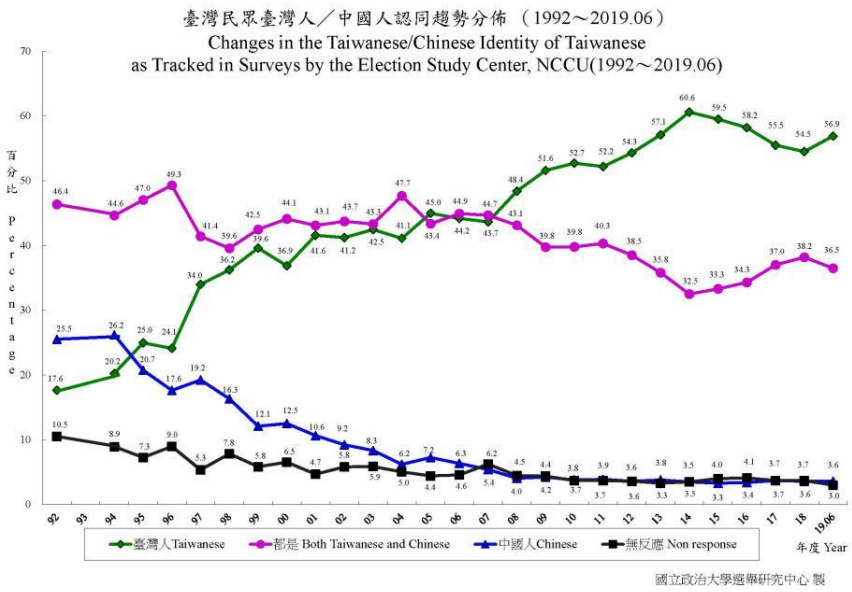


Figure 2.1 Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of Taiwanese people

Source: National Chengchi University (2019).

Taiwanese peoples' ethnonational identity has faced challenges not only from outside but also from the internal societal atmospheres. When the regime of R.O.C. and the government in Taiwan gradually lost their legitimacy for representing all the Chinese people, the traditional and grand Chinese national identity discourses and political narratives of K.M.T. began to lose their appeal to people in Taiwan. Moreover, the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (D.P.P., a stronghold for local and Taiwanese identity) first came to power in 2000 and ruled the central government until 2008; D.P.P. was re-elected in 2016 and 2020, which means that it can rule at least until 2024. During the D.P.P.'s rule from 2000 to 2008, the D.P.P. government changed the previously grand Chinese national political and identity narratives and began to emphasize the local and Taiwanese identity narratives and political propaganda. Thus, scholars use the term "Taiwanization" to describe the local and Taiwanese identity developments in the past decades during the D.D.P.'s rule. The term "Taiwanization" means that more and more people in Taiwan regard themselves as Taiwanese only rather than Chinese or both (Hughes, 2011; Stockton, 2002).

As the figure shows, the notion of Taiwanese ethnonational identity has undergone tremendous changes in the past two decades. In 1992, when the survey began, only

17.6% of the residents in Taiwan regarded themselves as Taiwanese. However, more than a quarter (25.5%) and 46.6% of people at the time considered themselves as Chinese or both, respectively. However, associations with the Chinese ethnonational identity have decreased from 26.2% in 1994 to 3.6% in mid-2019. A similar trend was also seen in the ethnonational identity of "both Chinese and Taiwanese," which peaked in 1996 when nearly half of the people in Taiwan (49.3%) regarded themselves as both Chinese and Taiwanese. This figure, however, decreased annually until 2019 when 36.5% of people in Taiwan identified themselves with this ethnonational identity. On the contrary, there are more and more people in Taiwan who tend to utilize the label of "only Taiwanese" to describe their ethnonational identity, and the usage percentage of this identity label has increased since the beginning of this survey in 1992. The usage of this identity label peaked in 2014 when 60.6% of people in Taiwan depicted their ethnonational identity only by the label of "Taiwanese." In 2019, 56.9% of people in Taiwan used this label to describe their ethnonational identity. The longitudinal survey results illustrate that the ethnonational identity have experienced profound changes in Taiwan as that labels such as "Chinese" and "both as Chinese and Taiwanese" have become less popular. In contrast, the label of "Taiwanese" has gradually gained popularity among the majority of people in Taiwan to describe their ethnonational identity (National Chengchi University, 2019).

Scholars have done extensive researches on ethnonational identity developments and changes in Taiwan. Zhong's (2016) study shows that the majority of people in Taiwan refuse to be called as "Chinese" or even "both Chinese and Taiwanese." Interestingly, this study found that although most people in Taiwan regard themselves as Taiwanese, they do not deny that culturally and ethnically they are "Chinese." However, the Chinese label in this paper only refers to the similarities of the Chinese culture shared by both people in Taiwan and Mainland China. Moreover, this Chinese cultural identity held by the Taiwanese people does not extend to the political arena. Zhong's study suggests that the meaning behind the Taiwanese ethnonational identity is multilayered and that people in Taiwan tend to separate their Chinese cultural identity from the political domain. He claims that the majority of people in Taiwan do not connect their "Chinese" identity with the political dimension since, in the contemporary era, the meaning of "Chinese" political identity for people in Taiwan is linked to the

image of P.R.C. in Mainland China rather than R.O.C. in Taiwan. To explain why the popularity of Chinese ethnonational identity has decreased dramatically in Taiwan, Liao, Chen, and Huang (2013) suggest two possible reasons. First, many of the first-generation *waishengren* (Mainlanders who migrated to Taiwan after World War II and the civil war between K.M.T. and the Chinese Communist Party) have passed away in the past decades, changing the demographic compositions in Taiwan; the majority of *waishengren*, in general, regard(ed) themselves as Chinese rather than Taiwanese. The decrease in the population of *waishengren* has further contributed to a decline in Chinese ethnonational identity in Taiwan. However, the number of *waishengren* just constitutes less than 10% of the total population in Taiwan; thus, the authors do not think that the demographic change in *waishengren* can explain the diminishing Chinese ethnonational identity in Taiwan. Liao, Chen, and Huang also argue that specific political events could explain this phenomenon. The events such as the cross-strait military tensions as well as the political pressures imposed by Mainland China to limit Taiwan's participation in international affairs and joining international organizations are all important developments influencing how people in Taiwan identify themselves in the ethnonational domain. The authors also found that the young generation and highly educated people in Taiwan tend to reject the identity label of "Chinese." Lee and Yang (2016) use the terms "old Taiwanese" and "new Taiwanese" to describe the generation gaps in peoples' ethnonational identity attitudes in Taiwan. They found that the young generation of people in Taiwan (aged below 30) are more likely to identify themselves as "Taiwanese." However, the memories of 228 incidents and the attitude toward the issue of Taiwan independent are critical factors that significantly influence the older generation's (aged above 40) attitude toward their ethnonational identity.

The discussions above illustrate a lack of consensus on the empirical evidence available to explain the ethnonational identity developments and changes in Taiwan in the past decades. Nonetheless, previous studies have demonstrated that the ethnonational, Taiwanese, and Chinese identity labels have various meanings for different people at distinct ages, generations, and educational levels, suggesting that the meanings vary from person to person. Hence, it is fair to say that people in the past decades in Taiwan have experienced difficulties in finding and adjusting their personal attitudes toward the issue of ethnonational identity; they have also faced difficulties in

giving an appropriate name to their "big home" and situating their sense of belonging within their big and national home.

Compared with the people who still living in Taiwan, they just need to negotiate their identity and sense of belonging to the notion of big (national) home, mainly between the two identity labels of "Taiwanese" and "Chinese." However, people who have already migrated overseas from Taiwan may find it more challenging to negotiate their ethnonational identity mainly because their identity labels do not solely lie between "Taiwanese" or "Chinese." Instead, these overseas Taiwanese need to continue balancing their attitude and identity in their place of residence; this means that the overseas Taiwanese should negotiate at least three ethnonational identity labels (i.e., Taiwanese, Chinese, and the host country' identity). In this study, the focus will be on the identity labels among "Taiwanese", "Chinese", and "Belgian". Tsai's (2010) study shows the difficulties involved in negotiating ethnonational identity experienced by the overseas Taiwanese. Tsai studied the subjective narratives of the Taiwanese immigrants in Australia with regard to ethnonational identity. She found that the Taiwanese immigrants in Australia utilize eight different schemes of identity labels to describe their ethnonational identity: "Taiwanese in Australia," "both (or maybe not both) Taiwanese and Australian (or a combination of both types with various ratios), "Taiwanese Australian," "Chinese Australian," "Chinese or Chinese from Taiwan," "Australian when in Australia and Taiwanese when in Taiwan," "global citizen," and "Asian Australian." Tsai further emphasizes that because the immigrants and diasporic groups are affiliated to different ethnonational communities at the same time, they may face more difficulties in locating their sense of belonging in relation to different ethnonational identity labels; this is because the immigrants not only have to negotiate their identity domestically but also between their home and host country.

Taking my study as an example, my research participants faced many challenges to (re)find and continuously negotiate their ethnonational identity with regard to the notion of big (national) home, mainly because they not only have to situate their ethnonational identity between the labels of Taiwanese and Chinese but also need to balance their sense of belonging and loyalty between home and the host country in Taiwan and Belgium. Considering the discussions above, it is worth noting that the

concepts of home (no matter small or big) both mean different things to people, especially immigrants. In migration studies, not only does home refer to a place or physical building but a transnational space, social relation, or symbol, with the meanings varying from person to person in their different life stages and living circumstances.

Table 2.2 The notions of small home and big home in the immigrant nexus

	Small home	**Big home**
The various dimensions between small home and big home	- Physical places - Transnational spaces - Social relations - Symbolic meanings - Different meanings over time and living circumstances	- An ongoing process with regard to how individual immigrant attach and negotiate their sense of belonging and ethnonational identity in daily life

Source: This study.

2.2.7 Summary

Nowicka (2007) states that home is a dynamic notion; thus, the notion of home for people and immigrants is not static but fluid and constructed by the dialectical relations not only among people but also between people and their living environments and circumstances. Boccagni (2017) concludes with a multidimensional meaning of home by utilizing a hexagonal figure with three angles constituting the material–immaterial angle, private–public angle, and proximity–distance angle. He further argues that the homemaking experiences and meanings of these three angles regarding the notion of home vary from person to person in their distinct life stages and living circumstances. He adds that homemaking meanings in the immigrant nexus refer to immigrants' experiences of (re)production and management of their home-like settings, feelings, and relations in daily life.

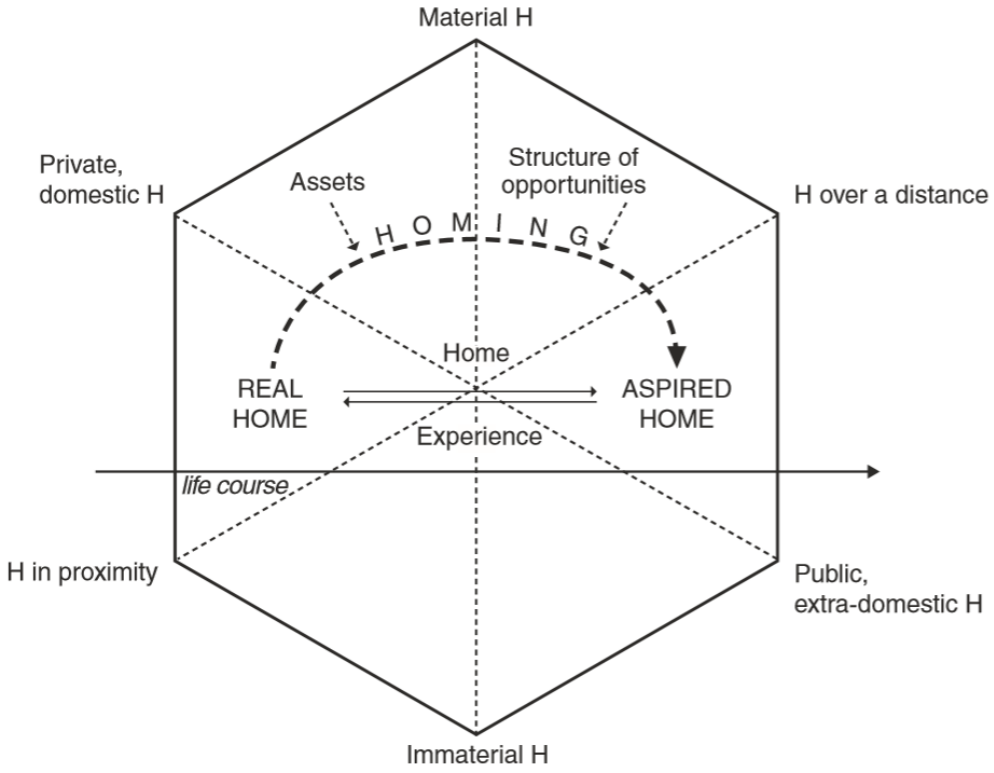


Figure 2.2 The six dimensions of homing

Source: Boccagni (2017, p. 25)

2.3 Literature review of Taiwanese migration studies from the lens of small home and big home

The discussions above illustrate that the meanings of home for immigrants are not static but fluid, dynamic, and context-specific because of immigrants' different living circumstances and life stages. Previous literature on immigrants suggests that the meaning of home can refer to the physical place, transnational space, social relationships, and even symbolic notions. However, time also influences how immigrants think and construct their subjective perceptions concerning the notion of home. The literature review in this section focuses on the Taiwanese immigrants' understanding of home through the lens of small home and big home.

2.3.1 Literature review of Taiwanese immigrants' small home

On the issue of immigrants' small home and resettlement experiences, Hsu (2008a)

conducted a series of studies to explain Taiwanese immigrants' residential decisions after arriving in Canada. Hsu found that the living environment and weather were two important factors that influenced Taiwanese immigrants' residence choices in Vancouver. Moreover, family and education were two other critical factors influencing Taiwanese immigrants' choices in Toronto. Hsu further found that Taiwanese immigrants maintain a high frequency of connections and interactions with their home country and relations in Taiwan through the Internet and/or travel. Taiwanese immigrants were found to have constructed a transnational social space between their small homes in Canada and Taiwan. In this transnational social space, Taiwanese immigrants transferred and preserved not only Taiwanese traditional culture from generation to generation but also shared their international immigration and resettlement experiences with other potential immigrants. Interaction with other Canadian Taiwanese immigrants not only facilitated information exchange within the ethnic community but also assisted Taiwanese immigrants in accumulating their social capital by maintaining good relationships with their Taiwanese counterparts. Moreover, Hsu (2008b) draws a complete figure to demonstrate that immigrants tend to consider nearly 50 factors when deciding on a place of residence.

Apart from the discussions on the issue of residence choice, scholars across multiple disciplines have also explored other issues from the lens of small home in Taiwanese immigrants' lives. Tasi (2012) examined Taiwanese immigrants in Australia to gain insights into their conceptions of home and homeland following their (re)settlement in Australia after many years. She found that the meanings of home and homeland for immigrants are not fixed; however, she discovered that immigrants tend to describe these two concepts in various ways. Regarding the concept of homeland, it is not surprising that most first-generation Taiwanese immigrants consider Taiwan as their homeland, while the 1.5 and second-generation immigrants tend to regard Australia as their homeland. Moreover, some 1.5 generation of Taiwanese immigrants tend to describe their homeland by statements such as "Taiwan is my homeland, but Australia is my home" or "Taiwan and Australia are both my homeland." In Tasi's study, only one research participant said that Mainland China is his homeland. With regard to the meaning of home in immigrants' lives, different generations of Taiwanese immigrants offered various descriptions and explanations. For example, most first-

generation immigrants link their perceptions of home with their home country, place of birth, place of upbringing, and the place where their families currently reside. However, in the study, many immigrants' descendants faced several difficulties in negotiating their sense of belonging and subjective meanings of home between their parents' place of origin and their place of residence. Since these descendants spent much of their lifetime living in Australia rather than their parents' home in Taiwan, most of them tend to associate their sense of belonging with Australia both as their home and homeland.

Nora Chiang and Stephenson (2015) concentrated on the life experiences of middle-class Taiwanese female immigrants before and after migration. They found that before their immigration to Canada, most of these middle-class Taiwanese women occupied a respectable position in the Taiwanese mainstream labor market. However, after migrating to Canada, constrained by the language barrier, an unfamiliar culture, and the social status of immigrants, they found it very hard to find a job in the Canadian mainstream labor market that was commensurate with their previous work experiences. Hence, they had to become full-time housewives and accept other responsibilities such as caregiving, parenting, and domestic work. Thus, they gradually lost their self-confidence and thought that they did not feel they belonged in the host society while being an immigrant. However, the authors add that many of their participants chose to act as volunteers in their community or children's school as a practical strategy for integrating into the host society. By volunteering in the Canadian host society, these Taiwanese female immigrants attached various subjective meanings to their voluntary behaviors. By doing so, they not only conveyed the positive aspects of Taiwan to others but also felt engaged in the local community and the Canadian host society, which would further assist them in gaining a sense of belonging in the foreign land.

Gu's (2010) study focused on transnationalism and explored how Taiwanese female immigrants in the United States define their homemaking notions through transnational emotional behaviors between home and host families. In her study, Gu explains that many Taiwanese female immigrants have already left Taiwan and lived in the United States for many decades. However, in their daily lives, these immigrant women continue facing difficulties in balancing different cultural expectations and social rules between their heritage and Western cultures. During their cultural balancing

and negotiating efforts, the immigrants try to re-establish their cultural identity and re-seek their belonging in between cultures. Gu argues that if an immigrant can successfully navigate cultural differences, then he/she will feel satisfied with their immigrant life and living circumstances. In contrast, if an immigrant cannot successfully balance and negotiate the differences between the cultural schemes, he/she may face difficulties in locating their sense of belonging with the cultures between home and host country, which will gradually turn the immigrant into a cultural homeless. The challenges emanating from cultural differences will further put considerable emotional pressure on Taiwanese female immigrants, pushing some of them toward depression. Many of the participants in Gu's study indicate that they are under considerable pressure and stress because they find it very hard to fulfill all the cultural and social expectations, given the differences between Taiwan and the United States. Some of the participants state that from their Taiwanese families' point of view, they have become "too American" and "too open." However, the second-generation children who have grown up in the United States think their immigrant mothers are "too old fashion" and "too conservative." These emotional dilemmas originate from the participants' home family relationships as well as different cultural and social expectations between their home and the host country, which undermine not only their well-being but also their identity and sense of belonging to their immigrant life and the notion of home.

2.3.2 Literature review of Taiwanese immigrants' big home and ethnonational identity constructions

Reagrding the issues of big home and ethnonational identity, most Taiwanese migration studies are mainly focused on exploring Taiwanese immigrant communities in the English-speaking countries.

Lien (2008a) draws on the results of the Chinese American Homeland Politics Survey in 2007 to examine how immigrants' socialization experiences in their home society influence their construction of the ethnonational identity after migrating to the United States. She took the American pan-Chinese communities (i.e., Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Hong Kong immigrants) as her research subjects. She found

that, in general, “American Chinese” is the most popular and acceptable ethnonational identity label among the participants, followed by the “Chinese American.” However, people from different origins show distinct viewpoints to describe their ethnonational identity. For example, 34% of the immigrants from Taiwan consider themselves “Taiwanese,” with 17%, 16%, and 15% of them regarding themselves as “Taiwanese American,” “Chinese,” and “American Chinese,” respectively. However, half the immigrants from Mainland China see themselves as ethnic “Chinese,” with only 23% and 17% of them calling themselves “American Chinese” and “Chinese American.” Moreover, Hong Kong Chinese immigrants use more diverse ethnonational labels to describe their identity. For example, 27% and 26% of the Hong Kong Chinese immigrants call themselves “Chinese” and “American Chinese,” with 19% and 13% of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants considering themselves “Chinese American” and “Hong Kongese.” Lien investigated further to understand why the pan-Chinese immigrant communities in the United States use such diverse ethnonational identities. She discovered that immigrants’ political socialization experiences in the home country play a significant role in the process of ethnonational formation after migrating to the new place. She found significant gaps in ethnonational identity descriptions between the immigrants who had grown up in Taiwan and Mainland China. She further discovered that the previous political socialization experiences of immigrants from different origins (Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) were profoundly influenced on their opinions and perceptions regarding some of the sensitive political issues, such as the “one China policy,” “Taiwan independence,” and “cross-strait unification.” Pan-Chinese immigrants have somewhat different growth and political socialization experiences in their homeland, which not only affect their opinions and attitudes toward sensitive political issues but also influence the way they identify themselves in the ethnonational identity domain.

Yu and Nora Chiang (2009) used the U.S. decennial censuses between 1990 and 2000 to understand why more and more immigrants from Taiwan in the United States tend to regard themselves as “Taiwanese” rather than “Chinese.” They drew on the statistical method of the double cohort for their analysis and found that generation and resident location are two critical factors that influence how Taiwanese immigrants describe their ethnonational identity. It is interesting to note that the old generation of

Taiwanese immigrants living in Los Angeles is most likely to identify themselves as "Taiwanese" rather than "Chinese." Moreover, the study indicates that since there are more than 20% of Taiwanese immigrants in the United States choose to reside in the Los Angeles, and mainly because of this demographic concentration characteristic in the area, which helps Taiwanese immigrants feel more comfortable to present their original ethnonational identity. This condition contrasts the time when Taiwanese immigrants live in a community surrounded by a great number of Mainland Chinese neighbors where they are pressurized to show their Taiwanese ethnonational identity. The authors also state that the elderly Taiwanese immigrants in the United States are less likely to switch their ethnonational identity. However, their study results further show that identifying oneself as "Taiwanese" has become increasingly more popular among Taiwanese immigrants in the United State in recent years.

Alongside using quantitative approaches and surveys to explore Taiwanese immigrants' ethnonational identity, Kang and Yang (2011), for example, utilize the qualitative textual analysis to gain insights into how Taiwanese immigrants in the United States describe their ethnonational identity in virtual spaces (e.g., on the Internet). They focused on 126 Taiwanese immigrants' virtual communities on different websites and found that the use of these virtual immigrant communities helps overseas Taiwanese construct and enhance their original ethnonational identity for being "Taiwanese." By analyzing texts on these 126 websites, Kang and Yang found that in all the virtual communities, overseas Taiwanese show a very strong sense and pride of being ethnic "Taiwanese" or "Taiwanese Americans." Based on these findings, they conclude that by using these online immigrant virtual communities, Taiwanese immigrants can share, exchange, and learn about Taiwan's culture, histories, and values from each other. This way, these digital platforms act as the safe and unique places for these overseas Taiwanese to demonstrate their authentic ethnonational identities and emotional attachments with Taiwan. Kang and Yang add that the Taiwanese immigrants' usage of the Internet and virtual communities has considerably helped them format and perform their ethnonational identity for being "Taiwanese" in the United States.

In Australia, Tsai (2010) examined how Taiwanese immigrants negotiate their ethnonational identity between "Taiwanese" and "Australian." Using the qualitative

approach and semi-structured interview, Tsai interviewed 65 Taiwanese immigrants in Australia and learned that Taiwanese immigrants show diverse ethnonational identities and draw on various cultural and symbolic parameters as their references to draw an ethnic boundary and distinguish themselves from local Australians. Interestingly, she found that Taiwanese immigrants utilize 16 different ethnonational labels to describe their identity, including "Australian," "half Australian, half Taiwanese," "Taiwanese," "Chinese," "Chinese from Taiwan," Australian-born Chinese," "Australian-born Taiwanese," "Asian," "global person," "New Zealander," "international flyer," "Taiwanese in Australia," "Chinese Australian," and "Taiwanese Australian." Moreover, she discovered that various cultural and symbolic parameters are used as a reference to differentiate between Taiwanese immigrants and local Australians, including lifestyle, karaoke, Chinese food, English accent, outdoor exercise, and attitudes toward the issues of equality. Her research findings also echo the viewpoint of constructivism with regard to identity formation and negotiation. Tsai argues that people's ethnonational identity is not static but dynamic and can change depending on varying living circumstances and the differences between "us" and "others."

2.3.3 Summary

The reviews and discussions on the concept of home and its related studies of overseas Taiwanese' living experiences in the foreign land illustrate that home is not only a static or consolidated physical building or dwelling but a dynamic and fluid concept regardless of whether it is in the physical or non-physical domain.

I appreciate the contributions of previous researches on the issue of home in people's and immigrants' lives. However, I would like to argue that previous studies have been too focused on the concept of "home" itself, however, overlooking "human" and "personal background" aspects. For example, it is not clear how people's/immigrants' age, gender, generation, ethnicity, religious beliefs, social status, migration pathway, and other personal facets influence their homemaking experiences in real life, especially in the foreign land, as well as their perceptions of small home and big home. Such a perceived limitation can be found in the previous Taiwanese immigrant studies' literature (Song, 2006). For example, from a geographical

perspective, previous overseas Taiwanese studies are mainly focused on North America, especially the United States. Such emphasis may be explained by the fact that nearly half of the Taiwanese immigrants (about1 million) live in the United States. Nonetheless, still many other studies have chosen to examine Taiwanese immigrants' experiences in other English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, with very few studies concentrating on Taiwanese immigrants in Europe. For example, no systematic research has to date investigated Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium. The third characteristic of Taiwanese migration studies from the aspect of research topic shows that previous studies have mostly explored Taiwanese immigrants' home-related issues by considering "small" and "big" home concepts separately. With regard to the topic of small home, Hsu's (2008a, b) studies, for example, have mainly focused on exploring the factors influencing Taiwanese immigrants' residence choices upon their arrival and resettlement in the host country. Moreover, Tasi (2012) has examined how Taiwanese immigrants living in Australia negotiate their feelings and sense of belonging between their home and the host country, as well as how they interpret the meanings of "home" and "homeland" in their immigrant life. With respect to the notion of big home, previous studies have largely used the quantitative research approach to probe Taiwanese Americans' ethnonational identity and their sense of belonging to the notion of big (national) home (e.g., Lien, 2008a; Yu & Nora Chiang, 2009). Accordingly, it can be noted that from the perspective of the research topic, previous research outcomes regarding overseas Taiwanese immigrants have mainly been focused on their perceptions and homemaking experiences between the small home and big home separately, in this regard, with very few studies probing these two concepts simultaneously. Lastly, previous studies have mostly paid attention to the concept of home itself, ignoring how immigrants' personal backgrounds and distinct live circumstances would influence their homemaking experiences in the immigrant life.

Thus, my dissertation focuses on Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants and aims to answer the following questions: What does the notions of small and big home means in Taiwanese immigrants' daily live? What are immigrants' experiences of re-finding and reconstructing the sense of home or obtaining the feeling of home in the foreign land? What are Taiwanese immigrants' subjective meanings, perceptions, and interpretations

of small home and big home between the home and the host country? Moreover, from Chapter 4 to 7, I will draw on my fieldwork, interviews, and research data to sequentially answer the above questions in light of the life stories of four different types of Taiwanese immigrants (i.e., restaurateurs, housewives, young Taiwanese holiday makers, and high-skilled expatriates).

2.4 The concepts of "intersectionality" and "intersectional home"

2.4.1 The theoretical backgrounds of intersectionality

To fill the perceived research gap in the existing studies, I propose the new concept of "intersectional home" to examine Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences and explore how different personal aspects would further influence its processes. I also intend to probe the participants' homemaking experiences between the notions of small home and big home in their daily lives abroad. However, before discussing the idea of intersectional home in this dissertation, I will briefly review and discuss the theoretical underpinnings of intersectionality, which date back to the black and colored women's social movements in the United States in the 1960s, however, this concept gained currency in the academic literature until to the 1980s.

The black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw is one of the famous representative scholars in the field. In 1989, she coined "intersectionality" in her popular article and stated that black and colored women's disadvantaged positions and oppression experiences in society are not affected by their gender or skin color only but by the idea that black and colored women's social situations are intersectionally influenced by various personal matters, such as race, ethnicity, education, age, culture, language, social class, and sexuality. However, these individual aspects may further intertwine with other meso and macro aspects, including family relationships, living conditions, quality of neighbors, and other sociopolitical hierarchies, causing them to feel stuck in their perceived disadvantaged social positions marked by limited opportunities for advancement. All the micro, meso, and macro factors tend to coalesce into a system and structure of oppression. As such, the social structure of oppression is not a singular domain determined by any single factor. However, it is more appropriate to understand black and colored women's social statuses, living situations, and

oppression experiences as the consequences that constituting by multiple and interwoven personal and non-personal parameters at the same time (Crenshaw, 1989; Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, & Tomlinson, 2013). This theoretical concept has to date been regarded as women studies' most important contribution to social sciences. The concept of intersectionality clarifies that no single factor or domain dominates women's and people's living experiences, however, people's living experiences and social statuses are complex and are simultaneously influenced by various personal and non-personal parameters. Hence, the aim of intersectionality is to remind scholars that we cannot simplify people's lives into a single or a few variables and assume that their lives are only affected by some simple or unitary social categories (e.g., social class or political identity). This conception means that when analyzing peoples' lives, scholars should adopt the holistic and comprehensive view (Carastathis, 2014).

Crenshaw (1991) argues that there are three different types of intersectionality. The first type is *structural intersectionality*, meaning that American black and colored women's disadvantaged social positions and oppression experiences are defined by the unequal and discriminatory macro structure arrangements embodied in the socioeconomic and -political structures. These structural imbalances in society cause black and colored women to have very different social and living experiences while living in the United States compared with their white female counterparts. The second type is *political intersectionality*; politics, in this sense, refers to gender politics. Crenshaw points out that the unfair treatment and racist experiences of black and colored women are different from those of their black and colored men and white women counterparts. Black and colored women simultaneously belong to at least two subordinate groups (i.e., women and colored), which cause black and colored women's living experiences to have distinct features. In this regard, white women's and colored men's experiences are not be totally similar to those of their black and colored female counterparts. The third type is *representational intersectionality*, which concerns how black and colored women are presented on the media and peoples' racist narratives. This type also looks at how people reproduce stereotypes and prejudices against black and colored women, as well as how these racist narratives and prejudices marginalize them in society and other socioeconomic and -political domains.

It is worth noting that from a sociological perspective, micro level refers to peoples'

individual or intersubjective experiences, meso level concerns the social group to which people belong and with which share historical backgrounds or common interests, and macro level refers to socioeconomic and/or -political structures. Moreover, because intersectionality encourages scholars to adopt a holistic vis-à-vis narrow view on a single or a few variables and categories at a specific level, thus, Collins (2009), an expert on intersectionality, believes that intersectionality can be used to analyze and examine micro, meso, and macro levels of social phenomena and people's living experiences. In this regard, intersectionality can advance our understanding of how different factors coalesce would make different impacts on people's daily living experiences. The core theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of intersectionality involve encouraging scholars to explore specific social phenomena, and the complexities of our real world and living situations by adopting a comprehensive view. Thus, intersectionality experts propose two analysis approaches to demonstrate the complexities in our real world. The first approach is *inter-categorical*, which is used to analyze the complexities between/among different social groups or across distinct categories. The second approach is *intra-categorical*, which examines the complexities and multilayered relations within a social group. These two analysis approaches aim to illustrate the different kinds of complexities between inter- and intra- social relations and people's real lives. Both these analysis approaches can be placed under the overarching theoretical and methodological concept of "anti-categorical," which holds that people's real and social lives are too complex to be understood through a specific variable or a few social categories (McCall, 2005).

Most intersectionality scholars agree that monistic, single-axis, and non-intersectional approaches and studies fail to adequately capture the complexities of social structure, people's subjective meanings, and real-life experiences. Two keywords are worth noting when conducting the study by applying the concept of intersectionality: *simultaneity* and *irreducibility.* The metaphor behind these two keywords serves to remind scholars that when applying intersectionality, it is not appropriate to reduce social phenomena and people's subjective and real-life experiences to a distinct social category; instead, it is more appropriate to understand and examine people's real lives through the simultaneous consideration of different layers of personal and structural parameters and to hold the ontological belief that the academic and social forms of

knowledge are produced via exploring the relations and interactions between and within multiple, decentered, and co-constitutive complexities (Clarke & McCall, 2013).

2.4.2 The concept of intersectionality and intersectional home in migration studies

Intersectionality is popular in both gender/women studies and migration studies. For migration scholars, intersectionality provides a very useful theoretical and analytical framework for examining how different layers of factors and micro personal parameters coalesce to influence immigrants' living experiences in different domains (Bastia, 2014).

For example, Manassen and Verkuyten (2018) used intersectionality to explore how different personal factors influence the Thai female immigrants in the Netherlands during their construction and negotiation processes regarding their ethnic, gender, and immigrant status' intersectional identities. Interestingly, the researchers received diverse responses from the research participants regarding their intersectional identities' negotiation experiences. Their answers supporting the idea that people may have different feelings and interpretations in various situations, especially when they have to consider several personal factors at the same time. Renfroe (2018) also used intersectionality to examine the distinct personal parameters (e.g., gender, nationality, and immigration status) of Latina female immigrants' living experiences in the United States. Renfroe found that the living experiences of the participants were not merely affected by a single factor but a multiplicity of factors. Other scholars have also used intersectionality to explore immigrants' living experiences beyond women's perspective. Huang and Fang (2019), for example, explored how young Chinese gay men in Toronto construct and negotiate their identity in the host society through the intersectional lens. They found that the participants purposively distinguish their sexual and cultural identities and emphasize that these two identities belong to different life spheres with barely any conflict. They further argue that the effects of intersectionality are context-specific, in other words, people's intersectional personal backgrounds may have different impacts when living in different conditions. The study also suggests that it is not enough to consider gender and ethnic identity only. However, they found that young Chinese gay men's living experiences in Canada are far more complex to be

explained by gender and ethnic identity alone.

Previous literature reviews and discussions suggest that intersectionality cannot only be studied through the lens of women's living experiences and that other scholars have drawn on intersectionality to investigate the living experiences of men and sexual minorities. The studies above are mainly focused on discussing immigrants' (both male and female) intersectional identities negotiation and formation processes, however, a few studies have used intersectionality to examine immigrants' homemaking experiences. These situations raise the question as to whether it is appropriate to employ intersectionality to explore immigrants' homemaking experiences in their daily life and during their international movement. Yee Kelly (2018), for instance, examined how Malay and Chinese female immigrants' intersectionality influence their homemaking experiences in Singapore. She found that gender, ethnicity, and generation coalesce to impact on immigrant women's homemaking experiences both in material and immaterial aspects alongside their subjective meanings and sense of belonging toward the notion of home in the immigrants' lives.

Notable, there still have other scholars tried to apply the concept of intersectionality in examining different immigrant groups' homemaking experiences. Levin (2014) took the former Soviet Union immigrants (both male and female) in Tel Aviv, Israel, as research subjects and examined how these immigrants' homemaking experiences are affected by their individual circumstances. By analyzing three immigrants' homemaking experiences in detail, Levin found that each immigrant's homemaking experiences are different and are thus be affected by their distinct personal parameters intersectionally. Furthermore, several scholars have already employed intersectionality to explore immigrants' (both male and female) homemaking experiences. However, after reviewing the literature on intersectionality and their homemaking experiences on a meta-analysis scale, Mollett and Faria (2018) claim that only a few studies have to date combined people's homemaking experiences with intersectionality. Subsequently, they propose the idea of "spatialities of intersectional thinking," which stresses the significance of incorporating intersectional thinking, particularly concerning how people's ethnicity, gender, class, and living experiences, for example, may influence their spatial and homemaking experiences.

Thus, to summarize the previous literature on intersectionality and homemaking in the international migration context and Mollett and Faria's (2018) idea of spatialities of intersectional thinking, I proposed a new concept of "intersectional home" ("交織的家" *[jiāo zhī de jiā]*) to examine Belgium-Taiwanese immigrants homemaking experiences in their daily lives . The aim of intersectional home in the study is to point out that:

> Home in immigrants' lives and international movements is inextricable and influenced by individuals' diverse backgrounds and further cocreated via the complexities of negotiation processes of different personal circumstances, including age, gender, ethnicity, generation, religion, living circumstances, social mobility, personal role, spatial and temporal relations, and ethnonational identity. In this regard, no single factor, aspect, or social category could cover all the possibilities and dimensions of home in immigrants' lives. Thus, the notion and meaning of home in immigrants' lives are non-static, however, that would be intersectionally influenced and co-constructed by immigrants' distinct personal circumstances. Furthermore, this study holds that the notion of home in immigrants' lives is multidimensional and negotiable and that home could simultaneously contain tangible (physical) and intangible (non-physical) aspects.

By applying the theoretical concept of intersectionality, this study not only aims to examine the concept of home per se but intends to take the individual immigrant's distinct lived circumstance and personal background into consideration. In other words, intersectionality in this study is used to explore how Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants' different lived circumstance and personal background will influence their homemaking experiences and (inter-)subjective meaning constructions in terms of small home and big home while living in the foreign land.

Table 2.3 Intersectionality vs. intersectional home

Concept/idea	**Intersectionality**	**Intersectional home**
Explanations	Is a theoretical concept to understand how different	Is a theoretical concept based on the revised by the concept of

	factors, including macro (structures), meso (social groups, communities), and micro (personal circumstances), coalesce to influence people's real-life experiences.	intersectionality. In this study, it aims to illustrate how individual immigrant's distinct lived circumstance and personal background would further influence their homemaking experiences.

Source: This study.

2.5 Conclusion

The review of the literature and concepts in this chapter shows that the meaning of home is not static, considering that home has its multidimensional and negotiable characteristics. This means that people can construct the different aspects of home according to their subjective desires and expectations of what an ideal home they want. Thus, scholars from different subjects have tried to demonstrate the multidimensional and negotiable natures of home in their studies. Boccagni (2017), for example, concludes that there exist different dimensions of home and, accordingly, constructs a hexagonal figure to visualize the multidimensional characteristic of home.

I appreciate the value of previous studies; however, it is also important to point out the shortcomings of migration studies, and especially Taiwanese migration researches. After a systematic literature review of the Taiwanese migration studies, I found that several gaps in the literature. First, previous Taiwanese migration studies are bound by geography and mainly focus on examining Taiwanese immigrants' living experiences in North America, especially in the United States, although several other studies have focused their attention on other English-speaking countries. In contrast, few studies have systematically examined Taiwanese immigrants' living experiences in Europe, and to date, no study has looked at Taiwanese immigrant communities in Belgium. The second perceived gap concerns overemphasizing the concept of home without considering people's backgrounds and life experiences when conducting research on Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences abroad.

To address the perceived gaps in the existing research and bring immigrants'

distinct experiences and backgrounds into consideration, I firstly introduce and discuss the concept of intersectionality, which originates from gender studies, particularly black and colored women's social movements and studies in the United States. In so doing, I intend to illustrate the importance of people's intersectional backgrounds when examining specific social phenomena and people's real-life experiences. In light of the arguments concerning intersectionality, I intend to propose a new concept of intersectional home in my thesis. The aim of this new concept is to illustrate that the notion and meanings of home for immigrants do not only influence by the concept of home itself, however, it is also affected by a whole raft of personal backgrounds and living circumstances. In other words, it is not enough to only examine immigrants' homemaking experiences through the lens of home itself or tangible and physical perspectives. Thus, it is more appropriate to consider the concept of home in immigrants' life alongside with their distinct backgrounds and living experiences. These considerations could assist with our understanding of how immigrants' backgrounds and living conditions influence their homemaking experiences and subjective meaning-making processes in the real life.

In accordance with the concepts of intersectionality and intersectional home, in this thesis, I will draw on semi-structured and photo-elicitation interviews and fieldwork data to demonstrate the homemaking experiences of four different subgroups of Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium (i.e., restaurateurs, immigrant housewives, working holiday makers, and transient high-skilled expatriates) through examining their life stories and immigration narratives. In the following chapters, I will analyze and discuss two participants' life stories in each chapter in detail to gain insights into Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences in Belgium. I will also try to deepen the understanding of how immigrants' distinct backgrounds and living circumstances may intertwine together to influence their homemaking experiences and the meanings of home for them. In conclusion, the notion of intersectionality forms the basis of my examination into Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences. Intersectionality will also be used to examine how the participants construct and negotiate their sense of belonging, identity, and feelings of home through the lens of small home and big home. The concept of intersectionality will also be drawn on to explore how immigrants' different backgrounds and living circumstances coalesce together and influence the construction and negotiation experiences of their subjective

"intersectional home" in their immigrant life.

Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 The epistemology of this study: The everyday life perspective

In this study, I accept the constructivist epistemology's perspective with regard to the issues of social truth and our living world. Thus, I believe that, rather than having a single form, social reality and truth present in multiple ways. In this regard, I do further believe that individuals may have their own distinct perceptions and interpretations in defining what are the meanings of social truth and life experiences for them (Iosifides, 2018). Accordingly, if social realities and truths are diverse and influenced by people's various viewpoints, two questions arise. First, how can sociological study be put into practice? Second, how can researchers explain different social phenomena in relation to people's distinct life experiences? With regard to these questions, scholars believe that consideration of people's everyday life experiences and biographical narratives are the appropriate approaches to understanding how people construct their own and subjective understandings and worldviews in response to distinct life circumstances and environments (Lefebvre & Levich ,1987; Adler & Adler, 1987). Moreover, in fact, the field of migration studies has a long academic tradition of applying the perspective of everyday life to various research topics related to international immigration (Maggio, 2014).

Tadevosyan (2014) claimed that immigrants' daily lives are the best platform for displaying multidimensional subjective individual meanings as they incessantly experience back-and-forth negotiations regarding issues of adaptation, belonging, and identity during an individual's international journey. Sztompka (2008) proposed the idea of a paradigm transition of sociological studies. He argues that scholars from broader social science disciplines should focus on exploring how people engage with, react to, understand, and construct subjective meanings in order to respond to different life circumstances and events via their everyday life experiences and individual narratives. For him, social science disciplines had already experienced two paradigm transitions since the start of the twentieth century. He said the first paradigm of social science was influenced by theories of modernization and the linear cognition of social

development. In this regard, many social scientists at the time considered society as a whole and there was a clear and linear direction of history, human experience, and societal development. In contrast, the second paradigm of social science was shaped by the idea of social atoms. Scholars considered each person to be like an atom, so a whole social structure could be understood by applying scientific research methods and ways of thinking in using methods such as random sampling and statistical techniques for calculating patterns of human behavior, and even predicting the possible direction of social trends. Sztompka acknowledged the contributions of the first two paradigms of social science studies but argued that it was time to enter a third by incorporating the concepts of both social existence and everyday life. He indicated that social existence implied that the social world is nothing but an inter-human space, filled with encounters, contacts, interactions, relations, social boundaries, and so forth, all of which are embodied in people's everyday lives. In this regard, society is not independent and isolated from people's real and daily life experiences but reflected within them. Moreover, Merton (1996) further argued that everyday life is the observable and valuable social existence platform for manifesting and displaying unique human experiences; moreover, everyday life is the most appropriate research site for exploring the dynamic and complex life stories and experiences of human beings.

Furthermore, scholars from the everyday life research community have concluded that people's everyday lives have multidimensional meanings for academic research. First, everyday life is not synonymous with private life as it also includes the public domain. Second, behaviors in people's everyday lives are non-reflexive and deeply internalized as our bodies' memories, daily routines, and conventional practices. Third, everyday life is indistinguishable from the relations with others in the society in which people live, exist, and attach. In this regard, everyday life not only consists of people's various social relations but also represents how people exist, and the roles, status, and emotions that people experience in a specific life circumstance. Fourth, the duration and subjective sense of time both further influence how people arrange their everyday lives and construct meanings for their life experiences (Highmore, 2002). Kalekin-Fishman (2013) claimed that everyday life is the basis for understanding human beings since this is not only the central arena of human actions, but also the heart of humans' thought. In this regard, De Certeau (1984) argued that people's

everyday lives represent the centrality of human agencies and motilities by creating diverse outcomes, social relations, human actions, and subjective interpretations.

Since this study accepts the everyday life epistemological position, the author would like to examine Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences and other related issues regarding life adaptation, sense of belongings and identities negotiation, and their experiences in searching for a sense of "home" (家的感覺) while living in a foreign land by applying immigrants' daily life experiences and autobiographical life-stories rather than relying on a statistical model since the aim of my thesis is to explore and show the diverse nature of immigrants' lives and homemaking experiences, and deepen the reader's understanding of these research issues instead of offering a closed or general statistical model or explanation.

3.2 Constructing the online and offline field sites

The first time I used Facebook to access and interact with Belgian Taiwanese immigrants could date back to 2017. At that time, I examined the research topics regarding the role of Facebook and social media in their daily life. However, using Facebook or other social media platforms in academic research is not common before the 1990s. At that time, of course, the internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools were not as popular as they are in the present days. In the 1990s, the internet and its' relations with human user was still in the first-generation namely as Web 1.0. The internet user could just "read" content and information provided by the website; in this regard, opportunities for internet users to interact with one another were limited. However, an important change occurred in the 2000s. After 2004, the world internet technic entered the second-generation of Web 2.0, which re-organized the relationships between websites and its' users. In this scheme, internet users could not only read content and information, but also could create content by their own. Therefore, the internet became both as a "read and write" platform (Choudhury, 2014). Based on this new internet service, social network sites (SNSs) developed rapidly. Facebook came online and started to provide it's services in 2004. According to the definition from Boyd and Ellison (2008), social network sites like Facebook are web-based services that allow online users to construct personal profiles and share with others

publicly or semi-publicly, also allow users to know others' social networks by checking user's friend lists; moreover, the function of knowing others' friend list gives the social network sites have powerful capacities in enabling users to construct, maintain, or even manage their interpersonal relationships.

However, the roles of SNSs and social media in academic research, and especially in ethnographical studies, have raised extensive debate over the past decade on social science in general and anthropology in particular. Traditionally speaking, since Malinowski demonstrated the early model of the modern ethnography research method, the anthropology community has expected anthropologists and ethnographic researchers could conduct fieldwork by living with research participants together and learning their local language. In other words, the researchers must immerse themselves into the living environment with their research participants. By learning local language and living together with research participant during fieldwork, facilitating anthropologists could further get "insider" / (emic) points of view rather than just being as a "outsider" in the field. Moreover, it is common that in the most classic ethnographic studies, researchers conduct their fieldwork in a specific "field" or place. Whether it be a tribe, village, community, street, building, or even city, they all have a clear territorial boundary (Palmer, 2001). In this regard, is it appropriate or possible to conduct an ethnographic study on the internet since in the digital world, there has no clearly territorial boundary? With regard to this question, which has generated massive debate in the academic literature. Following the previous debates, many scholars have indicated that the dichotomy perspective of dividing people's online and offline life as two independent parts is no longer valid since the internet and other CMC tools have gradually become as the inextricable part of people's contemporary life. In fact, in the present day, when people want to know something they don't know, they google it; when people see something interesting that stirs their emotions, they take a photo and post it on Facebook or other SNS platforms to share their life experiences with other users. In this regard, online and offline life mutually affect with each other, it is difficult to consider people's online and offline life as independent. Thus, further making the boundaries of people's online and offline lives have become blurry and vague (Beneito-Montagut, 2011; Carter, 2004).

In my dissertation, to answer the research questions, I have applied both online (Netnograpgy) and offline ethnography as the research methods to conduct the study. In this paragraph, I will introduce both of online and offline fieldwork sites in this study respectively, and I will also discuss how I conduct my fieldwork of this study in Belgium.

In fact, from September 2017 till now, I have joined several Belgian Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities on Facebook, including:

- *Taiwanese in Belgium* (台灣人在比利時)
- *Taiwanese Wife and Husband in Belgium* (台灣媳婦與女婿在比利時)
- *Belgian Taiwanese Wife chat forum* (比國主婦哈拉 543)
- *The Student Association of Working Holiday in Belgium* (比利時打工度假同學會)
- *Self-help of Working Holiday Makers in Belgium* (比利時打工度假自救會)
- *The Office of Working Holiday for Taiwanese* (台灣鄉親比利時打工度假辦事處).

The number of users among these immigrant virtual communities are varies. The "Taiwanese in Belgium," for example, has more than 5,000 users, while there are only 108 and 38 users on "Taiwanese Wife and Husband in Belgium" and "Belgian Taiwanese Wife chat forum," respectively. And the virtual communities of working holiday have 2,567, 1,652, and 504 online users, respectively. Participating in these migrant virtual communities and by apply the method of Netnography have provided me with plenty of opportunities to conduct participant observation in terms of how Taiwanese immigrants discuss the issues regarding their emigrant life in Belgium and interact with other users on these online platforms. It is important to mention that I did not only act as a "lurker", instead, when I was accepted to participate in communities, I posted his self-introduction information for letting other online users know my academic background and research intention while also asking for consent on the part of the research participants. By conducting fieldwork and participant observation online, these virtual communities provided opportunities to access different social groups of Taiwanese in Belgium. During the process of conducting the netnography, after

receiving authorization from the online information providers, relevant information were downloaded along with screenshots. In addition to conducting fieldwork online, active users in the virtual communities were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews on the online platforms after a detailed explanation of the research aim and subject of study and having gained their written consent. Subsequently, appointments were made with each participant for further online and offline interviews (Kozinets, 2002, 2012).

In addition to conduct online fieldworks on different Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities online, I do further conduct offline fieldwork for being as a Chinese language teacher in every weekend at Ecole Sun Yat-sen in Brussels (旅比華僑中山學校) during my fieldwork in Belgium (2017-2019). It is worth to mention that the Ecole Sun Yat-sen is the oldest Chinese language and cultural heritage school in Europe, established in 1965 by immigrants from Republic of China (Taiwan) and nowadays still getting funds and majority financial supports from the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan); moreover, the "Overseas Community Affairs Council (OCAC)," and "Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium" are the two biggest Taiwanese government financial sponsors to the school. Moreover, this is a school mainly managed by Belgian Taiwanese immigrants since all of the teachers and staff at the school are Taiwanese immigrants, their descendants, or even relatives. Thus, the school has become a vital social gathering place for the Belgian Taiwanese immigration community. The school includes both of the elementary and high school departments (小學與中學) and accept students from the ages between 5 to 18. In addition, the school divides the elementary section into six levels from grade one to six, and three levels in the high school section from grade seven to nine. In the past couple of years (from 2017 to 2019), the school has had about 120 to 150 students on average; however, 80 percent of the students are the descendants of immigrants from mainland China, with Taiwanese and other Asian immigrant descendants constituting the remaining part of the student population. However, there still has a few of local Belgian or other international students at the school too (fieldnote).

After constructing these fieldwork sites both in online and offline, I further applied ethnographic methods to conduct the participant observation by frequently interacting

with online users on these Facebook virtual communities, and my Taiwanese immigrant' and colleagues at the school. Moreover, I participated in their real lives, for example by having lunch or dinner with them, going on one-day trip, or joining their private family events and so on. In so doing, which did provide me a plenty of opportunities to interact with them and observe their life experiences while living in a foreign land both in online and offline spheres. Moreover, after I successfully constructing closer relationships with them, then I would try to invite them in participating in this study and the further interview.



Figure 3.1 The Photos of the Ecole Sun Yat-sen in Brussels

Source: Token by the author, with the authorization to use.

In this study, I did not conduct my fieldwork like traditional in a specific place, instead, I did the fieldwork and traced my research participants' immigrant life experiences both in online and offline spheres, also across several different field sites , and their daily life sceneries. From this respect, the methodological ideas of the "multi-sited ethnography" also be applied and practiced during my three years' field work period and data collection process (Marcus, 1995).

3.3 Picturing the Researcher–Participant Relationships

It is important to note that the relationship between researcher and research participants in the anthropology discipline is inseparable, and the study outcomes in the

inquiry are based on mutual interactions and intersubjective constructions both by researcher and participants. In this regard, Marcus (2001) claimed that the academic findings in an anthropological inquiry are as the collaboration knowledge production products that based on mutual understandings, dialogical meaning-makings, and inter-subjectively constructions that collaborative produce by both researcher and research participants. In this regard, the aim and objective of anthropological and ethnographical studies are not to find relationships between different statistical variables or offering a single or general explanation toward a specific social phenomenon. On the contrary, anthropologists believe that the social realities are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure by merely utilizing statistical method. However, academic knowledge in the anthropology discipline is subjective, value-bounded, and embodied in its' specific context that so as to reveal research participants' emic and insider point of views (Yilmaz, 2012). In this regard, researcher and research participants would both have their own opportunities and authorities in academic knowledge production; researcher cannot monopolize the role of interpretation and knowledge-making position.

Accordingly, since it is important to show how researcher construct his/her relationships with their research participants in the ethnographical studies, thus, in the next paragraphs, I further explain how did I established and managed mutual relations with my research participants by utilizing my three years of life (2017-2020) to encounter, enter, and understand individual research participant's distinct life stories (Cherng, 2014).

Case One: Alice Ho

I first met Alice Ho at a social gathering activity that organized by the "*Belgium Overseas Chinese Catering Industry Association*" at the mid-autumn festival in 2017. I was introduced by my colleague at Sun Yat Sen language school to participated in the event. At the event, most of the participants were Taiwanese immigrants and some of them were mainland Chinese or Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in Belgium. And most of them had worked as chefs or restaurant managers or servicers in the catering industry for years or even several decades. When we met, Ho was already 69 years old and retired from the catering industry

for a couple of years. As she knew that I was a Chinese language teacher in Brussels and also had taught the course of Civil Society in Taiwanese junior and senior high school, she stared to talk to me and ask me about my experiences and opinions with respect to the issues of Chinese language learning and the educational environment in contemporary Taiwan. We had a good conversation and also exchanged our LINE and Facebook IDs for further possible communications.

After our first met, Ho invited me to be her grandson's Chinese language tutor when I had free time. He was a five-years old boy and studied at the kindergarten in Liege. Liege is a city in the Walloon French-speaking region, which is approximately 80 kilometers away from Leuven. It was an hour's train journey for me to go there. I visited her home in Liege several times after our first met from October to December 2017 as her grandson's language tutor. At the end of the year, she invited me to participate in the Lunar Chinese New Year's celebration and social gathering event which organized by the "*Overseas Chinese Association - Belgium Branch*" (華僑協會比利時分會) for celebrating the 2018 New Year. At that event, Ho introduced me to other Taiwanese and mainland Chinese immigrant participants. Having these two interactions and gathering experiences, we developed closer relationships. During my three years' stay in Belgium, we have had frequent interactions by having lunch, dinner, sometimes celebrating festivals or having one-day trip together.

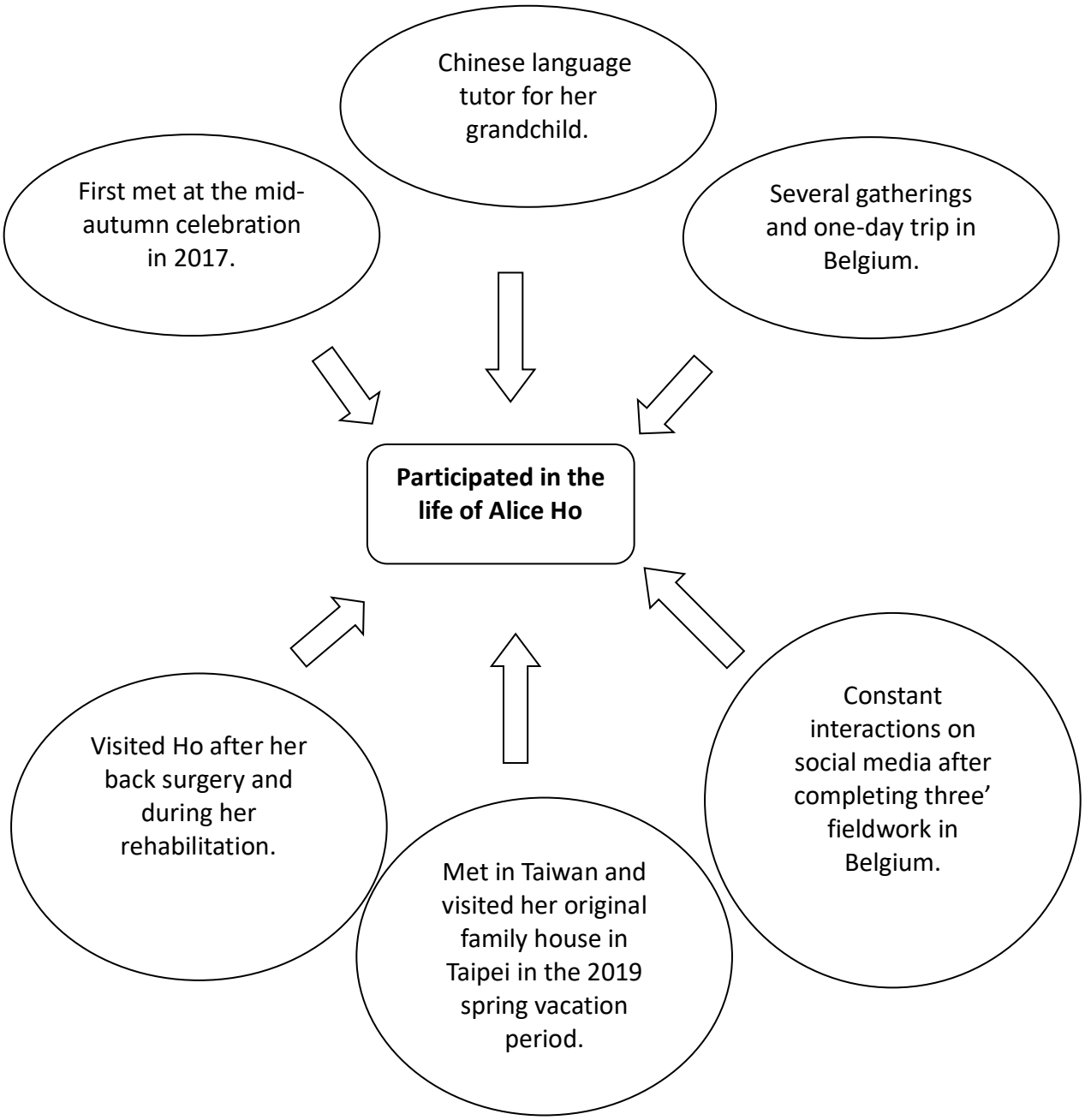


Figure 3.2 Relations between researcher and participant Alice Ho

Source: The author.

In March 2018, she had surgery because of back pain. After the surgery and during her rehabilitation, I visited her several times to find out how she was doing. She gradually recovered after about half a year's rehabilitation. In addition to get together in Belgium, we also visit each other in Taiwan when she came back to Taiwan for visiting her original family during the 2019 spring vacation. This time she invited me to visit her original home at the veteran village (眷村) in Taipei;

however, the original house had been demolished by the government because of the urban renewal policy. Now, Ho's original house in Taipei has become part of the new 20 flowers apartment building. During the visit, she shared her life stories and growth experiences before migrating to Belgium in 1974. After the New Year vacation, we went back to Belgium separately. When I told her that I would be back in Taiwan in July 2020 after completing my three years' fieldwork, she invited other Taiwanese students and immigrants we both knew to hold a farewell party for me before departure. In fact, during my three years stay in Belgium, I and Ho did already become as friend, and our relationship did also beyond the relation between researcher and research participant.

Case Two: Selena Lu

I first met Lu were at a Christmas music concert in 2017. At the concert Lu played as the role of soprano. I was surprised to find that she was the only Asian people of the orchestra. However, there was another surprise thing to me — she sang a Taiwanese song as the end song of the performance. After the concert, the director of the orchestra introduced Lu to the audience and said that our soprano came from Taiwan! This introduction really made me interested in her. After the concert I waited for her and introduced myself. She was so happy to see a fellow Taiwanese in the audience and at such a special Christmas event. I remember clearly she said to me that "*Meeting with the audience from Taiwan at this Christmas concert really made me feel warm and like being at home.*" We didn't have enough time to conduct a deeper conversation at the time, but we exchanged our contact information and social media ID for further interaction.

Our second met was at a coffee shop in Brussels where I conducted my first interview with her. She shared with me about her immigration life stories and told me that she is an Amis who lived in the mountain area in Hualien before migrating to Belgium. Then, she described how poor her family was and the stories why she decided to immigrate to Belgium after meeting with her Belgian husband in Taipei when he was still a student and learning Chinese language at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) in the 1990s. After completing her bachelor's degree

majoring in music, she decided to immigrate to Belgium with her husband (at the time he still as her boyfriend) in 1998. Now Lu has lived in Belgium more than two decades and has one daughter and two sons residing in Namur. After our second met and interviewed, she invited me to participate in the family concert that she was holding at her private home. In fact, I participated in her family concerts for three times in total.

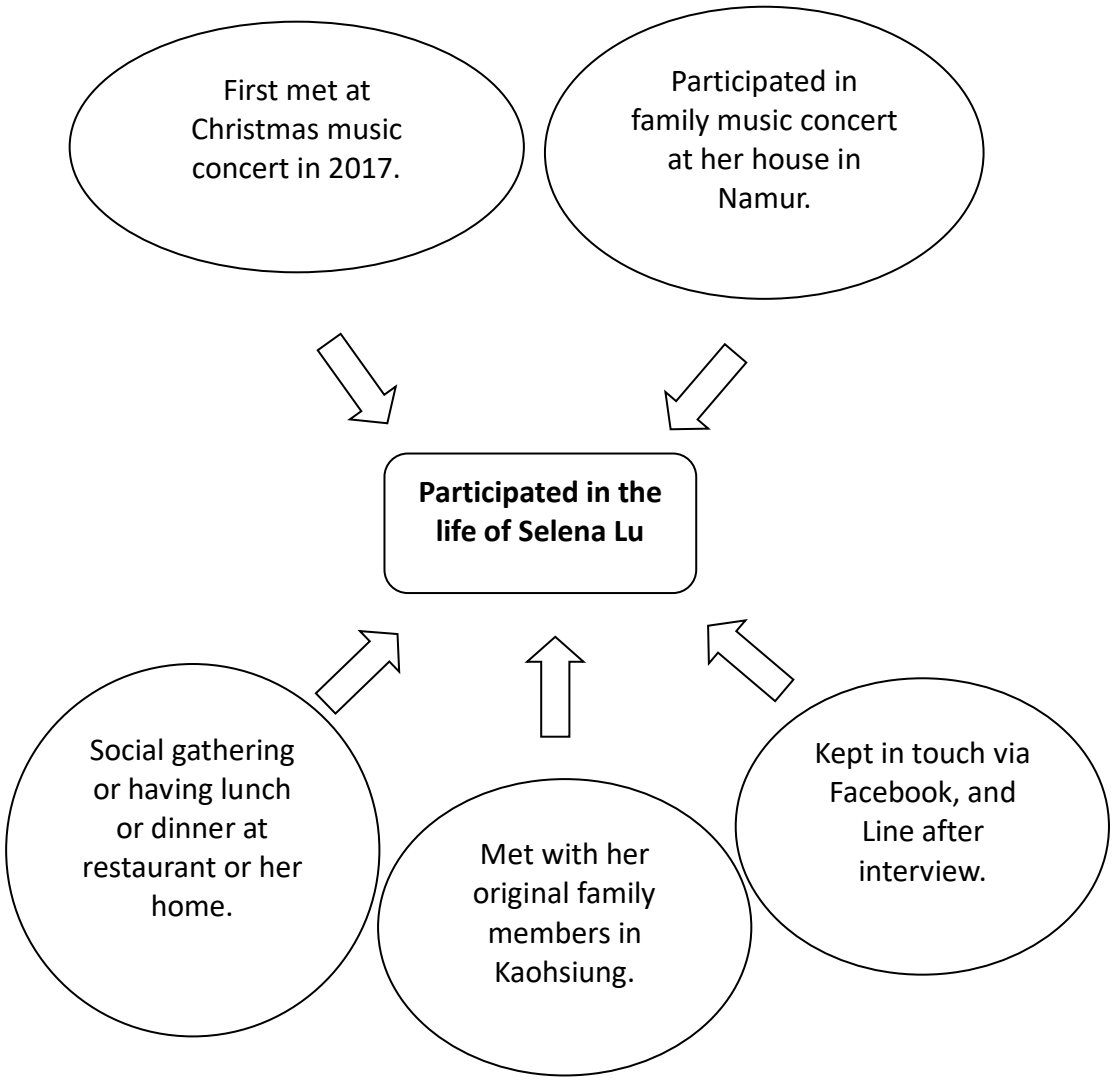


Figure 3.3 Relations between researcher and participant Selena Lu

Source: The author.

Moreover, we also met with each other several times for lunch or dinner together. Moreover, when she knew I will go back to Taiwan in the spring vacation in 2019,

she asked me for helping her to take some gifts to her original family members, including some red envelopes with money to her little nephews and nieces for the New Year celebration. By assisting her, give me the opportunity to contact Lu' original family members, and I had several conversations with her little sister during at that time by cellphone talks. After that, I and Lu still keeping in touch with each other via using different social media platforms and continuing to maintain our friendship in the real life.

It is important to note that I did not only construct depth interpersonal relations with long-settlement immigrants who were restaurant owners and housewives, but also tried my best to construct as many interactions as possible with transient immigrants — i.e., high-skill migrants and working holiday youths. In the next section, I take two cases as examples for demonstrating how I interacted with the transient Taiwanese immigrants, and how I managed our relations after the interview and the fieldwork process.

Case Three: Donna Liu

I first noticed Donna Liu were through her advertisement posted on the virtual community of "*The student association of working holiday in Belgium*" (比利時打工度假同學會) in October 2018. In the post she indicated:

> I am a Taiwanese. I came to Belgium via one year's working holiday program, and now living in Etterbeek. Before coming to Belgium, I worked as a hair designer for eight years in Taiwan. I know it is difficult to find a hair designer who is good at designing Asian's hair style in Euopre; however, I am good at it. You can easily find my information on Facebook and in this virtual community. The price of a haircut only costs 10 €, for both males and females.

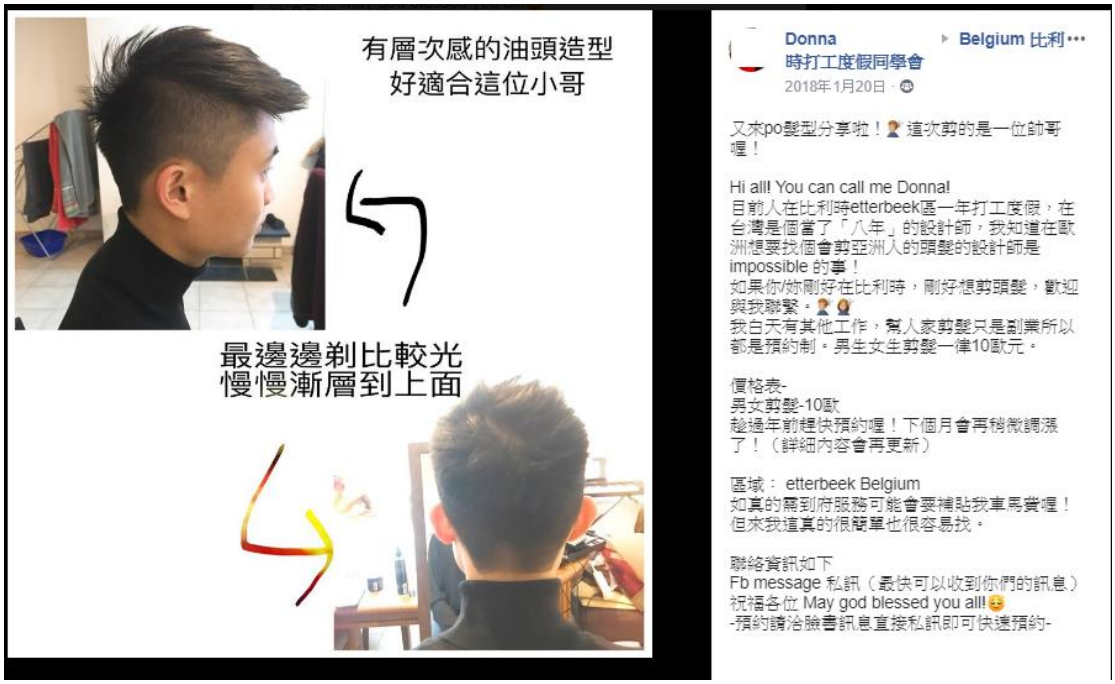


Figure 3.4 The Hairdressing advertisement posted by Donna Liu

Source: The author made a screenshot from the Facebook, with authorization to use.

As I knew she provided a cheap haircut service, I became her regular customer at the time when she stayed in Belgium. During the haircut service, she shared her international mobility experiences, and her experiences in finding job position in the Belgian mainstream job market. Because of our frequent meetings and with similar ages, we further became friends. Moreover, we had several-times of one-day trip with other Taiwanese youths and students together for visiting the Belgian cities like Antwerp, Burge, and Brussels. Based on our multiple interactions, she accepted my interview invitation; thus, I conducted multiple times of online interviews with her. And she provided me with rich information regarding her work and life experiences during her working holiday period of stay in Belgium, and after that she further introduced me to meet and know other Taiwanese youth working holiday makers for participating in the study.

Case Four: Wilson

My first met with Wilson was at the Taiwanese moon festival social gathering event organized by the *Belgium Taiwanese Association* (BTA,比利時台協) at the Taiwanese restaurant of Tai Hon in Brussels in 2018. The BTA is an immigrant

organization established by Taiwanese immigrants and is also a member of the European Federation of Taiwanese Associations (EFTA). The BTA organizes annual gathering events for three important festivals in Confusion culture: Lunar New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, and Moon Festival. In these three traditional festivals, the BTA cooperates with Tai Hon to organize the social and gathering event mainly for the Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium, bringing them together to have a festival lunch or dinner. Usually, the organization would announce the festival information via social media like LINE and Taiwanese immigrants' virtual communities on Facebook. In fact, the Tai Hon restaurant has become one of the most important venues for Belgian Taiwanese immigrants for gathering together. By frequently participating in the Taiwanese immigrants' social gathering events held by BTA and Tai Hon, I met with Wilson several times. We had many good conversations, and I was surprised to know from him about his life before migrating to Belgium and his previous work experiences at the TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, Limited).

His background made me curious to know why he chosen to abandon his original life in Taiwan and migrated to Belgium and now working as a contract-basis migrant worker in the host society. After our several meets at Tai Hon and other Taiwanese immigrants' social gathering events, we exchanged our mutual contact information and social media ID for further interaction. Afterward, he accepted my invitation to participate in this study; however, due to the difficulties of visiting his high-techno company, and due to the high mobility nature of his job for working as an expatriate, I mainly conducted the semi-structured and photo-elicitation interviews with him via the social media platforms of Skype, LINE, and Facebook.

The researcher and research participant relationships above mentioned did demonstrate how I construct and manage relations with the participants. Those relations are already beyond the merely academic purpose; some of the participants in the study became as my friends, even providing me a sense of family during interacting and gathering together with them. That why I claimed that I have used my life to encounter,

enter, and even become part of my participants' life (Li, 2015). In this regard, the narratives and life stories presented in this study are not based on single-time's interview but as the outcomes that based on the depth interactions, mutual participations, and also self-reflections that provided by both of the research participants and also myself.

Moreover, it is also important to point out that while 42 research participants were interviewed in total, the complete immigrant life stories of eight among these participants were demonstrated in detail. This is because I developed different levels of friendship and interpersonal relations with each participant. In this regard, the eight cases presented in the thesis are not because of their representative-ness, the criteria for choosing the stories presented in the thesis were mainly based on the level of interpersonal relationship between myself and the participant as well as the thick-ness of the data that individual immigrant provided (Liu, 2017). In fact, the anthropologist Geertz (1983) explained why the level of depth-ness and thick-ness of data is vital for people to understand our living world and also academic knowledges. He believed that all knowledge should be understood as based on its own context. If knowledge could not be comprehended from its context, then it could not say anything since all knowledge is influenced by the two factors: *where it is see from* (從什麼位置看事情), and *where it is seen with* (用什麼觀點看事情). That was the reason why I merely choose to present eight of my research participants' immigrant life stories rather than discuss all of the forty-two interlocutors' stories and narratives as I expected to demonstrate their stories as detail as possible, and did my best to keep stories in light with their own contexts and speak by themselves. However, it is also important to explain how I utilize the rest of the data that provided by other thirty-four research participants. In fact, other research participants' stories and narratives still played its vital role in helping the author to understand the life and homemaking experiences of Taiwanese immigrants in a broader and more holistic point of view. In this regard, although their immigrant stories are not presented fully in this study, however, many of their storylines are also discussed where appropriate.

3.4 Data collection: Semi-structured in-depth and photo-elicitation interviews

Academic community has a consensus that the qualitative and in-depth interviews are the most appropriate and powerful research methods to explore people's distinct life experiences and personal perceptions. Since the aim of this study is trying to examine Taiwanese immigrants' experiences of home-making in a foreign land, searching a sense of home in the host society, and the meaning of home for them in their international migration journey; in this regard, because the natures of my research curiosities and the above research questions are mainly aiming to explore Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' distinct life and immigration experiences rather than finding a general statistical explanation or model, I decided to apply the qualitative and ethnographical approaches to conduct this study and do the further data collection and analysis. It is also important to point out how do I apply both the semi-structured and photo-elicitation interview methods in this study. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative method that combines a predetermined interview guide regarding a series of interview questions that correspond to the main objective of the research while simultaneously allowing interviewees to answer the questions and share their own experiences and thoughts freely (Berg, 2009). In this study, before I started to conduct interview with my research participants, I set up a list of questions as an interview guideline by asking their home-making experiences in a foreign land, and other related questions about life-adaptation, belonging, and identity negotiation in the migration context. The detail of interview questions could be found in the appendix 1.

After completing the interview guideline, the second step for conducting the semi-structured interview is to decide how to select the interviewees. Regarding the issues of sample selection process, the purposive and snowball sampling strategies were applied in this study simultaneously. During my online fieldwork experiences, I have had conducted immersive participation observation rather than been as a lurker on the Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities, and not only observed those users' discussions and interactions, but also tried to find out proactive online users on virtual communities for being as the possible candidates of invitation for participate in this study. In so doing, I firstly sent a short message via Facebook to the proactive users

whom I expected to invite for introducing who I was, and explaining what my motivation was, and what the main purpose of this study. If the user accepts my invitation and is willing to participate in the research project, then I will make an appointment for the possible interview no matter doing in online or offline. If the user decided to be interviewed online, then I sent the informed consent and interview questions before the interview process began. Moreover, the interviewee will be asked to sign the informed consent and send it back to me via email or Facebook. When the first online user was interviewed, then I asked the interviewee to introduce other online users who might feel interesting to participate in the study. It is worth noting that the working holiday makers and high-skilled migrants were mainly recruited and interviewed online due to the natures of high mobility and uncertainty of their job, and which made difficulty for me incessantly to access and interact with them.

With regard to my offline fieldwork, the interviewees were mostly recruited from my personal social networks and colleagues at the Sun Yat-sen language school in Brussels, and some other Taiwanese immigrant organizations in Belgium. In most cases, I interviewed my friends and colleagues first, then asked for their assistance by introducing other Taiwanese immigrants they knew who might be feel interesting to participate in this study. Through applying the purposive and snowball sampling strategies at the same time, I successfully recruited the majority of my restaurant owners and immigrant housewives' interviewees, and I mainly conducted face-to-face interviews with them. Moreover, interviewees could decide the venues for the interview, which included coffee shop, restaurant, their work office, and private home (Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015).

Although the semi-structured interview method has the advantage of letting interviewees to answer and share their feelings, experiences, and subjective meanings freely, it still has some shortcomings. Adams (2015) pointed out that merely applying semi-structured interview method in the data collection process and using a prepared interview question list may limit interviewees' opportunities to share the things they want to say but beyond the interview question list. In order to minimize this disadvantage, I further employed the qualitative visual ethnography method, namely as the photo-elicitation interview for assisting me to collect deeper and more complete

Taiwan immigrant's life stories.

Before introducing the method, I would like to explain why the photo-elicitation interview could be an appropriate supplementary data collection method for this study. It is worth noting that some human's feelings and memories during lifetime cannot easily be described in words and moreover since as time goes by, people may gradually forget their experiences and events that happened in the past. In this regard, visual photos and pictures could, in turn, assist people to overcome these challenges. Assisting by the main recording function of picture and photo, people can easily recall their memories and feelings when they see the visual archives. Thus, picture, photo, and other visual document have become powerful tools for helping interviewees in depicting their feelings, memories, and emotions that attach to some critical moments in their past lifetime, and which may be difficult to describe by using language alone. In this respective, scholars believe that the photo-elicitation interview method could further provide interviewees with more individual agency and opportunity for sharing and talking about the things they want to say and share, but without or beyond the interview guidelines prepared by researcher (Bates, McCann, Kaye, & Taylor, 2017; Diefenbach, 2009).

The concept of photo-elicitation interview is based on incorporating pictures and photos into the qualitative interview procedures. In so doing, the method provides a way to elicit additional information by encouraging and facilitating interviewees to depict their personal and subjective un-observable thoughts, feelings, experiences, and understandings toward a specific topic. In fact, incorporating pictures, photos, and different visual materials in academic studies have become more popular in the past two decades and be applied by more and more researchers across various academic disciplines in exploring people's distinct and multi-dimensional life experiences and everyday practices ranging from social anthropology (Pink, 2004), sociology (Halford & Knowles, 2005) to human geography (Harper, 2002). Moreover, migration scholar also applies this method to examine the meaning of home and home-making experiences in immigrants' real life (Sandu, 2013). Further, Pink (2004) claimed that both of the photo-elicitation interview and visual ethnography research method are emphasize the centrality, subjectivity and autonomy of interviewees in telling their own

stories and the collaborative relations between researcher and research participants in the interview procedure. Therefore, researcher and research participants could both engage in the knowledge-making processes, instead of merely focusing on how researcher's sayings and interpretations.

It is also important to mention that in this study, pictures and photos are not intended to replace words and textual information collected by semi-structured interviews; however, it is appropriate to consider visual material as equally important as the verbal descriptions and information that collected in this study. By applying both the semi-structured in-depth and photo-elicitation interviews simultaneously, I successfully recruited and interviewed 42 Belgian Taiwanese immigrants and also collected abundant qualitative textual and visual material data regarding their immigrant life and home-making experiences in a foreign land although not all of the research participants did willing to provide their private photo or picture to me (Richard & Lahman, 2015). Furthermore, the majority of interviews (both in online or offline) were conducted by using the language of Mandarin Chinese; however, a few of the interviews were conducted in Taiwanese on request. If the interviewees accepted me recording the conversations and discussions between us, I will use the pen coder to record the whole interview processes. And interviews generally lasted from 1 to 2 hours. The criterion for deciding the number of interviewees in this study was based on the standard of data saturation of the qualitative research method, which means that I stop collecting data and conducting interview when research participants did not provide further new themes or storylines (Saunders et al., 2018).

In addition to the further data analysis, I verbatim transcribed all the recorded files and further translated them into English. With respect to the issue of anonymity, none of the narratives and immigrant interview data presented in the study included the interviewees' personal information. All of the interviewees' characteristics and personal information were used in an anonymous way and all names in the study are pseudonyms. Furthermore, the author covers part of the picture and photo in black if the visual data show clear personal information such as a face, house, or family members in order to secure research participants' right of privacy (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015).

Moreover, since the method of data analysis applied in the study was based on

narrative inquiry. In the next section, I discuss and review the concepts and ideas regarding the narrative approach and analysis method.

3.5 Data analysis: Immigrant life stories and Narrative analysis method

In our daily life, people utilize different styles of narration to describe, explain, and share their personal or unique life experiences and stories with others (Polkinghorne, 1995). Moreover, Abbott (2002) argued that each life story constitutes by several narratives, and the concept of the life story is broader than narrative. Narrative researchers believe that everyone is the writer of their own life stories. By narrating and sharing our personal life stories with others, we make our life encounter and also become part of others' life. Therefore, Robinson and Hawpe (1986) indicated people's life stories have both the characteristics of specialty and commonality. Although, individual's life story is narrated and described in a specific context; since people are not living in an empty and isolated world, we share some common and similar life experiences in a certain degree. In this regard, by sharing life story, people can circulate the story to others, which does not only make the meanings of individual life story beyond its personal level but further facilitating personal stories to link societal or collective meanings. Thus, the functions of life story is not only in assisting people to explore and understand an individual's life, but also let us to know the collective life experiences when a group of people does live in the similar environments, social contexts, or life circumstances (Shuman, 2005).

However, with regard to the question about what are the basic elements of narrative and people's life story? Oliver (1998) indicated that a good narrative and life story should include three components: setting, character, and plot. "Setting" means the basic information regarding where and when the story happened, and what are the social and cultural contexts and backgrounds in the story. "Character" means the actors in the story, and "plot" refers to the events which involved in. For narrative inquiry scholars, people's life story is not only the vehicle for assisting people to know themselves and interact with others, but also as knowledge-making basis. Moreover, O'Connor (2004) mentioned that there are two different levels when people narrate their personal life

story. First, the surface level, which the narrator simply describes the things that happened in their life. Second, the deeper level, the narrator chooses what they want to say, and further constructs or attaches different meanings with stories. This means that in the second level, narrators purposely and reflectively making and attaching their life stories with different meanings. Thus, Clandinin and Huber (2002) claimed the main aim of conducting narrative inquiry is to explore how people construct and attach their subjective meanings to their own or collective life stories.

In addition to discussing the concept of narrative and functions of life story, it is also important to know the role theory plays in the narrative study. Theory in narrative inquire does play the supplement role for researcher in exploring, analyzing, and interpreting people's life stories from different angles rather than play the dominated role of guidelines for testing the hypothesis or providing a general or macro explanations (Czarniawska, 2004). In this regard, the goal of narrative inquiry is not to find a single or generalized truth, social reality or explanation; instead, it tries to reveal the various possibilities and multidimensional angle of meanings in people's distinct life experiences and meanings that attached or constructed by narrators.

Regarding the procedure of conducting data analysis in the narrative inquiry, Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) proposed four different types of narrative analysis strategies. First, the Holistic Content Analysis approach, whereby the researcher applies a holistic perspective to read and analyze people's life stories, and examine the main storylines of context, meaning, and objectives. Second, the Holistic Analysis of Form, which mainly asking researcher in focusing on examining the plot, character, and structure of narratives and stories. Third, the Categorical Content Analysis approach, which is similar to content analysis and mainly focuses on counting how many times of a specific word, sentence, or paragraph is used or appears in stories. Accordingly, the aim of this analysis approach is mainly to focus on text calculation and categorization rather than to analyze the whole content of stories. Fourth, the Categorical Form Analysis approach, which focuses on applying the linguistic perspective to analyze the narrative-style of stories. For example, the metaphor or specific narrative styles that are more or less frequently be used by narrator describing stories. As my research questions in this study were mainly focused on Taiwanese

immigrants' real and daily life experiences of home-making, and other related issues of belonging and identity negotiation in a foreign land. In this regard, it was not appropriate to merely focus on analyzing narrative structure or linguistic style, instead, it would be more proper to apply the holistic point of view and the approach of holistic content analysis to conduct the data analyze in this study.

3.6 Self-reflection

3.6.1 Dual academic identity negotiation between political science and anthropology

As a double PhD program student encompassing the disciplines of political science and anthropology, how to fulfill the expectations for being as a qualified and appropriate researcher and to find my own academic identity between these two different disciplines became the first challenge for me after participating in this program (Gill, 2010). I got both of my bachelor and graduate degrees in political science and spent my first two years in the doctoral program of political science also. In general, the political science community expects the political researcher to think like a scientist and conduct research in a scientific way by finding, exploring, and examining possible causal relationship and general explanation between different variables or social phenomenon. Thus, to find the casual relationship and construct a grand theory for explaining social and political phenomenon are the main goals for political scientists. Moreover, based on the guidelines of scientific writing in the political sciences, scholars are expected to write and show their research outcomes in neutral and objective ways (Oren, 2006).

However, anthropologist and ethnography studies hold very different perspectives with regard to the aims of doing academic research. In the anthropology academic community, students and researchers are expected to immerse themselves into research field by living together with their research participants, learning local language, and documenting what they see, listen and experience during fieldwork. In so doing, anthropologists are expected to demonstrate and interpret data from emic and insider points of view rather than by their own or from the outsider's perspective. In this regard,

the relations between researcher and participants are not distant or abstract. Researcher and research participants could cooperate in constructing academic knowledge together. Therefore, the main goal of anthropological study is not to find a close-ended conclusion or to test scientific hypothesis, but to demonstrate how diverse our living world and people's life experiences are. Thus, the goal of the anthropological studies is not to find a general, grand, or close-ended academic answer, but to illustrate, describe, and analysis the diverse nature of our living world and people's real life (Lin, 2016).

Actually, I spend considerable of time negotiating, understanding, and fulfilling different expectations and ways of doing research between the political science and anthropology disciplines. I recall very clearly memories that at the beginning of this double PhD program, the anthropology professors always telling me that "*You are still thinking and asking questions like a scientist; it is not what anthropologists do.*" At the same time, the professors from political science, on the contrary, did remind me that "*You should not just focus on people's daily life. You have to find what are the factors and variables that influence immigrants' behaviors.*" These suggestions and advices really confused me at first; however, thanks to this program, I have been provided with opportunities to be trained in both disciplines at the same time. Now, I feel comfortable being a political scientist and an anthropologist simultaneously. In this regard, I accept the ideas and thoughts from Mintz (1989) and Hsu (2013), who claimed that the disciplines of anthropology and political science should no longer struggle over the dichotomy ideas between "science" and "humanities" or the differences between "objectivism" and "subjectivism." They believed that anthropology and political science could both be "science" and "humanities", and "objectivism" and "subjectivism"; there is no need to highlight and over-emphasis the differences since the natures and essentials of people's daily lives, and the places where we live always exist and constitute by poly-vocals and multiple perspectives. Thus, they agreed that the research goals both of anthropology and political science should not only focus on providing closed, single or general knowledge. Rather, both of these disciplines should pay more attention on demonstrating the diversity and dialectical human experiences of people's daily life and our living world. In this regard, they further believed that the combination could further assist both anthropology and political science approach the goal of becoming as the comprehensive disciplines.

3.6.2 The issues of gender, age, and cultural proximity in conducting fieldwork

When researcher enters into a field/place where they are not familiar, researcher may look forward to finding an appropriate position and situation that would help them feel comfortable for being and presenting in front of others and in the processes of fieldwork. In the process, gender plays an important role in constructing relationship and finding an appropriate social position between researcher and participants in the fieldwork. Studies have already demonstrated that the different roles of gender and gender relations between researcher and participants are crucially influence how researcher constructs the relationships with research participants and how researcher produces research outcomes during fieldwork. However, previous studies have mainly focused on examining how the gender in female would influence female researchers to conduct fieldwork, and relationships between female researchers and research participants. Easterday and her colleagues (1977) indicated that researcher participants may be more willing to share their own and personal stories and experiences toward female researchers because of females usually being regarded as "powerless" and "non-threatening" in the society and during the research processes. Moreover, female researchers are possibly perceived less professional than their male counterparts. Thus, the feminist scholar Warren (1988) stated that "all knowledge is gendered." Most scholars agree that gender is a vital factor in fieldwork and field research; however, few studies explore how the gender in male influences the experiences of conducting fieldwork and relationships between male researchers and their research participants (Neil & Michael, 1991).

Being a young and male researcher in the field that is mainly made up of female research participants (as my informants were mostly female Taiwanese immigrants), the gender in male was really an important issue for me in conducting my fieldwork and interacting with these female research participants. As a male researcher, I could still participate in some ordinary aspects of my female participants' everyday lives such as shopping, dining, and sometimes one-day trips or traveling. However, I could not easily participate in or observe their private lives — for example, their family life, dating, and intimate relations with husbands and their children due to my male gender's

limitation. I also had to be careful to avoid misunderstandings and causing offense when I asked certain questions, for instance, how they met their partners and what were their perceptions of and experiences regarding inter-cultural intimacy relations. Moreover, I had to keep higher awareness to understand the stories and narratives they shared, especially some unique female experiences in terms of pregnancy, motherhood, postnatal care, and so forth. In addition, because of the limitation of gender, I could not live with my female research participants, which really influenced me to conduct comprehensive participant observation of their everyday life.

In addition, age is the other issue that should be taken into consideration when conducting fieldwork (Ortbals & Rincker, 2009). As a young male and in aged of 30, my age was sometimes a negative factor when conducting the fieldwork. Some of my research participants would say: *you are too young to know how complex it is*, or *you are still a student, you do not have enough experience*. Even, some regarded me as not professional enough or said that I did not look like a researcher because of my young age. In order to counteract the disadvantage of my age and construct a professional image, I avoid dressing too casually, and intentionally wearing more formal, official clothes when I met and interviewed my research participants.

Furthermore, the culture proximity/similarity between researcher and research participants, in most cases, has been seen as one of the advantages for researcher to know, understand, and interpret from "insider" and "emic" point of views. However, this is not the case when researcher is not only *similar with them* but *one of them*. Taking myself as an example. I also came from Taiwan and, as Taiwanese, I have similar backgrounds in ethnicity, nationality, and in some degree share some familiar cultural and live experiences with my research participants since we all have quite a long time living in Taiwan. However, which make me, sometimes, would take certain cultural phenomena, daily life, or social behavior for granted, or even lose my curiosity or capacity of critical thinking with regard to what I saw, heard, and experienced during my fieldwork. These similarities and cultural proximities, sometimes, even make my research participants say: "*You are also Taiwanese, you know all about that, does it really interest you?*" In this regard, I have to remain patient and curiosity in order to be a keen scholar and to negotiate my dual identities of cultural insider and well-trained researcher. Accordingly, my fieldwork experiences reveal that when researcher comes

from the same cultural background and have similar ethnicity with their research participants, in this regard ,they should further purposely keep an appropriate distance in order to maintain their sense of curiosity and capacity of critical thinking in the processes of fieldwork and academic writing (Lin, 2011).

Additionally, it is important to indicate that, although I have completed my three years' fieldwork from 2017 to 2020 in Belgium, I still keep in touch with some research participants, and check their Facebook pages for their latest doings. In this regard, although I already left my research field and participants in physically, from an emotional and spiritual point of views, however , I am still with my research participants and the immigrant community since I still sharing and offering my concerns and emotional attachments to them via maintain online interactions and communications. Accordingly, that is why Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) claimed that anthropologists can leave their research field physically, however, as researchers and ethnographers we never really leave our research participants emotionally (雖然身體離開田野，但心還留在田野).

3.6.3 Ethical considerations

Furthermore, how to protect research participants' right of privacy, how to make informants' narrative quotations and my interpretations close to interlocutors' original meanings, and how to make power relations between researcher and research participants more equal in academic writing and knowledge-production are all vital ethical considerations in conducting social research, and especially when the study involves people's personal information and their own experiences. One of the basic ways to show respect to research participants is to get their informed consent before conducting the interview. I also do my best to explain the aims and objectives of my study, how the information and narratives they provide will be used, and what rights and benefits they may have before they sign the informed consent. Hence, I expected all of the participants in my study to be fully aware of what they were getting involved in. Regarding protecting participants' personal privacy, all of the participants' names and personal information demonstrated in this thesis were replaced with pseudonyms. Moreover, when using photos/pictures provided by research participants, if visual data

show participants' faces clearly or could make readers easily to identify personal information, I would cover the faces in black in order to keep their personal identity secret and fulfill the requirements of anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, all of the research participants participated in this study and the whole processes of semi-structured and photo-elicitation interviews voluntarily, which meant that no one could compel them to join or prevent them from leaving. Therefore, if any research participant feels uncomfortable at any stage, they could stop the interview or choose to leave the study immediately (Oprea, 2018).

Moreover, as a migration researcher, providing a place and opportunity for research participants to share their immigration experiences and life stories with their own voices and perspectives are both as the critical issues in making the relations between researcher and participants equal. In this regard, so as to present the Taiwanese immigrants' "insider" and "emic" of views, I decided to fill this thesis with an abundance of literal, narrative quotes and daily life photos/pictures shared and provided by the research participants rather than analyzed and interpreted the research data merely by myself. Indeed, in qualitative and interpretation studies, how author chooses, analyzes, and interprets quotes and textual data definitely influences the outcomes of the research. That why many qualitative and anthropological researchers are very concern about the issues of power inequality between researcher and participants in the knowledge production processes since in most situations, researcher has more power in knowledge production and during the writing up of research outcomes. However, one of the practical and useful strategies for overcoming the problem of power imbalance between researcher and participants in the knowledge production process is by providing and sharing the initial research outcomes and transcripts with participants, and in fact, the strategy could benefit both sides of researcher and participants. On the one hand, research participants can check whether researcher has misunderstood their narratives and original meanings or not; on the other hand, by getting feedback from participants, researcher can further do revision and re-write their initial analysis and interpretation (Erickson, 2012). Since the above strategy is frequently utilized in the qualitative studies, thus, in this thesis, I also apply this strategy for minimizing power inequality gap between researcher and participants, and assisting me to make my analysis and interpretations could as close to research participants' own voices as

possible.

Chapter Four
Belgian Taiwanese Restaurateurs' Homemaking Experiences

4.1 Ethnic Economy: The Chinese Catering Industry in Belgium

During my fieldwork, I found that one of the major subgroups in the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant community consists of migrants who emigrated to Europe or Belgium around the 1970s, initially for educational purposes. After finishing their education, some of them chose to stay in Belgium and work in the catering industry, running ethnic (Chinese) restaurants in Belgium for a living. In this study, there are eight research participants that could be categorized into this subgroup. Most of them operate restaurants with their spouse or family members since most of these small and medium-sized ethnic businesses run by immigrants have marked family characteristics; they were often the first career choice for the first generation of pan-Chinese immigrants (from Mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong). However, before moving on to the discussion about the homemaking experiences of this subgroup of Taiwanese immigrants, it is necessary to review the history of the Belgian-Chinese restaurant and catering industry in brief.

As in other European countries, the first wave of Chinese immigrants arrived in Belgium from the 1920s to the 1930s. At the time, they were mostly single males and worked as seamen. As a result, many European ports, such as London and Liverpool in the United Kingdom, and Antwerp in Belgium, have a significant immigration footprint; immigrants looked for a better life and job opportunities there since the southern provinces of Mainland China like Guangdong and Fujian were very poor at the time. According to immigration data from Antwerp, for example, in the 1930s the immigrant Chinese population was about 80 percent Cantonese, ten percent Zhejiangese, and the remaining two to three percent were immigrants from Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Fujian. The first Chinese restaurant, called "*WAH KEL 華僑*" was established in 1923 and is still open today, operated by the descendants of the original migrants. The restaurant maintains a strongly traditional Chinese style of decorations; it even has its own website and blog and information pages on different social media platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Until now, the Belgian Chinese restaurant and

catering industry has accumulated nearly one hundred years of history.



Figure 4.1 The decorations of the Chinese restaurant WAH KEL in Antwerp
Source: The author downloaded by the open-access Facebook page of WHA KEL.

As more and more Chinese immigrants came to Belgium and chose to settle in Antwerp, Antwerp's Chinatown was gradually established from the late 1950s near Antwerp's central station on Van Wesenbeke Street and Van Artevelde Street with a very obvious Chinese style archway in front of the main gate. Moreover, this area has a concentration of Chinese small and medium-sized businesses, many of which are restaurants and food markets (Pang, 2012). It is also important to note that in the 1950s, the characteristics of Chinese immigrants arriving in Belgium were different from those who came in the 1920s or 1930s. In the 1950s, a new type of Chinese immigrant emigrated to Belgium, either Cantonese from the New Territories in Hong Kong or Hakkas from southeastern parts of Mainland China via the migration trajectories of family unification and community formation. However, the Chinese immigration wave to Belgium stopped in 1974 due to the first international oil crisis. At the time, foreigners could enter Belgium only on tourist visas. Thus, the Chinese immigrant men entered Belgium as tourists but worked as restaurant kitchen assistants. This work is called "*打黑工*" in Chinese, which means working illegally. However, after they had several years' work experience and had accumulated some money, they would assist their family members who had been left behind in Mainland China, especially wives and children, to emigrate to Belgium. After several years of working with their family members, if they had saved enough money, they would open their own restaurant, often

assisted by their immigrant families or other pan-Chinese workers. Also, it is important to know that there are no official figures for the number of Chinese restaurants in Belgium. According to calculations by Pang (2002), in 1994 there were 235 Chinese restaurants in Antwerp alone and 829 Chinese restaurants across Belgium. Although there has been no systematic calculation of the number of Chinese restaurants in Belgium, it is likely that these numbers would now be exceeded because the population of Chinese immigrants in Belgium increased from 23,000 in 2000 to around 45,000 to 50,000 in 2014, according to a survey (Wu & Latham).

Moreover, Song (2011) argues that according to his studies and investigations, nearly 80 percent of Chinese immigrants in Europe are restaurateurs or owners of other kinds of small and medium businesses such as grocery and food shops, and the Chinese immigrants in Europe are clearly concentrated in catering or other related sectors. Pang provides some possible reasons and explanations for this phenomenon. First, owning and operating a restaurant or other small and medium-sized business requires a relatively lower level of investment than other entrepreneurial activities. According to Pang (2003) it costs approximately 500,000 Belgian francs, equivalent to 12,500 euros, to start a restaurant during the 1970s and the 1980s. Since the investment was not extremely high, it was easier for immigrants to save or acquire enough money to invest, even if it came from their friends or family members. Except for the investment cost, previous work experience was another important factor encouraging and facilitating pan-Chinese immigrants from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong to choose this sector. Given the one hundred-year history of Chinese restaurants in Belgium and the fact that Belgian pan-Chinese immigrant communities are not concentrated residentially, there are restaurants not just in Antwerp but scattered across the whole of Belgium. It is therefore easier for new arrivals to find a job in the industry. These two possible explanations are also echoed by my research participants, in my fieldwork, several research participants indicated that “it was cheaper and easier to save and get enough money to invest in a restaurant since it cost just under half a million NT dollars at the time.” Moreover, for most of my restaurateur research participants before they started to operate their own restaurant, it was a common experience for them to be employed as kitchen assistants, waiters, and counter staff; it was easy to find a job due to the large presence of Chinese restaurants in Belgium at the time that were mainly

operated by Mainland Chinese immigrants from Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Hong Kong. One research participant shared her experience with me as follows:

> *I remembered how easy it was to find a job working in a Chinese restaurant at the time. I was an international student who studied here and worked in the industry to earn my tuition fees and living expenses nearly 40 years ago in the 1970s*.

In addition to these two reasons, Pang (2008) further argued that there are another two possible reasons that could explain why most of the pan-Chinese immigrants chose to enter the catering industry after migration to Belgium. The first reason is related to the economic background in Europe at the time, Pang pointed out that from the 1970s to 1980s, most European countries had gone through the process of de-industrialization and sought to emphasize the development of service industries, which provided more opportunities for immigrants. Moreover, Pang's findings also demonstrated that pan-Chinese immigrants at the time responded to this social and economic change successfully, which helped them enter the industry and sell "exotic" products like ethnic Chinese foods in the host society for surviving. The final reason first-generation pan-Chinese immigrants chose to operate restaurants after migration is the family-oriented nature of the industry. Since first-generation immigrants lack social and economic capital and local friendship networks in the host society, they face difficulties in finding an appropriate job in mainstream society and challenge in hiring local employees to work for them. Thus, owning a restaurant or other small and medium-sized ethnic business is a good choice since these businesses can be operated by immigrants' spouses, family members or other compatriots. The features of these industries, especially the catering sector, mean that immigrants do not have to worry about hiring locals; moreover, the family could also stay and work together (Pang, 1998).

Accordingly, the factors influencing the choice of the catering industry as their dominant economic activity by first-generation immigrants while living in Belgium during the 1970s and 1980s and afterwards include cost, the ease of finding a job, economic structural changes in Europe, and family orientation of the industry.

My research participants in this subgroup emigrated to Belgium in the 1970s since

Taiwan at the time was still an agricultural society with less than 400 US dollar GDP per capita. International immigration to find a better life and career were the factors that pushed Taiwanese people to leave Taiwan and emigrate overseas. I successfully recruited eight Taiwanese restaurateurs to participate in the study. However, several of them were nearly 70 years old, and also retired from the catering business. Some of them had handed over their business to the second generation or other descendants even though many second-generation Taiwanese immigrants do not consider the catering industry as a first choice for career development. To analyze Belgian-Taiwanese restaurateurs' life stories and narratives of international migration, this chapter examines two Taiwanese restaurateurs' experiences in detail: Alice Ho and Aunt Zhang. The chapter considers their life stories to examine their experiences of homemaking during 40 years of living in Belgium as first-generation immigrants and restaurateurs. These narratives not only show the complex nature of home in their lives, but also demonstrate how different personal backgrounds and life experiences interacted to affect their homemaking experiences.

4.2 Case One: Aunt Zhang

- **Aunt Zhang's demographic information**
- Gender: Female
- Age: 68
- Year of immigration: 1979
- Job: Retired from the catering industry after operating restaurant for more than three decades. The restaurant was handed over to her son (second generation).
- Marital and family relationships: Taiwanese husband, one son, a daughter in law from Mainland China, and two grandchildren (one boy and one girl)

I first met Zhang at the 2017 Belgian-Taiwanese Lunar New Year event organized by the Belgian Federation of Taiwanese Association (BFTA) at Zhang's famous restaurant in Brussels. We did not have enough time for chatting in-depth but exchanged our Facebook IDs and maintained frequent contacts on social media. We usually track each other's Facebook posts and information and sometimes we have some private online chats and discussions regarding being as an immigrant and living experiences in

Belgium via Facebook. Based on these online interactions, we gradually become friends in our real and offline lives. I regularly go to her restaurant to eat and chat with her and her husband when I visit Brussels or go through the neighborhood near the restaurant. I conducted several interviews with her both in online and offline. In the following paragraphs, Zhang shares her experiences of international immigration and the subjective meaning and interpretation of her homemaking experiences in a foreign land. By recounting the narrative of her life story, this section shows how an immigrant's "intersectional home" is constructed, and how this intersectionality is affected by an immigrant's different personal backgrounds and life circumstances.

4.2.1. "I felt lonely and did not regard Belgium as my home in my first several years of living here as an hourly-paid worker"

She first shared her reasons for immigration and explained why she and her husband decided to emigrate to Belgium after getting married. In her narrative, it is revealed that the most important factor that influenced their decision to emigrate was career opportunity. She shared their considerations at that time:

> *After getting married in Taiwan, we decided to emigrate to Belgium in 1979.We chose Belgium because it was easier to find a job working in the Chinese restaurant here rather than in Austria. Before we emigrated to Belgium, in fact, my husband had already spent 10 years in Vienna studying music. So, he was quite familiar with Europe at that time; however, I did not know anything about Belgium because I did not have any experience of going abroad before migrating to Belgium.*

Compared to the long history of the Belgian-Chinese catering industry, the development of Chinese restaurants in Austria is relatively recent. In fact, Austria was not a popular immigration destination for the pan-Chinese diaspora. In the 1950s, there were less than 10 pan-Chinese immigrants living in Austria and according to oral history, at the time, there was just one Chinese restaurant in Vienna. Moreover, based on demographic data, there were only 18 pan-Chinese immigrants in Austria in 1961, and the number in 1971 had increased to only 73. The number of pan-Chinese immigrants

in Austria was less than 100 until the late 1970s. However, in 1981, there were 800 pan-Chinese immigrants in Austria, and the number of Chinese restaurants in Austria increased from single digits in the 1960s to around 60 in the 1970s. In other words, both the pan-Chinese immigrant community and the catering industry remained small in scale and number until the late of 1970s (Kwok, 2012). The small size of the pan-Chinese immigrant community and catering industry explain why Zhang and her husband decided to emigrate to Belgium rather than Austria. Kwok (2012) also echoes the narratives provided by Zhang that it was harder to find a restaurant job in Austria than in Belgium because the Austrian pan-Chinese community was small, and Chinese immigration and catering industry had occurred more recently than in Belgium.

After Zhang and her husband arrived and settled down their new life in Belgium, they did not immediately open their own restaurant due to the shortage of funds. Both Zhang and her husband at the time were employed by other people's Chinese restaurants as hourly-paid workers. Their working conditions at the time were unstable, and they were required to be highly mobile, as they had to work for several different employers and at different restaurants in order to earn and accumulate as much money as possible. Zhang and her husband did several jobs at the same time. She said:

> *My husband worked for two different Chinese restaurants during the week and worked for another one on the weekends. I designed and mended clothes for my customers, but when I had free time, then I would also work as a kitchen assistant in the Chinese restaurant.*

She continued:

> *In 1979, we did not have our own restaurant because we did not have enough money. So, my husband did a part-time job as a kitchen assistant in several Chinese restaurants. For me, because I had learned clothing design before emigrating, I did some work designing and modifying clothes for my customers. I also went to different Chinese restaurants and worked as a waitress and kitchen assistant. In this initial period, my husband and I spent several years focused only on working, working, and working… because our main goal at the time was to*

have our own restaurant ASAP.

As hourly-paid workers, Zhang and her husband had to spend the majority of their time on work. Because Zhang lacked the ability to speak the local language, French, her sense of belonging toward both her life as an immigrant and the living environment in Belgium was negatively affected:

> *However, I was not like my husband. Before he emigrated to Belgium, he already had several years' experiences of living in Europe; he could speak French fluently. On the contrary, I did not know anything about French. I couldn't read, couldn't speak, couldn't listen… I knew nothing. At that time, I was still pretty young, so I did not feel afraid; I felt curious about all of the new things in Belgium. However, I can honestly say I did not really spend my time exploring this new environment, however, because most of my time, I was busy working in Chinese restaurants. I felt really lonely and helpless at that time since I did not have friends and family (except for my husband) here and most of my time was spent at work, so I really did not feel a sense of belonging to this place (she means Belgium and her life as an immigrant). So, at that period I have to admit that I just regarded Belgium as a place for me to make money; I did not really regard Belgium as my home; I considered myself a sojourner who lived here mainly to make money.*

In fact, several Taiwanese restaurateurs who emigrated to Belgium in the 1970s like Zhang also shared similar experiences of choosing to emigrate to Belgium mainly for economic reasons. The poor economic situation of 1970s' Taiwan was the critical push factor that encouraged many Taiwanese to emigrate overseas to search for the better life and job opportunities. The immigrants of that period were under financial pressure and were strongly motivated to earn as much money as possible to improve their economic situations; they spent most of their time working, but this lifestyle would sometimes negatively impact on them. Several restaurateurs who emigrated at the same period as Zhang shared their perceptions in the interviews and indicated that "*they did not regard issues of integration or assimilation as their priorities at the time; the*

main goal for them was to earn and accumulate money as soon as possible and improve their lives and economic situations." It is clearly shows from Zhang's narratives that she was not really satisfied with her living circumstances and spent most of her time working. This reduced her level of life satisfaction, and because of her low satisfaction with life and poor local language proficiency she failed to build a sense of belonging toward her life as an immigrant and the host society (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015). A low level of life satisfaction and local language proficiency were both reasons why she did not regard Belgium as home during the initial period when she was an hourly-paid worker.

4.2.2. "Having one's own restaurant signifies home"

However, Zhang's low level of satisfaction with life and sense of belonging changed significantly after she and her husband accumulated enough money to open a restaurant on their own after several years of hard work. Zhang shared the meaning of having own restaurant:

> *However, after working for several years, my husband and I saved enough money, and we decided to open our own restaurant in Brussels. I have to say that the feelings of being a part-time worker and a restaurant owner are quite different. Just like I said, as a part-time job worker, I could not feel a sense of belonging in Belgium and life as an immigrant; however, after owning a restaurant with my husband together, I gradually acquired a sense of belonging and feelings of home since I did not have to go to different places and restaurants to work; instead, I could stay at our own restaurant and work with my husband together. All of the money we earned was for ourselves. We had our own living space (at the very beginning they lived on the second floor of the restaurant). My husband, children and I could always work and stay together… you know…when families can get together…that is a feeling of home.*

Owning a restaurant by themselves meant a lot to Zhang. At first, having their own restaurant meant that they did not have to live in uncertain conditions and did not have to be always on the move between different restaurants for work; they started to have

their own place to work, and the income belonged entirely to Zhang and her husband. Having their own restaurant meant she did not have to separate from her husband and children because of work; she could combine her work and private life together. In this way, owning a property allowed Zhang to construct a sense of belonging toward the place she lived and acquire a feeling of being at home. It can clearly be seen that owning property critically affects immigrants' identification with place and their sense of belonging to the host society and their living environment (Painter et al., 2003).

Having her own restaurant and the accumulation of financial capital had several positive psychological effects for Zhang. Since Zhang's restaurant was profitable, they gradually accumulated more and more financial capital, which enhanced Zhang's self-confidence and also provided her with a stronger motivation to stay in Belgium:

> *Moreover, it was very interesting that after we had our own restaurant and started to accumulate more and more financial capital, I gradually became more confident in identifying with what I was doing here, and persuaded myself that it was worth staying in Belgium and continuing living here as an immigrant. So, I have to say our own restaurant is not only a place for making money, but is also my home since me, my husband, and our child could always stay together, and I did not have to always move just for work.*



Figure 4.2 The first visit back to Zhang's family home in Yilan with her husband

Source: Provided by Zhang, with authorization to use

Zhang's narrative and Stewart et. al.'s (2009) study both reveal that levels of income have differential impacts on immigrants' sense of belonging, feelings of isolation, and levels of social engagement in the host society. It is not surprising that when immigrants (or people in general) have higher levels of income, they have a higher sense of belonging to the society and lower feelings of social isolation. They participate more actively in local activities and affairs. Immigrants and others who have lower levels of income, by contrast, may be more inclined to position their sense of belonging and identity in smaller networks and communities. They are therefore more likely to stay within co-ethnic networks rather than making friends with locals from the host society. Lower income may therefore lead to stronger feelings of social isolation.

Zhang provided a picture, taken during the first time she returned with her husband and children to her family home in Yilan after nearly 10 years' hard work in Belgium. She used a Chinese idiom *"衣錦還鄉"* [go home loaded with honors] to explain her feelings and the meanings attached to this visit home:

> *I still remember the first time my husband and I took our children back to Taiwan after we emigrated to Belgium after nearly 10 years. You know, in the first 10 years, just like I said. we paid most of our attention on working… working…and working, and the goal for doing that was to save money and provide my children with a better life. Honestly, I really missed my Taiwanese family in that 10 years, but since we had enough money, I told my husband I would like to see my Taiwanese family and let them know I am doing well in Belgium. It seemed like showing my parents and family that "you see, my decision was not wrong," and it gave me a feeling like the old Chinese saying "衣錦還鄉" [go home loaded with honors]. So, owning our restaurant really changed me a lot: it made me feel confident and also gave me feelings of home because I could work in the restaurant with my husband and also take care of my children.*

This old Chinese idiom refers to people who leave their hometown and go to other places to work and then return to show their success and especially their wealth.

Zhang's narrative shows this traditional cultural expectation still had an influence on her even though she had already lived in Belgium for nearly 10 years at the time. Gu's (2017) study also echoed Zhang's experiences and revealed that even when some Taiwanese immigrants had already left Taiwan and lived in other countries for several decades, they still had difficulties in negotiating the different cultural expectations derived from traditional Confucian Chinese culture and the local culture of the host society. Gu pointed out that traditional Confucian Chinese culture still has the power to affect Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants' social behaviors and decision making. However, these kinds of traditional cultural expectations have positive and negative effects simultaneously. On the positive side, immigrants work hard in order to earn as much money as possible and show their economic success to their family in their home country, often remitting money back to their family or hometown to contribute to their family's economic situation and local community developments. However, on the negative side, these traditional cultural expectations limit immigrants' motivation to return home if they are not successful in their professional or private life. Influenced by these cultural expectations, the pan-Chinese immigrants would not return home or seek assistance even they really did face some difficulties and challenges overseas. Immigrants would have to face these issues by themselves, which may make them feel helpless in the process (Li, 1999). Luckily, Zhang's case was a positive one, after she made a financial success of her catering business, which gave her the pride and confidence to return home to Taiwan.

4.2.3. Co-ethnic friends help to create a sense of belonging and feelings of home

Zhang and other Taiwanese restaurateurs in Belgium were very successful in terms of generating income and accumulating capital. However, the catering industry is labor intensive, requiring long hours of work with one's family. These conditions influence restaurateurs' daily living arrangements and their relationships with friends and family. Zhang summarized the catering industry using the word "辛苦錢" [hard money] to explain that the income she earned was based on hard work and other personal costs she paid in the process including little time for rest and socialization with others. She said:

As I said, before I retired from the catering industry, I spent most of my time working in the past 40 years to maintain the operation *of the restaurant. Just like you know, in our industry, we do not have many holidays, when others have holidays, we have to work. I remember that in the first several years when our restaurant just open around 1980s, we even had less than 10 days holidays in a whole year. Some people may say the restaurateurs could earn a lot of money; however, I have to say it is the "****hard money not easy money***. We spend every day, month, and year working.

As most restaurateurs spend most of their time working, their social relations and daily living arrangements are limited. This also makes them feel more comfortable living within co-ethnic social networks. They tend to socialize with other restaurateurs because they share similar live circumstances. Zhang stated:

I really do not have many friends in my private life because I do not have time to go out for shopping or hanging out with my friends. Most of my friends are also in this industry because they are the only people who also have similar lifestyles. When we all still worked in the catering industry, the most frequent entertainment for us was to play Mahjong ["打麻將"]. You know it is so important for us (she means restaurateurs); I can say "play Mahjong" was the only leisure activity that I could do with my restaurateur friends before I retired from the industry. I still remember that sometimes we even played together all night, then we re-started work the next morning.

According to Zhang's narratives, her social networks were constituted mainly by co-ethnic (mostly Taiwanese) and professional background (also restaurateurs) friends. Moreover, because Zhang spent most of her time socializing within co-ethnic networks and with other Taiwanese restaurateurs, this prevented her from creating local networks and friendships. However, Zhang explains the reason why she tended to socialize with co-ethnic others rather than local Belgians as follows:

Since these restaurateurs have similar lifestyles with me, I feel embarrassed to say that I have very few local friends (maybe one or two Belgian friends, and they are both my neighbors). By contrast, most of my friends are also restaurateurs from

Taiwan. I have to admit that interacting with my Taiwanese restaurateur friends is easier and more comfortable for me compared with interacting with locals. I think that is because we share similar lifestyles, so we don't need to hide anything bad, we can be our truth selves.

It is interesting to note that except for time limitations, Zhang's decisions about who she likes to socialize with are shaped by psychological feelings. Moreover, the ethnic background, living conditions, and cultural similarities are three vital factors that make Zhang feel comfortable and allow honesty in interpersonal relationships. Zhang indicated what these co-ethnic and restaurateurs meant to her and how they gradually became like her family and created feelings of being at home in a foreign land:

Because I do not have so many local friends here, these Taiwanese friends matter to me. They play a very important role when I need to talk or chat to someone; we can share our similar experiences and also give each other our suggestions and points of view. You know, when you know someone for more than 30 years, they indeed become like as your family. So, these friends really provide emotional support to me when I feel sad or confused. Everyone faces some problems or difficulties in life. Although friends may not help you solve problems, they can listen to you and make you feel warm. Sometimes they made me feel like being at home when I chatted or hung out with them.

Wang (2019a, 2019b) tries to explain why first-generations of pan-Chinese immigrants tend to socialize with other co-ethnic contacts and why they face difficulties in constructing inter-racial friendships and interacting with locals. First, pan-Chinese immigrants' ethnic identity plays a vital role since most first-generation pan-Chinese immigrants still maintain a relatively strong original ethnic identity. This strong ethnic identity makes pan-Chinese immigrants more likely to stay, live, and socialize with co-ethnic contacts, as co-ethnic networks provide feelings of warmth and safety. Moreover, Wang points out that since these immigrants have a strong ethnic identity and spend most of their time socializing and interacting with co-ethnic others, they have insufficient inter-cultural capacity to interact with locals and understand local culture in the host society. However, their co-ethnically orientated social life can also provide

some benefits since they do not have to interact frequently with culturally different individuals, preventing them from facing challenges and awkward situations. Second, Wang explains that most first-generation pan-Chinese immigrants do experience similar difficulties: finding a job in the mainstream labor market, unequal treatment and even discrimination, and inability to speak the local language fluently. These disadvantageous social positions and unhappy life experiences cause them to give most of their attention on their "family life" and "home affairs" rather than active pursuit of engagement with the host society. These issues impact negatively on the efforts of first-generation immigrants to construct a sense of belonging and identity in their new home in the host society.

Zhang's experiences share commonalities with Wang's findings. In the next paragraph, Zhang explains the meanings of her Belgian home and how she evaluates her level of integration into the host society.

4.2.4. "Yes, Belgium is my 'home.' However, I still feel I am not integrated into this society"

Zhang emphasized several times in the interviews and during my fieldwork her long working hours during her nearly four decades of life as an immigrant. This aroused my curiosity about her self-evaluation of her level of integration. I also wondered about the relationship between length of residency and level of integration. She shared her reflections with me about her 40 years as an immigrant. She felt some regrets that although she had already lived in Belgium for about four decades, she did not really feel that she belonged to and was integrated into Belgian society for most of her lifetime:

> *Since living in Belgium for more than 40 years, of course, I already regard Belgium as my home. However, even though I already have my son and the third generation of my grandchildren here, I do have to say that I am not really integrated into local society. As I said, I spent the majority of my lifetime working…working…and working…, and when I retired three years ago, I was already nearly 70 years old. You know what I mean? Which means I dedicated most of my lifetime on work; I did not really pay attention on exploring the place where I live in Belgium. When*

I wanted to, I was too old to do so.

It is interesting to note that for Zhang, the meaning of home is different from the notion of integration. Even though she already considered Belgium as her home, she does not think she is successfully integrated into the society. Thus, taking Zhang as an example, the relationship between feelings of home and the level of integration is not unidirectional or linear. In other words, even immigrants already living in the host society for a long period of time and who have descendants there may not be well integrated into the host society. Zhang, for example, was limited by the circumstances of her life and the features of the catering industry, which not only limited her ability to explore local society but also reduce her motivation to integrated into the host society. In fact, Zhang is not a special case, because based on my fieldwork and interaction experiences with the first-generation Taiwanese restaurateur immigrants in Belgium, they share similar feelings. They commented, for example, "*Yes, I regard Belgium as my home because I have already lived here for decades and most of my family also lives here*." However, when I asked them about their level of integration, I received comments such as "*...not really, because I do not frequently interact with locals or participate in the local activities, so I think I am not really well integrated*." Some indicated that "*…I'm okay being with local Belgians for days, but not for a long period time, because we are really different in mentality and appearance…., if I must be with local Belgians for a long time this would really make me feel embarrassed*." Zhang and other Taiwanese restaurateurs' narratives reflect that the notion of integration is multidimensional: no single aspect or evaluation criterion could cover all the possibilities and complexities with respect to immigrants' real situations. Zhang further noted that her motivation for pursuing the goal of integration may have changed as a result of the passage of time and varied at different stages of her life:

> *I think it is strange that when I was young, I did not think integrating into this society (she means Belgium) was necessary, because at that time my goal was to earn as much money as possible. As a restaurateur in the catering industry, it is common to work for more than 12 hours per day. Under these circumstances, how could I have time to get to know or engage with this place, local events, and the neighboring community? It is impossible! After work, the only feeling I had was*

"I'm so tired," and the only place I wanted to stay was my home. I just wanted to rest.

But interestingly, after my husband and I accumulated some money and became older, I initially thought that I would be more integrated into and engaged with Belgian society. However, it is strange that when I turned 60 and now, I am nearly in my 70s, I gradually feel that there is no need to chase the goals of "integration" or "assimilation." When you are in my age, you may have your son, children, business…everything…; at the time, you would feel satisfaction regarding your life and think why bother about the issue of integration or assimilation? I could live as how I lived before! There is no big motivation for me to integrate or assimilate into the host society. Because I am quite used to my life as it is.

Zhang and other first-generation Taiwanese restaurateur immigrants' narratives highlight some meaningful information regarding the notion of integration by immigrants. First, the notion of integration is by nature multidimensional. Zhang, for example, already regards Belgium as her home and had emotional connections with the place but still does not think she has integrated successfully. Harder et al. (2018) argue that the notion of immigrants' integration has at least six dimensions: psychological, economic, political, social, linguistic, and navigational. However, under these six dimensions, there are dozens of subdimensions. Immigrants who achieve integration goals in some dimensions may not achieve them in others. Second, it is important to note that immigrants' patterns of integration change along with the course of their life and according to their live circumstances. As such, it is more appropriate to consider immigrants' integration as a lifelong process with no end point. Moreover, longer residency does not directly translate into higher levels of integration or assimilation (Wingens & Matthias et al., 2011).

4.2.5. "Showing my appreciation and thankfulness to this place and making my restaurant like 'home' for all Taiwanese in Belgium."

With regard to the issue of integration, Zhang made some reflections about her limited integration by reviewing her voting behavior over the past three decades. Since

Zhang had spent most of her time working and lacked the time and motivation to participate in local activities, especially politics, she was not really familiar with the political parties and the politicians in Belgium. However, voting is an obligation for Belgian citizens on polling day, and Zhang also had to fulfill this obligation and vote. As she did not really understand the politics and politicians in Belgium, her vote was usually a "spoiled vote." As she had spoiled her vote for nearly 30 years, she reflected on her voting behaviors in the past:

> *Actually, in the past I paid most of my attention on knowing about things happening in Taiwan and in the past three decades I made a "spoiled vote" in every election because I really don't know who they are and I do not have time to find out and care about those local political issues. However, in these recent years, I gradually started to feel sorry for what I have done. Because I started to think that here (means Belgium) is not only my home, but also my son and grandchildren's home for ever. So, after I retired from the restaurant work, I really tried to spend more time exploring and understanding this society and tried to interact with locals*.

Since Zhang realized that Belgium was not only her home, but also the home for her son, grandchildren, and all future descendants, she started to feel a measure of regret. In the interviews, she told me:

> *…at that moment, I felt sorry for neglecting this place; although I was not born and did not grow up here, Belgium really gave me a lot as I already spent 40 years of my life in this place — its already longer than the time I lived in Taiwan and moreover, in Belgium, I earn money; I established my career and family here and this place also gives me opportunities, social welfare and so on. I started to think I have to appreciate this place because it is my home and also my children and their children's home…that's why in recent years, I started to change my attitude toward this place, and tried to learn, understand, and engage more with the place here and take part in local activities*.

Moreover, in addition to changing her attitude toward Belgium and the local affairs,

Zhang further developed a specific strategy to show her thankfulness and appreciation to the host society and Belgium by making their own restaurant become like a semi-public space and a "big home" for all Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants and others during the three important Chinese festivals: the Lunar New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Moon Festival. For these three special and important events, she and her husband would post event information on the different Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants' virtual communities on Facebook. Zhang and her husband would prepare lots of food and beverages for participants and free of charge. Those she invited were not only Taiwanese; they also welcomed people who came from Mainland China and local Belgians. As they provided food and beverages for free to participants and have done these events for years, I was curious about their motivations and reasons for these arrangements. Zhang told me:

> *...just like I said, I started to think how I could show my thankfulness and appreciation to this place since I am an immigrant who has already lived here for more than 40 years, and how I could do something for this place; then I thought why not open our restaurant toward the public, and make our restaurant like as an open space where people could meet, chat, and also make friends. I thought, if I can help someone to release their sense of nostalgia or know more about Belgium through participating in our activities, then I believed that which also could be some kind of contribution that I could do for this place and also for the Taiwanese immigrant community in here*.



Figure 4.3 The activities hold at the Aunt Zhang's restaurant in Brussels

Source: Pictures taken by the author.

Opening their restaurant to the public and making the restaurant like as a "home" for the Belgian-Taiwanese community is a strategy that Zhang applied to show her thankfulness and appreciation toward Belgium. In doing so, their restaurant has become a vital social space for Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants to gather together, make friends, exchange information, and obtain emotional support. Moreover, based on my participants' observations, most of the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants and participants in the events call Zhang as "aunt" and her husband as "uncle," which shows that Zhang and her husband already established quite close relationships with the participants. Some participants regarded them like their older relatives in their immigrant life. Zhang and her husband's intention in making their own restaurant like as a "home" for the Belgian-Taiwanese community can also be seen from the name of the restaurant — they use the words "Taiwanese restaurant" rather than "Chinese restaurant" on their advertisement board in front of the restaurant's main gate to present their "Taiwanese-ness" and "Taiwanese" ethnonational identity via this material symbol.

Moreover, based on my fieldwork and the experience of chatting with the participants, I found that the meaning of participating in these events goes beyond the food itself and food consumption, which makes the restaurant become as Taiwanese immigrants' collective space for exchanging information, establishing relationships, and providing emotional support to each other. In fact, the function and meaning of these activities and the restaurant are difficult to measure by quantitative measurement and data analysis. However, by analyzing immigrants' narratives and real experiences, which clearly reveal that Zhang's restaurant and activities already go beyond the notion of food itself, it can be seen that these food events have its social meanings and emotional support functions both toward the participants and Zhang (Marovelli, 2019; Pang, 2003). Moreover, the advertisement board has both representational and more-than-representational value. With regard to its representational value, the board shows clearly that the restaurant is different from Chinese or other Asian restaurants in Belgium: it is a restaurant of "Taiwanese." On the other hand, it further demonstrates Zhang and her husband's attitudes and confidence about their ethnonational identity for being as the Taiwanese immigrants living in Belgium. The ethnonational identity shown by Zhang and her husband via the advertisement board in front of their restaurant

reveals that people's ethnonational identity is not only constructed by macro-political slogans and propaganda from above or by government, but that people show their ethnonational identity from the bottom up in banal ways. For Zhang and her husband, the banal way to present their "Taiwanese" identity is to clearly demonstrate on their advertisement information about their restaurant. This shows that people's ethnonational identity and their sense of nationhood is not structurally formed and constructed by macro-political ideology or by a top-down approach, however, in peoples' real life, its mostly show in everyday life and perform in very banal ways. In other words, people's ethnonational identity and nationhood are constructed by the bottom-up approach and embodied in people's daily and real lives (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2018; Antonsich,2016).

4.2.6. Ethnonational identity negotiation: "Taiwanese for being, and Belgian for learning," and the shift from "Chinese" to "Taiwanese" identity

Zhang's ethnonational identity and sense of belonging toward her two big homes between Taiwan and Belgium, can be expressed by the sentence that "*Taiwanese for being, and Belgian for learning*." She shared the meaning and perceptions of the "Taiwanese" part of her identity as follow:

> *Just like I said, I came from and grew up in Taiwan; my roots are there because my family is still there, and before I emigrated to Belgium, I am part of them. So, when people ask who I am, I would say I am Taiwanese. Moreover, I like and value the culture, rituals, and life experiences in Taiwan. Even though I have already lived in Belgium for more than 40 years, I sometimes recall childhood memories of playing with my little brother and the time I stayed with my parents in Taiwan and Yilan. I cannot throw them away; these are the basic parts of myself and my roots. That would not easily change or be changed because of moving. No! I think that these are the basic ingredients that make me complete and show my origins.*

It is clear that Zhang connects the "Taiwanese" part of her identity to her culture and consanguinity and also emphasizes that this part of her "Taiwanese" identity is not

easy to change since these origins and kinships are the basic ingredients and primordial attachments that make her complete. In this regard, Zhang's perspective of her "Taiwanese" identity is aligned with the ethnonational identity theory of primordialism. Primordialism believes that people's ethnonational identity is fixed and unchangeable since the identity is based on primordial objects such as biological factors, kinships, territorial location, and so forth (Keyes,1976).



Figure 4.4 The Song of Lovely Annong River posted on Zhang's Facebook page
Source: Screenshot made by the author from Aunt Zhang's Facebook, with authorization to use.

In addition to the primordial aspect of her Taiwanese identity, Zhang further describes how she presents her "Taiwanese-ness" in daily life and how she recalls memories of childhood experiences in Taiwan:

In my daily life, my family and I mostly eat Taiwanese foods at home. My husband and I watch Taiwanese TV programs, especially political talk shows, every night. As you know, most of my friends also came from Taiwan, and the activities I attend are related to Taiwan. When I have free time, I listen to Taiwanese songs and I really like the song called "幸福安農溪" [The Lovely Annong River]. It is a river

in my hometown in Sanxing Township, Yilan. Every time when I listen to this song, I recall memories of my little brother and I fishing by the river and going to school along the river every morning when I was a student in the primary school.

The primordial objects, daily practices, and childhood memories are vital components that constitute Zhang's Taiwanese identity. This does not mean that her identity would not change after immigration since in most cases of international movement, people may encounter different cultures and have to negotiate differences between heritage and host cultures. In this regard, I was curious about Zhang's sense of identity. Does she regard herself as "Taiwanese"? Or does she regard herself as "Belgian," or does she have another way to depict the ethnonational identity she possesses? She replied:

I think I would never be totally Belgian because when the local Belgians see my black hair and eyes and my Asian face, and listen to my poor French, they definitely would not regard me as Belgian. I think that is fine because I do not consider myself Belgian either, but I try to act and be more like as them. For example, I am still in the process of learning French, their lifestyle, and culture; I imitate their mindset and how they think, and so on. So, I would not say "I am half Taiwanese and half Belgian" because "I am Taiwanese" but I do my best to learn to act like a "Belgian."

According to Zhang's narratives, the ethnonational identity is a learning and negotiation process since people's ethnonational identity is not only determined by ourselves but also influenced by how others regard us. In other words, ethnonational identity has a double-sided nature in that others, as well as us, are involved in the process of identity formation. People's identity is a temporary outcome that intersubjectively be constructed by us and others (Jenkins, 1996). Taking Zhang as an example, on the one hand, she considers herself "Taiwanese" rather than "Belgian," but on the other hand, other Belgians do not regard her as "Belgian" either because Zhang is different from Belgians in her appearance, use of language, mentality, and so forth. Although Zhang and other Belgians do not regard her as Belgian, it is interesting to

point out that in her narratives, she emphasized that she would do her best to learn to act like a Belgian. This aroused my curiosity. Why does she want to do this? What does she mean by learning to act like a Belgian? She replied as follows:

> *Although I am Taiwanese, I have already lived here for more than 40 years so the local Belgians expect me to be or at least act like as them. For example, how they think, how they solve problems, or how they do business. As a restaurateur, I also have some local customers, and sometimes I have to do business with Belgians; it is necessary to know more about Belgian people and learn how to deal with problems or do business in more Belgian ways and styles. When you can make local Belgians think you know them, then it would be more likely to be accepted by them, and furthermore establish closer relationships with them. However, doing so does not means that I have to change my "real" and original identity; the aim is to fulfill and respond to local Belgians' expectations of me and make my business run more smoothly*.

In this paragraph, Zhang shares her situational and instrumental ethnonational identity performance strategy by learning how Belgians think, how they solve problems, how they do business, how they communicate, and so forth. For Zhang, the aim is not to change her original identity but to make Zhang and her local customers feel closer and let her local Belgian customers think Zhang is familiar with them and can understand Belgian styles of communication and ways of doing things. Thus, Zhang's identity performance is a strategic behavior to assist her business with local Belgian customers rather than change her original ethnonational identity or her perceptions regarding ethnic boundaries between her and local Belgians. Her strategic identity performance behavior is in line with the instrumentalism perspective of identity theory. This viewpoint argues that people choose to show different aspects of their ethnonational identities to respond to different live circumstances and to achieve individual optimization goals. Taking Zhang as an example, she may realize that when interacting with her Taiwanese contacts, it is appropriate to act like a Taiwanese person and perform the "Taiwanese" part of her identity since, on the one hand, she could feel comfortable and safe in doing so, and on the other hand, performing her Taiwanese

identity is more acceptable when interacting with her Taiwanese peers and within the Taiwanese diaspora community. By contrast, when Zhang is interacting and doing business with her local Belgian customers, then she may find that it is more appropriate for her to act like a Belgian since she has the intention to make her relationships with the local customers closer. However, instrumentalism argues that strategic identity performance behavior is temporary and mainly based on people's rational calculations. People choose to present different dimensions of their ethnonational identity to secure maximum material or non-material benefits. Thus, people's ethnonational identity performances are strategic, rational, and also situational. People's identity is not static, rather it is dynamic and changeable since people face different circumstances and need to adapt in order to respond to practical needs in daily life (Liu, 2011; Bačová, 1998).

In her life as an immigrant, Zhang has to negotiate two different ethnonational identities: Taiwanese and Belgian. Moreover, Zhang gradually found that she is different from those of her Mainland Chinese friends and counterparties based on her daily interaction experiences with them. Zhang's experiences of encountering with the Mainland Chinese people in her everyday life have become as her references that serving to distinguish the differences between her and the immigrants from Mainland China, and further influence her perceptions about the ethnic boundaries between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese. With regard to the differences between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese immigrants, she draws an ethnic boundary between these two groups of people on the basis of the following references: sense of humor, level of aggression, and attitude to money. Thus, she explained her perceptions about the differences between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese as follows:

> *I have to say these are based on my own and personal experiences; I would not say all the Mainland Chinese are all the same. Compared to Taiwanese, first of all, I think my Mainland Chinese friends have a less developed sense of humor; it is more difficult for me to say something interesting or just for fun with them…I do not know…maybe it is because most of my Mainland Chinese friends are elderly and like me nearly 70 years old. They are more serious when we interact. Moreover, I think they are more aggressive, especially when we discuss topics related to politics or the relations between Taiwan and Mainland China. You know, for us*

(means Taiwanese), even if someone holds very different viewpoints from us, we do not interrupt them when they are talking. However, several of my Mainland Chinese friends, when we talk about the issues regarding Taiwan and the relations between Taiwan and Mainland China, they become pretty impatient and even could not accept the perspectives I share with them because the viewpoints I provided are pretty different from those they got from their government or media. It is really difficult for me to share my thoughts with them. Moreover, I think my Mainland Chinese friends put more emphasis on money; they always put money first and consider everything from the perspective of money. But I could imagine why, because like I said most of my Mainland Chinese friends are in my age. Before migrating to Belgium, they really experienced a very tough time in China.

By contrast, I think Taiwanese have more sense of humor; people interact with each other in more unofficial ways…and Taiwanese are more friendly; we seldom show the aggressive part of ourselves even if others hold very different points of view from us. Indeed, Taiwanese do not take money as importantly as Mainland Chinese do. Overall, I feel more comfortable interacting with Taiwanese rather than Mainland Chinese…and I think Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese are really different when it comes to these characteristics.

The narratives above reveal that Zhang does not apply macro or large cultural, political, or historical objects as references to draw ethnic boundaries; she distinguishes differences between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese based on real and everyday life experiences of interacting with her Mainland Chinese counterparts.

Furthermore, regarding Zhang's ethnonational identity, during the interview, I invited Zhang to share her perceptions about two different identities: Chinese and Taiwanese. I asked Zhang about this because before she left Taiwan in 1979, she had had been educated in the Kuomintang's Chinese nationalist education system from primary to high school for more than a decade. One of the aims of the Kuomintang's Chinese nationalist education system was to persuade people in Taiwan to identify themselves as "Chinese" rather than "Taiwanese." Many people in Taiwan during the period from the 1950s to the early 1970s accepted the identity label of Chinese and also

recognized themselves as ethnic "Chinese" or at least as "both Chinese and Taiwanese" (Hsiau, 2005). Influenced by the Kuomintang's education system, Zhang might also be expected to identify herselves as ethnic "Chinese" rather than "Taiwanese." In the interview, she said, "…in 1979 and the early 1980s, I did really consider myself as "Chinese."

However, she experienced significant changes regarding her ethnonational identity from the mid-1980s since at the time she got more involved with the "Taiwanese Association in Belgium (TAB)" and with publishing the magazine of *Courrier des Formosans* (鄉訊). She further doubted her original ethnonational identity as ethnic "Chinese" since more and more new immigrants emigrated to Belgium from Mainland China from the 1980s once the Chinese government implemented its open door and economic reform policies (Pang, 2008). When the Mainland Chinese immigrants also called themselves "Chinese," it made Zhang feel confused about who were the real Chinese. Was she Chinese too? Or was she different from the Chinese who came from Mainland China? These ethnonational identity problems really confused and bothered Zhang at the time, and because of this confusion and more active participation in the TAB, Zhang gradually shifted her ethnonational identity from identifying herself as "Chinese" to "Taiwanese." She shared her confusion:

> I have to say that I really identified as ethnic "Chinese" before I left Taiwan and emigrated to Belgium. Because, you know, when I was a student, the government, school, and teachers all taught us that "we are Chinese," so I think it was pretty common for the people in Taiwan to identify themselves as "Chinese" at the time, from the 1950s to 1960s. However, after I emigrated to Belgium, I started to feel confused about my "Chinese identity" because more and more Chinese immigrants emigrated to Belgium in 1980s and I found that we (people from Taiwan) were not the only group of people that claimed to be "Chinese." The immigrants from Mainland China also claimed that "they are Chinese." You know, when two different groups of people hold the same identity label, then it definitely causes some conflicts. Because of that I started to doubt my "Chinese" identity and I gradually felt that I am different from the immigrants who came from Mainland China. Moreover, participating in the TAB and assisting in publishing

Courrier des Formosans [鄉訊] influenced me a lot. The people at the TAB and *Courrier des Formosans* provided very different points of view to the Kuomintang and of course also very different points of view to the People's Republic of China (PRC) regarding issues about who we are, and what are the relations between Taiwan and China. The people at the TAB and at the magazine told us that "we (means people from Taiwan) are not Chinese, we are Taiwanese." These thoughts really influenced me at that time, and I gradually felt that "I am not Chinese, I am Taiwanese."

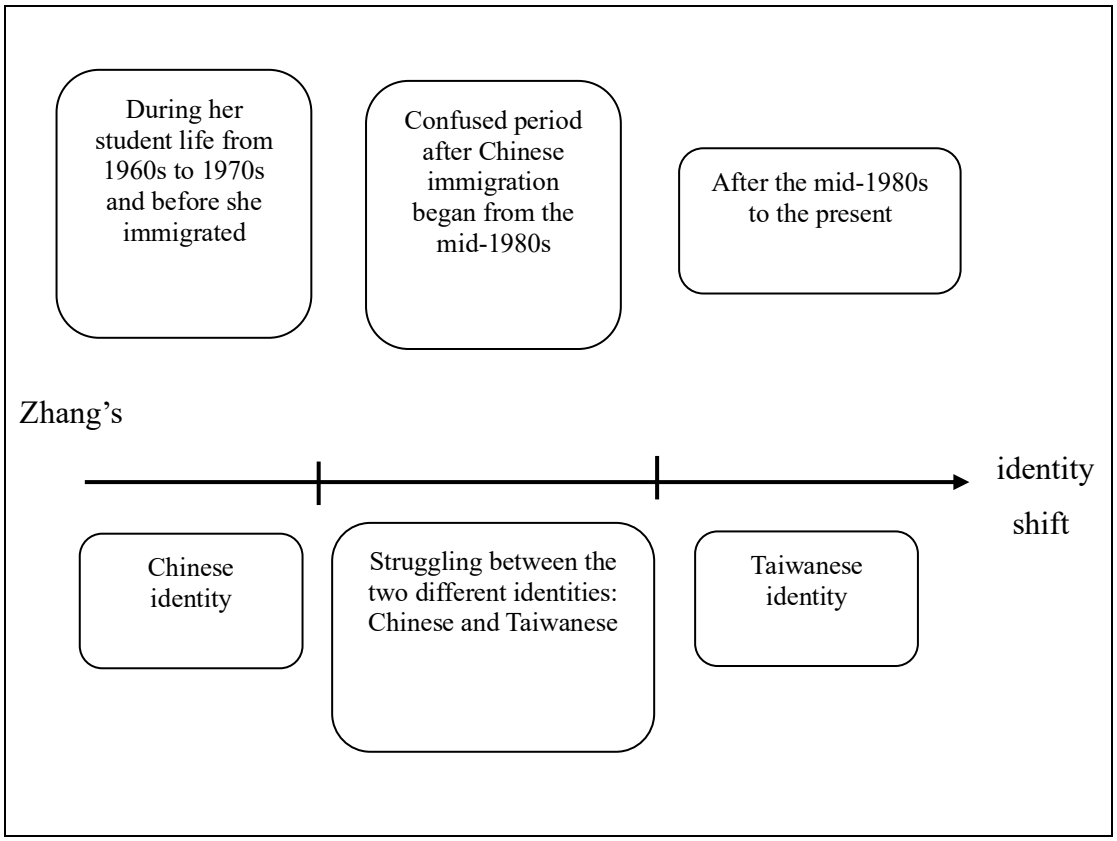


Figure 4.5 Zhang's ethno-national identity shift

Source: This study.

It is important to understand the history of TAB and the magazine *Courrier des Formosans*. In fact, the TAB was the first Taiwanese immigrants' organization in Europe. It was established by several first-generation of Taiwanese students and early immigrants in 1971, and Zhang's husband (Mrs. Ho) was one of the most important members in the organization. These early Taiwanese immigrants and students published the first magazine that focused only on Taiwan and information about Taiwanese

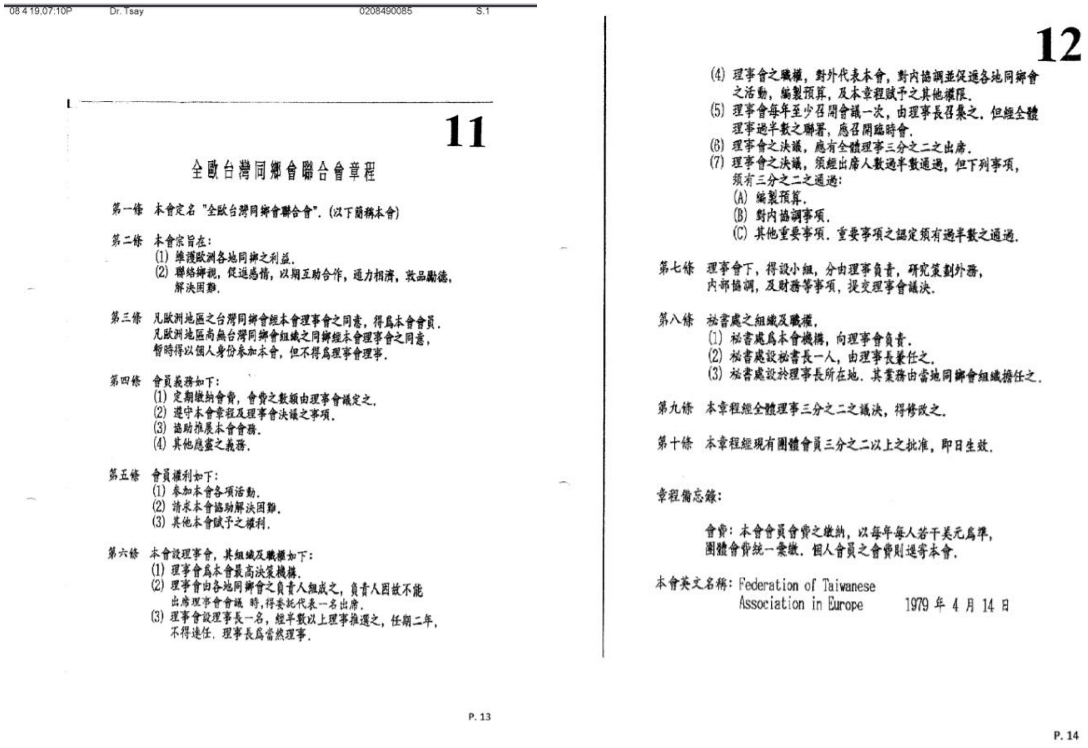
communities around Europe. The TAB and *Courrier des Formosans* played very important role connecting Taiwanese immigrants in different countries since at the time there were no convenient and cheap internet services or social media platforms. Encouraged by the development of the TAB and *Courrier des Formosans* in Belgium, Taiwanese immigrants in other European countries started to establish their own Taiwanese associations in their host societies. Between 1971 to 1972, several Taiwanese associations were established in France, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany. Also, importantly, in December 1971, Taiwanese immigrants from different European countries gathered in Frankfurt and announced the establishment of the Federation of Taiwanese Associations in Europe (FTAE) and then published their organizational rules in 1979 (Ho, 2020). However, the organization changed its original name to a new one, European Federation of Taiwanese Associations (EFTA), in 1996, and this new name is still used today (EFTA, 2020).

Since Zhang's husband (Mr. Ho) was a vital and active member of the organization, she recalled the memories of the organization's history and establishment:

> *My husband really spent lot of time on the affairs of this organization and also gathered the Belgian-Taiwanese students and immigrants at that time together to study some "sensitive books." My husband was really devoted to these activities. You know, because of this organization and these study activities, my husband was listed on the Kuomintang government's "blacklist." My husband became an un-welcome person to the Kuomintang government; we couldn't go back to Taiwan for nearly 10 years because of his reputation*.

> *You know, in the very beginning, I did not participate in the organization and study activities very much, I just sat to one side and listened to what they said and what are they talked about! In fact, it really shocked me at that time, because they shared very different viewpoints from what the Kuomintang government had taught and told me before. I have to admit that I was influenced by them, started to doubt my original identity, and started asking myself questions like "am I really Chinese? Why can I not say I am Taiwanese?" Moreover, another thing that really influenced me a lot was that my husband could not go back to Taiwan and visit his*

family just because he participated in the establishment of the organization and studied some books. For me, it was not reasonable.



08:4 19.07:10P Dr. Tsay 0208490085 S.1

11

全歐台灣同鄉會聯合會章程

第一條 本會定名"全歐台灣同鄉會聯合會".(以下簡稱本會)

第二條 本會宗旨在:
(1) 維護歐洲各地同鄉之利益.
(2) 聯絡鄉誼,促進感情,以期互助合作,通力相濟,敦品勵德,解決困難.

第三條 凡歐洲地區之台灣同鄉會經本會理事會之同意,得爲本會會員.
凡歐洲地區尚無台灣同鄉會組織之同鄉經本會理事會之同意,暫時得以個人身份參加本會,但不得爲理事會理事.

第四條 會員義務如下:
(1) 定期繳納會費,會費之數額由理事會議定之.
(2) 遵守本會章程及理事會決議之事項.
(3) 協助推展本會會務.
(4) 其他應盡之義務.

第五條 會員權利如下:
(1) 參加本會各項活動.
(2) 請求本會協助解決困難.
(3) 其他本會賦予之權利.

第六條 本會設理事會,其組織及職權如下:
(1) 理事會爲本會最高決策機構.
(2) 理事會由各地同鄉會之負責人組成之,負責人因故不能出席理事會會議 時,得委託代表一名出席.
(3) 理事會設理事長一名,經半數以上理事推選之,任期二年,不得連任.理事長爲當然理事.

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(4) 理事會之職權,對外代表本會,對內協調並促進各地同鄉會之活動,編製預算,及本章程賦予之其他權限.
(5) 理事會每年至少召開會議一次,由理事長召集之.但經全體理事過半數之聯署,應召開臨時會.
(6) 理事會之決議,應有全體理事三分之二之出席.
(7) 理事會之決議,須經出席人數過半數通過,但下列事項,須有三分之二之通過:
(A) 編製預算.
(B) 對內協調事項.
(C) 其他重要事項.重要事項之認定須有過半數之通過.

第七條 理事會下,得設小組,分由理事負責,研究策劃外務,內部協調,及財務等事項,提交理事會議決.

第八條 秘書處之組織及職權.
(1) 秘書處爲本會機構,向理事會負責.
(2) 秘書處設秘書長一人,由理事長兼任之.
(3) 秘書處設於理事長所在地.其業務由當地同鄉會組織擔任之.

第九條 本章程經全體理事三分之二之議決,得修改之.

第十條 本章程經現有團體會員三分之二以上之批准,即日生效.

章程備忘錄:

會費:本會會員會費之繳納,以每年每人若干美元爲準,團體會費統一彙繳.個人會員之會費則逕寄本會.

本會英文名稱: Federation of Taiwanese Association in Europe 1979 年 4 月 14 日

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Figure 4.6 The FTAE's organizational rules in 1979

Source: EFTA (2020).

Zhang's narratives show that participation in the TBA organization really influenced her perceptions of the ethnonational identity, and the differences between Chinese and Taiwanese, which further led her to undergo self-reflection about the ethnonational identity she had at the time. In addition, the interaction with immigrants from Mainland China that were discussed in previous paragraphs also made her feel that she was not like them in terms of personal characteristics, mentality, ideas, lifestyle, and, more importantly, political attitudes and ideology. The combination of participation in the organization and her daily interactions with Mainland Chinese gradually changed her ethnonational identity from an initial identification as Chinese to a Taiwanese identity. In other words, Zhang really experienced an ethnonational identity and boundary shift by applying the "fission" identity negotiation strategy proposed by Wimmer (2008). Fission means that people construct or add a new identity to replace an old one, and that the new identity scheme is different from or even

contradicts the previous one.

Table 4.1 Zhang's experience of identity negotiation and performance

Zhang's multidimensional ethno-national identity performance and negotiation experiences	**Explanations**
Primordial aspect of Zhang's Taiwanese identity	Zhang tends to connect her Taiwanese identity with origins and consanguinities; she emphasized that her Taiwanese identity is in her roots and is not easily changed.
Negotiating "Taiwanese" and "Belgian" identities	In Zhang's everyday life, she found that people's identity is not only determined by oneself — it is affected by how others regard us. Identity is an intersubjective production outcome that is based on people's interpersonal interaction experiences.
Situational and instrumental identity performance	Since Zhang has already lived in Belgium more than 40 years, she has tried to learn how to act more like a Belgian and apply the Belgian way of doing business to create closer relations with local friends and to facilitate business relations with her Belgian customers.
Ethnic boundary negotiation via previous interactional experiences with Mainland Chinese friends	Zhang further makes distinctions between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese based on experiences of interacting with her Mainland Chinese friends.
Ethnic identity and boundary shift from "Chinese" to "Taiwanese"	Influenced by the experience of participating in the TAB organization

	and her daily interactions with Mainland Chinese counterparts, Zhang gradually changed her ethno-national identity from “Chinese” to “Taiwanese.”

Source: This study

4.2.7. Summary

Zhang’s narratives of life as an immigrant reveals the nature of her home-making experiences. The meaning of home for Zhang is fluid and multidimensional, Her stories show that her home-making experiences are not neutral or unidirectional but are influenced by individual circumstances, experiences of moving, and other intersectional personal backgrounds.

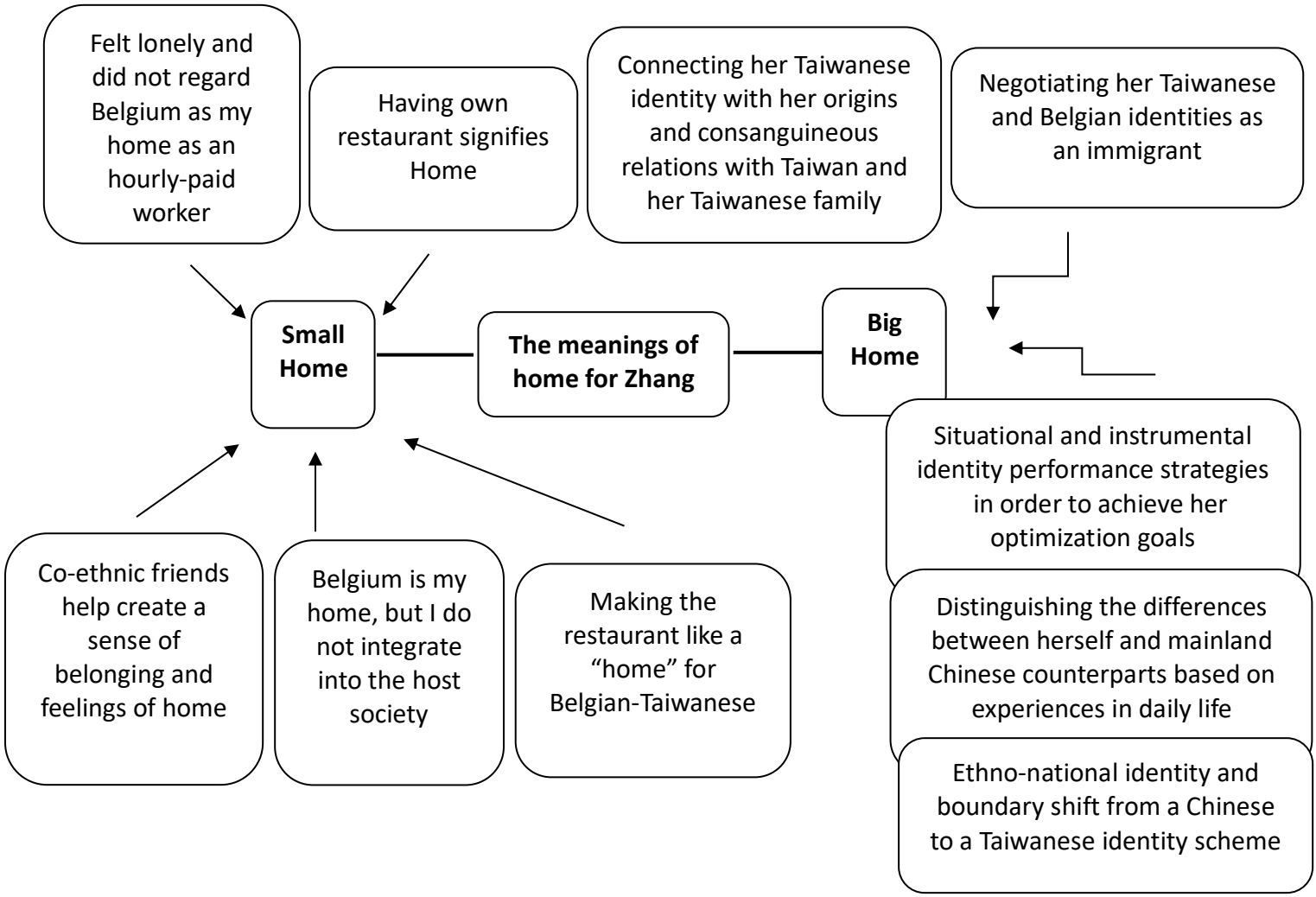


Figure 4.7 The intersectional meanings of home for Zhang

Source: This study

When Zhang emigrated with her husband to Belgium in 1979, the main goal for them, and especially for her, was to earn money and improve their economic situation. Belgian society at the time was experiencing rapid service industry growth following de-industrialization, which created many opportunities for people (including immigrants) to enter the service industry (Pang, 2003). Taking advantage of these opportunities for economic development, Zhang and her husband easily found jobs working in the Chinese catering industry. However, at the beginning, Zhang and her husband were hourly-paid workers. They had to do several part-time jobs at the same time, usually in different places. It is important to note that according to Zhang's narratives, she could earn quite good money as an hourly-paid worker, but she felt

lonely and did not have a sense of belonging toward Belgium: the life of an hourly-paid worker made her feel like just a sojourner. She did not regard Belgium as her home either. However, after several years' hard work, Zhang and her husband eventually saved enough money to open their own restaurant in Brussels. Having their own restaurant meant a lot to Zhang. On the one hand, she and her husband did not have to work separately; they could work together at their own restaurant and also take care of their children. On the other hand, since Zhang could work with her husband and stay with their children together at the restaurant, she developed an emotional attachment to their restaurant and Belgium. Since Zhang and her husband opened their own restaurant, she gradually acquired feelings of home because of the intimate family relations. Having their own restaurant for Zhang signifies home. The restaurant was a link connecting the relationships and emotions between Zhang and her family and also between Zhang and the place of Belgium. However, limited by the long working hours in the catering industry, Zhang spent most of her time working, which had some negative impacts on her life. The most obvious one is that she did not have enough time for socializing; other restaurateurs were the best partners for socializing since they shared similar living and working conditions. Zhang's friendships and social networks in Belgian society mainly consisted with co-ethnic friends who also came from Taiwan and were affiliated with the catering industry. Zhang's networks were limited, but since these restaurateurs shared plenty of similarities with Zhang, she maintained frequent interactions with them. Moreover, socializing and maintaining relationships with her co-ethnic and restaurateur friends helped her to acquire feelings of home in her immigrant life.

Zhang's narratives reveal an interesting element of self-reflection that she separates feelings of home and integration. Although she already regarded Belgium as her home since she had lived for more than four decades, Zhang did not deem that she had integrated into the Belgian host society successfully. However, more recently she made reflected deeply on her life and felt apologetic toward the host society because of she started to think *"how could I neglect the place I live since this place provides me with plenty of opportunities, social welfare, and so on, and this is the place where I have spent the majority of my lifetime*." According to Zhang's reflections about her limited integration, she tried to change her attitude toward Belgium and applied a

special strategy to show her appreciation and thankfulness and make a contribution to the Belgian host society by opening her restaurant to the public, especially to the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant community by organizing parties for Taiwanese immigrants during the Lunar New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Moon Festival. On these three special events, Zhang opened their restaurant and invited the Taiwanese in Belgium to come and eat together totally for free. Zhang's motivation, on the one hand, is to show her appreciation to the host society. On the other hand, she likes to turn her restaurant into a collective social space or even a "home" for Belgian-Taiwanese to meet and chat with each other.

With respect to Zhang's ethnonational identity and her sense of belonging, she demonstrated various ways to negotiate and perform her identity. First of all, she tends to connect her Taiwanese identity with her heritage and consanguineous relationships with Taiwan, her Taiwanese background, and family. She emphasized that the Taiwanese part of her identity would not be easy to change or throw away because it does not only represent where she came from but is also the basic element which makes her complete, especially with respect to her ethnonational identity. However, since she already lived in Belgium for more than 40 years, the manner in which she negotiated two different identities, Taiwanese and Belgian, is an interesting and important question. Zhang indicated that "*she does not regard herself as Belgian, but her Belgian counterparties do not consider her as Belgian either*." Her experiences of negotiating these two identities and how others see her reflect the fact that identity is not determined solely by oneself but is influenced by others. In other words, people's identity is an outcome of a mutual and intersubjective construction process rather than a static or self-determined product. Although Zhang does not regard herself as Belgian, she has tried to learn to act like a Belgian since this identity performance behavior for her is a strategy. This strategic identity performance behavior assists her to form closer relationships with her local Belgian friends and customers. Moreover, it is good for her catering business. In Zhang's daily life, negotiating her ethnonational identity as either Taiwanese or Chinese is another vital issue. Zhang makes a distinction between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese based on her daily interaction experiences with her Mainland Chinese counterparties according to the differences in personal characteristics, mentality, and political attitudes and ideology. These references allow

her to draw an ethnic boundary between Taiwanese and Chinese. Finally, Zhang's experience of participating in the TAB organization and her daily interactions with Mainland Chinese are vital vehicles for Zhang to understand that she is different from Mainland Chinese, which eventually made her shift her original Chinese identity to a Taiwanese identity.

In summary, Zhang's stories of immigrant life demonstrate that the meanings of home (both of her small and big home) for her are not fixed but change according to her live circumstances and practical needs. Moreover, her distinct personal circumstances (including working and living conditions, gender, ethnicity, and so on) further intersectionally affect Zhang's home-making experiences.

4.3 Case Two: Alice Ho

- **Alice Ho's demographic information**
- Gender: Female
- Age: 70
- Year of immigration: 1976
- Job: Retired from the catering industry after operating restaurant for nearly four decades.
- Marital and family relationships: Taiwanese husband, two sons, and one grandchild (boy)

4.3.1 The background of Ho's family and the reasons for leaving Taiwan

In my interview with Alice Ho, she emphasized that before talking about her life as an immigrant in Belgium, " *it is also important to know where my family came from and what kind of childhood and life I had before emigrating to Belgium*," and shared with me information about her family's background and the experience of immigration from Mainland China to Taiwan because of the civil war between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949:

I think before explaining why I decided to leave Taiwan and emigrate to Belgium, I would like to share what my family was and what my life was like before I emigrated to Belgium in 1974.

…in fact, my Mom and Dad were Chinese immigrants who came to Taiwan with the Kuomintang government in 1949 after the Kuomintang lost the civil war with the Communist party in Mainland China. At that time, my father was a government employee working in a public bank. Before they emigrated to Taiwan, they had two boys, who are my first and second elder brothers. However, when the war got worse, my father had no choice but to follow the Kuomintang government to Taiwan. My mom told me what a struggle it was…at the time, because of the war, they had to decide which children they wanted to take with them. However, as my second elder brother was too little to emigrate and move to Taiwan at the time, my parents had no choice but to take my oldest brother to Taiwan and let my second brother stay in Mainland China with my mother's elder sister (she decided to stay in Mainland China rather than emigrate to Taiwan).

According to Ho's narratives, the members of her family were not local to Taiwan; instead they emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan because of the war. After the Kuomintang lost the civil war against the CCP in 1949, some 1.1 million Mainland Chinese residents emigrated to Taiwan between the end of the 1940s to the 1950s. These Mainland Chinese immigrants were mainly from the provinces of Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Guangdong, and Shandong; immigrants from these five provinces made up more than half (57.7%) of the Mainland Chinese immigrants who came to Taiwan at that time. Nearly 40 percent of the Mainland Chinese immigrants at the time lived in Taipei and the surrounding areas. The Kuomintang government took over one million Mainland Chinese to Taiwan in 10 years from the 1940s to the 1950s. This was the greatest ever wave of immigration to Taiwan and because it occurred over such a short period, it rapidly and significantly changed the demographic makeup of Taiwan, especially the ethnic composition of the population. Before this wave of immigration, the main ethnic groups in Taiwan were aboriginals, living mainly in mountainous areas; the Holo, who emigrated from Fujian and Guangdong in Mainland China to Taiwan

starting in the 17th century; and the Hakka, who emigrated to Taiwan even earlier than the Holo people and mainly came from the mountainous parts of Fujian and Guangdong in Mainland China. However, after 1949, the million new Mainland Chinese immigrants who emigrated to Taiwan constituted a new ethnic group was called as "Mainlanders," and "外省人" (wài shěng rén) in Chinese. This new ethnic group of Chinese "Mainlanders" became a new and critically important ethnic group in Taiwanese society since the total population at that time was still less than 10 million, which means that the "Mainlanders" made up more than 10 percent of the total population in the 1950s (Corcuff, 2000).

After explaining her family's backgrounds and the experiences of immigration from Mainland China, Ho shared stories about her birth and study lifetime at college and the reasons that motivated her to make a decision to leave Taiwan and emigrate to Belgium:

> *…and about me, I was born in 1950, which was one year after the civil war so in my memory, my family and I lived in an apartment in poor condition, which had been built by the Japanese colonial government for their government staff at that time in Taipei. You know, we did not even have a whole house. All five members of my family lived in a small room within a building, and there were several different families living together with us in the house. Can you imagine that we did not even have our own lavatory? So, you can imagine how difficult the living circumstances at that time were, especially my family's economic condition…*

In the post war period, most people in Taiwan did not enjoy good economic conditions. The "Mainlanders" who emigrated to Taiwan with the Kuomintang government comprised two types of people. The biggest group, making up nearly half of the total number, was made up of male soldiers. The other half of the immigrant population comprised ordinary people with different careers, but about 40 percent of them were the government employees. In other words, soldiers and government employees comprised the majority of the Chinese "Mainlanders" (林桶法，2018). Although Ho's father was a government employee, he did not get a high salary from the government. However, compared with other people in Taiwan and other occupations,

government employees at that time were an economically advantaged group (Su & Yu, 2007). She modestly stated:

> *…my parents were not rich at the time; however, because my dad worked in a government department, his small salary could still provide for me to complete my college degree. At the time, I studied French at Tamkang University. After I completed my college degree, I told my father that I wanted to leave Taiwan and go overseas. He did not say too much but just told me, " I, as your father, I do not have money to support your decision, you can only do it by yourself.*"

After sharing information about her background, Ho explained the reason she decided to leave Taiwan and start her international journey. Economic and political aspects were the two most important push factors that facilitated Ho to leave Taiwan:

> *…you know, at that time in the 1970s, I was just only 20 something; I could not feel that I had a future in Taiwan since Taiwan faced lot of economic and political constraints. At the time, people in Taiwan were still poor and the political atmosphere was also very unstable. People at the time were very afraid that Taiwan would disappear. Thus, I decided to go overseas for economic and political reasons …*

Hung (2006) points out that from the 1970s to the early 2000s, Taiwan experienced three out-bound waves of emigration. First, in the early 1970s, Taiwan faced political turmoil. The most serious incident was the replacement of the Kuomintang government's seat in the United Nation by the Chinese Communist party. Since that time, more and more countries in the world recognized the People's Republic of China as the only legal authority and regime that could represent the whole of China and the Chinese people. The Kuomintang government in Taiwan gradually lost its legitimacy in international society and the ability to argue that it also could represent the Chinese people in Taiwan. This disadvantageous political situation for the Kuomintang government and Taiwanese society became a push factor for Taiwanese choosing to leave their home country. Many Taiwanese people emigrated to Southeast Asia and

Hong Kong. The second wave of immigration happened in 1979, when the United States decided to cut off their diplomatic relationship with the Kuomintang government in Taiwan and instead establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communist party in Mainland China. Since the United States had close relations with the government in Taiwan, the severance of diplomatic relations had a significant impact on Taiwanese society and the people of Taiwan. The most obvious effect at the time was the decreased confidence of the Taiwanese people in their own country. In this wave of immigration, the majority chose to emigrate to the United States and Canada. The last wave happened in the late 1990s to the early 2000s. At this time, Taiwan experienced a number of severe criminal incidents, which made some middle-class Taiwanese lose confidence in the government and decide to leave for countries including the USA, Canada, Australia, and other English-speaking countries. According to Hung's classification, Alice Ho belonged to the first wave of out-bound emigration in that she decided to leave Taiwan because of the poor economic conditions and the disadvantageous political situation that the Kuomintang government faced at the time.

4.3.2 "For building a new home in Belgium, I feel sorry for my sons"

In fact, Alice Ho did not emigrate to Belgium directly; she went to Paris first to study and met her husband (a Taiwanese man) there. After completing their studies in Paris, they decided to get married and after that emigrated to Belgium. Moreover, as with other Taiwanese restaurateurs, Ho and her husband did not directly invest in their own restaurant since at the time they did not have enough money to do so. Like other members of the first generation of Taiwanese restaurateurs who emigrated to Belgium in 1970s, they firstly worked as hourly-paid workers in Chinese restaurants owned by other immigrants from Mainland China. She commented as follows:

> *…Before I emigrated to Belgium, I studied French in Paris from 1972 to 1974 and at that time I met my husband (a Taiwanese man). After we completed our studies in Paris we got married and decided to emigrate to Belgium. For the first several years both of us worked as hourly-paid workers in other people's Chinese restaurants. After several years of hard work, we saved some money, and both of us borrowed some money from our families. We opened our own restaurants firstly*

in Brussels, and later we moved to Liege and opened the other one.

After Ho and her husband opened their own restaurant, both of them spent the majority of their time operating their catering business. Her husband took responsibility for cooking, and Ho took charge of the front desk and reception. The restaurant was operated by both Ho and her husband in the main, but they still employed some hourly-paid workers to help. Ho explained her busy daily schedule, which lasted from the morning to the middle of the night:

…you know, as restaurateurs, both my husband and I spent most of our time working and keeping the restaurant going. I can tell you how I lived and worked every day before I retired from the industry several years ago. I woke up around 6–7am and started to buy and prepare the ingredients for the opening at 11 am. Then we had two hours break from 3 to 5pm; then we needed to prepare for the business at night from 6pm to midnight. I usually went to bed and went to sleep at 2 or even 3am. So, everyday I could just have around four to five hours' sleep and I had to work around 14 to 16 hours… it was really tiring…

She explained the reason she and her husband had to work in such an intensive way at the time and shared her thoughts about how the restaurant working conditions and the characteristics of the catering industry had a negative impact on the relationship between them and their children and left them little time to be concerned about their children's education:

Maybe you question why I had to work so long? That was because at the time my husband and I really wanted to buy our own house, so we kept our restaurant open for a long time. Our intention was to earn enough to improve our family's economic situation and buy our own house as soon as possible. I felt sorry for both of my sons. When they were born, my husband and I were too busy to take care of them, so we made a very tough decision to send them to a nanny during the day and night from Monday to Friday. We had very limited time to stay with my boys on the weekends. Then, when they were of school age, we sent them to boarding school. They only came back home on weekends, so I have to say, honestly and

sadly, that because at the time my husband and I were too focused on our restaurant business, we did not have enough time to take care of and be with our sons. It really had a bad impact on our relationship. Our sons are not really close with us. Every time I think about that I feel very sorry for them…

In her famous paper, Pang (2007) noted both the positive and negative aspects of the Belgian pan-Chinese restaurateurs' experience. On the positive side, these pan-Chinese restaurateurs successfully improved their families' economic situations. However, this was based on the cost of long working hours, limited family interaction, and absence from Belgian mainstream society, which contributed to their "invisible" social status and reduced their ability to achieve upward social mobility in mainstream society. Moreover, Ho's narrative demonstrates another negative impact on the relationship between restaurateur immigrant parents and their descendants due to the long working hours characteristic of the catering industry.

In order to avoid repeating the same mistakes after retirement, Ho and her husband have spent most of their time staying with their grandchild. This behavior means a lot to them. Staying with their grandchild is like a "compensation behavior," toward their sons. By spending more time on their grandchild, they expect that their grandchild could have a better life and achieve higher levels of social integration than his parents and his first- generation immigrant grandparents do. She stated:

thus, in order to avoid the same situation happening again, my husband and I have spent the majority of our time taking care of and staying with our grandchild (their oldest boy's son) and teaching him Chinese. I think it is some kind of compensation to compensate for the things we have not done for our sons so we do it for our grandchildren and we also expect that our grandchild could have a different childhood and family relations compared with their fathers…

In fact, during my fieldwork and based on my interview experiences, I found that many Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant parents shared a similar point of view that "*it is nearly impossible for the first-generation of immigrants to entirely integrate into the host and mainstream society since they are so different compared with locals. Maybe the second-generation could do better than their parents*." However, several of my

research participants believed that because the second-generation still did not have the same level of social resources as their local counterparts and because, in reality, the locals in the mainstream society would not really recognize second-generation children as being one of their number, it is also a difficult task for second-generation children to become fully integrated into the host society. The "third-generation argument" is a popular and acceptable viewpoint shared by many of my research participants, who consider that "*it needs to wait until the third-generation before people can really and fully integrate into the host society and be accepted by locals and recognized as part of the mainstream society*." This "third-generation integration argument" is not only held by Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants; similar arguments and research findings can also be found in Gu's (2017) study.

4.3.3 Letters from original family and international phone cards connect with and signify home

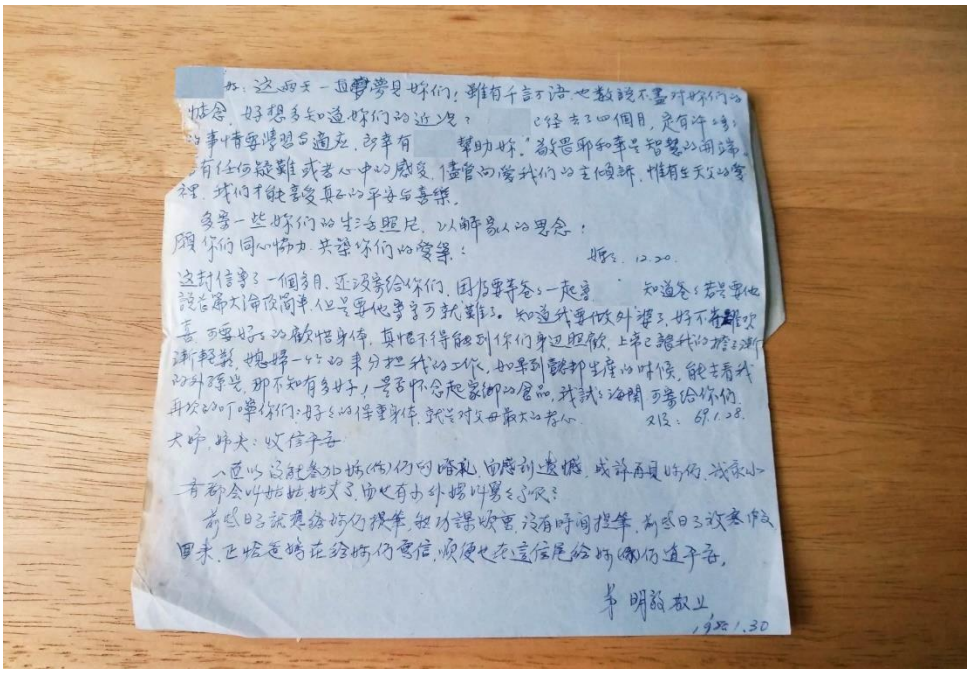
When I visited Alice Ho's house in Liege and interviewed her, she shared two objects with me and told me that these things really reminded her of Taiwan and helped her to have feelings about her original home in Taiwan. These objects are related to international communication: letters from family and international phone cards. Since international immigration means people leave their original home and build a new life abroad, maintaining connections with left-behind family members is always a difficult problem especially for immigrants who lived in the era before internet services and mobile phones. In fact, before the late 1980s, international phone calls were still very expensive and so letter writing was the alternative and affordable way to communicate. Alice Ho also had similar experiences of writing "home/family letters" and mailing them back by post from Belgium to her family in Taiwan. She stated:

> *…there are two other things that would really make me feel connected with home; these are home letters and international phone cards. You know when I left Taiwan, which was in the late 1970s, although international phone calls were possible, it cost a lot…I could not frequently connect with my family in Taiwan by international phone. Thus, I wrote letters and mailed them back to Taiwan by post. However, you know, at that time, exchanging letters and mail could take months*

so I could only contact them maybe once or twice a year by writing home/family letters…

In the interview, Ho showed me some pictures of letters from her family. One of these letters, which was written by her mom, younger sister, and brother in 1980, left an impression on me. In the letter, Ho's family show their feelings of caring and missing to her.

Figure 4.8 Alice Ho's letter from her family



Source: Provided by Alice Ho, with authorization to use.

Her mother wrote:

… these days I am always dreaming of you at night…I miss you so much…I really want to know how you are doing? It everything OKAY in Belgium? …and if it is possible, could you please send pictures in your next letter. Then I wouldn't miss my dear daughter so much.

Moreover, her younger brother wrote:

…it always takes months to get your news and reply…we really miss you…do you miss food from Taiwan? …if you really want to eat some Taiwanese food, I can try

to buy it and send it to you…and take care of yourself and your husband…look forward to hearing from you soon…

The contents of the letter from Alice Ho's family clearly show their sense of care and feelings of missing her, which means the letter functions as an emotional exchange. Ho further shared her feelings of receiving letters from her Taiwanese family:

…every time I got the letters from my Taiwanese family, my feelings were complex. On the one hand, I am happy to receive letters from them and know how they are in Taiwan; on the other hand, when I saw these letters and the news from my family, I would also feel sad and ask why I could not stay with them. However, I would not say anything bad to them; I just told them about the positive part of my life because I did not like them to worry about me, so in the initial years of my life as an immigrant in Belgium, every time I received my family's letters, I would cry in secret.

…moreover, to let them know my situation and also see how they were doing, we sometimes exchanged photos. I have to say that reading these letters from my Taiwanese family would really make me feel warm and feel like I was at home. It was like an emotional support for both me and my family.

It is interesting to note that Alice Ho acquires feelings of home and an emotional connection with her family in Taiwan via these material letters. The letters exchanged between Alice Ho and her family symbolized her home in her imagination. By exchanging letters, Alice Ho not only acquires feelings of home but also finds out how her family in Taiwan is doing. Chen (2012) makes similar findings about the role of letters from family in the life of immigrants. In her study, Chen examines how the Nanyang (南洋) migrant workers worked in the southern part of China make their home far away from their original home and get feelings of home and emotional support by writing and exchanging letters with their family lived in the Southeast Asia.

However, since international phone calls became cheaper in the late 1980s, Alice Ho contacted her family in Taiwan less and less by letter; instead, she made

international phone calls. However, before making a phone call, at the time, she had to buy an international phone card at the Chinese or Asian supermarket:

> *…from the late 1980s, international phone calls became more popular and most importantly cheaper. From that time, I contacted my Taiwanese family less by letter. Instead I made an international phone call to them. I still remember that at the time we needed to buy international phone cards at Chinese or Asian supermarkets first. Then I could make a phone call to my family. It is really different from writing a letter. In a phone call you can hear the voices of your family and respond to them immediately. At the time, I bought lot of international phone cards and every time I saw these cards, I would remember my Taiwanese family, and it made me feel warm and gave me feelings of home, even though I longer lived in Taiwan and was no longer with them*.

Alice Ho's narratives and Chen's (2012) study both echo the material culture approach, which claims that the meanings of material objects can be defined by the objects themselves but can also be created by people; material objects possess not only its physical value but embody a part of people's lives. In other words, the importance of a specific thing or material is not fully explained by the characteristics of the material itself; it is further determined by the people who use or own the objects (Miller, 1998). For others, these letters and phone cards might be just paper and plastic; however, these objects matter to Alice Ho, and each letter and international phone card is full of meaning and carries many feelings and memories. These letters and phone cards therefore reflect the connections between the notion of home and Ho's past and present life.

4.3.4 Emotional feelings about home, especially in Ho's parents' declining years

People do not only acquire feelings of home via some specific material objects; the notion of home for immigrants could also be related to people's emotional feelings. With respect to the relationship between home and emotions, Alice Ho explained how

her feelings and emotions about home changed at different stages of her life and how these were related to her parents' health:

> *…I think the meaning of home for me is changing. In the first several years after we started our new life in Belgium, I paid most of my attention to re-building my home here. I have to say that at the time I did not spend lot of time thinking about my original home in Taiwan, and also because of the limitations of the catering business, I did not return to Taiwan for more than 10 years in the processes…*

> *…however, when I turned 40 years old, I gradually found that…Wow! My Mom and Dad really got old. If I did not back go to Taiwan more often, I do not know how many times I could see them again. You know, at that time, I really struggled with the feeling that I was not a filial person since I did not go back to Taiwan frequently and take care of my parents. I left Taiwan when I was 20 something. When I experienced these moments of self-reflection, my parents were nearly 70. From then on, I decided to go back to Taiwan to see them more often, at least once a year.*

Alice Ho's narratives show that the meaning of home for her is not static; it can be influenced by people's age and by the focus of their life at the time. In general, when people are between 20 and 50, they may mainly focus on work and career development. Taking Ho as an example, when she was just 20, the focus of her life was to find opportunities, leave her original home in Taiwan, and go abroad to study and live. When she got married to her husband, decided to emigrate to Belgium, and started to operate their own restaurant, her focus was to earn as much money as possible in order to build her life as an immigrant in her new home in Belgium. In that period, her focus was on her home in Belgium rather than her original home in Taiwan. However, when she found that her parents were gradually getting older, she started to turn her focus back on her parents and her original home in Taiwan. As Ho's parents turned 80, she started to perceive that thoughts of her Taiwanese family and original home were full of emotions including different feelings like regret, sadness, and sometimes even a sense of an emotional burden when her parents' health deteriorated. She had to spend a lot of

time following her parents' health situation closely, even though she did not live in Taiwan. Furthermore, when Ho's parents became too old to move and get out of bed, she decided to go back and forth between Belgium and Taiwan for half a year at a time in order to stay with them. She stated:

> *…however, the situation become more difficult when they turned 80, and I also turned 60. You know, 80 is really old, and at the time my parents' health got worse and worse. I still remember that in that period my parents frequently went to hospital for treatment. On the one hand, I am lucky that because my younger sister and brother were still living in Taiwan not far from my parents' house, when something happened, they could help to take care of them, but on the other hand I still felt sorry that I could not always stay with my parents even though their health was getting worse, so in order to compensate I traveled back and forth between Belgium and Taiwan every half a year and went back to Taiwan to stay with my parents when they became too old to walk. I think staying with them is the only thing that I could do to take care for them and show my filial piety to them when they were already in their declining years…*

In Confucian and traditional Chinese culture, filial piety is one of the most important and praiseworthy behaviors. Chinese culture also expects that children should take care of and stay with their parents when they get old. However, when immigrants leave their home country and parents, they could not always stay with and take care of their parents. How immigrants show filial piety to and provide care for their elderly parents is always a difficult problem. Ho and Nora Chiang (2017) examine how pan-Chinese immigrants living in Australia and New Zealand show filial piety and a sense of care toward their elderly parents still living in Mainland China and Taiwan. They found that there are three practical approaches to provide care for elderly parents. First, the majority of the research participants in their study cared for their elderly parents by regularly going back to their original home to visit and stay with their parents. Second, some of the participants took their elderly parents to live with them in Australia or New Zealand. However, this strategy may face difficulties since, on the one hand, the pan-Chinese immigrants' local spouses may not agree, and on the other hand, their elderly parents may also refuse to leave their original home. Third, some participants

in their study provided limited caregiving for their elderly parents. Alice Ho simultaneously applied two strategies to provide care for and show filial piety toward her elderly parents. When Ho's parents' health was still fine, and she was between 30 and 50 years old, she provided limited caregiving for her parents because she had to spend the majority of her time running the restaurant. When Ho's parents' health deteriorated, she traveled back to Taiwan more frequently and took care of her parents by visiting and staying with them for half a year at a time. However, even though she tried her best to show filial piety and provide care for her elderly parents in their declining years, Ho still stated in the interview that "*I feel regretful and sorry that I did not spend more time with my parents. I only went to stay with them when they were already in bad health*."

4.3.5 Negotiating two types of thoughts regarding home: "putting down roots abroad" [落地生根] or "leaves fall to their roots" [落葉歸根]

Alice Ho is already in her 70s and is retired from her previous work in the catering industry. The question of where to stay during retirement (Belgium or Taiwan) has become an important and vexing issue for Ho. When thinking about this problem, some aspects of traditional Chinese culture affect Ho significantly, since traditional Chinese culture emphasizes that that people should stay and get old or even die in their original place, land, or home. There is also a Chinese idiom that reflects this cultural expectation, which is "*leaves fall to their roots*"[落葉歸根]. This idiom refers to the fact that people should be like the leaves on a tree; after the tree withers, leaves will fall to its roots rather than drift to other places. These traditional Chinese cultural thoughts really influenced Alice Ho's considerations about where to stay. She explained that her sense of nostalgia had grown in her retirement life:

> *…you know when I turned 65 and retired from the catering industry several years ago, my husband and I started to think about whether we should stay in Belgium or go back to Taiwan. Of course, my sons and grandchild are all living here, and we also lived in Belgium for more than four decades and got our*

Belgian nationality a pretty long time ago so "Yes, Belgium is my home," of that there is no doubt, but you know, when I retired from my job and had more free time, it interesting, my husband and I wanted to go back and visit Taiwan. It is a very strange feeling like you want to revisit your roots and your original home. I don't know, maybe it is the feeling of being "homesick" in old age.

Stoyanova, Doseva, Gergov, and Virginás-Tar (2015) examine the sense of nostalgia and sentiment toward their home country that elderly immigrants feel. They found that "young elders" (elderly people between 60 and 75 years old) have a stronger sense of nostalgia than the oldest people (above 76 years old). Moreover, this study further found that minority women also experience higher levels of sentimentality and nostalgia than their male counterparts. The study further argued that when people are young elders, they are more likely to recall their past memories, but when people are above 76 years old, limited by their health and mobility, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their life abroad and less likely to think about going back home. Their findings correspond to Alice Ho and her husband's situation. Ho told me, "*I am more willing to go back to Taiwan rather than getting older in Belgium; however, my husband does not think like me*." Gergov and Stoyanova (2013) further found that the level of the "sentimental compensate" (which refers to the feeling of wanting to compensate for previous behavior, which mostly relates to some past negative acts) that immigrants have significantly affects immigrants' level of nostalgia. According to Alice Ho's narratives in the previous paragraph, she felt regret about that she could not spend enough time with her parents in Taiwan when she was busy with her restaurant; she could only stay with them when they were already in their declining years. These feelings of sadness and regret greatly affected her thinking about where to stay after retirement, although she has not made the final decision when I interviewed her.

Alice Ho explained further how the different cultural thoughts and expectations influence her considerations about where she wants to live, and how she balances two different cultural expectations between "putting down roots abroad" [落地生根] and "leaves fall to their roots" [落葉歸根]. She said:

…I think there are two Chinese idioms that could reflect my feelings:

"putting down roots abroad" and "leaves fall to their roots." I already have roots in my life as an immigrant in Belgium. Here, my husband and I established our own business and restaurant, we have our two sons, and now we became our grandchild's grandparents. I think we already made roots in this place, there is no doubt; however, I still face difficulties and challenges in deciding where I would like to spend the remaining 20 or 25 years of my life and where I would like to die. You know it is really difficult. You would not think about these questions when you are of working age; however, these issues become more obvious when people retire from their job and start having to think about their life after retirement.

Ho's narratives reveal a contradiction. Ho already lived in Belgium for more than four decades, and also regards Belgium as her home, but when she retired from her restaurant work and turned 70, she still faced difficulty in choosing where she wanted live between her two homes, one in Belgium and the other one in Taiwan. Like Alice Ho, many first-generation Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium still have their dual roots in Belgium and Taiwan. As they get older, and begin their retirement life, where they should live for the rest of their life, and whether they should stay in Belgium or return to Taiwan, become problems that bother them. Ho's narratives, and those of other research participants, show that traditional Chinese thoughts and narratives like "putting down roots abroad" and "leaves fall to their roots" still have power to influence these elderly immigrants' considerations about staying in the host country or returning back to their home country (Liu, Maher, & Sheer, 2019).

The decision to stay or go is not an easy question for these Belgian-Taiwanese immigrants; many of them have lived in Belgium and left their original home in Taiwan for decades. Alice Ho shared the important considerations for her: family relationships, health condition, and a sense of nostalgia toward her homeland:

I think the things that I really struggle with are that I have one home in Belgium. Here, I have my husband, my sons, my grandchild, and my friends. Moreover, I have already got used to the lifestyle here. However, when people turn 70, your body and health get worse. That really makes me think about whether I

should go back to Taiwan with my husband. Taiwan could provide high quality of medical services but costs less. You know, the traditional cultural thought "leaves fall to their roots" also really influences me, because I can honestly say that I miss my hometown in Taiwan. However, you know it is really difficult to make a final decision. When you make a choice, you have to give up something, so I think it is really a big challenge for elderly immigrants like me to make a decision about which home they want to stay in and where they want to die, but I think the best way is that I frequently travel back and forth between Belgium and Taiwan, for example, half the year in Belgium, and half the year in Taiwan.

This narrative shows the complex nature of the decision about where to stay, especially for the elderly. Yahirun (2012) demonstrates that the level of economic resources that immigrants have, the relations between an immigrant and their spouse, and their kinship ties between home and host countries are all the key factors that affect and shape immigrants' decisions to return or stay. Alice Ho provides another key consideration: the difference in the quality and cost of medical care between home and host countries, and the immigrant's personal health conditions. Moreover, as Alice Ho said, choosing to stay or leave means she has to give up one part of her life. A more feasible and practical choice for her is to be a "circular migrant" travelling back and forth between her dual homes between the host and home countries. In this way, she could simultaneously maintain and benefit from her culture, kin, emotions, and interpersonal ties and connect with the both places rather than making a choice between one or the other (Bolzman, Fibbi, & Vial, 2006).

4.3.6. "I am Chinese from Taiwan; however, I am a different type of Chinese compared with people from Mainland China"

Since Alice Ho's parents emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan with the Kuomintang government in 1949, and she was educated as "Chinese" both at home and school, she regarded herself as "Chinese" instead of "Taiwanese." She noted:

> *…as I said, my Mom and Dad were immigrants who emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan because of the civil war, and my Dad was a government employee that accompanied the Kuomintang government to Taiwan. So, of course, in my family, we all regarded ourselves as "Chinese." You know, the Chinese identity was totally no problem at that time and even the majority of people in Taiwan saw themselves as "Chinese" since our government, teachers, and parents were all educating us like that, so I regarded myself as "Chinese*."

Then I asked Alice Ho whether she could explain her "Chinese" identity and her relations with and sense of belonging to Taiwan and Belgium. She explained:

> *…firstly, I will say I am "Chinese" from Taiwan. You know for me, there are several different kinds of "Chinese". One type of Chinese is from Mainland China and another type of Chinese is from Taiwan and still others are from Singapore, Malaysia, or some other places who also speak Chinese language. I am a kind of "Chinese" who came from Taiwan and is now living in Belgium. For me, there is no conflict here because I consider myself "Chinese," and Taiwan refers to where I came from and where my hometown is, and Belgium is the place where I am living now. Moreover, I would not see myself as Belgian because I was not born and did not grow up here; I am just an immigrant who has already lived here for most of my life, but that does not make me Belgian*.

Alice Ho utilizes the place of origin as her point of reference to distinguish between different types of "Chinese" from different places. For her, the ethnic boundary

of the term “Chinese” is beyond the limitation of national borders. For Alice Ho, the term of “Chinese” denotes culture or heritage; thus, no specific group of people occupies this identity. For her, of course, the identity of “Chinese” not only refers to people from Mainland China but also to the people from Taiwan, and other places significantly influenced by traditional Chinese culture. She tends to describe herself with the sentence “*I am Chinese from Taiwan now living in Belgium*.”

However, since the pan-Chinese immigrant community in Belgium is mostly made up of Chinese from Mainland China, I asked Alice Ho how she makes a distinction between her and other Mainland Chinese immigrants who also call themselves “Chinese.” She replied:

> *… moreover, I think I am a different kind of “Chinese” compared with the people who came from China. They are really different from me and people who came from Taiwan. You know, people from Taiwan are more humble, friendly, and hospitable. You know, the people from Taiwan still preserve some basic Confucian virtues and people from Taiwan are more open-minded…however, people from Mainland China make me feel different. They are more emphasis on “money talk,” people are more benefit-oriented, they cherish traditional Confucian virtues less, and I guess that is because their people and society experienced the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s. I think it really influences how people from Mainland China interact with and treat others. Thus, making their people trust each other less. So that is why I would say I am “Chinese” but different from the people from Mainland China, especially in the domains of culture and values*.

Alice Ho’s narratives demonstrate that for her, “Chinese” identity is not an exclusive or a fixed social category; it is more like a concept of pan-ethnicity. The concept of pan-ethnicity refers to an ethnonational identity label shared by several different ethnic groups who have similar historical, cultural, and backgrounds. One famous pan-ethnic category in migration studies is “Asian American,” which does not refer to a specific ethnic group from Asia, but many different ethnic groups. This label could refer to people who emigrated from Taiwan, Mainland China, Japan, South Korea,

and so on, to the United States (Park, 2008). Moreover, according to the perspective of pan-ethnicity, "Chinese" [華人] or "pan-Chinese" [泛華人] also do not only refer to people from Mainland China; these terms could also be shared by people from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and even Macau since these societies are critically affected by traditional Confucian and Chinese culture. As the pan-ethnic identity is shared by several different ethnic groups at the same time, people in the different ethnic groups may make various subjective interpretations of pan-ethnic identity categories. Taking "Chinese" and "pan-Chinese" as examples, people from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China may have very different perceptions of it, or distinctly different meanings for this specific identity label (Li, 2016).

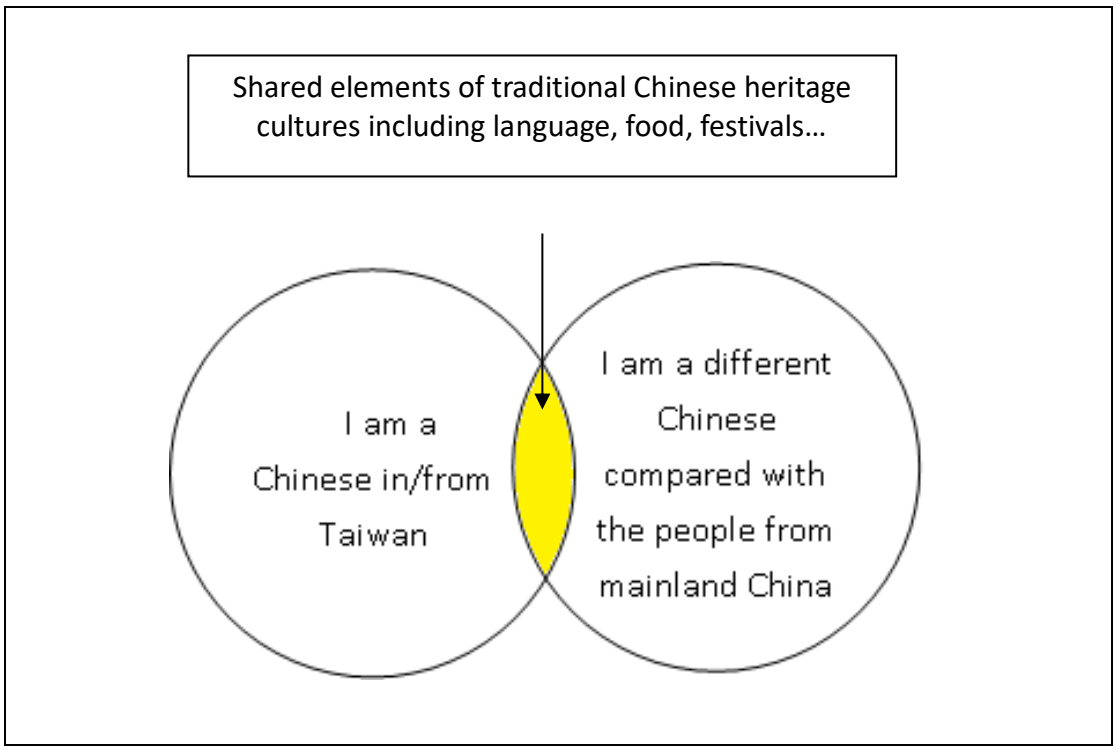


Figure 4.9 Ho's explanations of her perceptions about the pan-Chinese identity
Source: This study.

Ang (2017) examines how Mainland Chinese immigrants living in Singapore and local Chinese Singaporean negotiate and interpret their subjective perceptions and meanings with regard to their pan-ethnic identity of "Chinese." In her study, she found that language and accent are two key points of reference for both these two groups when drawing ethnic boundaries between themselves. From the perspective of Mainland

Chinese immigrants, local Chinese Singaporean do not speak "traditional and standard" Chinese like they do. Mainland Chinese immigrants argue that local Chinese Singaporean are "less Chinese" and that they are "more Chinese." By contrast, Chinese Singaporean think that Mainland Chinese immigrants cannot speak English as fluently as they can; the local Chinese Singaporean argue that they are "high-class Chinese" and that the Mainland Chinese immigrants are "low quality Chinese." Although both the Mainland Chinese immigrants and the local Chinese Singaporean accept the "Chinese" identity label to describe themselves, they still apply some other different references to draw ethnic boundaries between each other. Ang's study also echoes the perspective of the pan-ethnicity theory that even people who share the same or similar pan-ethnic identity label, may interpret its meaning differently.

Alice Ho's attitudes toward the "Chinese" identity label is more in line with the pan-ethnicity point of view. She considers herself as "Chinese" no matter where she is. In Taiwan, she identifies herself as Chinese; however, after she emigrated to Belgium, Ho would describe herself as a Chinese person who came from Taiwan and lives in Belgium. Moreover, when she interacts with other immigrants from Mainland China, she differentiates between her and her Mainland Chinese counterparts according to criteria including mentality, attitudes to money, the extent to which Confucian values are cherished, and so forth. Based on these standards, Ho indicates that "*I am a different Chinese compared with the people from Mainland China; I am more graceful than them*." Although Alice Ho makes a distinction between herself and Mainland Chinese counterparts, she does not change or shift her original Chinese identity even though the Mainland Chinese immigrants also claiming the Chinese identity label. Ho thinks that she is different from her Mainland Chinese counterparts. She admits that people from Taiwan and Mainland China share cultural similarities such as language, food, traditional festivals, and so forth. Her ethnonational identity does not shift since she does not change her Chinese identity, whether she is in Belgium or Taiwan, or when she interacts with her Mainland Chinese counterparts. According to Wimmer's (2008) identity negotiation strategy categorization, the strategy that Alice Ho applies is "transvaluation," which means that Alice Ho does not shift or change her original ethnonational identity or ethnic boundaries but emphasizes different aspects of identity when interacting with other "Chinese" from Mainland China. In summary, Alice Ho's

narrative reveals that in terms of her ethnonational identity, the notion of identity is not static, but fluid and dynamic. People could modify or even shift their identity to meet practical needs and respond to different live circumstances.

4.3.7. Summary

Alice Ho's parents were both Mainland Chinese immigrants who emigrated to Taiwan with the Kuomintang government in 1949. This family migration background matters to Ho. During the interview, before we talked about her life as an immigrant in Belgium, she reminded me that her family background had a significant impact on her with respect to the issues of ethnonational identity. Ho's reasons for deciding to leave Taiwan are like those of many other Taiwanese in the 1970s; at the time, poor economic conditions and the macro-political environment were two critical push factors that made many people in Taiwan decide to leave and go abroad. In the 1970s, Taiwan was still an agricultural society, and the income for ordinary people was low. As the Kuomintang government gradually lost its political legitimacy and diplomatic alliances in international society, many people in Taiwan felt hopeless about the future and did not have enough confidence in the government. In combination, these two push factors facilitated many Taiwanese at the time to go overseas to search for a better life. Many people left Taiwan and emigrated overseas in the 1970s; this became the first major wave of out-bound immigration after the KMT government came to Taiwan in 1949. Alice Ho, like many other people in Taiwan at the time, felt there was no future in Taiwan and after she completed her college degree from Tamkang University, she decided to leave Taiwan and go abroad to Europe. However, at the very beginning, she started her European journey by studying French in Paris, where she met her husband. After they completed their courses and got their degrees, they got married and decided to emigrate and settle down in Belgium in 1976.

Like many other Taiwanese immigrants in the 1970s, Alice Ho and her husband worked as hourly-paid workers to accumulate their investment fund. After several years' hard work, she and her husband saved some money, borrowed some money from their families in Taiwan, and opened their own restaurant at first in Brussels and latterly in

Liege. After they had their own restaurant, Alice Ho and her husband both spent the majority of their time running it. Alice Ho took over the work at reception, and her husband was in charge of the work at restaurant kitchen. Limited by the nature of the catering industry in terms of long working hours, she did not spend a lot of time on taking care of her two sons. After they grew up, her two sons did not have close relations with Ho and her husband. Thus, in the interview, Ho stated that "*she feels sorry for her two sons since when they were still young and little, she and her husband did not spend enough time and effort on them*," and she thinks that "*maybe it is the cost for first-generation immigrants like her and her husband since they had no choice but to concentrate on earning money and improving the family's economic situation*." Moreover, Alice Ho indicated that "letters from home" and "international phone cards" were two things that connected her with original home in Taiwan; these two communication methods not only kept Ho abreast of her family's life but also provided her with emotional support since both Ho and her family wrote about loving, missing, and caring for each other. However, as Ho's parents aged, she felt an emotional conflict because she could not stay with her parents at the time, and when her parents' health became worse, this made her depressed and sad. When Ho's parents were both in their declining years, Ho traveled back and forth between Taiwan and Belgium frequently, at least once a year, so to take care of them and show filial piety. When Ho and her husband retired from the catering industry and turned 70, she faced another problem: deciding where she wanted to stay and live for the rest of her life. With regard to this problem, some Chinese cultural expectations play an important role in the process of consideration, and until now Alice Ho has not make her final decision about where she wants to live. One possible solution is to travel back and forth frequently between her dual homes between Belgium and Taiwan. Becoming a "circular migrant" is an appropriate and practical strategy for dealing with Ho's relationships, sense of belonging, and feelings of nostalgia with regard to her dual homes between Belgium and Taiwan.

Furthermore, in term of her big home, Ho clearly stated that "*She is Chinese from Taiwan now living in Belgium*." Her Chinese identity actually does not change no matter where she lives. In Taiwan, influenced by her family's "Mainlander" background and the KMT government's Chinese nationalist education, Ho was taught that she is

Chinese, so even before she emigrated to Belgium, she identified herself as Chinese when lived in Taiwan. After she emigrated to Belgium in 1976, she still did not change her Chinese ethnonational identity; however, she makes a distinction between her and Mainland Chinese immigrants according to the criteria that include personality, mentality, attitudes to money, and the extent to which Confucian values are cherished. She further stated that "*I am a different type of Chinese person compared with people from Mainland China; I am a more graceful Chinese person than them*." Whether in Taiwan or Belgium, she has not changed her ethnonational identity; however, she has modified her Chinese ethnonational identity by applying a transvaluation identity negotiation strategy to re-interpret the content and meanings of being "Chinese," which helps her to draw distinctions between her and her Mainland Chinese immigrant counterparts, who also share a similar Chinese ethnonational identity. In summary, according to Alice Ho's narratives with regard to her small and big home, there is no single factor or dimension that could cover all of the meanings of home in her life as an immigrant; the notion of home in Ho's life as an immigrant is intersectionally affected and determined by her personal background and the circumstances of her life.

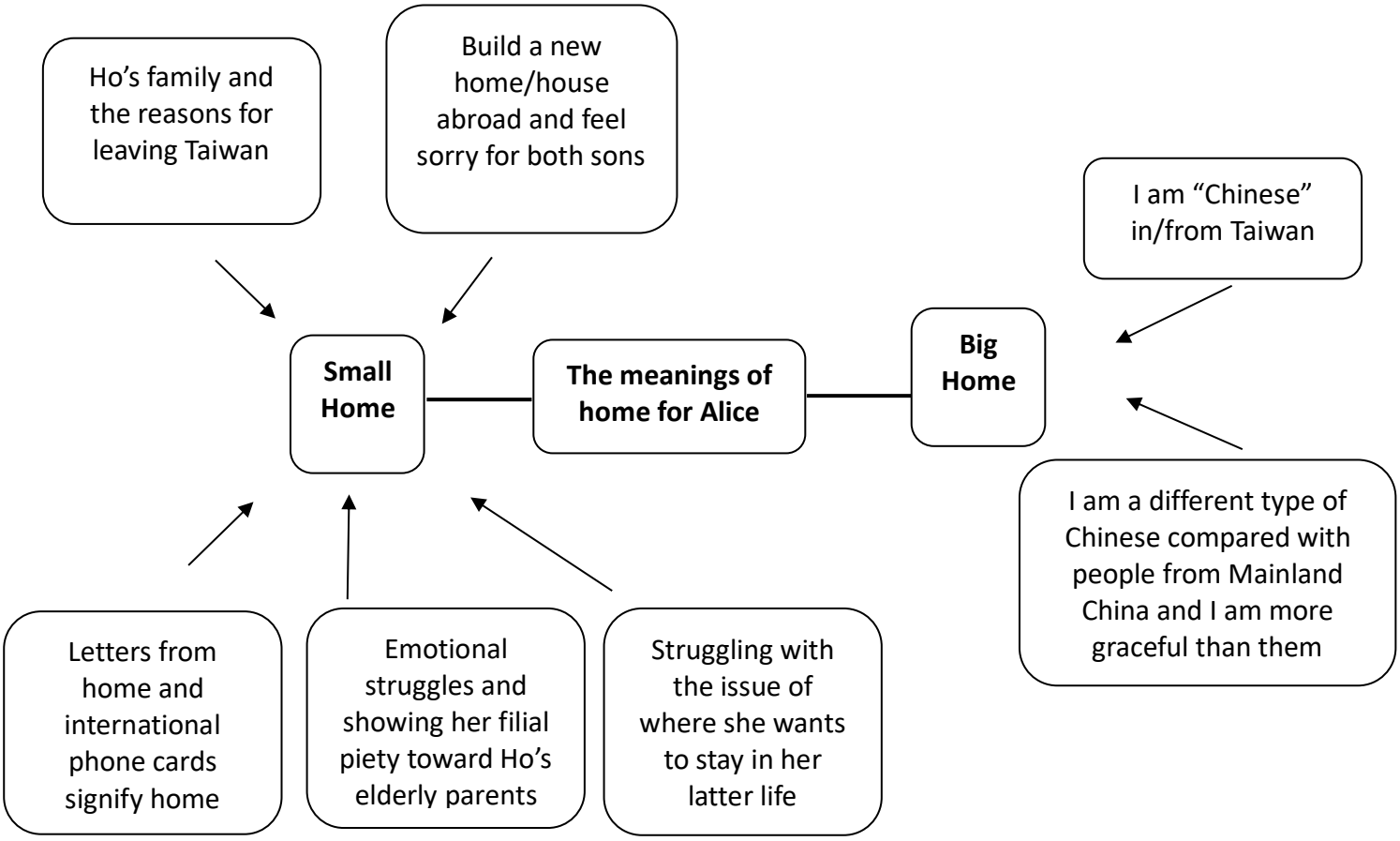


Figure 4.10 The intersectional meanings of home for Alice Ho

Source: This Study.

4.4 Conclusion

Restaurateurs are the second largest subgroup in the Belgian-Taiwanese immigrant community. They are mostly first-generation immigrants who emigrated from Taiwan to Belgium during the 1970s and the 1980s. In this study, I successfully recruited eight Taiwanese restaurateurs to discuss their immigrant lives and home-making experiences abroad. In this chapter, the focus on narratives by Aunt Zhang and Alice Ho. Since both of them emigrated to Belgium in the late 1970s, they share some similarities with respect to their immigration and home-making experiences in Belgium; however, their stories and interpretations of their small and big home-making experiences are diverse. Since Taiwan was still an agricultural society in the 1970s, people on average did not enjoy good economic conditions. Moreover, the KMT

government faced lot of challenges at the time, losing its legitimacy and diplomatic alliances in international society. Economic and political challenges were two key push factors that encouraged many people in Taiwan to leave their original home and emigrate overseas. These two push factors created the first out-bound wave of emigration since the Kuomintang government came to Taiwan. However, at that time, the majority of people chose to emigrate to the United States and Canada. Still others chose to emigrate to Europe.

This chapter recounts how Aunt Zhang and Alice Ho emigrated to Belgium due to political and economic concerns and searched for a better life. After Zhang and Ho arrived in Belgium, they and their husbands at the time worked as hourly-paid workers in Chinese restaurants. As hourly-paid worker is irregular, both Zhang and Ho had no choice but to get several jobs and works in different restaurants to earn as much money as possible. However, because Zhang and Ho spent the majority of their time working, their lives were negatively impacted, especially Aunt Zhang's life. As Zhang could not speak and read French, she spent most of her time working in the kitchen and in the restaurant, which made her feel lonely and led her to regard herself merely as a sojourner in the Belgian host society, whose only purpose was to earn money. She did not regard Belgium as her home even though she lived with her husband in Belgium together. After several years of hard work, both Zhang and Ho opened their own restaurants with their husbands. Operating their own restaurants had both positive and negative effects on them. Owning a restaurant meant that they did not have to work in others' restaurants and could work with their family in their own place. On the positive side, working in her own restaurant made Aunt Zhang less lonely; she started to feel at home because she could work with her husband and also take care of her children. On the negative side, the long working hours of the restaurant business had a negative impact on Alice Ho's relationship with her two sons.

Table 4.2 The intersectional meanings of home for Aunt Zhang and Alice Ho

Dimensions/ Cases	Aunt Zhang	Alice Ho
Small Home	● Felt lonely and did not regard Belgium as home as hourly-paid workers ● Having own restaurant signifies home ● Co-ethnic friends help to create feelings of home ● Belgium is my home, but I have not integrated into the host society ● Making own restaurant a "home" for all Taiwanese in Belgium	● The family background of "Mainlanders," who emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949 because of the civil war and reasons for leaving Taiwan ● Feels sorry for both sons since she did not spend enough time with them because of hard work in the home-making process ● Letters from original family and international phone cards signify home ● Emotional struggles and caring for her elderly parents ● Deciding where to stay for the rest of her life
Big Home	● Taiwanese for being, Belgian for learning ● Ethnonational identity shift from Chinese to	● Identifying herself as Chinese both in Taiwan and Belgium ● Ethnonational identity modification

	Taiwanese by applying the identity negotiation strategy of “fission”	by applying the identity negotiation strategy of “transvaluation” to re-interpret the content and meanings of being Chinese and distinguishing between her and Mainland Chinese immigrant counterparts

Source: This study.

Moreover, interacting with co-ethnic friends gave Aunt Zhang a feeling of belonging and home feeling in the host society. Alice Ho mentions that two important objects connected her with feelings of home and gave her emotional support: letters from home and international phone cards. After Aunt Zhang and Alice Ho turned 70, their perceptions of home and their life stories diverged. Even though Aunt Zhang had emigrated to and lived in Belgium for more than four decades and considered Belgium her home, she thought that she had not really integrated into the host society. Zhang opened their restaurant to the public, especially Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium on the three traditional festivals: Lunar New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Moon Festival. In doing so, making their restaurant became like as a “home” for the all Taiwanese in Belgium.

For Alice Ho, the meaning of and her subjective feelings toward her small home as an elderly immigrant are related to her work regarding caring for her parents transnationally and the struggle to decide where to stay after retirement. When Ho’s elderly parents were both in their declining years, Ho frequently traveled back and forth between Belgium and Taiwan to compensate for the fact that she could not always stay with and take care of them earlier. Travelling between Belgium and Taiwan to take care

of both her families made her feel tired and burdened physically and emotionally. Moreover, as Ho was already in her 70s, she started to feel homesick and nostalgic toward her original home and homeland in Taiwan and was therefore struggling with the issue of where to stay and live in retirement. Moreover, in this consideration process, some traditional Confucian and cultural thoughts played an important role; two Chinese idioms affected her most of all: "putting down roots abroad" and "leaves fall to their roots." When I interviewed Alice Ho, she had not made her final decision, but she indicated that being a "circular migrant" may be an appropriate and practical strategy for her to deal with this difficult choice.

With regard to their big home, Aunt Zhang and Alice Ho had quite different perceptions of this notion. Aunt Zhang and her family were born and grew up in Yilan, the north-east part of Taiwan, but Alice Ho's family were "Mainlanders" who emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949 with the KMT government because of the civil war. Although, they had different family backgrounds, they were both influenced by the Kuomintang's Chinese nationalist education when they were students in Taiwan. At the time, the KMT government educated people in Taiwan to identify themselves as "Chinese," and both Zhang and Ho also identified themselves as "Chinese" when they were in Taiwan. However, after they emigrated to Belgium, Zhang and Ho experienced quite different ethnonational identity negotiation experiences. Ho does not change her Chinese identity, but she drew a distinction between herself and Mainland Chinese immigrants on the basis of personality, mentality, attitudes toward money, level of the cherish in terms of Confucian values, and so on. She stated that "*she is a different kind of Chinese person compared with the people who came from Mainland China, and she is more graceful than them*." She did not shift and change her original ethnonational boundaries and identity, but she applied the identity negotiation strategy of "transvaluation" to draw a boundary between her and other Mainland Chinese immigrants. In contrast, Zhang changed her ethnonational identity from "Chinese" to "Taiwanese" since she actively participated in and was influenced by the TAB and *Courrier des Formosans*. Zhang applied the identity negotiation strategy of "fission" to create a new Taiwanese identity to replace her old Chinese identity.

In summary, according to the narratives of Zhang and Ho's lives, it can be seen

that the notion and meanings of home (both small and big) in their lives as immigrants are varied, dynamic, context-specific, and influenced by each individual's intersectional personal backgrounds, and distinct life circumstances.

Chapter Five
Belgian Taiwanese Immigrant Housewives' Homemaking Experiences

5.1 Gender Issue: The Status of Women in International Immigration

In this chapter, the author will discuss Belgian Taiwanese immigrant women's international migration experiences and the meanings of home for them during their journey of international movements and in their different life stages. I will also consider how they negotiate between and construct the notions of "small home" and "big home" in their daily lives. By analyzing Belgian Taiwanese immigrant women's life-story narratives, this chapter will further illustrate how their notions of home are based on intersectional influences, not only from their gender roles, but also from other elements of personal backgrounds and axes, including spousal relationships, religious beliefs, motherhood, *housewifelization* processes, food practices, cultural heritage, cultural capital, and so forth.

Before entering into the discussion of Taiwanese immigrant women's life-story narratives, I will first review and discuss why immigrant women's experiences are important in migration studies, and what roles women play in international immigration processes. Women's roles and perspectives have not always been viewed as important or taken into consideration as they are nowadays. In the 1970s and early 1980s, women were regarded as only the supplement of males, and it was assumed that, in international immigration processes, women simply followed their husbands' movements. However, immigrant women's invisibility in migration studies gradually came to be challenged and criticized due to the rapid developments of feminist social movements, especially in Western countries. These developments facilitated and encouraged scholars in the broader social science disciplines to progressively pay more attention to explore women's experiences, rather than simply supposing that immigrant males' experiences could be generalized to cover females. Based on these historical developments, from the middle of the 1980s, some journals began trying to introduce women's perspectives into international migration studies. In 1984, the prominent migration journal *International Migration Review* published a special issue regarding "Women in

Migration," aiming to apply women's views to examine international immigration journeys and to show the differences in their migration stories and experiences compared with their male counterparts. In the introductory article of this special issue, feminist scholar Mirjana Morokvasic criticized the bias in the migration studies field at the time, which only took men's voices into consideration, and underlined the significance of immigrant women's points of view and experiences regarding participating in immigration flows. She argued that women are not passive, or simply followers of their husbands, as previous scholars had assumed in the 1970s and before. Rather, she stated that immigrant women have their own reasons and motivations to undertake international immigration; moreover, they also have their own agency to construct subjective meanings and tell their personal stories in terms of their decisions, behaviors, and experiences during their international movement journeys. Alongside the introduction article, 18 studies were included in the special issue. Overall, these studies criticized the status of the field at that time and argued that scholars should not take immigrant women's experiences for granted or regard them as passive dependents to their male counterparts. Thus, they argued that gender is an important factor in international immigration journeys, and that men and women may encounter and express different experiences and perceptions regarding their lives as immigrants (Brettell & Simon, 1986; Morokvasic, 1984).

Based on the developments in feminist perspectives, contemporary scholars have now reached a consensus that it is important to take gender and women's perspectives into account, and most migration scholars also agree that international immigration is not a gender-neutral process (Currant et al., 2006; Hondagenu-Sotelo, 2003). The current study considers some reasons that explain why it is important to take Belgian Taiwanese immigrant women's viewpoints into consideration. First of all, from scale and numerical perspectives, and based on the author's fieldwork and observations, the numbers of males and females in the Belgian Taiwanese immigrant community are disproportionate: most Belgian Taiwanese immigrants are female and migrated to Belgium via intercultural marriages or romances. Moreover, this kind of gender imbalance is also clearly reflected on the research sample: less than 30% of the research participants are males, while the rest are all females. It must be stated that there was no intention to choose more female participants; rather, the list of participants in this study

demonstrates the nature of the demographic structure of the Taiwanese immigrant community in Belgium, which is mainly comprised of immigrant women. The second reason is that most Taiwanese women migrate to Belgium because of intercultural marriages and apply via a Visa D (dependent visa) to obtain the legal social status of living in Belgium. However, limited by this type of visa and lacking the language proficiency for speaking the local languages of Dutch or French, many of these Taiwanese immigrant women face difficulties finding an official job in the mainstream labor market that corresponds to their previous job experience and expertise. In this situation, some Taiwanese immigrant women have no choice but to become full-time housewives and take on most of the responsibilities in terms of domestic work, caregiving, parenting, and so forth. Although some Taiwanese immigrant women may successfully find appropriate full-time or adjutant job positions in their later lives, their role as housewives and their dependent social status due to the type of visa they hold can influence how they describe their international immigration experiences and their perceptions toward the notion of small and big homes in their daily lives. It is vital to note that, while gender is a critical factor, it is not the only factor that influences women's life experiences: their international immigration and life experiences are also subject to further intersectional influence by various personal backgrounds and axes (Gu, 2012; 2015).

In the following sections, two Taiwanese immigrant women's life stories will be presented. Through analyzing the life stories of Mrs. Zhan and Selena Lu, the discussion will reveal how these research participants construct their own subjective and multi-layered meanings of home in their immigrant lives. Moreover, it will show the strategies that immigrant women apply in their daily lives to negotiate their sense of belonging, ethno-national identities, and the feelings around the notions of small and big homes.

5.2 Case One: Mrs. Zhan

➢ **Mrs. Zhan's demographic information**
● Gender: Female
● Age: 44
● Year of immigration: 2015
● Job: Housewife, and adjunct Chinese language teacher at Ecole Sun Yat Sen in Brussels
● Marital and family relationships: Belgian husband (they have one son)

Mrs. Zhan was the researcher's colleague at the Sun Yat Sen Chinese language school in Brussels, where there were plenty of opportunities to chat and share personal and immigration stories with each other. The most frequent topics discussed were the learning situation and progress of her young son, who was attending a Dutch primary school, and her experiences and perceptions regarding being an immigrant mother and a Taiwanese woman living in Belgium. Moreover, the data and life stories discussed in the following sections are not only based on the formal, one-off semi-structured interview, but also supplemented by the fieldwork data that I collected from multiple informal dialogues with Mrs. Zhan every weekend at the school.

5.2.1 "Where my husband is, there is my home"

Initially, I invited Mrs. Zhan to share her international immigration experiences, and what the meanings of home for her since she decided to marry her Belgian husband and accompany him when he travelled and lived in several different Asian and Pacific cities to fulfill the requirements of his job as an international real-estate investment manager. She shared her stories and stated that:

> *After I got my master's degree majoring in financial studies from an Australian university, I worked as an investment consultor in the financial industry in Taipei. The previous company where I worked was mainly focus on doing business with international customers, which is how I met and got to know my husband (a Belgian man) when he also worked in Taiwan. He is an international investor in*

the real estate industry and his main work is to find good targets for investing. In this regard, he has to travel and live in many different cities and countries to find investment opportunities for his company and customers. At the time [when we met], he mainly focused on the real estate markets in Asia. After dating him for two years, we decided to get married. Then I started a life like a ***nomad****, living in several countries and cities in Asia, including South Korea, Singapore, Australia, Thailand, and Indonesia, with my husband due to the needs of his work.*

When Mrs. Zhan applied the word "nomad" to describe her international movement experiences of moving among different countries and cities in the Asia-Pacific region, this raised curiosity regarding how she views the meaning of home when she had had to move frequently or live in the situation of always preparing to move to the next destination. In answer to these questions, she stated:

At the time, of course, I had one home in Taipei, because that is the place where I grew up and my parents are still living there. However, after getting married, I had another home and life plan that was co-established with my husband, but due to the nature of his work, we did not live in one country or city for a long time. In most cases, we just lived in a city or place for a year, or sometimes just for a few months. After the investment project was finished, then we would continue and move on to the next destination.

For me, at the time, the meaning of "home" was dynamic and did not had clear boundaries as we had no permanent place for living. We had experiences of living in five-star hotels and cozy apartments for months in South Korea and Singapore; however, we also had the experience of residing in a really simple room without luxury decorations in the tropical islands in Southeast Asia. In this regard, at the time, the meaning of home for me could be depicted by the phrase ***where my husband is, there is my home****. At that time, the meaning of home for me did not always refer to a specific place, space, or a particular location. Just like I said, we lived like nomads, we traveled and lived in cities and countries based on my husband's business requirements rather than according to our life expectations. Moreover, because we both knew we would not live in a specific place forever, we*

did not regard the places where we lived at the time as home. At most, they were spaces for us to live and sleep in just for a period.

The above narratives show that, when Mrs. Zhan decided to accompany her husband in traveling and living among different Asia-Pacific countries in order to satisfy the needs of his job, it became difficult for her to make a clear definition regarding where her home was, since they did not have a permanent place to live in. Due to the time limitations, she and her husband would not live in any given place for a long period of time; thus, Mrs. Zhan would not perceive any place they lived at the time in temporarily as her home or attach her sense of belonging to that space. Accordingly, she utilized the word "nomads" to describe her highly mobile life and international movement experiences at the time. Moreover, the limitation of their residence periods further influence Mrs. Zhan to build effective or long-standing social relationships and friendships in the host society; thus, her husband became the most important person for interaction and socialization in her daily life. In this regard, she attached her sense of belonging to her husband and constructed her perceptions of home mainly depending on her relationship with him. According to her narratives, it is interesting to note that when people are on the move, or living in uncertain conditions, a person who is surrounding with may further become an important object as a reference for building their sense of belonging while in highly mobile living circumstances. In Mrs. Zhan's case, her husband acted as a vehicle for her in the processes of homemaking and helped her to obtain the feeling of being at home even though she did not have a permanent residence address or living space.



Figure 5.1 Mrs. Zhan's living space in Singapore (cozy apartment)

Source: Provided by Mrs. Zhan, with authorization to use

5.2.2 "Religious practices signifying home"

In addition to constructing the sense of home by accompanying her husband and on the basis of their spousal relationship, Mrs. Zhan also mentioned that conducting some specific religious practices in her daily life during those migratory times would help her to find emotional peace, re-gain the sense of security, and further help her to obtain the feeling of being at home. She stated:

> *At that time, my parents were very worried about me. In their eyes, I was in an "uncertain" situation, because I did not have a permanent place for living. Thus, my mom gave me a statue of "Guanyin (觀音)," and told me that no matter where I go, I have to bring this statue with me. She also said the statue of Guanyin would bless me, keep me safe, and protect me from getting hurt or injured. That is why, no matter where I go and live, I always bring this Guanyin statue with me. At the time, after my husband went to the office, I would do 15 minutes of prayer to Guanyin, just like my mom and I did before in Taiwan. Doing so could not only*

make me feel calm and obtain the sense of peace and security, but also make me feel like being at home. I think the statue of "Guanyin" is an important symbol as a "spiritual home" for me, especially from the psychological perspective.



Figure 5.2 Mrs. Zhan's statue of Guanyin

Source: Provided by Mrs. Zhan, with authorization to use

It is worth noting that Guanyin is one of the most popular buddhas in the Buddhist religion in Taiwan; moreover, she is also a famous figure in several East Asian societies, including mainland China, Japan, and South Korea. In this regard, religious scholars claim that Guanyin could even represent half of Asian people's religious beliefs. The origin of Guanyin is based on the ancient stories in the Indian Buddhist culture, where she was a renowned and obvious figure, with the image that she would "*help people who are suffering or in difficult times*" (聞聲救苦). In Taiwan, people believe that Guanyin is kind and adept at helping and blessing people, especially women and children. Guanyin has obvious female characteristics: statues of Guanyin always have female features and hold one or two babies in one or both hands. In this regard, people believe that Guanyin can not only help people avoid getting injury and suffering from difficult life circumstances, but also bless women and assist them to become pregnant and have babies. Thus, Guanyin has closer relations with her female believers; however, she also has numerous male believers in the Buddhist religions (Lin & Su, 2004). From

the figure 5.2 provided by Mrs. Zhan, it is clear that her statue of Guanyin is made of wood and is standing on lotus flowers. The image of the lotus in Chinese culture represents cleanliness and beauty, and in an old Chinese saying, Lotus represents pure and beautiful love. Moreover, in the picture, Mrs. Zhan's Guanyin statue is also holding a baby with both hands.

Although Guanyin and other religious beliefs and practices play vital roles in people's daily lives, religious practices and behaviors have been largely overlooked by migration scholars. However, Mrs. Zhan's narratives show that daily religious practices provided Zhan with several positive emotional and psychological effects and acted as the vital intangible and symbolic objects for her in terms of her home-making processes while living in foreign countries. Mrs. Zhan's narratives here are in line with a study conducted by Straut-Eppsteiner and Hagan (2016), and both revealing that, although religion is not the only factor that determines the consequence of immigration decisions, re-settlement processes, and living condition, it does function as an important and intermediate force in influencing immigrants' social and psychological well-being when living in foreign countries and experiencing adjustments and life transitions. Religious beliefs offer immigrants strong effects of spiritual accompaniment, which can help them to overcome the sense of loneliness and regain peaceful feelings and sense of security while living in unfamiliar places. These religious effects are clearly demonstrated in Mrs. Zhan's case, and moreover, by carrying out the religious behaviors that she also frequently conducted in Taiwan before, she formed the connection between the life experiences and memories from her original home and her new living circumstances. These behaviors constructed transnational religious connections and gave Mrs. Zhan the feeling of spiritual home when she was always on the move and living under uncertain conditions (Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008).

5.2.3 "As an immigrant mother, the meaning of home refers to responsibilities"

After several years of traveling and lived experiences in the different Asia-Pacific cities, Mrs. Zhan and her husband faced another challenge in deciding to move again in order to fulfill her husband's job requirements. This time, they decided to migrate back to her husband's homeland of Belgium. With regard to the movement decision processes and considerations, she stated that:

> *Since I was pregnant, we went back to Taiwan and prepared for having a baby. When my son was born, we decided to live in Taiwan first, because I am more familiar with the medical system in Taiwan, and my parents could also help me to take care of my boy. The other practical consideration was that I wanted to let my boy learn Chinese. In this regard, we lived in Taiwan until my son graduated from his kindergarten school. After living in Taiwan until my son was five years old, my husband's company asked him to move back to Europe. At the time, his company gave him several places to choose between—the UK, France, and Belgium. Because my husband is a Belgian, we decided to move back to where my husband is from.*

She further indicated how the role of being a mother has influenced her perceptions and ideas about the notion and the expectation of "home." She stated:

> *We spent lot of time deciding where should we live in Belgium and what conditions of house and home we expected. For me, I was okay to live in a simple place like how we lived when we traveled and lived in Southeast Asia; however, my son couldn't. You know, when you became a mother, you have to think more deeply and also put your child first. Thus, I told my husband that we could not live like we did when we were young and in Asia. We spend lot of time finding a good place to live in Brussels, I was really concerned about the issues of safety, surrounding environment, condition of the neighborhood, schools, parks, and so forth. When I did not have children, I did not really care about the quality of a house and the decoration of rooms, but since I have had my child and been a mother, I am more concerned about the conditions and qualities of our home and have stronger material desires. However, the material desires are not for myself, they are for my*

child. As a mother, I always want to buy good-quality things for my son, and I also want to make my house and home as comfortable as possible.

From Mrs. Zhan's narratives, it can be seen that the role of being a mother has strongly influenced her perceptions regarding "home." In the interview, she showed a picture of where she and her husband lived on the Southeast Asian tropical island. She said:

… you see how simple it was, we just had one bed, a table, and an electric fan, we did not even have a TV or the internet. Even so, I was okay at that time, because there was just me and my husband, I did not have children.

However, since having her son, Mrs. Zhan has become more demanding in terms of the quality of their house/home, as well as neighborhood environments, safe conditions, and so forth. Moreover, she told me that:

… when you become a mother or father, you would always put your children first, and do your best to provide them with the best quality of living. You definitely do not want your children to get hurt or live in an uncomfortable or unsafe place.

Accordingly, Mrs. Zhan's narratives show that people's perceptions and expectations with regard to "home" are not static, but rather change due to people taking on different social roles. For Mrs. Zhan, becoming a mother has strongly influenced her perceptions and ideas about the notion of home.

In addition to the change in her perceptions of home, Mrs. Zhan shared her experiences regarding negotiating the different understandings of childcare, parenting, and parental responsibilities due to the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. She shared a story of conflict between her and her husband due to their holding very different views about how to take care of their children:

Here [in Belgium] and in the Western culture, they really have very different styles and ideas about taking care of children and newborn babies. *You know what, in Belgium, they would prepare a single room for a newborn baby, the baby would*

not live with their parent even when he/she is just back from hospital. However, it is difficult for me, as a mother from Taiwan and Asian society. We would let our baby sleep with their parent, maybe until they are 5–6 years old. So how could I let my baby who had only just been born at the time sleep independently every night? You know, it was a pretty difficult issue for me at that time, I tried to discuss this with Bart [her husband, a Belgian man], but he told me that it is pretty common in Belgium to let children sleep independently even when they are just newborn babies. I think that is really a cultural difference, I cried several times at night by myself, then I told Bart that I didn't care how Belgians raise and take care of their children, I don't buy it, I like to do in my Taiwanese way. In this regard, I insisted to let our baby sleep with us.

Different cultures strongly influence how parents conduct parenting and childcare. Generally, Western cultures place more emphasis on ideas regarding children's independence; in this regard, Western parents try not to influence their children too much, but to provide their children with more space and autonomy to decide what they want and what they do not. On the contrary, in Eastern and Chinese cultures, parents play a more "visible" role in their children's lives and decision-making processes. For example, "tiger mom" is a well-known term describing an image of how Chinese mothers educate and take care of their children. Chinese mothers are depicted as "tigers" in reference to how Chinese mothers (parents) get closely involved in almost every aspect of their children's lives and their important life decisions, even the issue of choosing a spouse (Kim et al., 2013). It is interesting to note that, on the intercultural parenting websites, whether babies should sleep with or separately from their parents is one of the most popular and contradictory topics of discussion. Some articles have argued that the relationship between parents and their babies in Western culture are strange, even stated that letting babies and children sleep by themselves is a flawed cultural tradition (Chenoweth, 2015; Meade, 2011). The current study does not aim to debate whether one type of parenting and childcare approach is more effective than another: I simply highlight that the narratives from Mrs. Zhan show that this was a difficult issue regarding negotiating the cultural differences in her mixed-culture family.

Accordingly, I further asked Mrs. Zhan what the meaning of home is for her since

becoming a mother. She replied that:

> *The meaning of home as a mother is "responsibilities." I take the main responsibility for taking care of my children, my cat, and even my husband. You cannot image how busy I am as a mother. I always remind my husband that I am the person who gets up earliest, at around 6 to 6:30am. Why do I have to do this? After I get up, I start to prepare the breakfast for my husband and son, and the lunch box for my boy, you know, it may take me 1–2 hours to do it. After finishing the work of preparing their meals, then I prepare to take my son to school.*

When Mrs. Zhan was invited to show a picture that could connect the notion of home with her role as a mother, she provided a picture of her son when he was only two years old with her cat.



Figure 5.3 Mrs. Zhan's son and her cat

Source: Provided by Mrs. Zhan, with authorization to use.

She elaborated regarding the meaning of this picture to her:

> *The picture was taken when my son was just two years old. During that year, we took my son back to Belgium for the Christmas vacation with my husband's family*

and my parents-in-law. One day, my son stood in front of the window and looked outside, and my cat sat just beside him. Although my son now is seven years old, every time I see this picture, I feel warm and have the feeling of home. For me, as an immigrant mother, home represents responsibilities. I do my best to protect, educate, and take care of my son, and to provide him with a good environment for growing up. ***Thus, the meaning of home for me, as an immigrant mother, does not merely refer to a house or a building; more importantly, it full of responsibility for taking care of the people you love.***

Mrs. Zhan's narratives demonstrate that when people's social roles change, this can influence how people consider their responsibilities in their relationships and their daily lives. For Mrs. Zhan, becoming a mother has critically influenced her perceptions and ideas about home. Since she had her baby, the meaning of home for her has become about childcare responsibilities, and the ideal home for her involves trying to do her best to provide as comfortable, safe, and warm place for her children as possible. A study conducted by Gilmartin and Migge (2016) also states that, particularly from a female perspective, the role of being a parent significantly affects how people place their sense of belonging and negotiate the concept or the notion of home.

5.2.4 "Lost job and became a full-time housewife"

According to the researcher's fieldwork and interview experiences in Belgium, a general theme could be observed regarding immigrants' narratives is that most of the Taiwanese immigrants, especially women, have common experiences regarding facing the difficulties of finding a full-time job in the mainstream labor market that is in line with their previous work experiences and professional expertise in Taiwan. In this respect, Mrs. Zhan shared her process of transitioning roles from being a white-collar professional—a financial manager—in Taiwan to becoming a full-time housewife in Belgium:

If I told you that I did not face any challenges in my immigration experiences, and everything is good and positive in my life, then that would not be the truths. Just like I previously said, when I decided to migrate to Belgium because of my

husband's job, I resigned my job and became a full-time housewife and took on most of the responsibilities for caregiving, parenting, and domestic work.

She then responded to questions regarding whether she tried to find a job in the Belgian labor market, and moreover, because she previously had a good job position in the financial industry in Taiwan, how she felt about the difficulties involved in finding a job after immigration:

Honestly, it is not really difficult to find a job in Belgium; however, the question is what kind of job you want to do. It is easy to find a job working at a restaurant or in a duty-free shop, but I do not want to do that kind of jobs. However, I am limited by my Dutch language proficiency and my immigrant background, so it is difficult to find a job that corresponds to my previous work experiences and job positions. Of course, if it is possible, I am willing to work at a bank or in the financial sector in Belgium. I tried job interviews several times, but I was not successful in getting any job opportunity. Because of the difficulties of searching for a job, I had no choice but to become a full-time housewife and spend most of my time and energies doing domestic work and taking care of my son and husband. However, as I said at the very beginning, ***I am not used to being a full-time housewife. You know, being a housewife means that you do not have income and have to become a dependent person, especially financially****. I felt really bad that I needed to ask for money from my husband even if I just wanted to buy clothes for myself. Because of that I felt depressed and started to feel that I am useless in this family.*

Mrs. Zhan's narrative shows that, as an immigrant from Taiwan (or, more broadly, from Asia), it is difficult to compete with local counterparts for a job position in the mainstream labor market, even if the immigrant has a stronger educational background and competitive previous work experience. Mrs. Zhan holds a master's degree with a major in finance and had several years' work experience as a senior executive in Taiwan's financial sector, but still faced difficulties trying to find a similar job position in Belgium. Mrs. Zhan is not a unique case: in the sample for this study, there are several research participants who shared similar experiences of trying to find an appropriate or expected job. Even if they held degrees from universities with good reputations, in

Taiwan or even the United States, they still found themselves in a disadvantaged position in the Belgian mainstream labor market. It is also interesting to note that finding an appropriate job is harder for immigrants than finding a part-time or labor-intensive position, or a job in the so-called "dirty, dangerous, and difficult" (3D) industries. The job-searching experiences of Mrs. Zhan reflect the situation and reality that, as an immigrant and a member of an "invisible" minority group in Belgium's mainstream society and labor market, her human capital is not easy to transfer from her country of origin to the host labor market (Pang, 1997).

Like Mrs. Zhan, many other Taiwanese immigrant women also share the experience of difficulty finding an appropriate and professional job, even if they hold a bachelor's, master's, or a doctoral degree. The women in this situation have no choice but to become full-time housewives and spend most of their time and energy doing domestic work, taking on most of the responsibilities regarding childcare and the duties of parenting. Although some of these immigrant women could successfully find a job they want later in life, becoming a full-time housewife is the common experience for many Taiwanese immigrant women, at least during the early phase of their settlement: some of them remain as housewives throughout their lives in Belgium. Gu (2017) referred to the transformation of immigrant women's roles from professional women to full-time housewives as "*housewifelization*." Not having a job means that these immigrant women lose both their main income and their bargaining power with their spouses at the same time, thus placing them at a disadvantage in the power hierarchy within their families. The importance of having a full-time job and a stable income for those immigrant women is clear. According to Mrs. Zhan's narratives and previous studies, losing income can have negative impacts on immigrant women's social mobility and their physical well-being (Kibria, 1990; Min, 2001; Pang, 2004).

Mrs. Zhan's case and other immigrant women's job-searching experiences observed during fieldwork illustrate that immigrants' human capital can be more easily used, transferred, and accumulated in middle- and low-end industries rather than professional or highly skilled job potions. We must note that these experiences are not unusual cases; on the contrary, these are fairly common situations and shared experiences across Belgian immigrant communities. According to statistical outcome,

in 2011, the proportion of non-European immigrant women's labor participation in Belgium was 25%; however, the same figure in other EU countries was 45% on average. This indicates that immigrant women may face and encounter more difficulties and challenges finding a job in Belgium than in other EU member countries (Petrovic, 2012).

5.2.5 "Searching for self-value and cultural home by becoming a Chinese language teacher"

After being a full-time housewife for a period of time, Mrs. Zhan was introduced by my Taiwanese colleague, Yang, at the Sun Yat-sen language school for an adjunct job teaching Chinese language courses on Saturdays in Brussels. During my fieldwork and interactions with Mrs. Zhan, it became clear that she does not merely regard this adjunct teaching job as work or only focus on how much income she can obtain from the job; rather, she attaches and constructs various meanings toward this work opportunity. She shared her subjective perceptions and meanings regarding this teaching position:

> *I think, I could not be like that (only being a full-time housewife) forever; thus, I asked my friend, who also migrated from Taiwan, to introduce me to be an adjunct Chinese language teacher at Ecole Sun Yat Sen in Brussels. Although it is just an adjunct job and the pay is low, I really cherish this work opportunity. As you know, the pay in this school is not so much; however, by doing it, I re-found the value of myself apart from only being a housewife. I could also be a teacher in the host society and teach local students. You know that feeling is quite strange, I only get around 200 euro per month, it is not so much, right? However, by having this small amount of salary, I can buy something I want and do not have to ask for money from my husband. It's a feeling like freedom,* it *makes me feel I am free again and I can re-find my value in my daily life even if it is just a part-time job.*

Several of my research participants teach at this school, and they share similar views to Mrs. Zhan, stating that by having this adjunct teaching job, they not only gain a little income every month, but also feel like they are re-find their role and self-value for living in the host society in Belgium. Even though the school can only pay each

teacher a low salary of around 200 euro per month, since each student's tuition fee for every semester is only between 200–250 euro, most of the teachers and my research participants feel happy about what they do at the school. Based on my fieldwork and observations, without this little salary, some of the research participants do not have any income in their daily lives. These financial constraints can have negative effects in terms of mental health, making these immigrant housewives/women feel that they are useless and valueless due to being financially dependent. Moreover, the limitations of their financial conditions may further diminish their social mobility and personal agency. In this regard, although they only receive a meager income from these school jobs, the meaning of this small salary is to re-obtain their "financial and personal freedom," allowing them to buy or do the things they want to do without having to seek permission from their husbands.

Moreover, based on the researcher's fieldwork, interviews, and work experiences at the school, it was observed that being a Chinese language teacher has another positive effect for these women regarding "self-growth" and enhancing their professional knowledge, since most of them did not have any experience of teaching before their migration. Although all of the teachers fully understand the traditional Chinese characters, most of them did not have much pre-knowledge about the system of *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn* since the Taiwanese educational system still applies a different language pronunciation system for the traditional Chinese phonetic alphabet (ㄅ, ㄆ, ㄇ) compared with mainland China. This means that, in order to teach non-native Chinese language speaker students and to become qualified and professional Chinese language teachers, these immigrant women have to spend a lot of time learning the *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn* system. Moreover, since most of them are not professional teachers and did not major in Chinese language or other related disciplines when they were in Taiwan, they must improve their professional knowledge and teaching skills by participating in training workshops and courses organized by the school or the Taiwanese government's Overseas Community Affairs Council, or through learning and studying by themselves. These professional and language-learning processes have the effect of empowerment for these immigrant women and teachers, facilitating them to gain knowledge that they did not have before, and to work as professional teachers. Previous studies regarding immigrants' ethnic language schools have mainly focused on the effects of educational

performance and ethnic identity formation toward immigrants' second generation or later descendants. For example, Zhou and Li (2003) review the history and development of Chinese heritage language schools in the United States and the consequences on students of attending this kind of supplementary education after their formal school. Their findings show that attending these ethnic language schools have positive effects on immigrant descendants, helping them to perform well at their formal schools. He (2006) explores immigrant descendants' heritage language-learning experiences and their cultural/ethnic identity formation. She finds that, when students can speak their heritage language more fluently, they may have more confidence to show and demonstrate their ethnic identity in their daily lives. However, differing from these previous studies, the current thesis and fieldwork data provide a perspective based on gender, and further show that having an adjunct job as a Chinese language teacher can have an empowerment effect for immigrant women. These jobs and teaching experiences empower Taiwanese immigrant women to develop a professional knowledge of languages and enhance their human capital and can also assist them to re-find their role and self-value while living in the host society.

Another empowerment effect is presented by the mutual cultural learning between immigrant women (teachers) and their students, both inside and outside the classroom. Mrs. Zhan shared:

> *My students, they are mainly the descendants of Chinese immigrants from mainland China; thus, they know little about Taiwan. The things they know about Taiwan are mainly based on what their parents told them, of course you know, which are the PRC's [People's Republic of China] perspectives. For example, some of my students would say: yeah, I know, Taiwan is part of China, or Taiwan is not a country, and so on. Then, I would explain to them that this is the viewpoint from their side, but Taiwanese people have the other perspective to consider, and discuss these issues. Moreover, except for discussing political issues, the main feature of our school is that we insist on teaching traditional Chinese characters and supplement with the system of Hànyǔ Pīnyīn. It is interesting to note that our students and their parents, although they mainly came from mainland China, do*

not refuse to learn our writing system.

In addition, *in my class, I share some famous Taiwanese movies, music, and popular culture with my students. In most cases they seem interested. I had the experiences of playing some famous music and songs by singers like Jolin (蔡依林), Jay Chou (周杰倫), Lin Jun Jie (林俊傑), Darren Wang (王大陸), S.H.E, Dino (李玉璽), etc., and I also play some popular movies to them, like You Are the Apple of My Eye (那些年我們一起追的女孩), Our Times (我的少女時代), Café·Waiting·Love (等一個人的咖啡), At Café 6 (六弄咖啡館), and so on. By sharing these parts of Taiwanese popular culture with my students, on the one hand, it can avoid my students feeling bored in the class, and on the other hand, because these Taiwanese celebrities are also very famous in mainland Chinese TV programs and on YouTube channels, this would further motivate my students to learn more about Taiwan! Interestingly*, *my students, on the contrary, also share with me in and out of the classroom what music they listen to, what movies they watch, what celebrities they like, and tell me about Belgian local cultural events, knowledge, and lifestyles. You know, it seems like mutual cultural exchange and learning, which mutually let us know more about each other from the cultural domain.*

According to this narrative, it is interesting that at the ethnic language school, the learning pattern is not unidirectional- teachers teach the students; however, students also share their local knowledge about Belgian culture and lifestyles with the teachers. This has the natural consequence of assisting these immigrant women (teachers) to learn more about Belgium, thus further facilitating them to integrate into the host society, cultural scheme, and local lifestyle. Thus, I argue that the Sun Yat Sen language school functions as a cultural borderland, facilitating both the immigrant women (teachers) and the immigrant descendants (students) to learn from each other, and putting multicultural learning into practice (Allan, 2002; Hsu, Pang, & Haagdorens, 2012).

In addition to the experiences of teaching and mutual learning at the school, Mrs. Zhan further narrated the meanings for her of having lunch and eating ethnic foods

together with Taiwanese colleagues at the school. She stated:

> *Furthermore, eating lunch with my Taiwanese colleagues is the other part that I really treasure of being a language teacher at Ecole Sun Yat Sen. You know in my school, all of the teachers and administrative staff came from Taiwan, they are mainly Taiwanese immigrants and some of them are Taiwanese students in Belgium, and every week, the students' parents would prepare abundant and tasty food for us. You know, just like I said, because they are mainly Chinese immigrants and some others are Taiwanese or Asian immigrants, and moreover, several of them are Chinese or Asian restaurant owners, they cook very well, and the food is so delicious. You know, by eating these Chinese and Asian foods and chatting with my Taiwanese colleagues at lunchtime, that always makes me feel happy, comfortable, and like I'm at home. You know, my colleagues, to some degree, seem like my big Taiwanese family in Belgium. We share useful information, provide emotional support, and exchange job opportunities and so forth with each other. Thus, by maintaining frequent interactions with other Taiwanese colleagues, the school provides me with a sense of belonging.*

For Mrs. Zhan, the Sun Yat Sen language school is not only a learning institution, but also a social gathering space for Taiwanese immigrants. In this space, they share useful information, chat, and even provide emotional support to each other. Figure 5.4 clearly shows that most of the teachers are female. Sharing their stories about immigrant life with each other helps them to know they are not alone, and that other immigrant colleagues may also share similar living conditions, experiences, and familiar challenges, as they are all immigrants from Asia and migrant mothers in the Belgian host society. The lunchtime social gathering activity makes the school become a collective space to meet, chat, and share information and feelings with each other. Thus, for these Taiwanese immigrant women (teachers), consuming food with other Taiwanese colleagues at school helps them to construct a family-like feeling between each other. These gathering experiences further help Mrs. Zhan to increase her sense of belonging, and even to feel like being at home in this foreign land. From the perspective of social capital, the social interactions conducted at the school between Taiwanese peers can assist these immigrant women (teachers) to gain both bridging social capital

via exchanging useful and new information and job opportunities, and bonding social capital by exchanging emotional support with their colleagues (Zhou & Kim, 2007).



Figure 5.4 Sun Yat-sen teachers' group picture

Source: Provided by Mrs. Zhan, with authorization to use

Mrs. Zhan's experience of obtaining home-like feelings from the language school tie in with Cristoforetti et al.'s (2011) proposed concept of the "introjection of external space," which aims to explain why and how immigrants attach their sense of belonging outside their private houses/homes, and construct the feeling of being at home in public or semi-public spaces. In Mrs. Zhan's case, she has close and frequent interactions with other Taiwanese colleagues who share similar ethnic backgrounds, immigration experiences, cultural proximate, and come from the same place. These shared personal similarities have led Mrs. Zhan to view the language school as her private space, and she has acquired a feeling of home based on the social relationships and interactions that take place at the school. In the case of Ecole Sun Yat-sen, these feelings and experiences are mainly based on frequent interactions and collective consumption of ethnic food with other Taiwanese immigrants/colleagues.

5.2.6 "Multiple strategies of negotiating and performing ethno-national identity"

Regarding the issues of "big home" and ethno-national identity, Mrs. Zhan made

the clear statement that she is Taiwanese, and her feeling of ethno-national identity is based on the original place she came from and her belonging to Taiwan. However, since Taiwanese immigrants are an "invisible" minority in mainstream Belgian society, Mrs. Zhan explained how she negotiates and performs her ethno-national identity when interacting with different groups of people and in different circumstances.

Mrs. Zhan explained her subjective perception regarding ethno-national identity and described the meaning for her of the identity labels of "Taiwanese," "Chinese," and "Overseas Chinese" when she interacts with different group of people. She stated:

> *For me, I came from Taiwan, of course, I identify myself as Taiwanese. However, culturally speaking, I could accept broader descriptions regarding my cultural identity and background. For example, I could accept that Taiwanese culture shares many similar elements with Chinese cultures, and Taiwanese society is also significantly influence by traditional Confucianist thought. However, if you want to talk about the issue of national identity, I apply different strategies to describe it.*
>
> *When I interact with people who came from mainland China, or someone who can speak Chinese, then I would say I am Overseas Chinese* (*huá rén*,華人). *Because for me, the term Overseas Chinese is a neutral term, which represents the people who come from the societies that also speak Chinese and are also influenced by the Confucian culture. Thus, Overseas Chinese for me is more like a cultural rather than a political label. Moreover, saying I am Overseas Chinese instead of merely "Chinese" or "Taiwanese" in front of my mainland Chinese friends can help me to avoid awkward situations or even conflicts by discussing complex political and identity issues with my mainland Chinese friends. When I am in the Taiwanese immigrant communities, of course it feels very normal and comfortable to say I am Taiwanese.*
>
> *However, when I interact with my husband's family members, I would be concerned about how they discuss about my country (Taiwan)and the issues of regarding identity. If my husband's family members say something like "how about*

China" or "what is the viewpoint from China," then I would tell and educate them that "I did not come from China, I came from Taiwan and I am Taiwanese." And I would tell them that I am not really sure about the situation in China, but that I could provide the viewpoint from the Taiwanese perspective.

Then, Mrs. Zhan illustrated why she is more concerned about her husband's family's perceptions with regard to the issue of where she came from and what her nationality is. She explained:

I think, I have already been married to my husband for more than 14 years, if his family still do not know where I came from, I think it is not really respectful to me. So that is why I will correct his family if they show misunderstanding regarding where I came from or my nationality.

As shown by the narratives presented above, Mrs. Zhan does not change her ethno-national identity and boundaries when she interacts with different group of people; however, she applies different ways to describe her subjective meanings with regard to the identity labels of "Taiwanese," "Chinese," and "Overseas Chinese." These negotiation behaviors not only assist her to avoid embarrassing situations of directly discussing the sensitive and "*unchangeable*" (Mrs. Zhan's word) issues of national identity, since Taiwan and mainland China have a very complex political and historical relationship. These behaviors further help Mrs. Zhan to find a comfort zone and safe place so she can feel comfortable presenting her identity when interacting with intra- or inter-ethnic others. The ethnic identity negotiation strategies applied by Mrs. Zhan are similar to the idea of the identity negotiation strategy of "playing" proposed by Li (2016). In his empirical study, he examined how Taiwanese immigrants in Australia negotiate the different identity labels of "Chinese," "Taiwanese," and "Overseas Chinese." His findings show that Taiwanese immigrants in Australia do not change their ethnic boundaries when they interact with other pan-ethnic counterparts, like immigrants from Hong Kong and mainland China. However, Australian Taiwanese immigrants apply the strategy of "playing" to minimize the possible tensions when they interact with these other groups of immigrants, since they have quite different viewpoints than Taiwanese people with respect to issues of ethno-national identity. Mrs.

Zhan, like these Taiwanese immigrants living in Australia, does not want to take these issues too seriously, so she utilizes more relaxed and flexible attitudes and strategies to face these issues and challenges. As Li argues, "playing" is an identity negotiation and performance strategy that immigrants can apply to manage their different ethno-national identity labels and approach these issues in more relaxed and informal ways.

Table 5.1 Mrs. Zhan's multiple methods of ethno-national identity negotiation and performance

Interaction Contexts	Subjective Identity Descriptions	Explanations
1. Interacting with mainland Chinese friends or someone who also understands the Chinese language	➢ Mrs. Zhan would describe herself as "Overseas Chinese" rather than using purely "Chinese" or "Taiwanese" identity labels	● Avoiding awkward situations and possible conflicts ● For Mrs. Zhan, "Overseas Chinese" is a neutral and cultural term, rather than a political concept
2. Interacting with other Taiwanese immigrants and Taiwanese friends	➢ Mrs. Zhan would describe herself as "Taiwanese"	● Mrs. Zhan identifies herself as "Taiwanese," and feels comfortable showing her Taiwanese identity within Taiwanese groups
3. Interacting with more distant friends: acquaintances, neighbors, or local Belgians	➢ Mrs. Zhan would not emphasize the differences between the labels of "Chinese," "Taiwanese," and "Overseas Chinese"	● It is too difficult for Belgians and Europeans to understand the complex political relations between Taiwan and mainland China
4. Interacting with her husband's family members	➢ Mrs. Zhan would depict herself as "Taiwanese," and feel unhappy if her husband's family	● Mrs. Zhan thinks it is a matter of basic respect to know where she came from and her

	members say she is Chinese or came from China	nationality, especially for her husband's family

Source: This study.

5.2.7 Summary

According to the immigrant life stories shared by Mrs. Zhan, it is clear that the meanings of home for her are various and dynamic, and that the homemaking experiences in her immigrant life are intersectionally influenced by her personal distinct axes and life circumstances. After Mrs. Zhan married her Belgian husband, she began a highly mobile international movement journey in order to meet her husband's job requirements as a real-estate investor mainly focused on searching for investment targets in the emerging markets around the Asia-Pacific region. During that time, Mrs. Zhan lived with her husband in several cities in a range of different residential conditions, including cozy apartments in Australia, Singapore, and South Korea, and very simple dwellings with just some basic furniture on tropical islands in Thailand and Indonesia. At that time, because Mrs. Zhan and her husband did not stay or live in any one place for long time, she did not regard the places they temporarily lived in as "home;" instead, she constructed and attached her feelings of home around the relationship with her husband. In this regard, her notion of home at that time was mainly based on her spousal relationship with her husband, rather than having a tangible physical house or clearly territorial place. In the interview, she utilized the expression "where my husband is, there is my home" to explain the fluid nature of home when she was under uncertain living circumstances or still on the move. In her journey of movement, religious practices played an important role for her in the processes of homemaking, and conducting daily prayers to the Buddhistic statue of Guanyin that she brought from Taiwan not only made her feel peaceful and calm, but also connected her to the memories and emotional links with her parents and original home, since her mother also carries out the same religious practices in Taiwan.

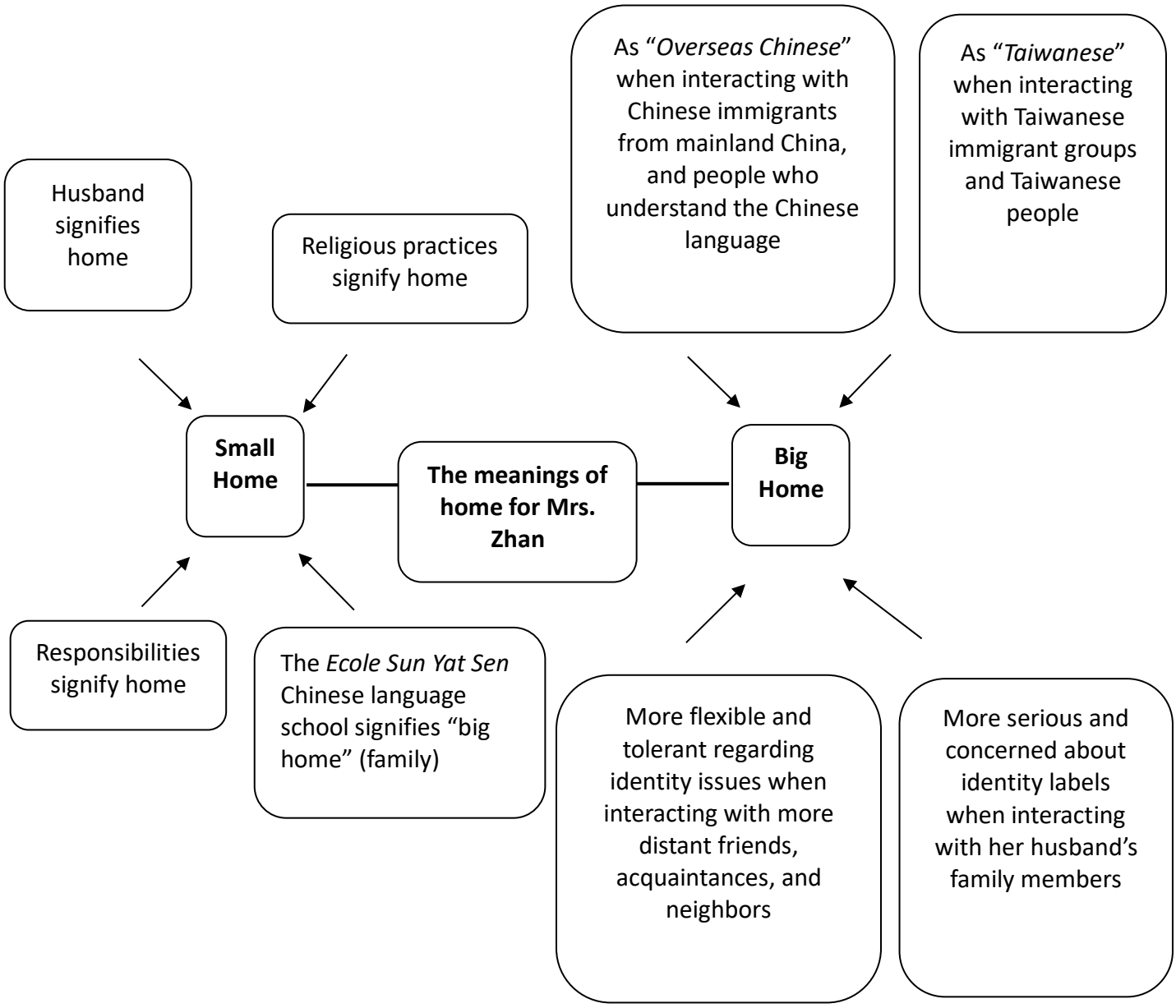


Figure 5.5 The intersectional meanings of home for Mrs. Zhan

Source: This study.

Mrs. Zhan then experienced a second international immigration movement in migrating to Belgium, also because of her husband's job requirements. Unlike how she had lived in Asia or Taiwan, after the move to Belgium, Mrs. Zhan not only became an immigrant mother, but also faced the challenges of searching for a professional job in the Belgian mainstream labor market and of balancing her life between career development and the responsibilities of taking care of her young son. Limited by her

inadequate proficiency with the local languages, she could not find a job in the Belgian labor market that corresponded with her previous work experiences in the Taipei financial sector. In this regard, she had no choice but to become a full-time housewife and to take on the main duties for taking care of her child. As her personal role shifted from a professional woman to be a full-time housewife and mother, the meaning of home for her also changed along with this transformation.

In this new life stage, the meaning of home for Mrs. Zhan became different from its previous form. Due to the transformations in her life and her personal role, she constructed her new subjective perception and meaning of home based on the responsibilities of taking care of her child, since she became a full-time housewife and spent most of her time with her child. As an immigrant mother in a foreign land, the notion of home in this life stage for Mrs. Zhan was tied to the responsibilities of parenting. However, when her son grew up and started to go to primary school, she began to have more free time for herself and was able to do the things she wanted to. After being introduced by another Taiwanese immigrant woman who also teaching at Ecole Sun Yat Sen, Mrs. Zhan started work as an adjunct Chinese language teacher. Although this adjunct job only provides her with a small income of around 200 euro per month, she constructed deeper meanings around this job, rather than just focusing on the small salary. One the one hand, this adjunct job has helped Mrs. Zhan to re-find her self-value beyond merely being a housewife, and on the other hand, even though the income from the job is low, she has re-gained a feeling of freedom by being able to do and buy the things she wants to. Moreover, Mrs. Zhan has also obtained a feeling of home by maintaining frequent interactions with her colleagues and eating ethnic food with them at the school every weekend. Practicing these conventional social activities also help Mrs. Zhan to feel like she is at home, even though the school is a public rather than a private space.

Furthermore, with regard to the issues of big home and ethno-national identity, Mrs. Zhan made a very clear statement that she is Taiwanese; however, she applies various strategies to present her ethno-national identity for responding to different circumstances. For instance, when she interacts with other Taiwanese immigrants or friends, she feels very safe and comfortable to show her Taiwanese identity and

ethnicity. On the contrary, when she interacts with people from mainland China, she tends to describe herself as Overseas Chinese rather than simply as Chinese or Taiwanese, to avoid the embarrassing situation of discussing these unresolvable issues with her mainland Chinese friends. Moreover, when Mrs. Zhan interacts with other, less close friends, acquaintances, or neighbors, she shows a higher level of tolerance regarding discussing these sensitive identity issues; however, she feels angry and not respected if her husband's family members misunderstand her place of origin and nationality, since she has been married to him for more than a decade. In summary, the meanings of home (small home and big home) for Mrs. Zhan are not static, and no single dimension can fully explain the feelings and meanings of home in her immigrant life. The notion of home in her life is intersectionally affected and comprised of different personal axes, including gender, personal role, living circumstances, religious beliefs, ethnicity, and so on.

5.3 Case Two: Selena Lu

- **Selena Lu's demographic information**
  - Gender: Female
  - Age: 48
  - Year of immigration: 1998
  - Job: Housewife, adjunct music lecturer at the music college in Namur, and music tutor
  - Marital and family relationships: Belgian husband (they have one daughter and two sons)

5.3.1 Struggle between professional job and heritage culture expectations of gender roles and motherhood

In the first interview with Selena Lu about why she decided to migrate to Belgium, she replied that she decided to migrate and live in Belgium because of love. In this regard, she said her international movements and immigration journey began with a love story:

Nearly 30 years ago, I was a college student studying at National Taiwan Normal University, majoring in music. At the time, my husband [a Belgian man] was learning Mandarin Chinese at the same university. That's how I met him, and after I graduated from the university, he proposed to me, then we got married, and that is why I am in Belgium.

After Lu married her husband, she decided to accompany him back to live in Belgium. However, the first challenges she faced at the time were educational issues regarding the difficulties of having her Taiwanese university degree recognized and accepted by the Belgian educational system, even though she already had a professional music diploma and a teacher's certificate in Taiwan. Holding these two musical and professional certificates meant that she had three years of teaching experience in Taiwanese high schools before she migrated to Belgium. However, she still faced challenges and difficulties in persuading the Belgian mainstream educational system to accept and recognize her qualifications and experience. She stated:

Although I got my bachelor's degree and teacher's certificate in Taiwan, it was not recognized and accepted in the Belgian educational system; thus, I could not be a music teacher here. So, I spent five more years studying music and French, and got my educational certificate and master's degree at the Brussels Royal Music College [Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles].

After Lu completed her master's degree and obtained her educational certificate from a Belgian university, she no longer faced the same challenges. With her Belgian degree and her professional expertise in vocal music, she quickly found a job as a soprano at the opera house in Namur. The characteristics of a job in opera are very different from office jobs. Instead of going to work at 9am and finishing around 5–6pm, opera performers work mainly at night, at weekends, and during holidays. In order to earn more money, Lu was also a private music tutor, which involved working and teaching her private students in the afternoon. In other words, Lu's working hours at that time were mainly during the afternoon, at night, and during weekends and sometimes holidays. Due to this unusual work schedule, Lu started to face challenges regarding balancing her life and time between work and family, which became a

difficult issue, especially when she had her children. Lu stated:

> *After five years I successfully got my degree and found a job as a soprano in an opera house. I felt very happy to get that job and work at the opera house. I started to face challenges when I had my children after I had worked at the job for three years. The difficulty for me at the time was whether I should continue to do the job or spend more time taking care of my children. Actually, it was a struggle for me, because I loved my job, but of course, I love my children too.*

Finding a balance between work and family is always as a difficult issue for working women, and especially for novice immigrant mothers, since they do not have sufficient interpersonal networks and family support compared with their Taiwanese counterparts still living in their home country. In Taiwan, lots of new parents are limited by their work schedules and job requirements, so they do not have time to take care of their children every day, especially during working hours. In this situation, most of them would ask their Taiwanese parents for assistance in taking care of their children. However, that is not such a common case in Western culture and the European context. In Belgium, even when people become grandparents, they still maintain their own personal lives and do not choose to live with their children and grandchildren. Moreover, Western (including Belgian) grandparents often do not spend most of their time and energy taking care of their grandchildren like Chinese and Taiwanese grandparents do. This means that novice immigrant mothers can only access a limited amount of assistance and support from their Belgian parents-in-law (Zhang, Emery, & Dykstra, 2018). In this context, Lu faced difficulties balancing her life and responsibilities between her job and motherhood. Thus, she asked for advice from her mother in Taiwan.

> *Since this was a difficult decision, I called my mother in Taiwan for suggestions. She told me that "you have to be a good mother to your children, and be a good wife to your husband," and she indicated that I could earn money after my children grew up, but the time of childhood for your babies only happens once. If you do not spend your time taking care of them and being with them when they are still little, after they grow up, your children will blame you for spending too much time working rather than taking care of them. Of course, I knew my mother's thoughts*

were quite traditional and "Chinese;" however, her advice really influenced me, so I quit my job and became a full-time housewife.

Lu grew up in an Amis aboriginal family, however, she admitted that her mother's ideas and perceptions regarding home and family relationships are "quite traditional and Chinese." In fact, the traditional Amis culture has quite different thoughts regarding family relationships and the role of the mother compared with the Chinese tradition. Amis is a matriarchal society, where women and mothers traditionally take most of the power over family decisions and are given first priority when family heritage properties are distributed (Raranges, 2011). On the contrary, in the traditional Confucian culture and "*Han*" Chinese (漢人) society, there has an old saying that "the man should go out to work while the women should stay at home and look after their children and house" (男主外、女主內). This traditional approach assumes that women should belong to the domestic sphere and private life, and according to this cultural viewpoint, the meaning of "good mother and good wife" implies that women should abandon their jobs and public lives and spend the majority of their time on domestic work and taking care of their children and family members, especially their husbands and parents-in-law (Chang, Hsu, & Li, 2018). However, Lu's mother's responses and suggestions really influence the afterward decision she made for becoming a full-time housewife. Moreover, the further evidence of the influential power of traditional Confucian culture for Taiwanese immigrant women and migrant families in terms of gender roles and domestic labor division can also be seen in a study by Gu's (2019).

5.3.2. House decoration as the first step of "homemaking" in a foreign land

After having babies, Lu and her husband decided to buy their own house in order to fulfill their requirements of a bigger living space. This took place nearly two decades ago; however, Lu still remembers how difficult it was to establish a new home and decorate a new house in the Belgian context. She emphasized that "*house decoration is totally different in Taiwan and Belgium.*" In Taiwan, after buying a house, most people would outsource the work of house decoration to private interior design and decoration companies. After months of works, people can then move into a completed, well-

decorated house. However, it is not the same in the Belgian and European context: Lu stated that outsourcing all of the domestic and house decoration work to private companies "*would be extremely expensive, a family like us (middle class) definitely could not afford it.*" In this regard, ordinary people and middle-class families undertake some part of the decoration works by themselves to limit expenses. In the interview, Lu further emphasized that:

> *… we cannot take immigrant houses for granted and assume that after people arrive in their destination place, they will automatically have a good house to live in. In fact, searching for an appropriate house and working on the house and domestic decorations not only takes time but further challenges immigrants coming from different cultures who do not have the DIY [do-it-yourself] house decoration traditions, like Taiwan.*

Lu also shared her memories and experiences of assisting with the domestic and house decorations, and the meanings she found in doing this:

> *There are big differences between homemaking in Taiwan and in the context of Europe. In Taiwan, after buying a house or an apartment, people just need to find a company to help them to do the design in terms of furniture and dwelling space arrangement. After waiting for a period of time, people can directly move into the new house, we do not have to do the house decoration by ourselves. However, it is a pretty different style of homemaking here, you know. In Belgium, after you buy a house, people have to take on most of the work regarding the house adornment. In Taiwan, we have the stereotype that people in Western countries like to do DIY. But why do they have to do so? On the one hand, it is based on their cultural perceptions; however, on the other hand, I think the main reason for doing so is that it is too expensive to ask workers to do all of the works. Because in Europe and in Belgium, the hourly pay and salary for workers are much higher than in Taiwan or Asia. In this regard, most people here tend to be more willing to do the work by themselves, including the house and domestic decorations.*

Lu mentioned that conducting the house decoration by themselves had some

positive effects for her in terms of learning about house and domestic space design and decoration, which she did not know about when she was living in Taiwan.

> *You know, my husband and I spent several years doing the decoration of our house. Doing the house decoration by ourselves was the first step of [re]building our home in Belgium. Honestly, at the time, I totally did not understand about house decoration; however, in order to [re]build my new house and home here, I learned everything from very beginning. For example, how to do the varnish, woodwork for assembling the bookcase, nightstand, wine cabinet, and dining table, etc. Most of the furniture in my living house was made or assembled by myself with my husband. I think it is a learning process that really made me know more about how difficult it is to re-build and decorate a house here.*

Moreover, Lu stated that working on the house and domestic space decorations with her husband had an unconscious positive effect on her relationships with her husband and his family members. She further explained the process of how, after she and her husband completed the works of decorations, she was gradually accepted by her husband's family, and especially her parents-in-law.

> *Although it was already two decades ago, I still remember that my husband and I were always in conflict at the time because his parents and family members did not like or really accept me. Thus, the relationship between me and his family was in tension. However, due to the collaboration on the work of house decoration, my husband and I could discuss and design the house we wanted and expected together, which really gave us more chances to exchange our ideas and imagination about our future life and ideal home. In so doing, this provided us with more common goals and discussion topics without always talking about the issues regarding his family and our relations. Now, I am 50 years old, but when I recall these memories and experiences, it really touches me. Moreover, his parents treated me in a very different way after that. I think it is because they saw the efforts I put in, so that's why they gradually accepted me and improved their attitudes toward me.*

The house decoration experiences of Selena Lu show that these works did not only have a material value, but also had a social meaning and gender-related value to her. Her stories supplement gender and immigrant women's perspectives and subjective meanings in terms of homemaking and house decoration processes. In the interview, Lu told me that "re-constructing and re-decorating a domestic space and house is the first step of homemaking in the foreign land." Moreover, Lu's experiences of conducting the collaborative work of house decoration with her husband helped them to improve their spousal relationship and facilitated her to build a sense of belonging toward their "collective" and "new" house/home in the foreign land. This had some further, unconscious effects: it let her husband's parents see the efforts and contributions she was making toward her new life in Belgium, and these close observations and interactions, which further changed the attitudes of her parents-in-law toward Lu and led them to gradually accept her as a new member of the family. As Ariztia (2012) has already demonstrated, through house and domestic decoration processes, people can (re)negotiate and perform their initial or new self-images and identities within the space. In the example, Lu's house decoration experiences helped her to gain a "legitimate" position in her new life and recognition by her husband's family in Belgium.

5.3.3 Everyday chats with children and cooking special foods to connect with and signify home

When Lu decided to become a full-time housewife, she changed her daily living arrangements and spent most of her time and energy on doing domestic work and taking care of her children. By dedicating most of her capacity to these efforts, she gradually adapted to her new personal social roles as a full-time housewife and mother in her family life and domestic sphere. Moreover, by frequently chatting with her children, and cooking and sharing "home-/mother-made food" with her family at mealtimes, Lu successfully gained a sense of belonging in her immigrant life through being a "good mother."

After becoming as a housewife and immigrant mother, I took on most of the responsibilities regarding take care of my children, doing the domestic work, and trying to play the role of a good mother. Moreover, cooking delicious meals and

showing motherhood and care toward my children were my most crucial tasks in daily life. However, I enjoyed preparing lunch boxes and dinner for my husband and children, you know, in the cooking processes, it seems like I could show my love and caring via food. When my children were little, I enjoyed the time after they finished school, when I would ask them to accompany me to go shopping and buy the daily food ingredients. During the shopping time with my children, I chatted with them regarding their lives and situations at school, you know, they were cute at the time and very willing to share everything they had learned, experienced, seen, and heard at school with me. I felt very warm when they shared these things with me, and further gained a sense of belonging in this foreign land as an immigrant mother.

Lu's narratives demonstrate how important it was to her to spend time with her children. The relationships between immigrant mothers and their children are a significant part of not only the daily homemaking processes, but also in the formation of a sense of belonging. In this context, the meaning of home for Lu was constituted by her relationship with her children. She also stated that these everyday shopping experiences with her children in the city and supermarket helped her to obtain a feeling of familiarity toward the town where she lived and the surrounding area. Thus, for Lu, her children acted as a bridge for connecting with the place where she was living and her sense of belonging with her surroundings and neighborhood. This also facilitate Lu to gain the feeling of being at home in her immigrant life (Edawds & Gibson, 2016).

Moreover, her everyday food practices of preparing, cooking, and sharing "home-/mother-made" foods with her children and husband became vital social interaction opportunities for her to show that she cared about her children, as well as to facilitate the family's mutual dialogue. From Lu's daily cooking experiences, there are two dishes that really hold a special meaning for her: chicken legs, and pig ears. When asked why these two dishes are so important and meaningful to her, she replied:

I liked to cook two very special foods for my children and husband, which are "chicken legs and pig ears." However, you know, in Belgium they do not eat animals' organs or legs, which meant I had to order the food ingredients at the

meat shop several days before I wanted to cook them. Actually, it is very meaningful for me to cook these two dishes, you know, I am an aboriginal person, as Amis lived in the mountain areas in Hualien. When I was a child, my parents were very poor, it was impossible for my mother to cook meat or fish every day; thus, my mother figured out an alternative way to provide us with the necessary protein, by cooking "chicken legs and pig ears" to feed us with, because those foods were much cheaper than other pork or chicken meat.

Lu explained the feelings it gives her to eat these two special dishes, and how these dishes became her "comfort foods," since they reduced her feelings of nostalgia and helped her to recall her beautiful childhood memories from when she lived with her Taiwanese family in Hualien. Moreover, she would also tell her children and husband about the stories and meanings behind these two dishes. In relation to the experiences of cooking and consuming these two special foods, she stated:

So, when I missed my Taiwanese family after migrating to Belgium, I would cook these two dishes for my husband and children and doing this had two effects for me. First, cooking and eating these two dishes could not only make me connect with and remember my Taiwanese family, and my lived experiences in Hualien, but also reduce the feeling of nostalgia toward my hometown and my mother's foods. Moreover, in the cooking processes, I would share the stories behind these foods with my children and husband to make them understand why these two dishes are so important and meaningful for me, letting them know more about my background and lived experiences in Taiwan.

Lu's family food practices demonstrate that her daily food consumption and practices allowed her to transmit and share her subjective food preferences, home cultures, values, and stories of her personal life and immigration journey, vertically to her children and horizontally to her husband. These kinds of activities can have the positive effects of facilitating interactions and communication between immigrant mothers and their family members (Brown & Paszkiewicz, 2017; Lin, 2019).

5.3.4 Traditional festivals signifying home

In addition to the physical and material things that helped Selena Lu to gain feelings of home in her daily life, some cultural symbols could also offer such feelings to her. In the interview, Lu emphasized that "*I really expect my children to understand Taiwanese and Chinese cultures, because these refer to where I came from and the cultural backgrounds and experiences I had before.*" Moreover, she stated:

> *I think of my children as made up half by their Belgian father and half by their Taiwanese mother; in this regard, if they do not learn about and have some basic knowledge regarding Taiwanese and Chinese cultures, I think it would be very sad.*

Lu further indicated that:

> *… it is impossible for me to throw my heritage cultures away, because those cultures are part of me. If my children cannot know about these, I would think they are not complete: they do have their Belgian part, but they lack their Taiwanese part*.

These cultural views that Lu holds led her to insist upon letting her children experience some important and meaningful Chinese traditional festivals that she had experienced in Taiwan, even though it is more difficult to replicate the festival feelings and atmospheres in a foreign country. Thus, when asked, why would you persist to do so, she replied: "*because I don't want my children to forget who they are in their Taiwanese part.*" She further stated:

> *As an immigrant mother coming from Taiwan and a Confucian culture society, I want to let my children know about and experience some traditional festivals that I experienced in Taiwan before. Of course, the Chinese (lunar) New Year is the most important one. So, in that period, although Belgians do not celebrate this festival, I insisted on having my children experience this traditional and most vital festival in the Chinese culture. I told them about the customs regarding the Lunar New Year and how people in Taiwan celebrate this event.*

The traditional Chinese festivals comprise several special and specific rituals, which are still maintained and valued in Taiwanese society. The Lunar New Year is the most important of these festivals, and still plays a significant role in most Confucian and Chinese societies, including Taiwan, mainland China, Hong Kong, and the pan-Chinese immigrant communities in overseas regions. Traditionally, all children, no matter where they are, would back to their hometown and original (parental) homes for the "family gathering." In the period of the Lunar New Year, families get together to eat, talk, and share their experiences from the year. Moreover, the elderly in the family practice a vital ritual of giving their children and descendants red envelopes (*壓歲錢*) containing New Year money. This money is said to bring the owner luck in the new beginning, and children and descendants should do something to demonstrate their thankfulness toward their parents and elderly family members by reciting positive blessings. Although the Lunar New Year is not celebrated by the majority of Belgian families (Pang, 2012), Lu still tried her best and wanted her children to have the chance to experience this most vital festival in the Chinese culture. She stated:

> *Of course, the red envelope (壓歲錢) is the most popular and representative cultural symbol and ritual in the Lunar New Year; however, I told my children that before you get the New Year money from your parents, you should say something good and positive to show your thankfulness to your parents. I am happy that my children did not refuse to do so, and they found it interesting. It is worth mentioning that, when we approached January and February, my children would say "Mom, it is time for the red envelopes?," and even that now my children are grow up [one is a university student, one is a senior high-school student, and the other is an elementary-school student], they save their time to come back home and have a family lunch or dinner together to celebrate the Lunar New Years with their Taiwanese mom.*

In addition to the Lunar New Year, Lu tried to let her children experience another two important traditional festivals in the Chinese culture—the "Dragon Boat" and "Moon" festivals. However, since these two festivals are not as popular as Lunar New Year in the host society, it is more difficult for her to celebrate these festivals in Belgium.

When asked about how she celebrates these events since Belgium does not have similar customs, she said:

> *Except for the Lunar New Year, I also wanted my children to experience other important traditional festivals, like the dragon boat and moon festivals. In several years, I taught my children to make "sticky rice buns" (粽子) at home, and we ate them together. For the moon festival, it was difficult to make a moon cake by ourselves, so I usually bought a moon cake from the Chinese supermarket and made the cake our dessert after lunch or dinner. Celebrating these traditional festivals from my cultural heritage with my children and husband made me feel at home and gain a sense of belonging for both my heritage culture and my immigrant life in Belgium. Moreover, I think it is important to let my children know and experience their mother's homeland cultures, since they do not have enough opportunities to experience these cultural things in their daily life. In so doing, I want to remind my children where their mother came from, and for them to understand and even accept their mother's heritage culture.*

Lu's narratives show that there are three meanings for her in celebrating these traditional festival events with her immigrant family, especially with her children. First, by letting her children celebrate these festivals, Lu's intention was to give them the opportunity to experience those cultural events, and in doing so, she expected to remind her children that these cultural features are also parts of them. Further, by making and consuming special festival foods with her children and husband, she also wanted to make her children's ethnicity complete. Celebrating these traditional cultural events and consuming the special festival foods are both identity performance strategies for Lu, not only in the domestic and family spheres, but also as her cultural toolkits to educate her children in terms of their "complete" and "whole" ethnicity (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013). Moreover, these traditional festivals are important excuses for Lu to gather her children back home and celebrate together, so they have become vital opportunities for family gatherings. These festival and family gathering events have facilitated Lu to acquire a sense of belonging and a feeling of home in her immigrant life.

5.3.5 Family music concerts signifying home

As Lu has expertise in music, she re-started her professional musical work after her children had grown up and were independent enough to take care of themselves. Now, she is an adjunct lecturer teaching vocal music at the Namur musical college, and also utilizes her house as a classroom for teaching private students about music. In so doing, she has become well known in her local area, and more and more students have enrolled in her private music classes. She indicated that re-starting her professional musical work facilitated her to re-discover her personal value and professional identity.

> *Now, my daughter and my older son are university and senior high school students, and my little son is in the sixth grade of primary school. I do not have to spend most of my time taking care of them as I did before, they can do most things regarding the school affairs and take care of themselves most cases. Thus, in the recent years, I have had more free time to re-focus on what I am really interested in and passionate about. That's why I have re-started my professional jobs working as a lecturer in music at the music college in Namur, and also as a music tutor, teaching private students in music and vocals at my own house. I am really appreciative that I could re-build my musical profession, even though is not a full-time job*, and *although the income is limited, I have really re-found my professional and personal values in doing the things that I am really good at*.

It is interesting to note that Lu has applied music as one of her vital strategies in the processes of homemaking. She organizes so-called "family music concerts," and invites her students and their parents and families, as well as her own children and husband, to participate. In my fieldwork experiences, Lu extended two invitations to participate in her family music concerts. In these concerts, she invites her own children and her students to play the different musical instruments that they have learned from her to perform and share their learning outcomes in front of their parents. After the musical performances, she invites all participants to enjoy some beverages and snacks together. In the interview, she stated:

> *Because I love music, I also let my children learn musical instruments, and in the*

past several years, I have organized "family music concerts" at my private house. I invite my students and their parents to participate [most are Belgian and local students)], and in the concerts, my students perform what they have learned, and I also invite my own children to perform the musical instruments they have learned. After my children's and students' performances, everyone gets together to chat and share stories with each other, we also have coffee, cake, and sometimes lunch together in my home.

It was surprising at the first of these events attended by the researcher to see that most of her students were local Belgians, some of them were pan-Chinese students, and there were also a few other international students. This made an impression, as the initial assumption was that most of her students would be Taiwanese or other pan-Chinese students; however, the truth is different. The demographics of the concert's participants aroused curiosity about what the meaning is to her of organizing these concerts annually. She replied that:

The aim of organizing this "family music concert" is not for competition. This annual event provides me with wonderful opportunities for meeting and interacting with my students and their families, and also my neighbors. In so doing, I can get to know more about my students, their families, and my neighbors without pressure, just like family interactions. Holding these events, can make me feel I am not the "outsider" in this society; on the contrary, I can also contribute my capacities to the society in Belgium by teaching Belgian students about music and musical professions. I have to say that this event really makes me feel comfortable, I enjoy it, and gain a sense of belonging and feeling at home, since I have already established very good relationships with several students and their families. In addition to my students' and children's performances, before the end of the concert, I sometimes sing some Taiwanese or Amis aboriginal songs for the participants. I have found that the audience not only enjoy their children's performances, but also like me to sing some Asian and Taiwanese songs. It brings them the feeling of "exotic," but for me, singing these songs means "home."



Figure 5.6 A family music concert organized by Selena Lu at her home

Source: Taken by the researcher, with Selena Lu's authorization to use

The above discussion has demonstrated that the family music concerts have several meanings for Lu. On the surface, she utilizes these concert events as a platform for her students to share and perform their musical studies and learning outcomes in front of their parents. However, the deeper meaning for Lu is that she makes her private house into a semi-public and collective social space for gathering different people (her children, students, students' families, and community neighborhoods) to chat, interact, and make new encounters. In so doing, during these annual musical events, her house becomes a "node and intersection" space for Lu to mobilize and cultivate her social networks. In the interview, she mentioned that the music concerts are also one of her ways to look beyond the original co-ethnic networks within the Taiwanese or other pan-Chinese immigrant communities and to establish and expand other local friendships. This strategy for establishing local networks echoes Lizardo's (2006) findings, as he states that people utilize their "taste" and "cultural capital" as tools and strategies for managing and cultivating their interpersonal networks. Moreover, Lu's case shows that

the cultural capital and musical professional expertise she possesses have become successful personal social and cultural resources to help her expand, manage, and cultivate her interpersonal networks, and to assist her in gaining social capital. Furthermore, these interpersonal networks facilitate her to obtain a feeling of belonging, and because of the family-like style of interaction at the concerts, they make her feel at home. The feeling of home for Lu here is not physical, but symbolic. It is constructed via musical performances, such as when she sings Taiwanese and Amis aboriginal songs for the participants at the end of the concerts to show where she came from and her mix of ethnicities.

Although music is a human universal, the meanings of musical practices regarding signing, listening to, and sharing music vary from person to person. Especially in the diasporic context, singing, listening to, and sharing local or ethnic music are considered as identity performance. In Lu's case, singing and sharing the Amis and Taiwanese songs means home to her, while for local Belgian audiences, these musical practices provide them with a feeling of the exotic. Thus, this example shows that musical practices have different meanings for different people, and especially for people who do not live in their original home country. Yoon (2019) took Korean young people living in Canada as an example and examined their perceptions and the meanings they attach to listen and share K-Pop music in the immigration context. The Korean diaspora youths in his study indicated that they see K-pop as ethnic music; thus, listening to, singing, and sharing K-pop music means connecting with their Korean heritage. In this regard, K-pop music serves as a cultural bridge to connect overseas Korean immigrants and allow them to live in a "symbolic Korean home" constructed and intermediated by K-pop music and popular culture. Yoon finds that, since K-pop has become well known and widely accepted both in Western and Eastern societies, the soft power of K-pop further encourages and facilitates Korean diaspora youths to become more willing and brave in presenting their Korean ethnic characteristics and identities in the Canadian host society. Thus, the meaning of consuming K-pop music for Korean diaspora youths involves the process of making sense of who they are, and daily practices of listening to or singing K-pop further re-affirm and consolidate their identities regarding their Korean heritage culture and ethnic background.

In her interview, Lu mentioned that "*if it is possible and if I can, I will insist on*

incorporating some Taiwanese or even Amis songs into my performances or musical shows." In response to why she would like to do so and what meanings are involved for her in doing so, she replied: "*it is easy, because I came from Taiwan, and I would like to share our beautiful sounds with the people here.*" Interestingly, the meaning of organizing the family music concerts for Lu does not only lie in consolidating and sharing her original ethnicities as Amis and Taiwanese. In addition, by inviting Belgian students' parents, local neighbors, and performing the Taiwanese songs and Western vocal music together, the concerts have become her platform to present her hard efforts to re-build a feeling of home in Belgium. The performances with a mix of Eastern and Western music have also become a way of demonstrating her mixed personal status as an immigrant from Taiwan who has lived in Belgium for more than two decades and has been granted Belgian nationality. In this regard, Lu's music practices not only assist her to present and maintain her pre-existing identities, but also provide her with opportunities for contesting and negotiating regarding her mixed identities and even constructing a new one (Lidskog, 2017).

5.3.6 "I am a rootless orchid": Negotiating between the identity labels of "Amis," "Taiwanese," and "Belgian"

It was surprising to hear, when discussing issues regarding ethno-national identity and big home with Lu, that she emphasized more the importance of her ethnic background as aboriginal "Amis" than as "Taiwanese." Moreover, she applied some cultural objects to distinguish between the identity labels of "Amis" and "Taiwanese," by stating:

> *I have to mention that, before saying I am Taiwanese, I would firstly say "I am Amis." You know, the cultures, lifestyle, customs, and so forth are pretty different between "Amis" and "Taiwanese," we (Amis) have our own cultures, foods, festivals, clothes, etc. I am very proud of my aboriginal background and cultural roots.*

Lu's perceptions and interpretations regarding her personal ethno-national identity

and the differences between the identity labels of "Amis" and "Taiwanese" echo the thoughts proposed by the anthropologist Barth (1969; 1994). He indicated that people's ethnic identity is not static or unchangeable but can be changed when interacting with different people and facing different living circumstances. Moreover, when interacting with other ethnic groups, people may apply different objects (language, accent, foods, cloth, lifestyle, etc.) to distinguish the similarities and differences between "us" and "others." These distinguishing processes are called as "boundary-making" processes by Barth, indicating that people could use distinct and various objects to draw boundaries between/among different ethnic groups. Such ethnic boundaries have a dual function. First, these boundaries can assist people to differentiate the ethnic others; in this sense, the boundaries have an exclusionary function. On the contrary, ethnic boundaries can also have the inclusive function of helping people to know who belong to their own groups and are affiliated to their shared community (Barth, 2000). Lu's narratives clearly show that she does not believe that "Taiwanese" and "Amis" cultures and identities are the same. Moreover, in the interview, Lu said she is willing and proud to present her "Amis" ethnic roots; in fact, during the interview process, she gave several reminders that "*you have to write it down*, *I am "Amis" first then a "Taiwanese."* Furthermore, her ethno-national identity faced further challenges when she migrated, and she has now lived in Belgium for more than two decades. She utilized the imagery of an orchid to explain her subjective perceptions regarding this issue. She stated:

> *However, honestly, after migrating and living in Belgium for more than 25 years (I leaved Taiwan when I was 24 years old), how to identify myself is a pretty difficult question for me. I feel like a "rootless orchid," you know, the orchid is a plant that can survive without soil, it can be cultivated and planted even in a cement wall or living on top of other plants. You know, I have already lived for more than two decades in Belgium, and here, I have experienced most of important life transitions, from a young girl to becoming a migrant mother and my husband's wife.*

Accordingly, her international immigration experiences have influenced her a lot, as she has experienced significant personal development in her transition from a young

woman to becoming her husband's wife and an immigrant mother. However, even though she has lived in Belgium for more than 20 years, this does not mean that she has been able to assimilate herself into the mainstream society entirely, and the difficulties she still faces the most is how to balance and negotiate her three identity schemes of "Amis," "Taiwanese," and "Belgian." In the interview, she spoke about her identity negotiation difficulties when interacting with people from different ethnic groups in her daily life:

> *Although the time I have been living in Belgium is more than I spent in Taiwan, I do not identify myself totally as a Belgian because I also spent my childhood and adolescent periods in Taiwan. For me, it is really difficult to say who I am or what identity label I 100% belong to. When I go back to Hualien and my Amis tribe, it's still familiar; however, I do not feel I totally belong to them. In some cases, I even feel unhappy about some thoughts and cultural traditions in my village. So, I am in an awkward situation. When I interact with my Amis family members and friends, they may say "your thoughts and behaviors are too open and too foreign," "we Amis would not think like that;" however, when I interact with my Taiwanese friends, they would say "you are already a Belgian, you do not think like as a Taiwanese person." Then, when I interact with my Belgian friends, they still regard me as an Asian immigrant woman or a Taiwanese wife, they definitely do not consider me as totally Belgian because of my obvious different appearance, accent, color, and so on. In this regard, for me it is difficult to balance my ethno-national backgrounds and the sense of identity between Taiwan and Belgium. I feel I am part of these three identity schemes, but I could not find a 100% sense of belonging toward any one of them. So that's why I said I am a "rootless orchid," I no longer feel that I totally belong to any culture or identity group, I am living* ***in-between****.*

Lu's explanations regarding her interactions with different people demonstrate very clearly the nature of people identity formation. In fact, people's ethno-national identity does not only determine how they regard themselves, but also influence by how others consider them. This means that identity formation is a social process that influences both ourselves and others (Jenkins, 2000). Lu's experiences show that, when

she interacts with different groups of people, she makes distinct responses in terms of her identity labels. However, in these interaction processes, Lu has come to feel that she does not 100% belong to any one ethnic group, since her Amis friends tell her she is not like an "Amis" person in some aspect, her Taiwanese friends say that some of her thoughts and behaviors are too "foreign" but not "Taiwanese" enough, and her Belgian peers do not regard Lu as totally "Belgian" because of her immigrant background and the obvious differences in her appearance, skin color, language use, accent, and so forth. These perceptions of others strongly affect how Lu sees herself and interprets her identity and sense of belonging. Due to the difficulties of placing and interpreting her self-identity and cultural belonging, she utilized the imagery of an orchid to explain her "rootless" feelings with respect to ethno-national identity.

The consequences of these identity negotiation difficulties she has faced have led Lu to choose a "hybrid" strategy, which reflects the "in between-ness" of her ethno-national identity composition (Han, 2008). Since Lu cannot successfully feel that she 100% belongs to any of her identity groups, she presents her ethno-national identity by choosing different levels and aspects of the identity content she agrees with and feels attached to among the three. This "in-between" identity performance strategy has both positive and negative effects on her. From the positive side, this strategy allows Lu to remain flexible and avoid some potential awkward situations when discussing this sensitive and difficult issue with others, so she can feel comfortable floating and navigating between her three ethno-national identity labels. However, on the negative side, this strategy makes her feel unattached and like a rootless orchid, not completely belonging to any specific ethnic group. In this regard, Lu falls under the category of "culture homeless" proposed by Vivero and Jenkins (1999). Thus, Lu's responses reveal that she has faced several challenges in terms of locating and identifying her sense of ethno-national identity and of cultural belonging in the sense of a big home, despite her initial claim that she comes from Taiwan and regards Taiwan as her country and as her homeland.

5.3.7 Summary

The life stories and narratives shared by Selena Lu show how diverse her notions

and meanings of home have been in her immigrant life and during her international movement journey.

Since Lu decided to migrate to Belgium due to intercultural intimacy, balancing the roles of a full-time housewife and immigrant mother with her personal career development has been a difficult task for her. Moreover, these issues are tied in with Confucian cultural expectations regarding gender roles and the concept of a good mother and wife. Lu's homemaking experiences are not only related to the issues of negotiating her personal role and intangible cultural expectations but are also linked with tangible and material issues. As Lu pointed out, house and domestic decoration was her first step toward making a home in a foreign land and in her immigrant life. Taiwanese and East Asian societies have very different cultures of house decorations and homemaking comparing with Belgian and European contexts; thus, Lu spent a lot of time on collaboratively completing the house decorations with her husband. It is interesting to note that this cooperative work had some unintended consequences of improving her relationships with her husband and her parents-in-law, allowing her to be further accepted and recognized by her husband's family members. Furthermore, because these relationships had been improved, Lu was gradually able to obtain a feeling of home and attach her sense of belonging to the new house/home cooperatively established by her and her husband. Moreover, home and some specific foods have played vital roles in Lu's homemaking experiences. She mentioned two important and special foods for her—chicken legs and pig ears. By cooking, sharing, and consuming these special dishes and other ordinary homemade food that she prepared, these food practices not only facilitated Lu to obtain a feeling of being at home in a foreign land, but held some social meanings of transferring her food habits and other personal and social meanings vertically to her husband and horizontally to her children. Cooking these special foods in her daily life helped her to recall her childhood memories from Taiwan and connect her emotional and attachment feelings across national borders between her original home in Taiwan and her new home and life in Belgium.

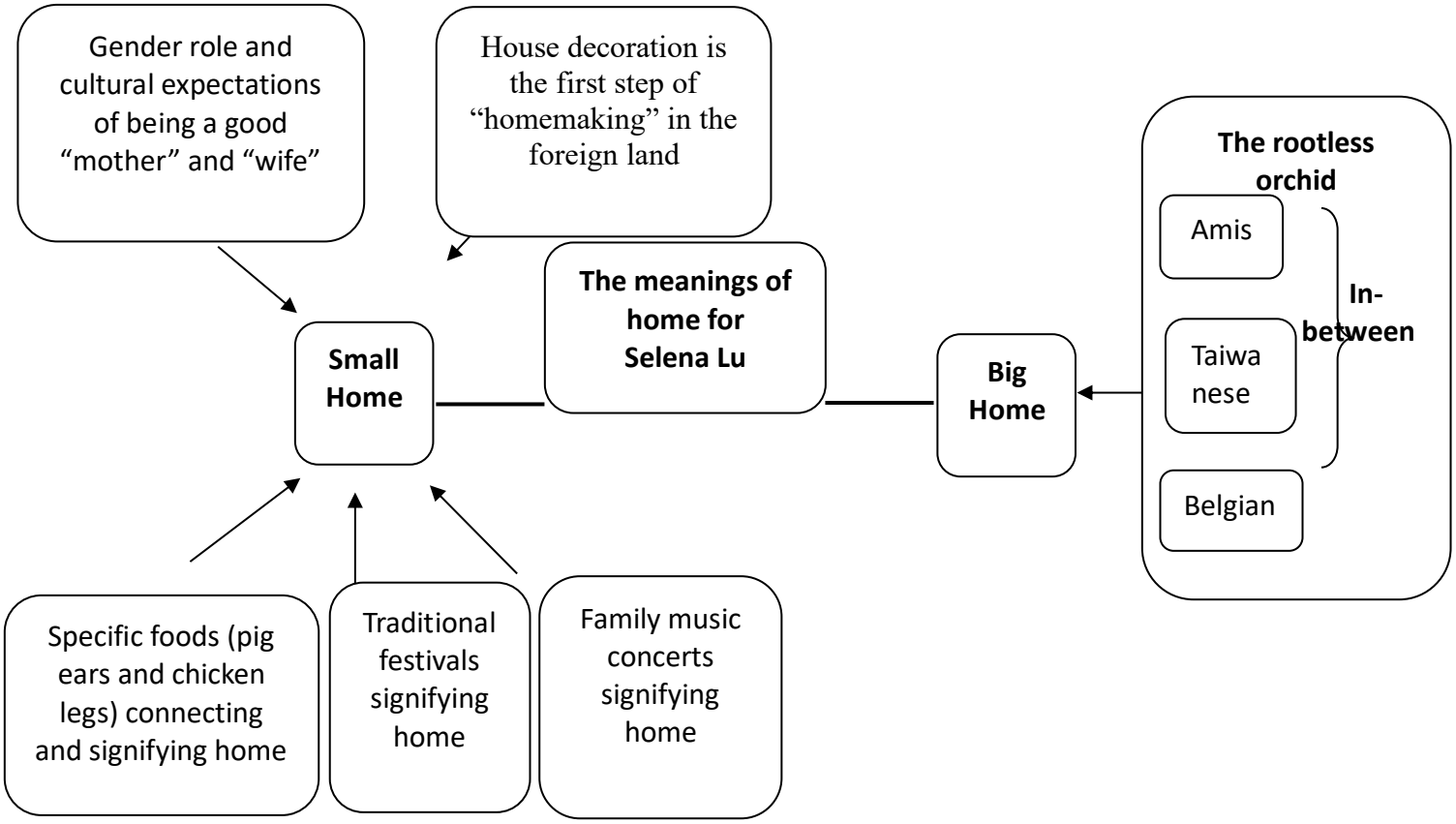


Figure 5.7 The intersectional meanings of home for Selena Lu

Source: This study.

As an immigrant mother who came from Taiwan and is considerably influenced by Confucian and traditional Chinese cultures, Lu did her best to provide her children with opportunities to experience her heritage cultures and avoid them forgetting that they come from both their Belgian father and their Taiwanese mother. In this regard, she insisted on letting her children experience specific traditional festivals and practice some Chinese cultural rituals because she believed these cultural practices could make her children become "whole" people, especially in the cultural sphere. Moreover, carrying out these cultural and ritual activities together with her children and husband also helped her to gain a feeling of home and a sense of belonging to her family and the society. It is interesting to point out that organizing her annual family concerts is a special homemaking strategy conducted by Lu. By doing this, she successfully makes her private house into a collective and node-like social interaction space by inviting her

music students and their families, as well as her neighbors, to attend. Thus, Lu shows and constructs her meanings of home via her cultural tastes and musical performances.

Furthermore, with regard to the notions of big home and ethno-national identity, Lu recognizes that she came from Taiwan and is Taiwanese; however, the ethnic identity of being "Amis" is more important to her when she describes her identity composition. Lu has a complicated identity composition of being "Amis" and "Taiwanese" simultaneously and has faced difficulties and challenges in balancing the three identity labels she has, which also include "Belgian." Since she has lived in Belgium for more than two decades, these identity compositions in some cases come into conflict, meaning that Lu finds it difficult to place her ethno-national identity into a specific identity label or cultural group. This is why she utilized the term "rootless orchid" to describe her attitude to her identity and her psychological feelings of living in an "in-between" identity domain. In summary, the intersections of Lu's gender, role as a mother, ethnicity, heritage culture, food practices, and her experiences of carrying out the cooperative work of house and domestic decorations with her husband have all affected Lu's perceptions and experiences of homemaking in her daily life as an immigrant.

5.4 Conclusion

Women constitute the majority of the Belgian Taiwanese immigrant community. Thus, in this chapter, we have examined Taiwanese immigrant women's experiences of homemaking and their subjective interpretations and narratives regarding their experiences of international movement and re-building the sense of home and constructing the place where they can belong in their host country. By analyzing interview data regarding Taiwanese immigrant women's life stories, we have demonstrated two Taiwanese immigrant women's cases and their immigrant life-story narratives in this chapter—Mrs. Zhan and Selena Lu.

Table 5.2 The intersectional meanings of home for Mrs. Zhan and Selena Lu

Dimensions/Cases	Mrs. Zhan	Selena Lu
Small Home	● Husband signifies home ● Religious practices signify home ● Responsibilities signify home ● The Ecole Sun Yat Sen Chinese language school signifies her big home (family)	● Gender role and cultural expectations of being a good "mother" and "wife" ● House decoration as the first step of "homemaking" in a foreign land ● Specific foods (pig ears and chicken legs) connect with and signify home ● Traditional festivals signify home ● Family music concerts signify home
Big Home	● Identifies as "Overseas Chinese" when interacting with Chinese immigrants from mainland China and people who understand the Chinese language ● Identifies as "Taiwanese" when interacting with Taiwanese	● A rootless orchid ● In-betweenness of identity

	immigrant groups and Taiwanese people ● More flexible and tolerant regarding identity issues when interacting with less close friends, acquaintances, and neighbors ● More serious and concerned about identity labels when interacting with her husband's family members	

Source: This study.

This chapter has revealed that no single dimension or factor can holistically cover the concept of home in immigrant life; on the contrary, the notions and meanings of home for immigrant are fluid, dynamic, and diverse, and can be influenced by different personal axes and living circumstances. This suggests that the meaning of home cannot be defined by a house itself or its physical dimensions. Rather, it is necessary to bring the human elements back into consideration when discussing the concept of home. When people's different backgrounds and axes are taken into account, like in the cases of Mrs. Zhan and Selena Lu in this chapter, we can see that the notions and meanings of home are intersectionally influenced and affected by their personal characteristics, including gender, personal role, ethnicity, social relationships, religious practices, experiences of international movement, and so on. Thus, Mrs. Zhan's and Selena Lu's homemaking experiences are varied and diverse. Table 5.2 shows the similarities and differences of these two subjects' homemaking experiences.

In terms of the concept of small home, both subjects chose to leave their original homes in Taiwan due to intercultural romance, and based on those relationships, they then migrated to Belgium and began their new lives and journeys of homemaking in this foreign country. However, they underwent quite different small-homemaking experiences because of their distinct life experiences and personal axes. For example, religious beliefs and being an adjunct Chinese language teacher at a heritage school provided Mrs. Zhan with feelings of home and allowed her to construct a sense of belonging in this unfamiliar land as an immigrant woman from Taiwan. However, for Selena Lu, carrying out collaborative house and domestic decorating with her husband, cooking, sharing, and consuming special homemade foods, experiencing special Chinese traditional festivals in her immigrant life, and organizing family music concerts in her private home, were all crucial strategies and practices that she has applied in her homemaking experiences in Belgium. Both Mrs. Zhan and Selena Lu pointed out that their social relationships (especially their spousal relationships) and their obligations and responsibilities as the immigrant mothers were vital aspects for them to construct feelings of home and belonging in their immigrant lives and throughout their processes of homemaking. Since many Taiwanese immigrant women have migrated to Belgium due to intercultural marriage, several of the other research participants also share the common narrative of "*where my husband is, there is my home*". Interestingly, this kind of narrative is more likely to be heard from immigrant women who are just in their first few years living in Belgium or in their relationship. Moreover, since many immigrant women experience a transformation in their personal roles, for example becoming immigrant mothers and having their own children, then their children also become an important reference for immigrant women when constructing and obtaining a feeling of home and a sense of belonging.

In summary, the intersections of Mrs. Zhan's and Selena Lu's different and varied personal axes and living circumstances have resulted in diverse experiences in their homemaking, subjective meaning formation, and negotiations of the concepts of small and big homes (Hopkins, 2019).

Chapter Six
Belgian Taiwanese Working Holiday Youths' Homemaking experiences

6.1 Temporary migratory flows and working holiday programs

Due to the rapid development of international transportation and communication systems, people in the contemporary era are able to travel abroad and even migrate to other countries more cheaply and easily than ever before. This trend has had a significant influence on the meaning of international immigration. The classical migration perspective regards the term international immigrants to refer to people who leave their home country and migrate to another country abroad, in most cases on a permanent basis. However, given the ease with which people can move between and migrate to countries in the contemporary era, international immigration no longer necessarily refers to people wishing to move permanently, but rather encompasses those who move or migrate overseas to live or work on a temporary basis.

These new developments have made temporary migration one of the key characteristics of international immigration flows in the contemporary world. In recent years, an increasing number of European countries have begun to offer temporary working visas to the global labor market, and have actively recruited both blue- and white-collar temporary workers from overseas to supplement shortages in the local labor force, and in so doing, facilitating their economic development. Since European countries tend to offer better workplace conditions and higher salaries, compared to their Asian counterparts, Europe is the most popular destination for most Asians looking to go abroad to work. According to the statistics, in the period 2005–2010, nearly 3.2 million people moved from Asia to Europe for work; this figure is higher than the equivalent from South and North America to Europe (2.9 million) and from Africa to Europe (2.1 million). Nowadays, we can conclude that Asian migrants are the dominant source for migratory flows to Europe. Many of these are temporary migrant workers who move back and forth between their home country in Asia and their host country in Europe (Aksakal et al., 2018; Abel and Sander, 2014).

It is important to note that these temporary migratory flows are composed of several migration pathways. According to Pitkänen and Carerra (2014), there are several types of temporary migrants. The first consists of international students; these are people who leave their home country to migrate overseas temporarily for educational purposes. Student mobility can further be divided into two subsets: credit mobility, which refers to students who study at an overseas university for a short period like a semester to obtain credit, and degree-searching mobility, which refers to students who enroll at a foreign university to complete an entire degree program (King & Ragharum, 2013). The second category of temporary migrant is that of lifestyle migrants, which refers to people who choose to leave their home country and migrate overseas in order to obtain a better quality of life; in most cases, they are looking for a more relaxed and inexpensive lifestyle. The migration pathway of this type of temporary migrant is mainly composed of people who move from affluent, industrialized countries to those with a favorable climate and lower living costs. For example, there are many lifestyle migrants who migrate from Western Europe and North America to countries in Southeast Asia. However, since these migrants typically do not lack money, the main reason why they have migrated is not to find a job or pursue career development, but rather to enjoy a relaxed life in their place of settlement (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

The above two categories of temporary migrants are not relevant to this thesis, which focuses instead on two further categories: low-skilled temporary migrants (working holiday-makers [WHMs]), who will be discussed in this chapter, and high-skilled temporary migrants (professional expatriates), who will be discussed in the following chapter.

However, before embarking on these discussions, I would like to offer a brief introduction to working holiday policies in the context of the relationship between Taiwan and Belgium. In a policy document published on this matter, the Taiwanese government clearly stipulates that the aims of the working holiday programs with which it is involved are to help young people to expand their international vision, cultivate independence, and accumulate life experience, as well as to facilitate international engagement. In 2003, the Taiwanese government started to promote and expand on

working holiday agreements with other countries, and in 2004, signed its first such agreement with Australia. By 2018, agreements with 16 other countries were in place, including with Belgium in 2013. In this case, the Belgian government announced that it would provide up to 200 quotas annually for Taiwanese young people aged from 18 to 30 to obtain a one-year working holiday visa to live and work in Belgium, and in 2013, 148 Taiwanese young people applied for this visa. The average age of those who participate in the various working holiday programs on offer is 26.3, of whom females account for 70% and males for 30%. A total of 85% of participants have completed a bachelor's degree. Taiwanese young people earn on average $12,000 during their year abroad, with their annual expenses amounting to $7,670. Based on these figures, Taiwanese WHMs are likely to save around $4,300 per year (*CommonWealth Magazine*, 2016).

This program offering a working holiday in Belgium can be said to be one of the latest migration pathways for Taiwanese people, having been established in 2013. Even though participants can live and work in Belgium for one year, an important factor to note is that neither government offers to help participants to find a job, which means that participating Taiwanese young people have to survive in the Belgian labor market by themselves. This is likely to give rise to many challenges and difficulties, given that many participants are low-skilled temporary migrant workers.

This concept of a working holiday derives from Western rather than Asian culture; many Western young people choose to go on a 'gap year' to travel or work abroad prior to entering university or the labor market. WHMs are required to return home upon the expiry of their temporary visa, and therefore scholars regard them as temporary rather than permanent migrant workers (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009). According to Conradson and Latham (2005, 2007), a working holiday is a mild form of transnational mobility that differs markedly from the experiences of asylum seekers and white-collar professional migrants, and therefore WHMs' international mobility experiences have the diversity and specificity of their own.

Previous working holiday studies have mainly focused on the experiences of Western young people. Cohen (2011) examined the experiences of Western WHMs and

the meanings for them by working and living in the developing countries in Asia. He found that young people's experiences of traveling, living, and working in Asia not only give them new knowledge about different cultures and lifestyles, but also help them to transit their personal role, find and construct their youth and personal identities, enhance their international mobility, and further achieve their goals of self-development. Clarke (2004) has written that working holiday programs give young people a sense of freedom and independence, and helps them to transition from adolescence to adulthood, while according to Amit (2012), Western young people benefit from experiencing their own autonomy, when they decide to participate in working holiday programs or work as temporary workers. This is because such participants voluntarily choose to engage in these programs, rather than being forced to migrate overseas as a result of economic concerns.

Compared to their Western counterparts, Taiwanese—and, more broadly, Asian—young people tend to have different motivations and considerations for participating in this international youth mobility programs. A study by Zhang (2014) revealed that the majority of Taiwanese youngsters who participate in working holiday programs are mainly from lower middle- and working-class families, and that they viewed these programs as an opportunity to experience the Western lifestyle, and go abroad with lower costs. Their overall goal is to experience life and work in Western countries and to spend some time away from their daily routine in Taiwan. Kawashima (2010) and Bui et al. (2013) echoed this argument, reporting that the chief reasons why Asian young people participate in working holiday program relate to uncompetitive work conditions and low-level salaries in their home countries.

The above-mentioned studies spotlight differences in motivation and individual agency between Asian and Western young people. Differently to Western youths, who mainly choose to participate in working holiday program voluntarily, many of their Taiwanese and Asian counterparts do so due to the socio-economic disadvantages they experience in their home countries, and because becoming a WHM is an easy and cheap way to go abroad, experience an "exotic" lifestyle, and work and live overseas.

Previous studies on Taiwanese young people's working holiday experiences have

mainly focused on sojourns in English-speaking countries and have majorly explored motivation and life adaptation issues; other important issues such as homemaking, ethnonational identity issues, and other work experiences have not yet been systematically investigated. There are also few studies that have looked at Taiwanese WHMs' experiences in non-English-speaking countries (Yoon, 2014).

Ho, Lin and Huang (2014) examined Taiwanese young people's motivations for embarking on working holidays in Australia and New Zealand, finding that examples of such motivations include the desire to pursue self-fulfillment and search for meaning, to travel abroad, to experience the "exotic" Western lifestyle, to learn a foreign language, and to earn money. Chi and Lin (2017) examined the experiences of Taiwanese WHMs in Australia and found that apart from typical desires, such as to travel, experience the different culture, and learn a languages, participants share a collective consciousness to "work hard to earn their first bucket of gold," given the large salary discrepancies between the Taiwanese and Australian labor markets. It seems that low wages and disadvantaged workplace conditions in Taiwan are two of the critical push factors that prompt Taiwanese young people to participate in working holiday programs. Peng and Hebbani (2014) examined young Taiwanese WHMs' socialization and job-search experiences in Australia, finding that levels of English proficiency have a decisive impact on the capacity to find a job in the Australian labor market. In their study, Tsai and Collins (2017) explored the experiences of Taiwanese young people on working holidays in New Zealand, reporting that working visas last for a maximum of 12 months, after which the working holiday visa's regulation stipulates that they have to return to Taiwan. As such, the feeling of being "temporary" and a "sojourner" in the host society is common among the Taiwanese young people, which could lead them to experience feelings such as uncertainly, danger, and alienation.

The above-mentioned literature has showcased some of the characteristics of working holiday programs. While working holiday programs offer one of the easiest and cheapest ways for young people to spend time abroad, the literature reveals that there are broad differences between youngsters from Eastern and Western cultures in terms of their motivation to participate in such programs. Young people from both of Asian and Taiwan are more likely to participate in programs due to their disadvantaged

economic position in their home countries, or other economic considerations. Moreover, studies into Taiwanese WHMs have tended to focus on those who go to English-speaking countries, and have mostly looked at their motivation, adaptation to their new life, and language-learning progress; few have considered how Taiwanese young people perceive the notion and meaning of "home," homemaking, and other topics related to belonging and ethnonational identity negotiation experiences in their international journey.

In this regard, in order to fill the existing research gap, this chapter will focus on Taiwanese young people on working holidays in Belgium as the research subject, examining their homemaking experiences, ethnonational identity negotiation experiences, and their understanding of the meaning of "home" while living and working as a WHM in a foreign country**.** The author successfully recruited and interviewed 13 Taiwanese WHMs, two of whose life stories will be presented in the following sections. Through the analysis of the life stories of Donna Liu and BaiBai Huang, the discussion will reveal how these research participants construct their own subjective and multi-layered meanings of "home" during their time abroad, and will show the strategies that WHMs apply in the course of their daily lives to negotiate their sense of belonging, ethnonational identities, and perceptions of the notions of small and big homes.

6.2 Case one: Donna Liu

- **Demographic information about Donna Liu**
- Gender: Female
- Age: 26
- Year of stay in Belgium: 2018-2019
- Job: As a WHM, Donna worked part time at a Chinese restaurant and duty-free shop in Brussels
- Marital and family relationships: Has a Belgian boyfriend

6.2.1 *Donna's reason for leaving Taiwan and participating in the working holiday program*

I became friends with Donna Liu after she cut my hair several times, and we started to speak about the reason why she wanted to leave Taiwan and migrate to Belgium as a WHM. She shared information with me about her workplace conditions as a hairdresser in Taiwan. She said:

> *Before I came to Belgium as a working holiday maker in 2018, I had worked as a hairdresser for about six years at a hair salon in Taipei after graduating from high school. ... However, working in the hairdressing industry is exhausting, and it's not possible to earn so much money. ... When I was in Taiwan, I always had to work for 10–12 hours. I would go to work at 11 a.m. and finish work at 9–10 p.m. ... Do you know how much money I earn for this? ... I am embarrassed to say that I only earn about 30,000–35,000 NT dollars [800–1,000 euros). ... I know that this is not much, but it really is an average salary in my industry*.

It is true that the hairdressing industry in Taiwan has a negative reputation for long hours of work and low levels of pay. According to a survey conducted by the non-government organization (NGO) of Taiwan Labour Front in 2016, the hairdressing industry in the country offers the second-lowest salary, second only to the educational-industrial sector. The average salary in the hairdressing industry amounts to roughly 27,219 NT dollars per month (800 to 900 euros); this is about half of the national average salary, which is 48,490 NT dollars (1,600 to 1,700 euros). Moreover, employees in the hairdressing industry have to work an average of 200 hours per month, which is 1.14 times higher than the national average workhour of 175 hours (Taiwan Labour Front, 2016). The survey indicates that Donna's work conditions are not an outliner or a special case, but rather accurately reflects workplace conditions and the low average salary in the Taiwanese hairdressing industry. These disadvantages can be said to be two important push factors that pushed Donna to leave Taiwan and participate in the working holiday program in Belgium.

After working these long hours for several years, Donna felt exhausted, and started

to consider alternative ways to earn money; one thing that came to mind was the option of experiencing a new and interesting life by working abroad. It is important to note that Belgium is not a popular choice among prospective Taiwanese WHMs since the Belgian government only offers 200 working holiday visas annually. Differently, Australia offers an unlimited number of working holiday visas to Taiwanese young people and has therefore become the most popular destination. In 2017 and 2018, more than 30,000 Taiwanese young people applied for the working holiday visa, of whom nearly 70% (roughly 20,000) applied for the Australian program. Taiwan was the second-largest source of young WHMs in Australia for the years 2012 to 2013. The average salary in Australia is 2 to 2.5 times higher than in Taiwan, which has given rise to the popular discourse, both in the Taiwanese media and in people's daily narratives, that it is a great opportunity to "go to Australia as a WHM to earning your first 'bucket of gold" (Chi & Lin, 2017). This kind of discourse has become extremely popular and widespread and has motivated many Taiwanese young people to go to Australia as WHMs.

Also influenced by this kind of discourse, Donna was persuaded that she would earn more money as a WHM in overseas than she would in Taiwan, but since the majority of Taiwanese young people choose to go to Australia, Donna felt that this would not be a special choice. Instead, she wanted to try something different to others and in this regard, decided to go to Europe, applying for Belgian's working holiday visa. Speaking about that decision, Donna said:

> *Because I had already worked in [the hairdressing] industry in Taiwan for several years, I really felt tired and wanted a rest, and to go abroad to travel and explore something new and interesting … I had several classmates from high school and colleagues at the hair salon who had gone to Australia as WHMs, and they told me that it is easier to earn money overseas than in Taiwan … Moreover, when I saw their pictures and posts about their lives and travel experiences in Australia on Facebook, I was so envious … Some of my friends encouraged me to do so, but since many Taiwanese people go to Australia, I wanted to try something different. I chose to come to Europe, which is why I am in Belgium*.

The narratives provided by Donna Liu and the other participants in this study indicate that major motivations for Taiwanese young people to go abroad and work as WHMs are a desire to escape their routine life environment and long working hours, to experiences culture and lifestyle differences, to experience adventures abroad, to earn money, to achieve personal goals, and to engage in self-development. Liu's words show that the decision to go abroad is not determined by any single factor, but rather that people consider a number of factors and dimensions at the same time (Zhu et al., 2019; Ho, 2014). Donna Liu, for example, poor workplace conditions in the hairdressing industry and the desire to earn money overseas, experience a different lifestyle and culture, and escape from her routine life in Taiwan were all factors and considerations that led her to decide to leave Taiwan.

6.2.2 *Difficulty finding a job in the mainstream labor market*

Dreaming of all the benefits of her new life working overseas, Donna Liu arrived in Belgium in 2018, but after she had completed the resettlement procedures, she began to face a number of challenges, the most difficult of which was finding an official position in the formal Belgian labor market. Her working holiday visa meant that she had only one year in Belgium, a limitation that made it harder for her to find a job. She also stated that her ethnic minority background compounded this difficulty. Donna shared her experiences searching for a job in Belgium:

> *Before I came to Belgium, I had so many beautiful dreams about life here. ... However, after arriving, I realized that there were many challenges I needed to deal with and overcome, the most difficult of which was to find a job. ... Since WHMs can only stay in Belgium for a maximum of one year under the Belgian government's regulations about those entering the country with a type-B temporary work permit ... employers are less likely to hire you if they know you'll only be in the country for less than one year. Furthermore, I think that my Asian background is another reason why I wasn't able to find a job easily. In the beginning, I used my Chinese name as well as a version of it translated into English on my CV, and I sent out more than 20 emails to prospective employers . However, I did not receive any responses. Then, my roommate suggested that I*

only use my English name in emails. I did this and surprisingly, I received to invitations to interview. However, when I went to these interviews and the manager realized that I was merely here on a working-holiday visa, they would tell me, "Sorry, our company supervisors are all in a meeting, they do not have time to interview you. You can go back home and await our response." Of course, I would never hear from them again. These experiences left me feeling upset and uncomfortable.

As a WHM from Taiwan, Donna simultaneously experienced two disadvantageous conditions: the temporary nature of her working holiday visa, and her ethnic minority background. These factors further put her at a disadvantage in the labor market and made it very difficult to find an official job position or work opportunity commensurate with her previous work experience and professional expertise. Many Taiwanese and Asian young people who go abroad to work as WHMs experience this same difficulty. The limit on the amount of time they can stay in their host country, in tandem with their minority background, are two negative factors that reduce their competitiveness in the European and Western countries host society and mainstream job markets (Arksey & Morée, 2008; Robertson, 2016).

In addition to the two disadvantages of visa limitations and ethnic minority backgrounds, another factor is Taiwanese WHMs' lack of proficiency in the local language; Belgium is not an English-speaking country, and even though the majority of Belgians can speak English well, they still prefer to speak their mother tongues of Dutch or French in the daily lives, and especially in business activities. WHM's ability to speak Dutch or French has become a significant factor influencing how employers evaluate their job applicants in the interview processes. However, since English is the major foreign language taught and spoken in Taiwan, most Taiwanese people do not speak Dutch and French languages, Donna further stated that the difficulty she faced finding a job in the Belgian labor market could to a large extent be attributed to her lack of proficiency in speaking Dutch or French. She reported:

In addition to the limitation of my length of stay, there are other limitations that made it hard for me to find a job, and I think my lack of language skills was the

most important problem. … In Belgium, if you cannot speak Dutch or French, it is very hard to find a job. … I suppose that it is very different working as a WHM here compared to working in the English-speaking countries like Australia. … My friends who worked as WHMs in Australia said that it was very easy to find a job since you do only need to speak English. … In Belgium, however, if you cannot speak Dutch or French, it is really impossible to find a job here.

Given that the local languages in Belgium are Dutch and French, Taiwanese WHMs face a double language barrier; most speak only a moderate level of English, and very little in the two local languages. Furthermore, their ethnic minority and temporary migrant worker status in the host society not only influence the jobs they are able to obtain, but in most circumstances, place them at a significant disadvantage in employment relationships. It is very difficult for Taiwanese WHMs to make use of their previous work experiences and human capital in the host country's labor market, or to further develop them. The double language barrier, the status of being a temporary migrant worker, and the difficulty of making use of their human capital are all key challenges for Taiwanese WHM young people seeking to gain employment in Belgium, and these can easily serve to shatter the preconceptions that these WHMs may have had about life in Europe (Dustmann, 1999).

6.2.3 *Searching for a job in the ethno-bubble, and finding part-time jobs at a Chinese restaurant and in a duty-fee shop*

Being temporary WHMs with a "Chinese face" provides both advantages and disadvantages for Taiwanese young people seeking a job in the ethnic economy sector of the Belgian labor market (Ngan & Chan, 2012). In the words of Donna Liu:

I think it is almost impossible for people like me [referring to Asian WHMs] to find an official job position in Belgium if you cannot speak Dutch or French. … I remember that I spent nearly two months searching for a job related to hairdressing or in an office. I went to several time job interviews but was unable to receive a job offer. … When I has been in Belgium for nearly two months and

was running out of money, I needed to urgently find a job to support myself. … I eventually found out that Asian WHMs can easily find jobs in places such as Chinese restaurants, Asian massage workshops, Asian/Chinese supermarket, Japanese sushi restaurants, chocolate shops, and duty-free shops because most of these small and medium-sized businesses are operated by immigrant minorities. … One advantage of my ethnic background was that by following introductions from my Taiwanese WHM friends, it was very easy to find a part-time job as an assistant at a Chinese restaurant. … However, since a part-time job was insufficient to meet all my living expenses, thus, I decided to kook for another part-time job. … Luckily, I saw an advertisement posted on the Facebook page of The Working Holiday Student Association of Belgium [比利時打工度假同學會] *on December 24, 2018 … about a duty-free shop in Brussels looking to recruit sellers to provide services to customers from Mainland China.*

Figure 6.1 The advertisement posted on Facebook



Source: A screenshot made by the author from the Facebook page of The Student Association of Working Holiday in Belgium, with authorization to use.

This advertisement indicates that the majority of employees at this duty-free shop are Taiwanese, and that it welcomes those with a working holiday visa to apply for job opportunities. It requires applicants to speak English, but especially, to be fluent in Chinese because most of the shop's customers are Mainland Chinese tourists. Since this shop is operated by Mainland Chinese immigrants and deliberately recruits Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese employees, Donna easily obtained a part-time job after completing a job interview with her Mainland Chinese employers. According to Donna,

she said:

> *I think that because this duty-free shop mainly does business with Mainland Chinese customers, it is easy for people like me [referring to WHMs from Taiwan or China] to find a job there; all my colleagues were either Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese, there were few local Belgians*.

Donna's job-search experiences demonstrate it was much easier for her to find gainful employment in the ethnic economic sector than in the mainstream Belgium labor market, particularly in small and medium-sized businesses operated by Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, or other Asian immigrant employers. These businesses mainly operate in the catering and food-related industries or as grocery stores, duty-free shops, or as Thai or Asian massage shops. In my fieldwork, I found that the majority of Taiwanese WHMs work in the ethnic economic and business sectors since the Belgian government does not consider these temporary migrant workers to be important human resources to supplement local labor force shortages, or a requirement for its mainstream labor market. This corroborates a survey conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which in its *International Migration Outlook* report published in 2019 stated that in 2017, there were only 190 non-EU citizens' WHMs in Belgium. However, this figure was nearly 30% higher than in 2016. Moreover, there were only 130 of non-EU citizens' temporary workers in other types in Belgium in 2017, a decrease of 88% from 2016. The total number of temporary labor migrants in Belgium in 2017 was 320. Temporary labor migration in Belgium can be seen to be both small in scale and number, and definitely not the main human capital or labor source in its mainstream labor market. Since non-EU citizens' labor participation and employment rate in Belgium is generally lower than that of EU migrants, the former—and especially temporary migrant workers—face even more challenges finding a job position in Belgium (OECD, 2019).

These are possible reasons that can explain why most Asian WHMs in Belgium work at marginal industries or in economic and business industrial sectors owned by their compatriots (Adam and Van Dijk, 2015). Since the Chinese catering industry in Belgium has a history of almost 100 years, and there are more than 1,000 Chinese

restaurants across Belgium (Pang, 2002), and since there are increasing numbers of immigrants from Mainland China who operate diverse economic and business activities in Belgian society, there are job opportunities that go beyond the Chinese catering industry such as bubble-tea, duty-free, manicure, and even "*frietchinees*" (Chinese fries) shops (Dongen, 2019). This diversification in Belgian pan-Chinese immigrants' economic and business activities (Pang, 2008) means that WHMs from Taiwan such as Donna can utilize their ethnic backgrounds and "Chinese face" in order to find a position.

Although, Donna further shared that the possession of a "Chinese face" and a temporary working holiday visa also led to some advantages in the pan-Chinese ethnic economic sector. She further stated that these factors could be disadvantageous when negotiating better work and wage conditions because Asian employers tend to assume fellow Asian employees will not complain, even they are told they will have to work for longer than the usual (or even the legal) number of hours. In Donna's own words, she said:

> *Most employers in the Chinese catering industry have a stereotype about people like me* [referring to young Asian WHMs]*, assuming that we will be hard-working, need money, and not complain. … Once, I heard my boss (a man from Mainland China) say that Chinese WHMs work as hard as firefighters! He said, "They are on call 24 hours per day, and even work on Sundays. They do not argue and will do overtime for unequal pay." I felt bad hearing what my employer said … but employers really do have that stereotype about Chinese and Taiwanese WHM workers. … Furthermore, my employer knows that people like me* [referring to WHMs] *are only in Belgium for one year, and that one of our main reasons for coming here is to earn money and travel. … We are not in the same position as official and permanent workers in Belgium, who are able to dispute workplace conditions or salaries.*

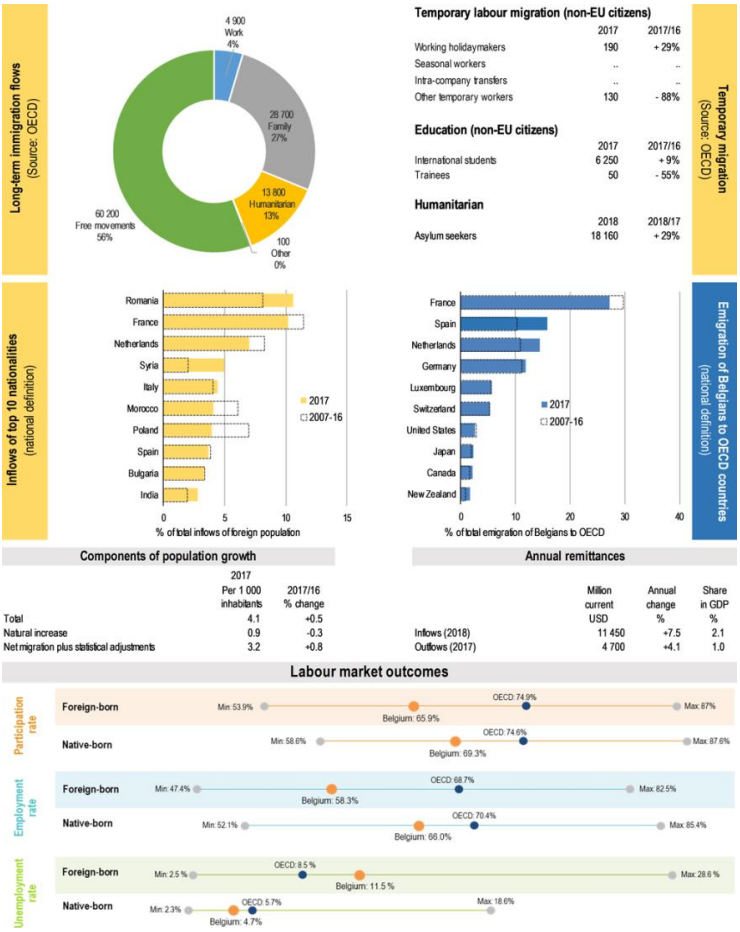


Figure 6.2 Key figures on immigration and emigration in Belgium

Source: OECD (2019).

According to Donna, her pan-Chinese ethnic background and obvious "Chinese face" made it harder for her to negotiate fairer working conditions and wages, while her temporary working holiday visa status further limited her mobility in the host society and labor market (Liu-Farrer, 2008). The interviews I conducted with other Taiwanese WHMs revealed similar work experiences to that of Donna. Other respondents also said that many Mainland Chinese employers subscribe to stereotypical discourses such as "able people should do more work"(能者多勞) and "do more and complain less" (多做事，少抱怨) to avoid giving young WHMs better work and salary conditions. Since these stereotypes are based on traditional Confucian and Chinese culture, Mainland Chinese employers rely on these cultural expectations to require that their WHM employees obey workplace requirements and not to complain. However, these disadvantages are not necessarily unique to the Belgian labor market but can also be

found in other destinations such as Australia (Li, 2017).

6.2.4 "*I did not regard Belgium as home, made few friends, and had few interactions with locals*"

Since young Taiwanese WHMs can only stay and work in Belgium for one year, the majority work full time (such as by doing two part-time jobs) in order to earn enough money to support their living and travel expenses. For example, Donna Liu not only had two part-time jobs— at a Chinese restaurant and at a duty-free shop in Brussels— she also worked a few hours as a hairdresser when she had free time. She charged just 10 euros for one haircut, and the majority of her customers were other Taiwanese youngsters who studied, worked, and lived in Belgium. This intensive work schedule meant that she had a fairly limited social life. She stated:

> *Since I had to work two part-time jobs to earn enough money to live in Belgium and to travel to other European countries, I have to say that I spent most of my time working. On weekdays, I mainly worked at the restaurant and the duty-free shop, while on weekends, I gave haircuts to Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese students. … Overall, I spent the majority of my time in Belgium working.*

Donna said that because she spent most of her time working, and that most of her colleagues and customers were from Taiwan or Mainland China, she did not have many opportunities to interact with Belgians, which meant that she cultivated very few friendships with locals. She said:

> *At both of my workplaces, the restaurant and the duty-free shop, my employees were Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese, with very few local Belgians. I would say that I did not really make any local Belgian friend, and that I seldom had the chance to interact with them*.

Donna's social life made me curious about the subjective perceptions and meanings she felt in terms of her friends and colleagues. She said:

> *I did talk to and interact my colleagues at my workplaces, and of course, we would*

sometimes get together for shopping, having dinner, or drinking bubble tea or coffee after work ... but in general, I have to say that they were only my colleagues, and I did not regard them as my real "friends." You know, the feelings between colleagues and friends is different. ... I think that my colleagues and I all realize that our "friendships" and "interactions" are temporary, and that after we all complete this working holiday program, we are likely to go our separate ways and do different things. ... Since we are all in a temporary situation, it is very difficult to establish strong or long-standing friendships with my colleagues.

Since Donna had few friends and local networks in Belgium, and regarded her colleagues as co-workers, rather than as long-standing friends, she felt a large degree of social isolation. She lived in student accommodation that she shared with three other WHMs from Asia. Thus, she used the Chinese word "窩"(wō) to describe it. The word "窩"means a place provided to people for living, but does not refer to the notion of "home," since home further implies emotional attachments and interpersonal relations with place or space (Eve, 2010; Sixsmith, 1986). In this regard, Donna did not regard Belgium or her accommodation as her "home," since she did not have any emotional and social connections with it. She considered herself to be "sojourner" (過客) during her period of stay in Belgium. Donna said:

It is interesting to tell you that I did not have many friends in Belgium, and that I did not even want to make new friends or interact with locals because I regarded myself as a temporary worker. After I complete this program, I was always going to go back to Taiwan. ... Furthermore, I was living in a student apartment with three other girls in my situation ... so, I did not really regard Belgium as my home.

Donna's narrative here, just as in the previous chapter, shows that time can be both objective and subjective simultaneously. While time can be described neutrally and physically, however, individuals' subjective feelings and perceptions regarding different notions of time such as past, present, future, permanent, and temporary may vary from person to person (Appadurai, 2013). For example, given the limited nature of her working holiday visa and temporary work permit, Donna was only able to stay in Belgium for a maximum of one year, so regarded herself as a "sojourner" (過客) in

Belgian society, rather than as someone who really wanted to settle down in the host society and become a permanent immigrant. These kinds of individual subjective perceptions further reduced Donna's willingness and motivations to devote her time to establishing long-term relationships with her colleagues and local Belgians since in her daily life, she was surrounded by pan-Chinese counterparts. Moreover, Donna admitted that she had a limited number of friends and socially activities, and therefore did not attach her emotional sense of belonging and identity to Belgium, since social relations are one of the most important elements by which people construct their identity and loyalty toward a specific place or space. Because Donna did not have abundant social relations and connections with the host society, she did not regard Belgium as her home while living and working there. The importance of social relations and friendships in immigrants' homemaking and place-making experiences is described in detail by Yap (2015). Moreover, in their paper, Nagai, Benckendorff, and Tkaczynski (2018) revealed a very interesting finding, that Westerns WHMs are more likely to live with people from other cultural backgrounds than their Asian counterparts, who prefer to live with people from culturally similar backgrounds. Donna's accommodation choice in Belgium reflects this cultural preference; however, it must be admitted that this kind of preference further reduces Asian WHMs' opportunities to interact with cultural others and experience the multicultural environment.

6.2.5 *"My homemaking is driven by my relationship with my Belgian boyfriend"*

Donna's limited social life and interpersonal interactions made her feel a great deal of social isolation. To improve the situation, she downloaded the dating app Tinder to see if it would help her to make new friends. She said that, initially, she did not intend to use Tinder to find a boyfriend, but she ended up talking a lot with a Belgian man, and after spending time with him, they initiated a relationship. Although Donna successfully found a local Belgian boyfriend, this was an unintended consequence of her on Tinder. In Donna's own words, she said:

> *Life is unpredictable. … In the beginning, I thought that I was just a sojourner* [過客] *in Belgium …. because at that time I felt bored regarding my social life due to*

my lack of friends. So, I downloaded Tinder thinking that I could meet someone that way, and maybe make a friend. ... I did not plan to use Tinder to find a boyfriend, but that's what happened! ... So yes, I now have a Belgian boyfriend, we've already been in a relationship for nearly half a year.

It is common among WHMs, and especially among women, to use dating apps to find a local partner. Based on my fieldwork and interview experiences, I found that mainly young Taiwanese WHMs (both male and female) use social media or dating apps to meet new people or find a partner while living abroad. However, there is a notable discrepancy between men and women in terms of their success at finding a local partner. Based on my observations, female migrants find it easier than their male counterparts to find a local partner in the host society, whether via social media, dating apps, or via traditional ways of meeting peoples. In other words, compared to female migrants, Asian (and Taiwanese) migrant men find it more difficult to be successful in Western dating markets since many Western women think that Asian men are insufficiently masculine, and do not fulfill these women's expectations with regard to an ideal partner (Kao et al., 2018).

When Donna entered a relationship with a local man, the next problem she had to face concerned how to stay in Belgium with him after her working holiday visa had expired after the one-year maximum. Because her Belgian boyfriend was studying in a graduate program, Donna applied for a student visa and enrolled in a graduate program in a Belgian university, and after doing so, was given a year's extension to her stay in Belgium. After completing her studies, she plans to apply for a "re-union visa" (家庭團聚簽)" to be able to stay in Belgium for a long period of time. Donna had this to say about the whole experience:

As I said life is unpredictable. Initially, I did not use Tinder to find a boyfriend, but when that happened, the next problem was how to find a way to stay longer in Belgium. Because my boyfriend is in a graduate program, he suggested that I could apply for a visa to study in Belgium at the same university. We also decided that if we are still together after I have completed my studies, then I could apply for a re-union visa. If granted that visa, I could stay with my boyfriend in Belgium

for a long period. … But we will see. No one knows for sure what will happen in the future.

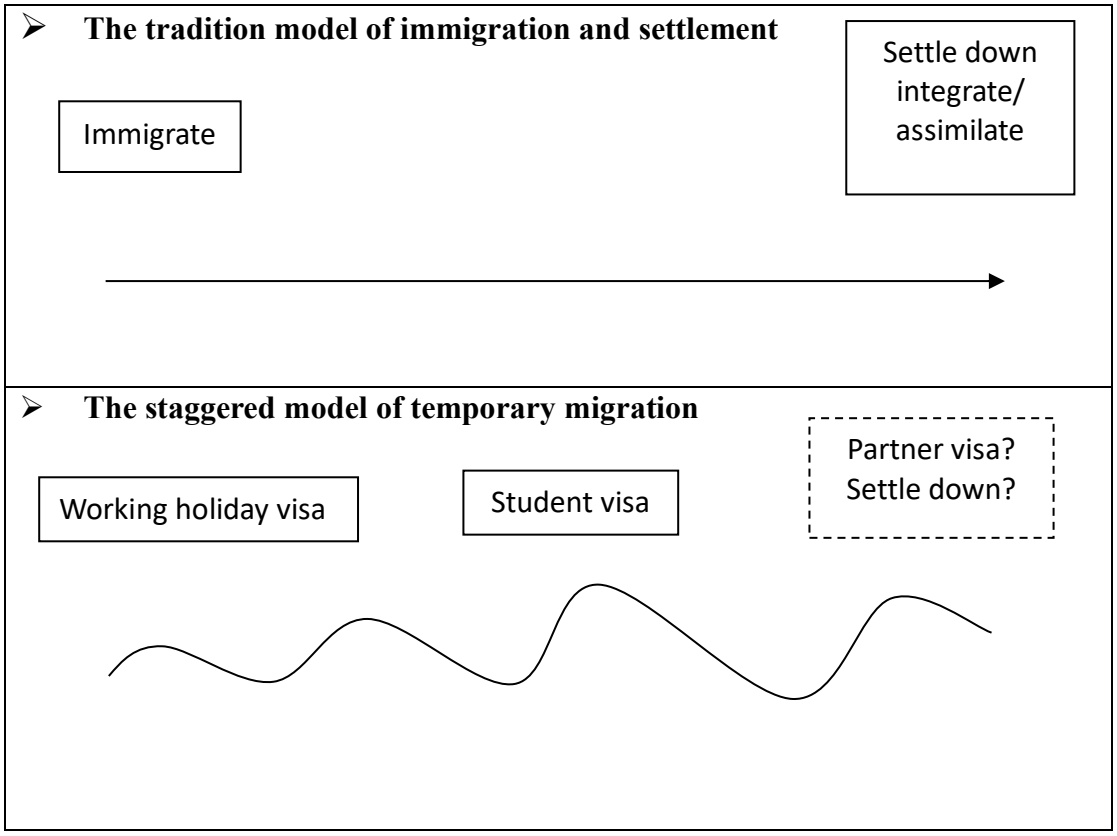


Figure 6.3 A comparison between traditional and staggered (im)migration

Source: The author.

Donna's narrative made me curious about her understanding of the meanings of home, since despite being able to stay for longer in Belgium, she was still in an uncertain situation. She said:

I think I would like to stay in Belgium because I now have a Belgian boyfriend, and I have already submitted my application for a "re-union visa." I'm currently waiting for a response from the Belgian government. The whole process will take several months, and who knows—maybe I will get married in one or two years. So, to respond to your question, I will say that my Belgian home is on the way and is still in the making.

Donna here showcases some of the most important characteristics of temporary migration, including "uncertainty," "unexpected consequences," and "migrant's status

in the making." It is important to note that temporary migration has become increasingly popular and common in the contemporary era, which had significantly changed our perception of international movements. In traditional migration theory, scholars assume that international immigration is a linear journey, that it has clear start and end points. This point of view assumes that when people decide to leave their home country and migrate overseas, their common goal is to resettle and rebuild a new life in a foreign land, and that in the end, they will successfully receive permanent resident status, citizenship, and integrate or even assimilate into the host society. This perspective asserts that immigrants have clear goals and directions in their lives, but this seems less and less relevant in the contemporary era, since the phenomenon of temporary migration has changed people's international movement trajectories and life experiences. Compared to permanent immigrants, these temporary migrants are more diverse and uncertain in their international journeys (Robertson et al., 2017).

Donna Liu first went to Belgium on a one-year working holiday visa, but when she met her Belgian boyfriend, she decided to apply for a student visa so as to be able to remain in Belgium for longer. Since then, she has applied for a re-union visa to be able to stay in Belgium with her boyfriend in the long term. In this way, Donna's international movement experience is different to those of most first-generation Taiwanese immigrants, who tend to have a relatively clear and directional migration trajectory. Usually, they migrate from Taiwan to Belgium and settle permanently, without experiencing uncertainties about their visa status changes like Donna. Differently to traditional assumptions, Donna's international movements and migration experience is not linear, but rather complex and full of uncertainties and status transitions.

With regard to the uncertainties and status transitions that temporary migrants experience, Robertson (2019a) has argued that immigrants' status in their host society is dynamic, rather than static, and is further affected by individuals' unique life circumstances and mobility capacities. According to Robertson (2019a), it is more

appropriate to utilize the concept of "status making," rather than fixed migrant types or categories, when exploring migrants' international movement experiences, particularly regarding temporary migrants. Robertson (2019b) advances the concept of "staggered" migration to descript the uncertainties and migrant status transition experiences that temporary migrants face, arguing that their international movement trajectories are not static or linear, but rather a curve. People have to negotiate their life circumstances back and forth and transit from the number of temporary visa statuses in the host society. Robertson (2019b) further claims that these staggered migration experiences further intersectional influence by the migration policies, political institutions, demographical backgrounds, and individuals' perceptions regarding different timescales. Thus, influenced by the uncertainties of transition created by the various types of temporary migrant visa (such as working holiday, student, and dependent visas), the temporal feeling of time makes it difficult for Donna to construct a sense of belonging and identity in Belgium, or to obtain feelings of being at home, given her uncertain and temporarily status as a sojourner. This is why she said, "her home in Belgium is on the way and still in the making," since she has not yet received a permanent resident permit, and her relationship with her Belgian boyfriend is still to some extent uncertain.

6.2.6 "*Applying downplay and humor as strategies in the workplace while talking about ethnonational identity issues with Mainland Chinese colleagues, which strengthened my Taiwanese identity*"

Since for most young Taiwanese WHMs, it is difficult to find an official job in the local mainstream labor market, they tend to work in the pan-Chinese ethnic economic sector. Furthermore, given that most employees in these businesses are pan-Chinese or relatives, these workplaces become a vital social venue for Taiwanese WHMs to negotiate and perform their ethnonational identity. It is these workplaces that give the WHMs most of their opportunities to interact with others from the similar cultural and ethnonational backgrounds (Kenny & Briner, 2013).

Donna Liu worked at a Chinese restaurant and at a duty-free shop, both of which were operated by Mainland Chinese employers, while the majority of employees were also pan-Chinese immigrants or migrant workers. Speaking about her interaction

experiences with Mainland Chinese colleagues, Donna revealed:

At the restaurant, I am the only employee from Taiwan working as a WHM. At the duty-free shop, although the majority of employees are Taiwanese migrant workers, there are still have several Mainland Chinese colleagues and few local Belgians.

Thus, I was curious about Donna's experiences interacting with her Mainland Chinese colleagues, and how she would respond to sensitive issues, particularly about her ethnonational identity. Since it was inevitable that Donna's colleagues would discuss sensitive political and ethnonational identity issues with her, so as to avoid awkward situations or even conflicts, in the most cases she sought to "downplay" these issues and employ a strategy of humor, when interacting with her Mainland Chinese colleagues. She stated:

Actually, my female Mainland Chinese colleagues tend not to talk about sensitive issues with me, but my male co-workers are more likely to do so. … I prefer not to talk about these kinds of issues with them … because these issues are "unsolvable," so I don't see why we should spend so much time debating who we are or who belongs to whom, since everyone has their own answer in their mind.

I then asked Donna about her personal ethnonational identity:

I am Taiwanese, there is no doubt about that. … I was born and brought up in Taiwan, so … of course I'm Taiwanese.

She added:

Even though I have a strong Taiwanese identity, this does not mean that I always like to talk about it with others, or even show my Taiwanese identity in front of my Mainland Chinese colleagues. … Everybody knows that this is a sensitive issue, and I am just a WHM in Belgium. After I complete this program, I will leave the workplace, so … why should I bother talking about these issues? … The main reason why I am working at the restaurant is to earn money, rather than to argue

about identity issues with my Mainland Chinese colleagues.

I then asked Donna if her Mainland Chinese colleagues tried to discuss these issues with her, and if so, how she dealt with them. She replied that "downplaying" and "humor" were the two practical strategies she employed in this regard. She said,

> *For example, once, one of my female Mainland Chinese colleagues asked me, "Do you think Taiwanese is Chinese?" I responded, "This is not really an important issue for me, because we are both the children of "Dorgan"* [龍的傳人]. *... Sometimes I might say, "I am money person; I only care about money, not about Taiwan or China." The truth of the matter is that I do care about Taiwan because I am Taiwanese ... but I don't want to waste my time talking about these "bothersome" issues with my Mainland colleagues*.

According to Donna, since she came to Belgium for one year, and one of her main goals was just to earn money, she had little motivation to talk about sensitive ethnonational identity issues with her Mainland Chinese counterparts. To avoid embarrassing situations or further conflicts, she downplayed the importance of these issues by applying a discourse of humor. Downplaying identity issues is a common negotiation strategy that immigrants employ in the course of their daily lives. Tajfel and Turner (1986) claimed that when immigrants feel insecure in their lives or surroundings because of their identity and ethnicity, they may choose the "downplay" strategy to protect themselves from physical or emotional pressure, or even risking personal injury while interacting with cultural or ethnic others.

Donna was a Taiwanese employee working at a Chinese restaurant dominated by Mainland Chinese co-workers, and her interactions with them made her reflect on how to talk about sensitive ethnonational identity issues with them. She said:

> *I think we cannot really change each other. Before we meet others, we all have our own impression of who we are. For me, I identify as Taiwanese, and I believe that Taiwan is an independent country, and not part of China. ... However, they* [referring to Donna's Mainland Chinese colleagues] *really believe that Taiwan is*

a part of their country and that Taiwanese people are Chinese. ... After interacting with them for nearly one year, I conclude that people do not and cannot change each other ... and the final outcome is enhancing people's original ideas, perceptions, or even stereotypes about each other. … For example, after my year's interactions with Mainland Chinese colleagues at the restaurant, my original Taiwanese identity was strengthened, and I now really do believe that I am different to them; I think of myself as only Taiwanese, rather than generally identifying myself as "Chinese."

Donna Liu's experiences with her Mainland Chinese colleagues did not disintegrate the original ethnonational boundary between her and her colleagues. She applied the "downplay" and "humor" strategies in conversations about ethnonational identities so as to avoid embarrassing situations or even conflicts, these experiences made her somewhat depressed, since she was unable to perform her Taiwanese identity in front of others. This was partly because the Chinese restaurant where she worked was overwhelmingly dominated by Mainland Chinese employees and co-workers, and the Taiwanese ethnonational identity is not welcome among Mainland Chinese people since the Taiwanese identity is usually connected and stigmatized with the idea of Taiwanese independence (台獨, tái dú) (Yeh, 2016). As her feelings of depression accumulated, Donna not only strengthened her original ethnonational boundary and Taiwanese identity, but also reconfirmed the differences between her and her Mainland Chinese counterparts. Similar experiences and findings can be observed in a study conducted by Li (2020), who investigated mutual interaction experiences between pan-Chinese immigrants and Taiwanese WHMs in the Chinese ethnic business sector in Australia. His findings echo the experiences and narratives of Donna. According to Li (2020), such experiences do not facilitate mutual understanding with regard to the two parties' ethnonational identities and subjective perceptions; on the contrary, they serve to enhance original identities, or even create new stereotypes or prejudices among pan-Chinese immigrants and migrant workers.

6.2.7. Summary

Donna revealed that poor work conditions and a low salary in the Taiwanese

hairdressing industry were two vital push factors that not only made her felt exhausted in Taiwan, but also prompted her to consider applying to the Belgian working holiday program and leaving Taiwan to work overseas. However, her dreams about the high quality of life she would experience abroad were challenged because of the initial difficulty she experienced finding an official job position in the mainstream Belgian labor market due to her one-year working holiday visa and status as a temporary migrant worker in the host society. Donna managed to find work opportunities in the pan-Chinese ethnic business sector after an introduction from a Taiwanese WHM fellow, eventually working two part-time jobs—one at a Chinese restaurant and the other at a duty-free shop in Brussels, both owned and operated mainly by Mainland Chinese employers and employees. These workplaces became as the vital social spaces for Donna in which she interacted with her Mainland Chinese co-workers and negotiated and performed her ethnonational identity. Given that she was a minority Taiwanese employee at the workplaces dominated by Mainland Chinese workers, to avoid embarrassment or even conflict when discussing sensitive political issues with her coworkers, Donna frequently applied the "downplay" and "humor" strategies to negotiate and perform her ethnonational identity. However, since she could not fully perform her real Taiwanese ethnonational identity, Donna began to feel increasingly depressed. These interactions she had with her Mainland Chinese coworkers did not lead to a disintegration of her original ethnonational boundaries or prejudices, but rather Donna's Liu's interactions with her colleagues actually strengthened her original Taiwanese ethnonational identity, and sense of belonging and loyalty towards her big Taiwanese (national) home.

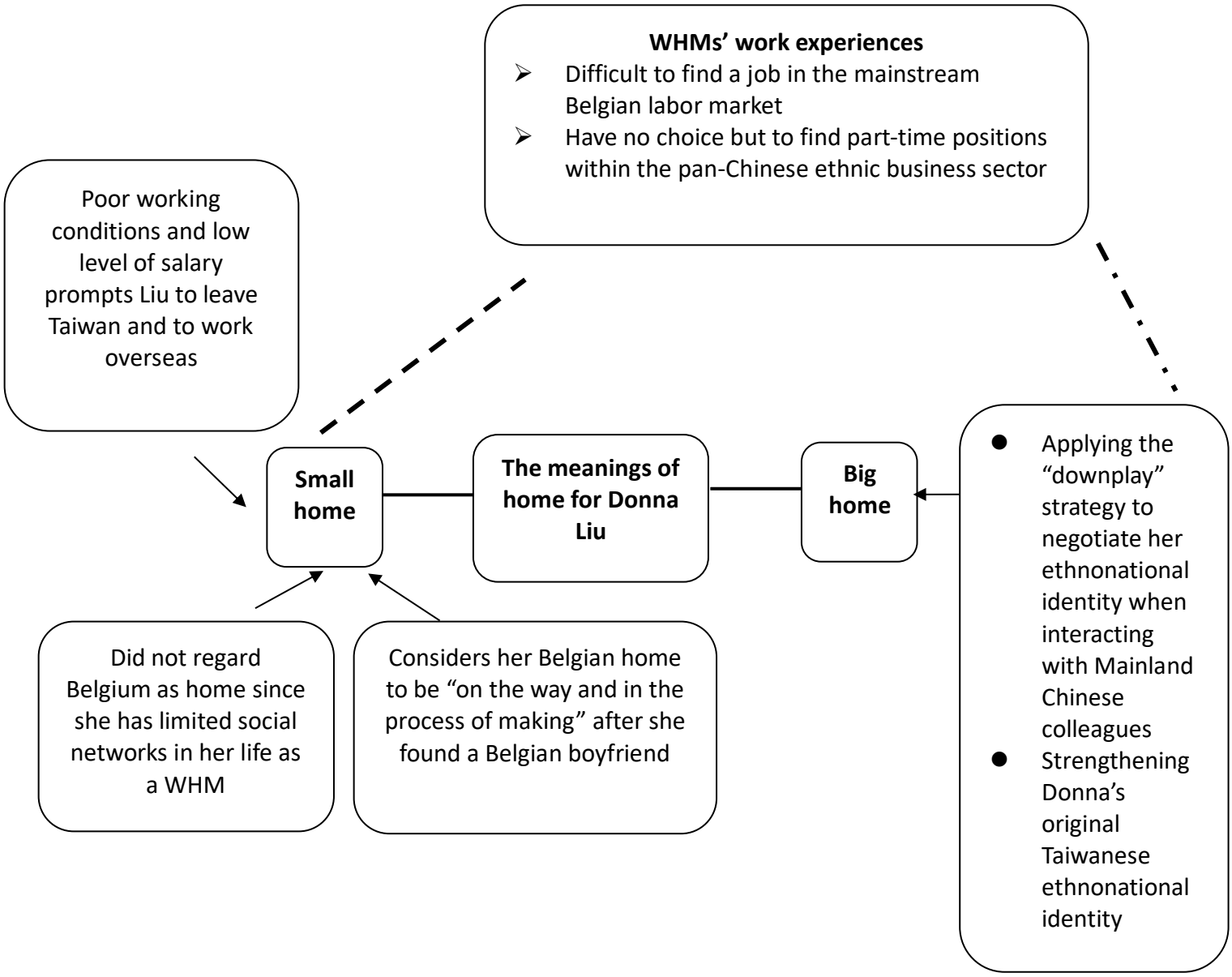


Figure 6.4 The intersectional meanings of home for Donna Liu

Source: This study

Moreover, since Donna first entered Belgium with a working holiday visa, she was only able to stay and work in Belgium for a maximum of one year. This temporary social status in Belgian society, which gave her a sense of temporariness and uncertainty, had a further negative impact on Donna's attempts to interact with local residents or construct long-standing friendships with Belgians. In this regard, since she had limited social networks with local residents and little social connection with the host society,

Donna regarded herself as a "sojourner" (過客) in Belgium and did not consider Belgium to be her home. However, the situations changed when she began to use the dating app Tinder, and successfully found a Belgian boyfriend. Then, she decided to extend her time in Belgium, first by applying for a student visa and studying with her boyfriend at the same university, and after graduating, to apply for "re-union visa" (家庭團聚簽)" in order to stay in Belgium for a longer period of time. Donna's immigration pathway is different to the traditional one. Traditional and first-generation Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium tend to settle down permanently and build a new life in Belgium. Donna's immigration pathway has been full of uncertainty; she has gone through several categories of temporary visa since she arrived in Belgium. However, since her social status in Belgian society is still uncertain and temporary, Donna described her attitude as follows: "My Belgian home is on the way and still in the making" to describe her perceptions and feelings towards the possibility that her home is now in Belgium.

To summarize, Donna's narratives indicates that for her, the meanings of both small and big home, as well as her international movement journey, are not static. They have been intersectionally influenced by Donna's unique life circumstances, work experiences, visa type, relationship with her Belgian boyfriend, social networks and connections in her host society, and her original ethnonational identity.

6.3 Case two: BaiBai Huang

- **Demographic information about BaiBai Huang**
- Gender: Male
- Age: 27
- Year of stay in Belgium: 2019
- Job: BaiBai worked as full-time sushi maker as a WHM at the Delhaize supermarket in Brussels
- Marital and family relationships: Single

6.3.1 *Before working as a WHM in Belgium, BaiBai was a WHM in Australia for two years*

In his interview, Huang spoke about his previous work conditions and level of income per month when he worked as a waiter in the catering industry in Taipei. He mentioned that his low monthly salary facilitated him to consider applying for working holiday program overseas. In his own words:

> *After obtaining my bachelor's degree, I worked as a waiter at a restaurant in Taipei for two years, but the salary for that kind of job is not high. On average, I could only earn about 30,000 to 35,000 NT dollars per month … and this is not enough to live in Taipei since I had to rent an apartment and paid for my living expenses, as well as give my parents 5000 NT per month. … I could only save 3,000 to 5,000 NT dollars per month for myself … but this is a very small amount of money. … At that time, several of my friends at college had just finished the working holiday program and came back to Taiwan … and they told me that it is easier to earn money in Australia. For example, I have a friend who saved 1 million NT dollars … in Australia. … My friends recommended that I should also try to participate in Australian's working holiday program*.

The phenomenon of the low salaries earned by Taiwanese young people (aged between 15 and 29) is a serious problem in the country. According to statistics published by the Taiwanese Ministry of Labor (MOL), in 2019, the average salary per month of Taiwanese young people was 31,603 NT dollars (roughly 900 to 1,000 Euros), and 31.2% of Taiwanese young people would like to change their current job because the salary is too low (Ministry of Labor, 2020). The phenomenon of low salaries among Taiwanese youths is not just a recent one; salary stagnation has been a feature for quite some time. In 2000, the average salary per month of young Taiwanese graduates was 27,863 NT dollars; however, by 2013, this figure had decreased to 26,915 NT dollars, indicating that over 13 years, the growth rate of Taiwanese young people's average salary was -3.5%. By 2019, the figure had grown to just 31,603 NT dollars, yielding the growth rate between 2000 and 2019 was 11.83%, which means that the average

growth rate per year over the past nearly two decades was only 5% (Guo, 2019). Chien (2012) employed the term "the poor generation of Taiwanese youths" (臺灣青年貧窮世代) and the "collapse or burdened generation" (崩世代) to describe the phenomenon of the salary stagnation that contemporary Taiwanese young people have faced over the past few years. This has become a significant push factor that has facilitated plenty of Taiwanese people to leave the country and to try to find both temporary and permanent work opportunities overseas. According to statistics published in 2019 by the Taiwanese Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS), over the past ten years, the number of Taiwanese people working overseas has increased considerably. In 2009, more than 650,000 Taiwanese people were working abroad but, this figure had increased to nearly 740,000 by 2019. This represents a 12.16% increase over ten years. More than half (55%) of these overseas workers are male, with 45% being women. One-fifth (20.1%) of Taiwanese overseas worker are under the age of 30. Interestingly, the data further show that most Taiwanese people who work in European countries are women aged between 30 and 49, while they also tend to have at least a bachelor's degree. Overall, Taiwanese people who choose to work in Europe tend to be young and highly educated women (DGBAS, 2019).

Given that Taiwan has faced severe salary stagnations and a brain drain, a study by Oxford Economics in 2012 found that by 2021, Taiwan will have the biggest talent deficit in the world, largely because of the uncompetitive level of salaries in the Taiwanese labor market (Oxford Economics, 2012). Like many other Taiwanese young people who work as WHMs in Belgium, BaiBai Huang was facilitated to move to escape from the long working hours and low salaries in Taiwan. At first, he did not go to Belgium, but rather participated in Australia's working holiday program, which is the most popular destination for Taiwanese youngsters. Speaking about his job-search experiences in Australia, BaiBai said the following:

> *It is easy to find a job in Australia because the Australia government and society consider WHMs to be an important human resource, and in big cities in Australia like Sydney or Melbourne, there are many working holiday or temporary migrant workers working for Australian companies.*

WHMs and temporary migrant workers are both important human resources in the mainstream Australian labor market. In 2017, there were nearly 400,000 temporary migrant workers in Australia, half of whom (211,010) were WHMs (OECD, 2019). Moreover, in the past decade, the Australian government has shifted its migration policy from welcoming permanent to temporary migrants, so not only make the temporary migrant workers have become more visible in Australia, but also more acceptable in the country's mainstream labor market (Robertson, 2011). Accordingly, since WHMs and migrant workers are accepted and welcomed both in the Australian government and society, WHMs can easily find jobs and working opportunities in the local labor market. BaiBai reported that he did not find it difficult to obtain a position as an WHM at a farm in Australia, and that he was able to work hard so as to earn more money and accumulate "points" to extend his working holiday visa in Australia to a second year. BaiBai said:

> *I worked at a farm owned by an Australian couple who I assisted by picking fruit, sheep-shearing, packaging, and so on. … I worked like as a "machine" because the longer I work, the more I can warn … and after one year, I had accumulated enough "points" to stay for a second year in Australia. … After two years, I had saved about 1 million NT dollars and after that, I went back to Taiwan to rest for several months. … Since I had realized that it is easier to earn money overseas, I decided to do so again, but this time, I did not want to go to an English-speaking country, so I applied for Belgium's working holiday program.*

Since the hourly wage in Australia is 2 to 2.5 times' greater than in Taiwan, there is a common perception among Taiwanese young people that going to Australia as a WHM is a good way to earn and save money. Many Taiwanese young people who have spent time as a WHM in Australia have a similar experience to BaiBai, spending the majority of their time on working, rather than traveling or otherwise having fun. Most Taiwanese WHMs in Australia have very different motivations compared to their Western counterparts, since most Western young people participate in working holiday programs are not primarily motivated by earning money, but rather emphasize

experiencing different cultures, lifestyles, modes of thinking, and achieving a life transformation. In Australia, there is a "point systems," whereby if WHMs work in primary industrial sectors such as farming, forestry, livestock, and fishing for more than 88 days during their first year's working holiday, they have the right to apply for a visa for a second year. These special working holiday regulations and high wages are two important factors that facilitate Taiwanese and other Asian WHMs to work in the primary industrial sector in Australia and spend most of their time working, rather than traveling or holidaying (Chi & Lin, 2017). Stephenson and Hughes (2005) have written that young Western WHMs' experiences cannot be directly compared to those of their Asian counterparts since most of Asians will be an ethnic minority in Australia and join a labor market dominated by a "White" majority. In this regard, young Asian WHMs have its unique work and living experiences.

6.3.2 "*I obtain the home feeling via social media, and do not regard Belgium as my home"*

I was curious about how BaiBai managed his relations with his family in Taiwan, and what "home" meant for him, given that he had worked overseas for three years. In the interview, he said that social media played a central role in the management of his family relations, and that social media tools helped him to obtain "home feelings" and a sense of "family togetherness," even though he was far from his physical home in Taiwan.

Asked how he employs social media tools and their various purposes and functions, BaiBai said the following:

> *Since I have worked overseas for nearly three years, social media have become important tools for me to connect with my family, relatives, and friends in Taiwan or other countries. … I remember that at the very beginning, I could not cook or prepare food by myself, so I called my mom the apps of LINE and Skype, who gave me online guidance to teach me how to prepare ingredients and how to cook*

dishes. … On important days or events like my parents' birthday or traditional festivals like lunar new year, I would make online calls and even eat lunch or dinner via Skype with my family. … Furthermore, I posted a lot of photos of my life and work on my Facebook pages so as to let my parents and family know about my living situation in Australia and Belgium.

BaiBai went into more detail about the meanings of the use of these social media tools in his life overseas:

When you are alone in a foreign country, digital communication tools matter because they not only constitute an opportunity to stay in contact with my family and friends in Taiwan for free, but by maintaining frequent online communication with them, I feel less lonely. I know that even though my family and friends are not with me physically, I can still obtain "family and home feelings" since I can see their live, hear their voices, and even watch their images on digital platforms. … In this way, even though my family and friends are not with me physically, they are still here, just in a different way.

Many scholars have touched on the importance of social media and digital tools in migrants/immigrants' daily lives. The anthropologists Madianou and Miller (2012, 2013) proposed a theoretical concept of "polymedia" to better understand the association between people's social relations and media use, and more concretely, to examine the meanings, functions, and implications for migrants' use of these digital platforms in the course of their daily lives. These authors took UK-based Filipino migrants as their research subject and explored how the Filipino migrant mothers perform their motherhood and show care to children who still live in the Philippines. Their study indicated that these mothers utilize digital platforms such as email, instant messaging, social networking sites, webcams, and texting to constantly remain in touch, and to show their care for or even educate their children (Madianou and Miller, 2012). By doing so, overseas Filipino migrant mothers successfully implement their motherhood, and further prove their presence in their children life. These two authors' 2013 article argued that rather than merely providing additional communication options,

the concept of "polymedia" can be employed to reveal the relationships between people and communication media in the contemporary social lives and interpersonal relations. They stated that by selecting a specific communication tool or platform over another in a particular relationship or communicative context, people construct their subjective and social meanings regarding media usage behaviors. Furthermore, people are in this way able to further manage their emotions and relationships and interpret the interplay between their social lives and technology through their media usage experiences (Madianou and Miller, 2013). "Polymedia" does not focus on the concept of the media itself, but rather the social, emotional, and relational consequences of media use in the course of people's daily lives.

BaiBai's social media usage reveals some of the important social meanings regarding these communication tools: "being together" and "co-presence." Whether it be permanent or temporary, international migration entails people leaving their home county and original family to go overseas. In this regard, it is worth investigating how such migrants maintain and manage their relations and connections with the family and friends they have left behind in the home country, which is a considerable challenge for both migrants and their families.

Before information and communications technology (ICT) became as convenient, fast, and cheap as it is today, immigrants could not easily make contact with or even know the living situations of their relatives in their home country. However, beginning in the late 1990s, the rapid development of ICT systems and social media platforms significantly changed how people and immigrants stay in contact with their family, friends, and relatives. One of the main contributions of ICT and social media to people's communication practices is that enabling the dispersed families can maintain high frequencies of contact, and thereby extensively exchange such as information and even emotions. Moreover, since ICT and social media technologies have allowed people to stay in contact with others beyond the limitations of national borders and times, this kind of communication service and function means that people in the different locations can create a digital transnational social space to continuously show their "co-presence" online, and further generate transnational forms of socialization and interpersonal

interactions. For example, BaiBai said that even though his family and friends were still in Taiwan while he worked as a WHM in Australia and Belgium, they could nevertheless communicate on social media platforms, and BaiBai and his relatives could exchange emotional supports with each other. By utilizing the "instant connection" that ICT technologies enable, BaiBai could obtain family and home feelings even though he was not physically with his family, and receive necessary emotional supports as a result of the digital connections (Nedelcu & Wyss, 2016; Nedelcu, 2017; Lin & Liao, 2019).

Bonini (2011) has put forward similar ideas to BaiBai's narratives; he stated that ICT and social media not only function as a medium for users to exchange information, but also play a vital role in migrants' lives, helping them to obtain the "home feeling" even though physically, they are far from their loved ones.

BaiBai's digital and online homemaking practices made me curious as to whether or not he felt at home in his host society. Another question I had concerned whether he perceived host societies (like Australia and Belgium) to be his home. BaiBai's thoughts on these matters were as follows:

> *Since I did not plan to stay in overseas forever, and still wanted to go back to Taiwan in the future, I did not regard either Belgium or Australia as my "home." I considered myself a migrant worker* [外勞] *in Belgium; how can a temporary migrant worker see their host society as their home? … I think that my situation is similar to the migrant workers from Southeast Asian working in Taiwan, and I think that they do not regard Taiwan as their home. Neither they nor I plan to stay in the host society forever. I know I will come back to Taiwan when I've earned enough money and completed my working holiday program.*

It is interesting that BaiBai compared his situation in Belgium to that of migrant workers from Southeast Asian working in Taiwan. He clearly considers himself to be a sojourner, rather than an immigrant, and did not plan to stay outside Taiwan for long period of life. BaiBai always knew that he would return to Taiwan when he considered

that he already earned enough money or completed the working holiday program, and not settle down in Australia or Belgium. Due to the temporary of their visa, many Taiwanese WHMs like BaiBai feel certain that their presence in the host society is on a temporary basis. Furthermore, since most of them intend to earn as much money as possible during the program, they frequently work in various locations, and such a fragmented work schedule and life arrangement reduces the possibility that young Taiwanese WHMs will feel a sense of belonging, identity, and even home feeling toward the host society (Maury, 2017 ; Robertson, 2014). This can be said to be why BaiBai was clear that he did "not regard either Australia or Belgium" as his home while he worked as a WHM abroad.

6.3.3. *Personal meanings of participation in working holiday programs overseas*

Although BaiBai did not regard either Australia or Belgium as his "home," nor did he obtain "home feelings" in the host society, when I invited him to share the meanings of his participation in the working holiday program, he said that his international experiences changed him a lot. BaiBai said that he had become more "independent," "brave," "mature," and "open-minded".

When asked how his overseas experiences had changed him in these ways, BaiBai said:

> *Honestly, I really appreciate the years I spent working abroad as a WHM because they changed me a lot. I became more independent, brave, and mature. For example, when in Taiwan, I did not even like to eat lunch or dinner by myself, but when abroad, I do a lot of things by myself such as shopping, eating at restaurants, watching movies, going to see a doctor, doing my laundry, and most importantly, making myself delicious foods and lunch boxes. Of course, I also studied hard to improve my English. … I did not usually do these things by myself in Taiwan; I always would ask my family or friends to accompany me. … But now, since I can*

do these things by myself, I feel that "I have transformed from a young boy into an adult," which means I can take more responsibility about what I want to do. … Overall, I would say that these years of overseas work have really made a differences; I am no longer a "Mama's boy" [媽寶]*!*

BaiBai's narrative shows that people's international experiences can give rise to subjective interpretations. For BaiBai, the three years he spent living and working overseas made him grow both personally and psychologically and empowered him with the confidence and independence required to deal with the difficulties he faced abroad. He was also able to learn things he had not knew in Taiwan before, and in this regard, his overseas experiences made BaiBai grow in terms of personal skills and intelligence (Yang & Wen, 2016). However, BaiBai's narrative is not unique; when I put the same questions to the 11 other participants in this research, many offered similar responses, indicating that their overseas experiences had significantly changed them and helped them to grow. For example, another participant said that they went "*to Belgium, and lived and worked there as if it was a new beginning in life. You have to learn everything anew, beginning with your arrival at Brussels airport. … and after this learning curve, you find out some day that you really have grown into a different person.*" The information given by BaiBai and the other participants echoed the findings of a study by Zhu et al. (2019), who found that participation in working holiday program helped Chinese young people to grow and change both physically and psychologically, and even achieve their personal or life goals.

BaiBai further shared that his overseas experiences made him more open-minded, tolerant, and accepting of differences, since living in multicultural and super-diverse cities such as Sydney and Brussels:

I have become more open now, since Western societies are more open than Taiwan; my experiences in Australia and Belgium have made me more open-minded regarding sensitive issues such as homosexuality, marijuana, migrants, refugees, graffiti, tattoos, and so on. … Many people in Taiwan are very conservative about

these issues … but I now feel more acceptable and open-minded, and perhaps even "admire" these differences, but when I'm in Taiwan, I can't.

Brussels has been ranked as the second most cosmopolitan city in the world, since more than 60% of the city's residents were born in a different country or have the migrant background. When people from so many places and ethnic backgrounds live together, there are many more opportunities to interact with others. BaiBai's narrative reveals that his experiences in multicultural cities such as Brussels and Sydney led him to embrace a cosmopolitan identity and become more open in his attitudes and tolerance of differences. Kawashima (2014) found that participation in working holiday programs in Australia tends to have two positive effects on Japanese young people. Her study argued that these experiences not only help Japanese youths to improve their English language proficiency, but also make them to construct the cosmopolitan identity, become more open-minded and to tolerant towards differences, and to accept of multicultural perspectives. These two positive effects and consequences are also could be found in the BaiBai's narrative, as well as those another Taiwanese youths' discourses who participated in this study.

6.3.4. *"I want to go back to Taiwan, but not yet"*

Since it was evident that BaiBai's participation in working holiday programs had had many positive implications for him, both physically and psychologically, I was curious about his future plans, after completing his working holiday program in Belgium; would he return to Taiwan, or does he have an alternative plan? However, BaiBai mentioned his struggle between emotions and realities. Emotionally, he said that he wishes to return to Taiwan because his parents, family, and friends are still there, and that he has strong feelings of nostalgia toward his homeland. However, in reality, he knows that if he goes back to Taiwan, he will again have to face challenges such as the rising cost of housing, disadvantageous labor conditions, and low salaries. Since the majority of employers in Taiwan do not regard working holiday as the official work experience, another challenge for BaiBai is how to transform his working holiday experiences into human capital in the mainstream Taiwanese job market, such as in job

interview. These difficulties may further influence BaiBai's decision as to whether he should return to Taiwan or not

BaiBai revealed that he had struggled with regard to these issues:

Of course, I want to return to Taiwan. My parents are already tired of working, and I am the only child in my family. My parents definitely miss me and expect me to return. … I would also like to come back because I am more familiar with life in Taiwan. I miss my hometown, family, friends, and also the food there. Taiwan is where I come from and my home, so … in my mind, I certainly want to return to Taiwan.

He added,

When I think about the low salaries, long hour works, and high cost of housing in Taiwan, these realities further reduce my motivation to return … For example, as I said before, I could only earn about 1000 Euros in Taiwan, and such a small salary made it impossible for me to have a good quality of life, or buy a small apartment in Taipei … Every time I think about how low salaries are in Taiwan, it really brings me down to reality, and I think, why don't I stay in a foreign country to earn money since I can earn several times of the salary than I could in Taiwan. … Moreover, most employers in Taiwan do not consider time spent overseas on a working holiday as the official job, but rather think of it as travel, not professional work … These economic and labor market realities have also influenced me and made me feel struggle to decide when I should return to Taiwan.

As mentioned previously, the average salary of Taiwanese young people has been stagnant for years. According to official statistics, a young worker would need to save his/her entire salary for 16 years to be able to afford a small apartment in Taipei. Given this great discrepancy between the cost of housing in Taipei and young people's average salary, it has become almost impossible for young people to buy an apartment or house on their own. This has led many young people to be dissatisfied with the local economic situation, and many have been facilitated to look for work overseas (Chang & Chen,

2012). It is interesting to note that Stevens (2017) found similar experiences with BaiBai, in his examination of temporary Chinese migrant workers in Australia when considering the question regarding whether to stay aboard or return to China. In his study, Stevens (2017) noted that Chinese migrant workers initially did not plan to stay in Australia for long period, but after several years, gradually changed their minds. Some of the main considerations for these workers were the low level of salary in China, compared to Australia, rising costs of housing and living expenses in the home country, and the fact that they gradually got used to Western ways of thinking and doing. These factors influence temporary migrant workers' decisions as to whether to return to China or not. Another economic reality that BaiBai has to face is that for the majority of employers in East Asian societies such as Taiwan and Japan have regarded the working holiday experience is valueless and considered the experiences as travel rather than the official job or professional work experiences. Working holiday experiences do not tend to have a very good impression among East Asian employees, when youngsters like BaiBai return to their home country and try to reengage into the labor market (Kawashima, 2010).

Since BaiBai was still struggling between emotional and economic considerations when I interviewed him, I asked him about his future plans. He replied:

> *I want to go back to Taiwan in the end but now, maybe I will apply for working holiday visas in other countries, or search for another kind of work opportunity in a foreign country, and after I've earned some more money, I will go back*.

In the context of BaiBai's struggle between his emotions and economic realities, he feels stuck in this contradictory situation. Emotionally, he would like to return to Taiwan, but with regard to reality, he no longer accepts the disadvantaged labor and work conditions and low salaries in Taiwan, which reduces his motivation to return. BaiBai finally decided to continue his circular migration trajectory and work overseas in order to earn money, after which he plans to return to Taiwan (Stevens, 2019). It is important to note that BaiBai's working holiday experiences are different to those of his Western counterparts since the main motivation for Western youths to participate

in working holiday programs is to experience different lifestyles and cultures, and perhaps even achieve personal development goals. However, for some Taiwanese young people like BaiBai, the reason why they participate in such programs is the economic disadvantages they face in their home country.

6.3.5. *The three stages of the ethnonational identity negotiation process*

With regard to the issues of his big (national) home and his ethnonational identity, BaiBai said that he has experienced three phases of change and negotiation.

Phase one: Initial perceptions regarding ethnonational identity

BaiBai said that the first stage was critically influenced by his family. He said that before going abroad, although he had a Taiwanese identity, he still felt an affinity with the notion of a pan-Chinese" cultural identity:

> *I grew up in a so-called "pan-blue" family; both my parents worked as government employees and are now retired. My mom and dad have voted for the Kuomintang [KMT] in every election and are very strong supporters of the KMT. … When I was child, my parents always taught me that "our ancestors were from Mainland China," and they consider themselves to be "both Taiwanese and Chinese." They told me that "the people in Taiwan still have very close connections and emotional links to the Mainland." … Since my parents had a friendly attitude towards the notion of "China" and "Mainland China," regardless of the cultural, economic, or political domains … my parents' perceptions regarding China and Chinese culture strongly affected me.*

According to the theory of political socialization, parents' political attitudes have a significant impact on their children (Merelman, 1980). However, it is important to explain the notions of "pan-blue" and "pan-green" in the Taiwanese context. In Taiwan,

"pan-blue" voters are those whose party identity tends towards the KMT or other parties that share the similar "Chinese" ethnonational identity. If someone has the "pan-blue" party identity, they will be more likely to support pan-blue parties' nominated candidates in elections, and to hold the "Chinese" ethnonational identity. The "pan-blue" family means that the family overall supports pan-blue parties and claims the "Chinese" ethnonational identity. In Taiwan, the major pan-blue party is the KMT. Moreover, the other major political force in Taiwan is the "pan-green" parties, whose major party is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). It and other small pan-green parties have the stronger "local and Taiwanese" identity, rather than the "Chinese" identity (Schubert, 2004).

Since BaiBai's parents are "pan blue" supporters, they have a dual identity, identifying themselves as "both Taiwanese and Chinese" and feel great pride in Chinese culture and history. BaiBai's own ethnonational identity was significantly affected by his parents, and although he does not have a dual "Taiwanese and Chinese" identity, he reported that the proportions he assigns to each part of his identity can vary:

> *I can say that I did not fully identify myself as "both Taiwanese and Chinese," but rather 80% Taiwanese and 20% Chinese, or perhaps 70% Taiwanese and 30% Chinese." ... I had this type of combined identity before I came to Belgium because I really believed that we [referring to Taiwanese people] really shared the similar lifestyle, culture, food, and so on with people in Mainland China. ... I remember the first time I went to Beijing, which was also the first time I had gone abroad. ... When I saw the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, and even Beijing Hutong, I felt so proud of Chinese culture, and even felt that "maybe" it is good to be a Chinese*.

BaiBai added that the "Chinese" part of his identity is more related to the cultural rather than the political domain:

> *When I talk about the "Chinese" part of my identity, I'm referring to traditional Chinese culture, history, food, architectures, and of course, the Chinese language. ... My Chinese identity is more like a cultural than a political identity. ...*

In the political domain, I identify as "Taiwanese," however, in culturally, I accept others consider me as a "Chinese."

BaiBai's narrative demonstrates the complexity and multi-layered nature of the meanings of "Chinese" identity. For some people, the Chinese identity can be related to political meanings, but for BaiBai, his "Chinese" identity is more a cultural than a political identity. It is interesting to note that while the majority of people in Taiwan identify themselves as "Taiwanese," according to statistics published by National Chenchi University (2019), nearly 35% of people in Taiwan hold a dual identity as "both Taiwanese and Chinese." This leaves the question as to why many people in Taiwan still have the "Chinese" identity. Zhong (2016) sought to provide answers to this question. He found that the majority of people in Taiwan do not accept a political "Chinese" identity, since the "political Chinese" identity is always connected to the PRC regime in Mainland China. He also stated that people in Taiwan are more apt to imbue their "Chinese" identity with cultural meanings since the majority of Taiwanese people do not entirely deny that Taiwanese society shares many similarities to and cultural roots with Mainland Chinese society. In this regard, many Taiwanese people who have the "Chinese" identity tend to separate their Chinese identity from the political domain and are more likely to link or depict their "Chinese" identity in the cultural way.

Phase two: Melting ethnonational boundaries and creating harmonious friendships with Mainland Chinese co-workers in Belgium

During his working holiday in Belgium, BaiBai constructed good friendships and harmonious interaction experiences with his Mainland Chinese colleagues. These positive interactions melted BaiBai's original ethnonational boundary, and he began to think that "*maybe there is not such big difference between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese people*." However, this melting effect only occurred in daily and ordinary interaction contexts:

When I arrived in Belgium, I successfully found a full-time job as "sushi maker" at the Delhaize supermarket in Brussels, since I had done this before in

Australia. … The majority of sushi makers at the supermarket were from Mainland China, some were other Asian migrants, and I was the only Taiwanese person. … I had many opportunities to interact with my colleagues. … We not only chatted at the workplace, but also would travel, have dinner, and go shopping, together. I thought that it was wonderful that I could establish such harmonious relationships with my Chinese colleagues.

However, the harmonious interactions that took place between BaiBai and his Mainland Chinese colleagues changed, when they spoke about politics. According to BaiBai:

My positive interaction experiences made me think that we Taiwanese were very similar to people from Mainland Chinese, and that there were not big differences between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese people in terms of culture, ritual, ideas, and so on, but this only lasted if we did not speak about ***politics****! … If we start to discuss about politics, we will become angry and even create conflicts since we do really have different political thoughts and ideologies.*

BaiBai's narrative indicates that the harmonious interactions between him and his Mainland Chinese colleagues melted the ethnonational boundaries between him and his Mainland Chinese counterparts and made him think that "there are not such big differences between them. Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese people share many similarities." However, there were limitations to the melting of these boundaries. It only occurred in specific contexts, such as the ordinary daily interactions between BaiBai and his colleagues.

However, the effect did not hold when BaiBai spoke about political issues with his colleagues. In fact, studies by Wang and Zhang (2018) and Zhang (2019) found similar findings. They took Mainland Chinese students studying in Taiwan as their research subject and examined their ethnonational identity negotiation experiences during their campus and daily life experiences. Both articles reveal that in the ordinary daily interactions, both Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese students enjoy good friendships,

and there are not big differences between the two groups. However, when the students talk about or debate political issues, many of them return to their original boundaries and defend their ethnonational identities and political ideologies. The positive interactions between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese students do not always or lead boundaries to melt; it tends to only happen in specific contexts or social circumstances. The studies by Wang and Zhang (2018) and Zhang (2019) and the experiences of BaiBai echo social construction perspectives, which assert that people's ethnonational identities and boundaries are socially constructed, and not static; they are rather dynamic and inter-constructed by ourselves and others in society. Moreover, the context is also important, in that people living in different circumstances or contexts of interpersonal interaction may perform different parts of their ethnonational identities in response to their practical needs (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). For example, for BaiBai and his Mainland Chinese co-workers, the issues of ethnonational identities and boundaries became less important in their daily and ordinary interactions, but when they spoke about politics, the issues of ethnonational identities became critical and influenced their interpersonal relations.

Phase three: The reinforcement of ethnonational boundaries

BaiBai touched on the political topics that he and his Mainland Chinese spoke about, and explained his feelings and perceptions about these interactions:

> *When I was surrounded by many Mainland Chinese friends, it is inevitable that they would be interested in my attitudes toward specific political issues, especially about relations between "Taiwanese" and "Chinese" people or between "Taiwan" and "China." ... At the beginning, I explained my opinions and attitudes very patiently, and they would also reply to me in an open-minded fashion.*

However, BaiBai gradually came to realize that he had different points of view regarding political issues compared to his Mainland Chinese co-workers, and that his

colleagues were beginning to show an impatient attitude toward his political viewpoints. Because of his Mainland Chinese colleagues' increasingly unfriendly responses, BaiBai had no choice but to defend his original ethnonational identity. As the consequence, the "Chinese" part of BaiBai's identity became less, and the "Taiwanese" part of his ethnonational identity was strengthened. He said:

> *We are very different in terms of our political opinions. ...since I grew up in the 1990s, when Taiwan was experiencing the processes of democratization, and society was becoming increasingly open, and people were more accepting of different point of political views. Gradually, in Taiwan, we became accustomed to discussing all kinds of issues even the sensitive ones. However, I found that I cannot do the same with my Mainland Chinese colleagues when we talk about issues regarding politics in particular. I can say that we are so different in this regard. ... It is hard for the two groups to come to a consensus about sensitive issues. They always argue that "Taiwan is a part of China," but this is simply not true. ... We nearly had some conflicts because of these political issues, and I realized that it might be hard to maintain the harmonious friendships with his Mainland Chinese colleagues because we are so different in terms of issues such as lifestyles, ideas, and especially political ideologies, which made me think that I cannot really think of myself as "Chinese." For this reason, I now regard myself as 95% "Taiwanese" and 5% or less "Chinese."*

With regard to the notion of one's big (national) home and ethnonational identity, BaiBai's narrative indicates that he went through three phases of ethnonational identity negotiation. When in Taiwan, BaiBai's parents' ethnonational identity influenced him since his parents hold the dual identity as the "both Taiwanese and Chinese," which made BaiBai has the positive attitude to the "Chinese" identity label. At that time, BaiBai considered himself as "70% Taiwanese 30% Chinese, or 80% Taiwanese and 20% Chinese". However, he emphasized that the "Chinese" part of his identity lay firmly in the cultural rather than the political domain. BaiBai was proud of his traditional Chinese heritage and culture. And his sense of himself as culturally "Chinese" increased, blurring the boundary inherent in his original ethnonational identity, after he

arrived in Belgium and had built up harmonious relations with his Mainland Chinese co-workers. However, this blurring came to an end when BaiBai started to discuss sensitive and controversial political issues with his colleagues. In the course of these discussions, some conflicts occurred between him and his Mainland Chinese counterparts, which made BaiBai feel that "even though I shared many similarities with my colleagues with regard to culture, there were huge differences between our political ideas and ideologies." These experiences served to strengthen the original "Taiwanese" part of BaiBai's identity and reduce the "Chinese" part of his identity. BaiBai's working holiday experiences, as well as the interactions he had with his Mainland Chinese coworkers in Belgium, enhanced his Taiwanese identity and reinforced the original ethnonational boundaries and cultural differences between BaiBai and his colleagues. Similar ethnonational identity negotiation experiences to those of BaiBai can be found in the study by Yan, Wong and Lai (2019).

6.3.6. Summary

BaiBai's narrative reveals that the disadvantaged work condition and low salary he faced in his previous job in Taiwan were the two vital economic push factors that facilitated him to leave Taiwan and participated in overseas working holiday programs. Before going to Belgium, BaiBai worked for two years in Australia, while in Belgium, he successfully found a full-time job as "sushi maker" at a supermarket. At his workplace, BaiBai's colleagues were mainly from Mainland China; there were some other Asian migrant workers there and he was the only Taiwanese worker. Since he already worked overseas for years, BaiBai knew that ICT tools and social media platforms were vital for him to communicate frequently with his family, friends, and relatives in Taiwan. The online contacts with his loved ones in Taiwan not only gave BaiBai valuable emotional supports, but because these online contacts kept him abreast of the life circumstances of his family and relatives, provided him with "home feelings" and the sense of "being at home."

When it came to decide whether or not to return to Taiwan, BaiBai experienced a struggle between his emotional preference and economic reality. Emotionally, he

wanted to return to Taiwan, but his knowledge of the economic realities of life in Taiwan such as the high cost of living and housing, poor workplace condition, and low average salary reduced his motivation to return. BaiBai decided to remain working overseas for several more years but is certain that he will return to Taiwan at some point in the future.

In addition to the notion of a "small home," BaiBai Huang experienced three phases in the course of the negotiation of his ethnonational identity and his big (national) home. When he lived in Taiwan, BaiBai was influenced by his parents' dual ethnonational identity (his parents identified as both "Taiwanese and Chinese"), and he stated that at that time, *he felt "70% Taiwanese and 30% Chinese, or perhaps 80% Taiwanese and 20% Chinese." BaiBai's* original ethnonational identity and boundary have further blurred since he went to Belgium. He successfully constructed harmonious relationships with his Mainland Chinese co-workers at his workplace, which made him think that there might not be very big differences between him and his Mainland Chinese colleagues. It is important to note that boundary melting tends to occur in specific interpersonal contexts, mostly in ordinary daily interactions. However, when BaiBai discussed political issues with his Mainland Chinese co-workers, he found that this melting effect stopped, and that interlocutors would simply return to their original political believes and ideologies. After BaiBai had experienced several negative experiences when talking about political issues with his Mainland Chinese counterparts, he gradually realized that even though he had many similarities with his Mainland Chinese coworkers, especially in terms of culture, however, in politically, they differed sharply. These negative interactions led to the strengthening of BaiBai's "Taiwanese" identity, enhancing his ethnonational boundaries and serving to distinguish between him and his Mainland Chinese co-workers.

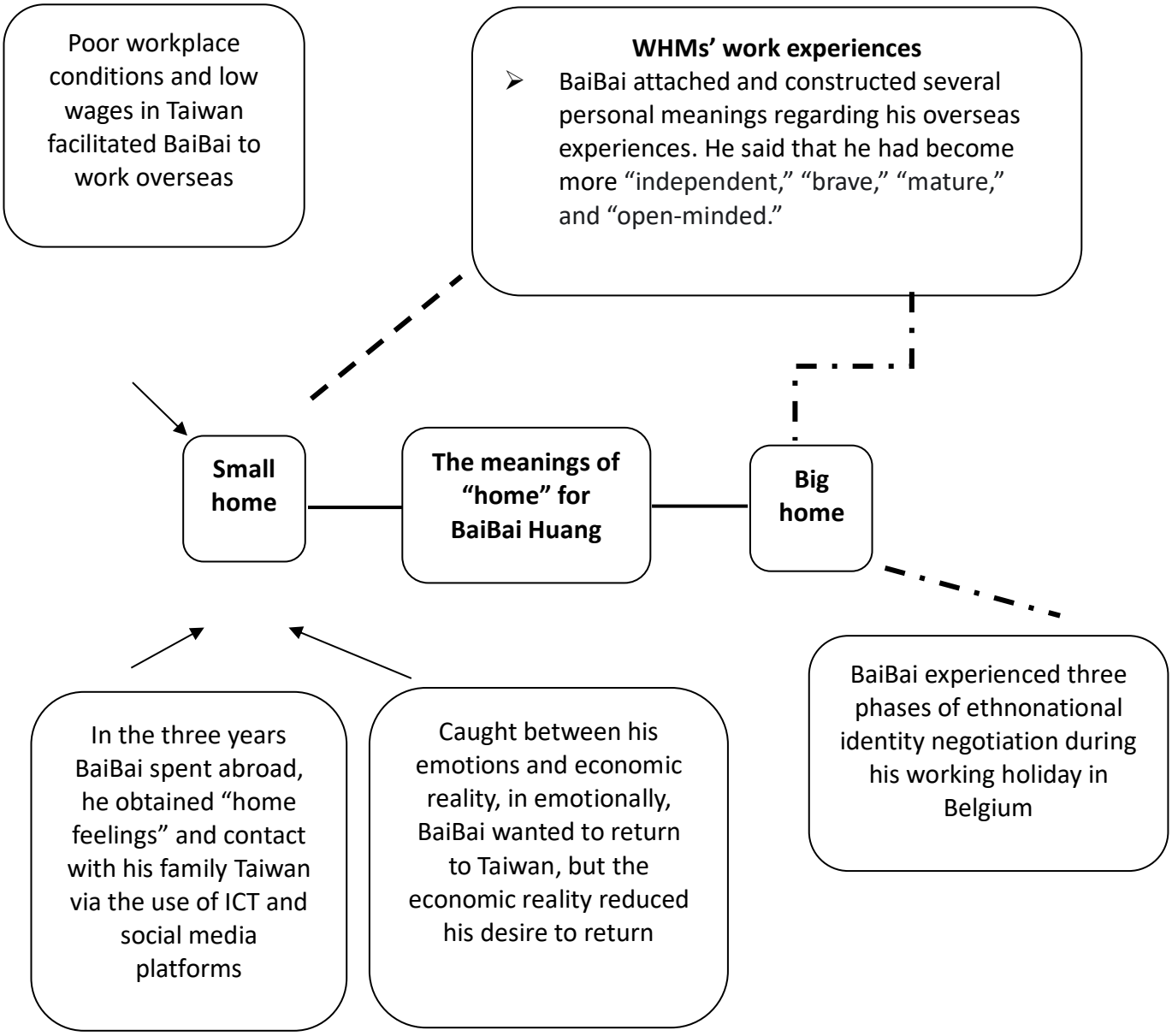


Figure 6.5 The intersectional meanings of "home" for BaiBai Huang

Source: This study

6.4 Conclusion

Working holiday schemes are the popular migration pathway that whereby Taiwanese young people are given the opportunity to live and work overseas on one-year visas. This chapter examined this phenomenon among Taiwanese WHMs in Belgium, looking at participants' international movements, job-searching process, and homemaking experiences during their lives overseas. To this end, two participants' life

stories and international experiences have been analyzed in detail.

Table 6.1 The intersectional meanings of "home" for Donna Liu and BaiBai Huang

Dimensions/ cases	Donna Liu	BaiBai Huang
Small home	● Poor workplace conditions and low salaries prompted Donna to leave Taiwan to work overseas ● Did not regard Belgium as her home since she had very limited social networks ● Her Belgian home is "on the way and in the process of being made"	● Disadvantaged working conditions and low salaries in Taiwan facilitated BaiBai to participate in working holiday programs ● Maintained connections with his home in Taiwan via a range of ICT and social media platforms ● Struggled with the conflicts between emotional and economic considerations regarding whether to return to Taiwan
Big Home	● Applied the "downplay" strategy to negotiate her ethnonational identity ● Her original Taiwanese ethnonational identity was strengthened	● Experienced three phases of ethnonational identity negotiation ● His original Taiwanese ethnonational identity was strengthened

Source: This study.

The life stories shared by Liu and Huang reveal that disadvantaged workplace

conditions and low average salaries in Taiwan are two of the most important push factors that facilitate young people to leave their homes in Taiwan and apply for participate in overseas working holiday programs. The regulations of working holiday visas meant that Donna and BaiBai were only able to live and work in Belgium for a maximum of one year, and as a result, they felt like "sojourners" in the host society. This feeling of being a temporary sojourner meant that Donna and BaiBai did not regard Belgium as their home. During program, Donna and BaiBai experienced different homemaking experiences; Donna successfully found a Belgian boyfriend via the Tinder dating app and hopes to build her home in Belgium if she is awarded a "re-union visa." However, because BaiBai had already worked overseas before going to Belgium, he was aware that ICT technologies and social media platforms are as the vital communication tools that ensured he could stay in contact with his family and friends back home, whereby BaiBai and his family could keep abreast of their respective life situations, and provide each other with warmth, care, and emotional support. This ensured that even though BaiBai was physically separated from his family, he was able to nevertheless feel a sense of "being at home." Moreover, BaiBai faced a further difficulty when it came to decide whether or not he would return to Taiwan. Emotionally, he felt a strong desire to return to Taiwan, but chose not to, based on the consideration of the economic realities of life in Taiwan.

In addition to the notion of one's small home, there were both similarities and differences between Donna and BaiBai's understanding of their big (national) home and their ethnonational identity negotiation. A similarity was that both were minority Taiwanese employees in their workplaces, but they experienced different identity negotiation processes. At her workplace, Donna usually applied the "downplay" strategy to negotiate and perform her Taiwanese identity so as to avoid embarrassing situations or conflicts with her Mainland Chinese co-workers, while BaiBai went through three distinct phases in his ethnonational identity negotiation. However, it is interesting to note that despite the fact that Donna and BaiBai have different experiences in terms of their ethnonational identity formation and big homemaking and negotiation experiences, both came to the conclusion that they were different to their Mainland Chinese counterparts, particularly in the political domain. Both Donna and BaiBai strengthened their original and "Taiwanese" identity and consolidated their

original ethnonational identity and boundaries so as to firmly establish differences between them and their Mainland Chinese counterparts in their big (national) home and identity domains. Their narratives confirmed that for Donna and BaiBai, the notions and meanings of both the small and big home are not static but rather dynamic, fluid, and intersectionally influenced by individuals' distinct life circumstances and personal backgrounds.

Chapter Seven
Belgian Taiwanese Skilled Migrants' and Professional Expatriates' Homemaking Experiences

7.1 Skilled migrants and expatriates in the contemporary era

Facilitated by the rapid development of economic globalization since the 1990s, business has become increasingly internationalized, meaning that companies have more difficultly focusing on a specific country or market. Thus, international business has played a vital role in the contemporary era, which has further led to an increasing number of people leaving their home countries and working overseas to manage their business or company across national borders. In fact, from the perspectives of time and duration, there are a wide variety of international work schemes, ranging from long-term assignments lasting for years to short-term assignments lasting only months or weeks. Moreover, there may be assignments that involve traveling back and forth between/among a company's different branches (Suutari & Brewster, 2009). Accordingly, international work takes many different forms. Because international work assignments are usually on a temporary basis, Pitkänen & Carerra (2014) include these international business workers as within the temporary migrant category. However, as most international business workers have high education levels and work skills, they have different characteristics compared with their low-skilled migrant counterparts such as the working holiday makers (WHMs) discussed in the previous chapter). Based on the migration study literature, highly skilled migrants are people who have a university or above educational degree along with professional knowledge or work skills (for example, engineers, doctors, academics, and so on) and work in overseas. It is also important to note that compared with their low skilled counterparts, these highly skilled migrants are more often welcomed by the countries they migrate to. This is because in most cases they have higher social, cultural, and economic capital, and moreover, they are less likely to become a problematic group of people in the host society or destination country (Iredale, 2008). Smith et al. (2006) argue that the consequences regarding the rapid development of international business and economic globalization make it necessary for workers to move across borders for work, for example, many of the high-skilled workers work for multinational corporations

(MNCs). In the past, these high-skilled workers have generally migrated from developed to developing countries to expand the new business markets, and in addition they have been more likely to work in higher positions in the labor market and receive higher salaries compared with their local counterparts. However, Favell, Feldblum, and Smith (2007) further claim that both low- and high-skilled migrant workers are motivated by similar push factors, which include searching for a better quality of life.

The number of the high-skilled migrants moving from Asia to Europe has significantly increased over the past several years. According to statistics, the number of high-skilled migrants who moved from non-European Union (EU) countries to EU-member states between 2011 and 2015 increased by nearly 12%, from 42,000 to approximately 48,000. Interesting, these non-EU high-skilled migrant workers mainly came from Asian countries. Approximately 60% of them came from Asia, including Japan, India, and mainland China (Aksakal et al., 2008). Moreover, Pan-Chinese high-skilled migrant workers are one of the main subgroups constituting the high-skilled migrant worker community in Belgium, especially in the Flanders region. Pang (2008) found that in Flanders, the pan-Chinese academic researchers and professors ranked first with regard to the nationalities of academics. Further, the pan-Chinese high-skilled migrant workers who hold type-B visa (temporary work visa for applicant with yearly gross salary higher than 38,665 EUR) are ranked fourth in the Flanders region after those from Japan, India, and the United States.

Moreover, the expatriates (外派工作者) constitute one of the main subgroups within the community of high-skilled migrant community in Belgium. Moreover, because Belgium is located in the center of Western Europe, and because Brussels is the headquarters for the European Union and many other MNCs, Belgium and especially Brussels have become one of the most popular countries and cities for professional expatriates worldwide. In 2000, the number of highly educated and skilled migrant workers (including expatriates) in Belgium was 150,000; however, this number had increased to 220,000 by 2017, meaning the growth rate during that period was 46%. With regard to the demographic background of these high-skilled migrant workers in Belgium and Brussels, in 2017 the highest percentage of them came from Japan, followed by Germany and the Czech Republic. It is also of interest that these migrants

lived concentrated in a number of specific regions within the city of Brussels, including Evere, Auderghem, and Ixelles. Their average age was between 25 and 40 years, and most stayed in Belgium for between 3 and 4.5 years. The majority of these migrants worked for the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), though many also worked for MNCs, such as Audi and Toyota or other high-tech information and communications technology (ICT) companies (The Bulletin, 2017). A study conducted by Gatti (2009) found that several characteristics could be used to depict the features of the expatriate community in Belgium. Gatti found that this group of people was young, highly educated, had high wages, and was highly sociable in the international community. However, they had only a few contacts and interactions with the local Belgian residents, and often did not speak French. Moreover, their stay in Belgium was mostly driven by job or work requests, and their stay were usually in the temporary basis.

Although there are no systematic data regarding how many Taiwanese high-skilled migrants and professional expatriates currently living and working in Belgium, the economic proximities between Taiwan and Europe and Taiwan and Belgium can still be understood according to related statistics. With regard to the economic relations between Taiwan and Europe, Europe was the fourth largest business and trade partner for Taiwan worldwide in 2017. Further, Taiwan was the sixth largest business and trade partner for Europe in Asia, and the amount of the bilateral trade between Taiwan and Europe surpassed 50 billion US dollars (駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處，2017). In 2018, Belgium was the 29th largest business and trade partner for Taiwan, and Taiwan was the ninth largest business and trade partner for Belgium in Asia. The amount of bilateral trade between Taiwan and Belgium surpassed two billion US dollars in 2018, a figure which has increased by 10% annually over the past several years (駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處，2019). Overall, these figures reveal that Taiwan has a strong economic connection with both of Europe and Belgium.

Because Taiwan is famous for having the strong and vibrant high-tech industries, especially in the areas of semi-conductors and ICT, Taiwan and Belgium have several cases of successful mutual investment in these areas. One of the most famous cases is the strong cooperative relations that have been established between many Taiwanese

ICT and semi-conductor companies and the Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre (IMEC) in Leuven and other Belgian cities. In particular, these Taiwanese companies and the IMEC have successfully undertaken several industrial and product innovations in the areas of semi-conductor manufacturing and product design. Further, based on the long-standing cooperative relations between Taiwanese ICT and semi-conductor companies and the IMEC, the IMEC established an Asian branch in Hsinchu, Taiwan in 2008. The IMEC further established a new IMEC Taiwan innovation center in 2010 for providing its services to local customers of Taiwanese high-tech companies. In addition to providing business services for Taiwanese customers, the IMEC has also established intensive cooperative relations and constructed a variety of human resource exchange programs for Taiwanese high-tech companies and universities. Based on these cooperative programs, both the high-tech companies and universities send their young engineers or PhD students to work or study at the IMEC and the University of Leuven for one to three years, or sometimes even longer (商業周刊，2011；European Economic and Trade Office, 2017).

However, it is important to note that because Taiwan has much greater number of investments in mainland China and Southeast Asia that compared with Europe, thus, the previous studies on Taiwanese high-skilled migrants and expatriates have mainly focused on these two regions. Which makes that the work and life experiences of these high-skilled migrants in Europe and especially in Belgium have yet to be fully explored. As Taiwanese high-skilled migrants and expatriates in most cases occupy advantageous work positions in the host society's labor market, they have better opportunities to obtain higher salaries than their local counterparts. Moreover, these professional Taiwanese migrant workers generally have higher education levels and higher social and cultural capital than the local residents. Thus, the majority of the previous studies regarding these professional Taiwanese migrant workers have used the concept "privileged migrants" as a theoretical lens for conducting the analysis. Notably, there have tens of thousands of Taiwanese companies and business people migrated to mainland China for expanding their business and searching for better market opportunities began in the early of 1980s since the CCP government began to implement its open-door and economic reform policies, moreover, after that mainland China experienced magnificent economic growth for decades. In this regard, many

previous studies have also focused on exploring Taiwanese professional migrant workers' work and life experiences in mainland China. According to the statistical data collected by the Taiwanese government from the Investment Commission of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEAIC, 2020), increasing numbers of Taiwanese companies and businesspeople have been investing in mainland China since the 1990s. The amount of investment reached its peak in 2010, during which Taiwanese companies invested nearly 15 billion US dollars in mainland China. Altogether Taiwanese companies and businesspeople have invested nearly two hundred billion US dollars in mainland China from 1991 to 2019. With this tremendous investment, Taiwanese companies have directly and indirectly hired more than fifteen million mainland Chinese employees. Further, to manage business in mainland China, there are currently approximately half a million Taiwanese people now living and working in mainland China, and the majority of them occupying professional job positions in various economic sectors. In the Chinese language, we call these Taiwanese professional workers and businesspeople in mainland China as 台幹 (tái gàn) or 台商 (tái shāng/Taishang; Chuang et al., 2018).

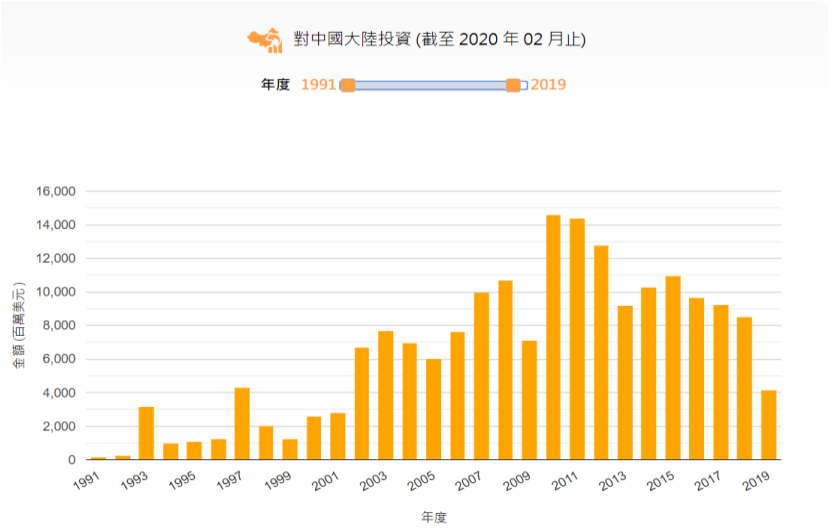


Figure 7.1 Number of investments from Taiwan to mainland China from 1991 to 2019 (in millions of US dollars)

Source: MOEAIC (2020).

Several previous studies have examined the work and life experiences of professional Taiwanese migrant workers and businesspeople in mainland China, with the majority of them using the concept of privileged migrant as a lens. Lin (2009) took

Taiwanese professional migrant workers and businesspeople who lived in Shanghai and Dongguan as his research subject and examined their level of social integration in the local society and the frequency of their interpersonal interactions with local residents. He found that these professional Taiwanese migrants generally did not choose to live with local residencies. Because most of these professional Taiwanese migrants had higher salaries than the locals, they preferred to buy cozy and luxury houses within communities majorly constituted by other Taiwanese or foreigners rather than locals. Because the residential areas of professional Taiwanese migrants were segregated from their local counterparts, they did not have many social interactions with the local residents. In this regard, even for Taiwanese professionals who had worked and lived in mainland China for more than two or three decades, their place-identity with the host society was still limited, and they regarded themselves as different from or even more special than the local counterparts.

Deng (2007) also examined Taiwanese high-skilled migrants' life and work experiences in mainland China. He found that several demographic characteristics could help in understanding this group of Taiwanese people, including their high level of skill, elite status, and belonging in the white-collar class. His study further pointed out that the cross-border mobility experiences for them meant freedom and independence. However, because mainland China has achieved significant improvements regarding their economic performance and the average income of their citizens over the past several decades, the discrepancy between the salaries and quality of life of mainland China's local employees and those of their professional or privileged Taiwanese counterparts are decreasing. This phenomenon can be seen in another study by Deng (2018), in which he examined the life and work experiences of young Taiwanese skilled migrants and expatriates living in mainland China. He found that the experiences of these young Taiwanese professionals were different from those of the prior generation of Taiwanese professionals in mainland China, who mainly migrated there in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During the 80s and 90s, Taiwan still had an advantage in salary level compared with mainland China, and the Taiwanese professional migrants who expatriated to mainland China could thus obtain much higher salaries than their local counterparts. Because of this, they were regarded as privileged migrants. However, because the differences between the salaries in Taiwan

and in mainland China especially in the big cities have decreased since in the 1990s, the situation has changed. The average salaries in Taiwan used to be ten to fifteen times higher than mainland China, while this figure decreased to five or six times during the 2010s (Huang, 2015). The decrease in the salary discrepancy between Taiwan and mainland China has influenced young Taiwanese professional migrants' life and work experiences in the host society, as their privileged social position and capital are not as powerful as those of their prior counterparts. Thus, Deng (2018) argues that professional migrants' privileged social position in the host society is not static but is influenced by a variety of factors. In the case of Taiwan and China, these factors are the economic performance and average salary gap between the two places.

In addition to mainland China, Taiwanese companies and businesspeople have also conducted numerous investments and invested tremendous amount of money in a number of Southeast Asian countries. According to the statistics announced by MOEAIC (2020), Taiwanese companies and businesspeople invested more than 80 billion US dollars in this area from 1960 to 2019. In particular, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore have attracted most of the investment money from Taiwan. As Taiwan has such intensive economic connections with this region and because tens of thousands of Taiwanese people living and working in there, many previous studies have examined the life and work experiences of Taiwanese people and especially professional migrants in these countries. For example, Lin (2016) took Taiwanese professional migrants, expatriates, and their families as research subjects and examined their life and work experiences in Jakarta, Indonesia. Lin found that because the majority of these Taiwanese people occupied advantageous job positions in the mainstream labor market and had much higher salaries than the local employees, their life and work experiences in Indonesia are go in light with the concept of privileged migrants. Most of them had a high-quality, cozy life and more career development opportunities in Indonesia than when they were in Taiwan. Moreover, most of the research participants in his studies indicated that their cross-border movement and overseas work experiences had positive effects for them, facilitating the achievement of their goal regarding upward social mobility. In another study, Lin (2019) again took Taiwanese people in Jakarta as his example, this time focusing on exploring their social lives and interpersonal interactions in the host society. He found that the majority of

these Taiwanese people had a middle-class social position before they immigrated to Indonesia. After they emigrated to Indonesia, they then obtained better jobs and higher salaries than those they had in Taiwan. However, their cozy life and work experiences became obstacles for these Taiwanese professional migrants to interact with locals, further preventing them from constructing the sense of belonging in and identifying with the host society in Indonesia. Instead, they merely regarded Indonesia as a place in which they could earn money rather than a place they wanted to stay forever.

To summarize the discussion above, it was revealed that the previous studies regarding Taiwanese high-skilled migrant workers or professional expatriates both in mainland China and Southeast Asia have mainly been echoed to the concept of privileged migrants. This is because most of these Taiwanese people have occupied advantageous job positions in the mainstream labor market and have also obtained higher salaries than their local counterparts in the host society. Moreover, the previous studies have mainly focused on the life and work experiences of Taiwanese in developing countries. However, the life, work, and homemaking experiences of Taiwanese professional migrants and expatriates in developed or global North countries have yet to be systematically studied.

So as to fill this research gap, this chapter examines Taiwanese high-skilled migrants and professional expatriates' work, life, and homemaking experiences in Belgium. The author successfully recruited and interviewed seven high-skilled Taiwanese migrants in the country. By analyzing the life stories of Wilson and Claire, the discussion will reveal how these research participants construct their own subjective and multi-layered meanings of "home" during their time abroad and will also show the strategies that these Taiwanese professionals apply in the course of their work and daily life experiences to negotiate their sense of belonging, ethnonational identities, and their perceptions of the notions of "small home" and "big home."

7.2 Case one: Wilson

➢ **Wilson's demographic information**
● Gender: Male.
● Age: 38.
● Years of stay in Belgium: From 2017 to the present.
● Job: Professional expatriate for a Taiwanese high-tech company in Belgium (Admiral Overseas Corporation, AOC (冠捷科技).
● Marital and family relationships: Single.

7.2.1 "*I earned a pretty good salary at AOC in Taiwan. However, the unbalanced life made me feel exhausted.*"

I first met with Wilson at a Taiwanese Lunar New Year gathering party organized by the restaurant Tai Hon in Brussels in 2018, which was also my first year spending the Chinese New Year in Belgium. Since the participants of the activity were mainly constituted by Taiwanese who lived in Belgium, they shared their life and work experiences with one another. After our first met at the restaurant, I exchanged Facebook accounts with Wilson, and we maintained communication online. After several online chats, I invited him to participate in my study and further interviews. Over the course of my research, I conducted several interviews (both online and offline) with Wilson. In the interviews, I expressed curiosity about the reason that he chose to work overseas, as he had had a good job in Taiwan before he moved. In response to my curiosity, he shared his work and life situation at the time and even the average salary he had earned. He said:

> *…honestly, I can tell you that I got pretty good salary when I still worked at AOC in Hsinchu, Taiwan… I could get about 65,000 NT dollars per month (equal to about 2,000 euros). I think it was quite a good income in Taiwan…yes, that is true…however, you know how long I spent on my work? It was nearly 12 hours. every morning I woke up around 7:30 and prepared to go to my company and start to work at 9 o'clock. And the most of time, I get off work at 20:00 or 21:00 at night. Sometimes, when the company was busy, I'd have to work even to 22:00 or 23:00…you know, the majority of my life in Taiwan was mainly constituted by*

work…work…and work… and yes, I had a private apartment in Hsinchu. However, since I had to work for more than 10 or even 12 hours, my house for me was just like a "hotel" for sleeping. Because I was too busy working, I did not have my own time or leisure… and on the weekend, the only thing I wanted to do was sleep…and do nothing…

It is true that the average salaries in high-tech companies are higher than those in other industry sectors in Taiwan. According to the data published by the Taiwanese government in 2018, the companies with the top fifty highest salaries were mostly related to high-tech industries. The data also revealed that an employee with a graduate degree working in the semi-conductor industry could on average earn 50,000 NT dollars per month (approximately 1,500 euros). This average monthly salary was higher than that of employees who work in the manufacturing industry (48,600 NT dollars or 1,400–1,500 euros) or the service industry (46,900 NT dollars or 1,400–1,500 euros). Further, the average monthly salary in Taiwan in 2018 was 51,957 NT dollars, while the median monthly salary was 41,000 NT dollars (equal to approximately 1,600 and 1,200 euros, respectively). However, the government further indicated that more than 70% of Taiwanese employees' monthly salaries were less than 50,000 NT dollars, meaning that the majority of Taiwanese employees' monthly salaries were lower than the average amount. These figures provided by the Taiwanese government demonstrate several important points regarding work conditions and salary levels in the mainstream labor market in Taiwan. First, they reveal that the average salary in the high-tech industry is higher than those in other industry sectors in Taiwan. Further, they reveal that most Taiwanese employees make less than 1,500 euros per month (CommonWealth, 2019; Research Portal, 2018; Taiwan News, 2018). When considering the salary figures in Taiwan, Wilson indeed had a pretty good monthly salary, one which was higher than that of most employees in the Taiwanese labor market. Before he became an expatriate working overseas, he thus occupied an advantageous job position within the mainstream labor market in Taiwan.

However, as things often have two sides, though Wilson had a higher salary than others, he also had to devote more effort and time to his work. In fact, the average work hours in the Taiwanese high-tech industry are between 9 and 10 hours a day, and more

than 40% of high-tech employees have experienced overtime work. In addition to the 10-hour daily workload, the average overtime work hours in the Taiwanese high-tech industry include 10 additional hours per week. To understand work-related fatigue in Taiwan, Hsin & Yeh (2013) conducted a quantitative study using a survey method to examine a variety of situations. They successfully received 800 valid questionnaire responses, with 500 of them being replied to by high-tech employees. Their study revealed that among high-tech employees, 58% of the respondents said they felt fatigued or even exhausted because of the long work hour requests from their companies. The study further points out that the long work hours in Taiwanese high-tech industries have a number of other negative impacts on their employees, including reducing work efficiency, increasing work-related pressure, and causing feelings of depression. The narratives shared by Wilson and the study conducted by Hsin and Yeh both reveal an important fact regarding workplace conditions in the Taiwanese high-tech industry. Namely, they reveal that even though the employees in the industry generally have high month salaries compared with employees working in other industry sectors, overtime work and high levels of work-related fatigue are common occurrences. These workplace conditions were the push factors that made Wilson considers working overseas.

I was also interested why Wilson chose Belgium as a place to work. He replied to this question by explaining the cooperative relations between his company and the Ghent University in Belgium. He said:

> *…however, after working like that for nearly five year, my company wanted to send some Taiwanese employees to Belgium to establish a now engineer team and work office here, so as to expand their European market. And our company has also cooperated with the Ghent University to do LCD technology and LCD TV product innovation research… at that time, since I already felt exhausted from my work and life situation in Taiwan, I voluntarily told my company that I wanted to come to Belgium… and of course, both the work and salary conditions here are better than in Taiwan…so that's why I am here*.

It is interesting that Admiral Overseas Corporation (AOC), a multinational company with headquarter in Taiwan, with Europe as one of its major markets. In 2016,

the European market contributed nearly 25% of the company's revenue. Because AOC began to open and expand new offices and organize new engineering teams in Belgium, Wilson voluntarily participated in AOC's overseas work program and has been working as an expatriate in Belgium since 2017. Similar to their WHM counterparts, high-skilled migrant workers like Wilson have also been influenced by economic considerations and decided to leave their original life and work in Taiwan to work in a foreign country. However, there are still some differences between the reasons causing the WHMs and high-skilled migrants like Wilson to move. For the young Taiwanese WHMs, the motivation to work in overseas is their disadvantaged labor positions and poor work conditions. In contrast, some high-skilled migrant workers like Wilson previously occupied good job positions with higher month salaries than the majority of Taiwanese employees in the mainstream labor market. Therefore, it was the long work hours that were the vital motivator for Wilson in deciding to leave Taiwan and work overseas. The decision- making experiences of Wilson and the WHMs thus reveal that although economic push factors play a critical role for both young Taiwanese WHMs and high-skilled migrants, the reasons contained within these economic considerations vary. In other words, although both the young Taiwanese WHMs and high-skilled migrant workers like Wilson chose to leave Taiwan and work overseas due to economic push factors, the actual considerations and meanings regarding these economic factors varied from person to person. Thus, potential factors pushing people to leave their home country may have different impacts on different people even though the factors could be included in the same category (Van Hear et al., 2018). Another important consideration, however, is that even though the reasons motivating low-skilled migrant workers (like the young Taiwanese WHMs) and high-skilled migrant workers (like Wilson) to leave Taiwan and work in a foreign country are not the same, however ,their overall goal is the same, which is trying to search for a better life (Smith & Favell, 2006).

7.2.2 "*It's really different working as an expatriate in Indonesia and in Belgium.*"

In fact, before Wilson came to Belgium, he had one year of overseas work experience working as an expatriate in Indonesia. He shared with me some of the differences regarding life and work between Indonesia and Belgium. He said:

> *…you know, before I came to Belgium, in 2015, I had one-year expatriate experience working in my company's Indonesia factory. Since, at that time, my company had just built a new factory near Jakarta, I was assigned to work as a young engineer to teach the local Indonesian workers… it is pretty different working in Indonesia and in Belgium…you know, when I was in Indonesia, my life there was really like a "rich" and "professional" guy…, when I was in Indonesia, although I lived in an employees' dormitory in the factory park, I did have my own apartment, and I had a sofa, a TV, a computer, and other furniture… and, you know, I did not have to clean my room by myself. there was a cleaning lady who would help me to do so… so, my room was always clean…, you know, when you are a local worker, you have to live with six or even eight roommates, you do not have your own room… and, you know, in Indonesia, when I wanted to go out, my company would ask a chauffeur to take me to the city or other places. Even if I had to take the local transportation, my company would also pay for it… you know, since I did have a different life compared with the other Indonesia counterparts, these privileges would sometimes make me feel that I was different or even higher than others.*

According to the narrative shared by Wilson, his life and work experiences in Indonesia were more in line with the concept of "privilege migrant," as the average monthly salary in Taiwan is five to six times higher than that in the Indonesia. Moreover, most of the Taiwanese expatriates in Indonesia are white-collar laborers or high-skilled workers rather than blue-collar workers or ordinary employees. Moreover, as they mostly occupy good work positions in the mainstream labor market, they have a better quality of life than their local counterparts. Even though Wilson lived at the dormitory during that time, his company made different arrangements with respect to residential area and life and work schedule between the engineers who came from Taiwan and the

local employees. Thus, Wilson had his own private room, and his company also provided him with a domestic housekeeper to assist him in cleaning his room. Further, when he wanted to go out he had a driver to take him wherever he wanted to go. These different life and work arrangements made Wilson feel that his own life was different from or even superior to those of his local counterparts. These differentiated arrangements between expatriates and the local employees and these special feelings thus create a privileged group of people, not only within the company or factory but also in the host society. This is why some scholars have criticized the international journeys of privileged migrants, claiming that their life and work situations in the host societies reveal the fact that the opportunity structure for international mobility and migration pathways are unequal among different people. Furthermore, this could reinforce the uneven levels of development between developed and developing countries or among different people based on their nationality, class, gender, or race (Croucher, 2012; Kunz, 2016).

Wilson further shared the great differences that exist between his life and work situation in Belgium compared with Indonesia, even though he is still working as an expatriate in the host society's mainstream labor market. He said:

> *…however, life in Belgium is pretty different from in Indonesia, since here I have to do most things by myself, and no one will do them for me… for example, I have to cook and also clean my room by myself. of course, the quality of life is better than in Indonesia. however, since I have to do all these things by myself, you know, it makes me feel that I am not special anymore in my company, ha…, and moreover, in Indonesia, actually, I did not frequently interact or hang out with the local workers. I spent most of my free and leisure time with other Taiwanese engineers or employees since most of the executives at that time were Taiwanese… however, here it is different. In addition to my Taiwanese colleagues, many of my coworkers are local Belgians, and some came from the Netherlands or other countries… and we do have a lot of interactions… we go to bar or even sometimes take trips together…in sum, it's really a different life and work experience here than in Indonesia…you know, there, I felt myself to be more like a supervisor. Here, I feel just like a normal employee at my company and like I am part of them*.

Wilson's narrative reveals how different his life and work experiences were between Indonesia and Belgium. In Indonesia, because his life and work were segregated from his local counterparts (aside from some necessary work-related contacts and interactions), he did not construct close relationships with them. Instead, he spent the majority of his time interacting with other Taiwanese colleagues and living within a "Taiwanese ethnic bubble." As Wilson's life and work situation in Indonesia was quite isolated from his local coworkers, he had a number of privileges, rights, and benefits that belonged exclusively to the Taiwanese expatriates, and these made him feel that he was unique or higher than others.

However, Huai shen's life and work experience is quite different now that he is living in Belgium. For example, his life and work in Belgium are not separated from his Taiwanese or other international coworkers, meaning that he has more opportunities to interact with other colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds. In this regard, Wilson no longer merely lives in a Taiwanese ethnic bubble, and he also spends more of his free leisure time interacting with his coworkers. Moreover, because he shares his work and daily life with his colleagues in Belgium, he no longer feels that he is different or special compared with his local counterparts. He feels that he is not unique compared with others because his life, like those of his colleagues, does not contain any special benefits that belong exclusively to him due to his nationality or ethnic background. Because Wilson no longer feels he is unique or different from his colleagues, he has a greater sense of belonging in his life and work in Belgium. Wilson's overseas life and work experiences in Indonesia and Belgium together reveal the fact that the expatriate's privileged social position and identity are not static. Instead, it is influenced by many other factors including which country he or she works in, the composition of the employees (Wilson's workplace in Belgium has more diversity in nationality and ethnicity compared with his previous workplace in Indonesia), and the social and power relations compared with the local counterparts. Comparing his life and work situations in Indonesia and Belgium, Wilson indicates that he no longer feels that he is different or special compared with others. On the contrary, he has gradually found he feels like a "normal" person and employee. In Belgium, he also has to do the domestic works by himself, which he did not need to do in Indonesia. Because his life and work situation

and relations with coworkers are different between Indonesia and in Belgium, he must re-negotiate his identity of working as an expatriate in the host society's mainstream labor market. As he has gradually begun to feel that he is part of the group, he has shown higher motivation and willingness to interact with his local and international counterparts, further diminishing his previous "privileged migrant" identity.

Thereby, Wilson's narrative agrees with the points made by Deng (2018) and Kunz (2019). The social image and identity of the expatriate are not static but dynamic and changeable depending on the time, place, and the economic relations between the home and host societies. Taking Wilson as an example, his life and work experiences as well as the relations with his coworkers and the local society were fairly different between Indonesia and Belgium. Because of these differences, Wilson has had to re-place his social position in the host society and workplace, also needed to re-negotiate his identity as an expatriate.

7.2.3 "*My bed, sofa, and luggage make me feel relaxed and obtain feelings of home, and my car further makes me gain a sense of belonging.*"

Because Wilson had already stayed and worked in Belgium for several years, I was curious about the meaning of home for him in his life and work experiences. Further, I wondered whether there was any place or object in his daily life in Belgium that would make him feel like he was at home. In response to these questions, Wilson mentioned that there were three pieces of furniture that helped him obtain feelings of home and connect his emotions with his original home in Taiwan. The three pieces of furniture he pointed out were his bed, sofa, and the luggage that he brought from Taiwan to Belgium. First, he explained that the bed and sofa allowed him to obtain feelings of home because he has spent plenty of time lying on the sofa or bed to rest by watching TV, playing computer games, reading books, eating, and so on. As these two pieces of furniture are the places, he has spent the majority of his time after work, they further assist Wilson in relieving work-related pressure. Altogether, the bed and sofa help Wilson to gain a sense of home during his expatriate daily life in Belgium. In addition to the furniture with which he decorates his domestic space in his Belgian home, the luggage he brought from Taiwan also helps him to obtain feelings of home. However,

the feelings that the luggage bring for him are more related to feelings of nostalgia and memories of his previous life in Taiwan. He explained:



Figure 7.2 Wilson's domestic house decorations

Source: Provided by Wilson, with authorization to use.

> *…actually, there are three items that make me feel relaxed and remind me that I am at home; one is my bed, and another is my sofa in my apartment… you know, every day after work I spend lot of time on lay on the sofa watching TV, playing video game, or just dazing and doing nothing…you know, it really makes me release my tiredness after a day of work… moreover, of course bed is a place I sleep, and you know, every night before I sleep, I do also lay on my bed and listen to the music and play my cell phone… this releases my pressure too… so, these two pieces of furniture play a vital role in my daily life since I do really spend pretty long periods of time on them after my daily work. These two pieces of furniture not only release my fatigue, they further remind me that I am at my home and that I can really rest… and you know, it is very interesting that my luggage also makes me connect with my home in Taiwan and further assists me in obtaining feelings of home, since most of my personal things were taken by my luggage from Taiwan to Belgium… in this regard, every time I see my luggage, it makes me remember my original home in Taiwan*.

Wilson's narrative reveals that his bed and sofa are two vital pieces of domestic furniture decorating in his Belgian house. Spending the majority of his free time after work on these not only assists him in releasing work and other daily pressure but further allows Wilson to obtain feelings of home. These two pieces of furniture play an

important role in providing Wilson a place in which he can take a very good rest, and they also function like a "safe haven" (避風港) for him. As Boccagni (2017) has already pointed out, materials do not only have material functions. Taking Wilson's bed and sofa as an example, they do not merely act as physical domestic furniture but also have further cultural, social, and even psychological meanings and functions. For Wilson, the bed and sofa are not just used for rest. By helping him to relieve work and life pressures and obtain a sense of safety, these two pieces of furniture have a further psychological meaning for him. Moreover, his luggage also has both material and non-material meanings and functions. From the material perspective, the function of the luggage is to assist with carrying things. However, for Wilson the meaning of the luggage he brought from Taiwan is deeper and more complex than its original material function. In particular, it has social and psychological meanings for him, helping him to recall memories of his time living in original home in Taiwan. Accordingly, these three pieces of domestic furniture in Wilson's Belgian home have become as the sites of memory and performative spaces that simultaneously assist him in recalling and linking his previous home and life experiences in Taiwan and constructing his new sense of identity and belonging in his present home in Belgium (Sandu, 2013).

Wilson further indicated that his car is another important material object that has assisted him in constructing a sense of belonging and obtaining a sense of home in his Belgian life. This is because he likes to drive his car to travel between different cities in Belgium, and by doing so, he learns more about the surrounding places in which he is living. In this way, the car assists him in constructing a sense of identity and belonging in his Belgian life. Moreover, because a car is an expensive item, deciding to buy a car during life overseas is a symbolic for him with respect to showing whether or not he is willing to stay in a place in the long run. He said:

> *…also very interesting is that, since I do love to travel, my car, for me, is not only a vehicle for transportation purposes but also could take me to discover my neighbors, the city, or even other places…and you know, since I learn more about my living place and my city, I feel that I belong more to this place (he means Belgium)… and also very important for me is that when I decided to buy a car in*

a place, it meant to me that "I have a long-term plan to settle down here" since a car is pretty expensive…, and you know, I did not buy a car in Indonesia… why? It is because I knew at that time that I would stay there for only one year, and I did not play to live in Jakarta for a long time… so, for me, a car represents the meaning that I do plan to stay in a place for a long period of time.

It is important to note that the notion of home for immigrants and for Huan-shen in his expatriate life in Belgium does not refer only to the private house and domestic decorations. This is because larger-scale areas, such as the neighborhood, community, or the city in which people live can also provide a sense of home. Taking pan-Chinese immigrant women living in Antwerp as their research subject, Liu & Pang (2019) examined how these immigrant women negotiated their sense of identity and tranformed the meanings regarding the public spaces within the city, including the Chinese language school, Chinese/Asian supermarket, and Chinese Buddhism temple, to became as their "symbolic home" in the host society. They reveal that even though these public or semi-public places were not the private homes of the pan-Chinese immigrant women, they still felt comfortable and obtained a sense of familiarity in these places related to their ethnicity. This increased their sense of belonging and identity with respect to both of the city of Antwerp and the country of Belgium. This article reveals a very interesting point that people are not only able to feel at home in their private home or space but that some public or semi-public spaces can give people feelings of home. This is reflected in Wilson, whose car represents for him a connection between his private life and space and the outside world. The ability to get out and explore the city and neighborhood in which he lives provides Wilson a feeling of being at home in Belgium, further increasing his level of belonging and identity in the host society. Rowles (1993) also found that going out and exploring the neighborhood or community by taking the bus or driving a personal car are two important strategies that immigrants frequently adapt to construct their sense of identity and belonging after arriving in a new country or place of settlement. Moreover, the high level of physical mobility that immigrants have could further assist them in feeling that they are independent and have the capacity to live and adapt to new life circumstance in a new place. Rowles further points out that going out and adventuring activities and habits that immigrants have in their life could have a positive impact in helping them to obtain

a sense of self-confidence. In this regard, the research findings of both Liu & Pang (2019) and Rowles (1993) as well as the narrative shared by Wilson all support the argument that the notion of home for immigrants can be extended into the neighborhood, local communities, and even lager public or semi-public places and spaces within a city or country. According to this point of view, for immigrants "home" does not necessarily refer only to their private house or space but could also refer to a town, community, city, or another specific place located within a country (Cuba & Hummon, 1993).

7.2.4 "*Besides visiting Taiwan, my parents and I also travel together to other countries to meet each other.*"

Since Wilson had already worked overseas for several years, I was curious how he managed his relations with his family still living in Taiwan, especially his retired parents. He shared with me his communication and interaction practices with his parents while working overseas. He said:

> *…actually, in my daily life, I do not contact my parents very often since my mom and dad, although they already retired from their jobs, still have pretty intensive life schedules. For example, my mom takes several courses, including dancing, cooking, gardening, and so on…and my father is still busy doing his investments on the stock market, and he also goes mountain climbing with his friends. Moreover, he also learns Saxophone on the weekends…so, even though they are retired, they still have pretty busy lives and daily schedules…and moreover, thanks to my younger brother, who is still living nearby my parents, he helps me to take care of my parents…*

As can be seen above, Wilson's parents are well-organized about their retirement lives, and his younger brother is also living nearby them in Taiwan. Thus, even though he cannot always take care of or spend time with his parents physically, he does not worry too much. However, Wilson still insists on going back to Taiwan and visiting at least once a year to provide care to his aged parents. In addition to this transnational care-giving practices constituted by the regular visit; he further provides care to them by creating opportunities to meet up with them through travel to other countries. He

said:

> *…however, while working overseas, I do insist on going back to Taiwan and visiting them at least once a year. In addition, my family and I also travel to other countries to spend our vacations together in summer time…thus, I meet my parents and family at least twice a year…so, actually, in this moment, I do not really worry about my parents, since they still have pretty good health conditions…, however, in the future… it is hard to say, maybe when they are growing into their late 70s or 80s, I will have to face the challenge of deciding whether I should go back to Taiwan and to stay with them or not, since I do not want to be regarded as an unfilial son (不孝子).*

Wilson's narrative reveals that his aged parents have a well-organized retirement life and that his younger brother is able to assist him to take care their parents. However, how he provides care to his aged parents is still an issue because in traditional Chinese and Confucian culture, taking care of aged parents is not only a cultural expectation but also an obligation for younger relatives and children. In this regard, Wilson has applied two important strategies to turn his transnational caregiving into practice. The first is his regular visit to provide care to his parents, and the second is his international travel together with his parents. The first caregiving strategy is quite common among overseas Taiwanese immigrants, which they apply to show their filial piety and provide care to their aged parents still living in Taiwan. The second strategy, however, is not as common as the first one, because it is more expensive, and it is mainly adopted by immigrant families with economic advantages (Ho & Nora Chiang, 2017; Zhang, 2013).

7.2.5 "*At the workplace, I prefer to identify myself as an engineer. And I support Taiwan in maintaining the status quo in the present time; however, they should build a new country in the future.*"

With regard to the notions of big (national) home and ethnonational identity, Wilson clearly told me that he is Taiwanese, as Taiwan is not only the location of his hometown but also the country he came from. More interestingly, because AOC is a Taiwanese multinational company, it is fine for him to present his Taiwanese

ethnonational identity at the workplace, as all of the employees know the background of the company. Moreover, the workplace is not dominated by any specific nationality, and the employees' national backgrounds are various, further reducing the importance of these issues at the Wilson's workplace in Belgium (Oerlemans et al., 2008). Thus, rather than focusing on ethnonational and nationality issues, Wilson prefers to identify himself in his daily life based on his professional domain. He said:

> *… I came from and grew up in Taiwan, and I do also identify myself as Taiwanese… moreover, since the employer of my company is also Taiwanese, it is pretty okay to say I'm Taiwanese or to present my Taiwanese identity at the workplace… however, I do believe that it is not so important to talk about our nationality in such a high-tech company, since both our coworkers and customers do come from all over the world, so… in our eyes (he means the high-tech engineers), professional identity is more important than pure ethnonational identity… you know, at our workplace, when someone mentions Taiwan, people will directly connect it with images of ICT or high-tech industries rather than the complex historical or political issues and relations with mainland China… actually, most of my coworkers do not really know about these… however, they would definitely know that Taiwan has several famous high-tech companies, including TSMC, ACER, AUSU, and so on… so, I do prefer to identity myself as an engineer first and then as a Taiwanese... but I'm Taiwanese, there is no doubt.*

Wilson's narrative reveals an interesting phenomenon, namely, that having different levels of ethnic and racial diversity at the workplace has an impact on the organization's work culture, the interaction experiences among the employees, and the importance of ethnonational identity issues at the workplace. The young Taiwanese WHMs in Belgium mainly worked in the pan-Chinese ethnic economic or business sectors (including the catering industry, duty-free and massage shops, and Asian or Chinese supermarkets), in which the workplaces were mainly constituted by pan-Chinese employees and especially those from mainland China. This meant that issues regarding ethnonational identity and attitudes towards the notion of big (national) home became severe compared with in workplaces that contain employees from a variety of countries and with various ethnonational backgrounds. The the discussions in the

previous chapter found that the young Taiwanese WHMs in Belgium were more likely to adapt a “downplay” strategy to deal with the issues with regard to ethnonational identity in their workplaces. This was because they were in most cases a minority in workplaces dominated by their mainland Chinese employer and coworkers. In adopting this strategy, these Taiwanese youth WHMs did not feel free and comfortable in showing their Taiwanese identity when interacting with their mainland Chinese colleagues. As the repressed ethnonational emotions accumulated, the consequences then further consolidated these young Taiwanese WHMs’ original sense of identity as Taiwanese.

However, Wilson’s situation reveals quite a different picture, as his workplace has higher ethnic and racial diversity than those of the Taiwanese WHMs. According to Wilson’s narrative, issues regarding ethnic background and nationality are not so important at his workplace because the employees come from a variety of countries and have a variety of ethnonational backgrounds. In this regard, the organizational culture in Wilson’s workplace places is more emphasis on employees’ professional capacities rather than ethnonational identity, even though he has no doubts in identifying himself as Taiwanese. It is interesting that the different characteristics and compositions of the employees’ nationalities and ethnonational backgrounds have significant impact on how employees interact with one another at the workplace, and this also affect the importance of the issue related to ethnonational identity at the workplace. A study conducted by Enchautegui-de-Jesús et al. (2006) reveals that when the level of ethnic and racial diversity level is low at a workplace or when a workplace is composed by employees affiliated with a specific nationality or ethnonational background, this may have several negative impacts on employees’ psychological well-being and physiological function. This argument could also be applied to the cases of the young Taiwanese WHMs and Wilson in Belgium. Because the WHMs’ workplaces are more homogeneous in nationality and ethnonational domain, the WHMs are not able to present their true selves concerning their ethnonational identity. In contrast, working in an ethnically and racially diverse workplace, Wilson feels comfortable and safe in showing his Taiwanese part of identity. And, these issues do not have high importance at Wilson's workplace because his colleagues and customers are highly diverse in the ethnonational domain.

As ethnonational identity is not an issue for Wilson at his workplace, he prefers to show his professional identity as an engineer. In this regard, his professional identity is more important for him in his work life at the workplace. However, when I had a chance to visit Wilson's private house in Belgium (by invitation), I was surprised to find that in the living room of his house he had two very different flags on the walls and that his decorations represented quite different attitudes and perceptions regarding ethnonational identity in the Taiwanese context.

On the one hand, Wilson has two small national flags of the Republic of China (ROC). On the other hand, he has a large green flag that is known as a "Taiwan independence flag" in the Taiwanese context, moreover, on this flag has two sentences that demonstrate very clear attitude towards ethnonational identity: "I am Taiwanese. I stand for Taiwan's Independence." When I saw these two flags at his house, I was curious as to why he simultaneously presented both flags and how he interpreted their meanings for him. This is because these two flags represent quite different perspectives regarding the relations between Taiwan and mainland China and the issue of Taiwan's independence. He explained:

> *…Yes, I have these two ROC flags since I know the official name of my country is the Republic of China, I wouldn't deny that… however, I also know that this flag and official name are recognized by very few people and countries in the world, and that the name Republic of China makes others and especially foreigners feel confused, since our national name only has one word different from our neighbor the People's Republic of China (PRC)… it is too difficult for ordinary people to differentiate ROC and PRC… for them, it's the same—we are all China… but, you know, for me I would say that, yes, from the cultural perspective, we are Chinese to some degree; however, in the political domain, we are Taiwanese, and we are definitely not Chinese, since the PRC China hasn't really governed us since 1949… and I really feel sick of always discussing about China, China, China everyday… so, deep in my heart, I support Taiwan for independence and use "Taiwan" as the official name rather than using the existing name of ROC or other names related to images of China.*

Wilson's narrative demonstrates the fluid, dynamic, and context-specific nature of ethnonational identity. His story not only confirms that people perform different parts of their ethnonational identities in response to the practical needs of different life circumstances. Moreover, his identity performance experiences further echo the concept of nested identity, according to which people can strategically show, perform, or even combine different layers of their group identity characteristics at the same time depending on the context. For example, Wilson more often shows his professional identity as an engineer at his workplace rather than highlighting his ethnonational identity. At the same time, in his private living space he has two different ethnonational flags, the ROC national flag and the Taiwan independence flag, to demonstrate his attitude towards issues of ethnonational identity (Díez, Medrano, & Gutiérrez, 2001; Genova, 2016). For him, his identification with ROC is a response to the present time. However, in the future he would prefer to adopt an independent Taiwanese identity to depict the notion of his big (national) home. In fact, a survey announced by National Chengchi University (2020) revealed that in 2019, 21.8% of people in Taiwan supported the argument that "Taiwan should maintain the status quo in the present and move towards independence in the future"(維持現狀，以後走向獨立). At the same time, 5% of people held the attitude that "Taiwan should achieve independent status as soon as possible" (盡快獨立). The attitude that Wilson holds regarding the issues of Taiwan's current and future political status indicate that he also supports the claim that Taiwan should maintain the status quo in the present time but should in the future construct a new country called "Taiwan" alone, without any relation to images of China. Thus, it is fair to say that Wilson is not an outlier but has ethnonational identity and political attitudes similar to those of many people in Taiwan regarding the issues of Taiwan's future and independence.

Wilson's narrative also reveals the importance of time in peoples' ethnonational identity formation processes. Appadurai (2013), Kleist & Jansen (2016), and Boccagni (2017) have previously pointed out that the meaning of different time scales vary from person to person and would further influence how people choose to identify themselves and how they perceive the notion regarding home. Taking Wilson as an example, he accepts the name of ROC as Taiwan's national name in the present time. However, when taking the future into consideration, he supports Taiwan's construction of a new

country called “Taiwan” alone, without any reference to China. Yu & Lim (2013) also found that there are many factors that influence Taiwanese peoples’ attitudes toward the future of cross-strait relations and of Taiwan, and that one of the vital factors is the issue of time. The ways in which people evaluate mainland China’s political and economic development and cross-strait relations in different time scales (past, present, or future) have had a significant impact on how people imagine Taiwan's future. The different perceptions of these issues further affect how people decide on the future of Taiwan among the different possible directions, which include maintaining the status quo, unifying with mainland China, or building a new country.

7.2.6 Summary

The narratives shared by Wilson reveal that the long-hour work conditions in the high-tech industry in Taiwan made him feel exhausted after work and tired of his lifestyle. These work conditions further became the main push factor motivating him to apply for work overseas even though he was earning a good monthly salary higher than the majority of Taiwanese employees in the mainstream labor market. Before Wilson migrated to Belgium, he also had one year’s work experience as an expatriate in Indonesia. There, the company created different life and work arrangements between the Taiwanese and local employees. Accordingly, Wilson came from Taiwan as a professional engineer, and his company provided him a number of exclusive privileges. These included giving him his own room in the company dormitory, while the local Indonesian workers had to share rooms with other employees. The company also provided him with a domestic cleaning person to help him with sanitary work, and he was given a driver to take him wherever he wanted to go. In this way, the company offered him several privileges and benefits that were meant exclusively for him and other Taiwanese engineers or employees with higher positions. Having these unique rights and benefits within the company made Wilson feel that he was different or even “higher” than his local Indonesian coworkers. Furthermore, as Wilson’s work and daily life were segregated from his Indonesian colleagues, he had little opportunity to interact with the local employees and spent the majority of his free time with his Taiwanese counterparts, staying within a Taiwanese ethnic bubble. Altogether, Wilson’s work and life experience in Indonesia reflected the concept of privileged migrant. However, his

expatriate work and life experiences in Belgium are quite different from those in Indonesia. In his Belgian expatriate life, he no longer feels that he is more special than others and has instead begun to feel that he is just an ordinary person. This is in part because Wilson has to deal with most of his problems by himself, and the company does not provide him with any exclusive benefits. In this regard, the differences between his life and work experiences in Indonesia and Belgium reveal the fact that the expatriate's status is not static. Instead, the expatriate's work and life experiences are influenced by a number of factors, such as where he or she lives and works and the discrepancy level in economic status and salary between the home and host society's labor markets.

In addition to his work and life experiences, Wilson further shared that three pieces of his furniture including his bed, sofa, and luggage play its vital role in daily life. These three material items do assist Wilson to release daily work and life pressures and to obtain feelings of home, as he spends plenty of his free time after work lying on the sofa or bed resting, watching TV, playing video games, and so on. In this regard, the sofa and bed mean for him relaxation, private space and time, and are also a kind of safe haven. Further, the luggage he brought from Taiwan also helps him to recall his previous life experiences in Taiwan and the present one in Belgium. Moreover, Wilson further indicated that his car not only plays an important role in his daily transportation but also allows him to go out and explore the neighborhood, community, city, and surrounding areas. In this way, the car further increases Wilson's capacity for mobility in his host society, and his movement and experiences of going out further assist him in constructing his identity towards the city and community he lives in. This helps him to feel that he is part of the society and to gain a sense of belonging.

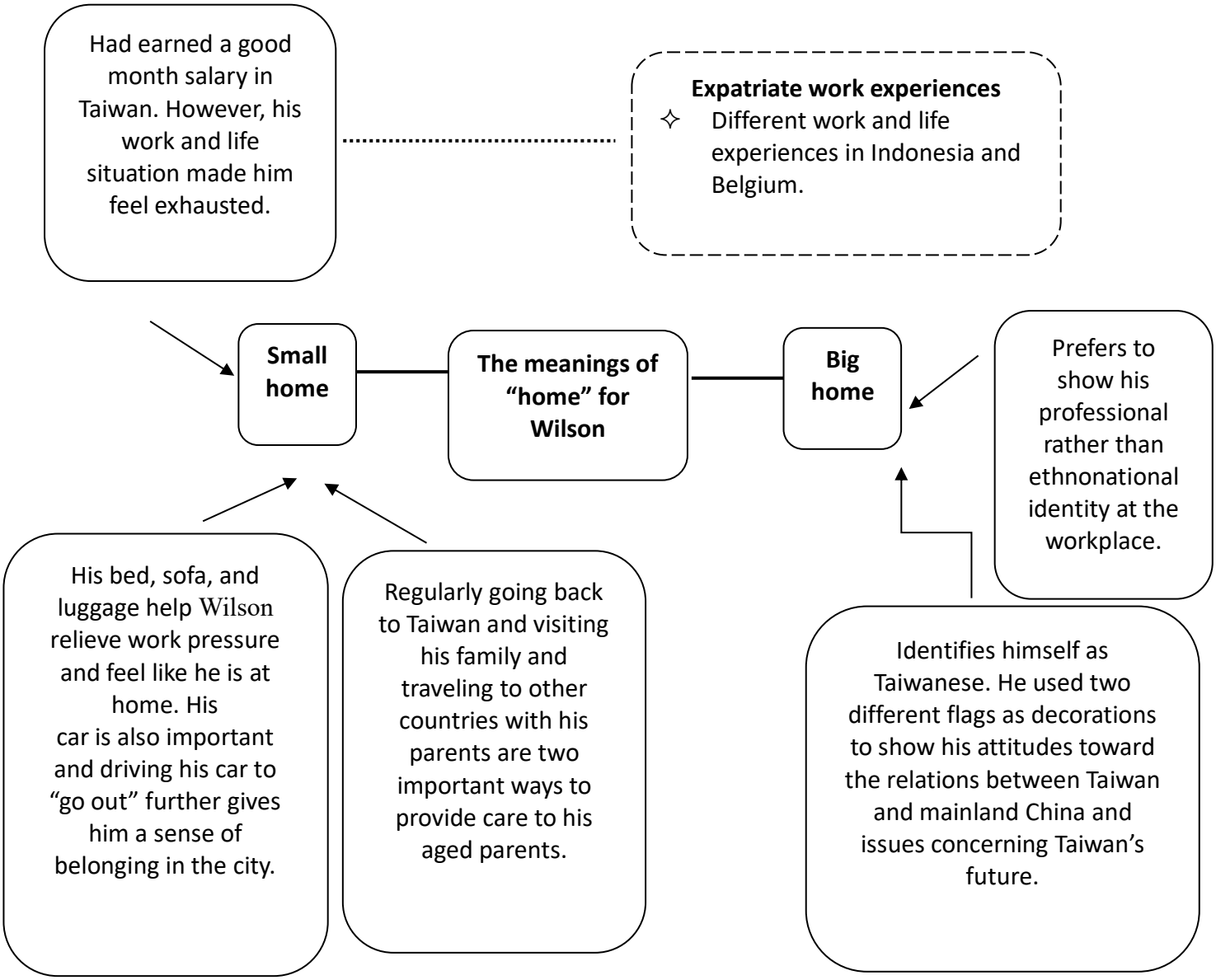


Figure 7.3 The intersectional meaning of "home" for Wilson

Source: This study.

With regard to how Wilson maintains the relations with his original family and provides his care to aged parents, regularly going back to Taiwan and traveling to other countries with his parents are the two main approaches he has applied to manage his family relations and show filial piety. Regarding the issue of ethnonational identity and the meaning of the big (national) home, Wilson has no doubt in identifying himself as a Taiwanese. However, because ethnonational background is not an important issue at his workplace, he prefers to show his professional identity as an engineer in front of his

colleagues. Moreover, in terms of the issues regarding the relations between Taiwan and mainland China and Taiwan's future, Wilson holds two different attitudes. In the present time, Wilson accepts that the ROC is Taiwan's official name, while at the same time he supports the people of Taiwan in constructing a new independent country (維持現狀、以後走向獨立) in the future and calling it "Taiwan" alone without any reference to China. In fact, approximately 20% of people in Taiwan hold a similar attitude to Wilson about this issue.

In summary, Wilson's narratives reveal the fluid and dynamic natures of the meanings of small and big home. The notions of small and big home for him are intersectionally influenced by his unique life circumstances, his expatriate life and work experiences in different host societies, his subjective perceptions concerning the relations between Taiwan and mainland China, and his imagination regarding Taiwan's future.

7.3 Case two: Claire

- **Claire's demographic information**
- Gender: Female.
- Age: 36.
- Years of stay in Belgium: From 2017 to the present.
- Job: Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC).
- Marital and family relationships: Married with Hong Kong Chinese husband, with whom she has one son.

7.3.1 "*Before I came to Belgium, my husband and I worked at TSMC in Taiwan for three years.*"

Before Claire came to Belgium, she and her husband (a Hong Kong Chinese) worked together at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) for three years. In fact, TSMC is one of the biggest and most important multinational companies owned by Taiwanese, and it is one of the top 500 companies worldwide. Moreover,

TSMC also has a positive reputation with respect to advantageous work conditions and salary level. In 2018, an engineer with a master's degree working at TSMC was able to earn more than 60,000 NT dollars (equal to 1,800 euros) per month on average, a figure that is three times higher than the minimum wage in Taiwan. TSMC also offers other bonus to employees in addition to their month salaries. With these included, an employee at the TSMC can earn approximately 1,600,000 NT dollars per year on average (equal to 50,000 euros). Because TSMC offers good work conditions and competitive salaries to its employees, it has gained a positive reputation in the Taiwanese mainstream labor market. In a 2018 survey, TSMC was selected as the most attractive company and an ideal workplace for young Taiwanese laborers. Thus, in the Taiwanese context, a job at TSMC is enviable (Focus Taiwan, 2020).

Because Claire and her Hong Kong husband worked at TSMC, they both earned good salaries while they were still in Taiwan. However, the cost of earning a good salary is long work hours. Claire shared some of her life and work experiences working in Taiwan at TSMC. She said:

…before I came to Belgium, I and my husband worked at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), me as a project manager and my husband as an engineer, for about three years… you know, TSMC is quite big and famous, not only in Taiwan but also around the world… and in fact, we got quite good of salaries while working at TSMC, although we had to work for 10 or even more hours per day… since we had already worked at TSMC for several years at that time, me and my husband tried to find another work opportunity and more balanced lifestyles, since we did not like such long work hours and we need more private time for ourselves… because we believe that life is not only for money or work… our life deserves other beautiful things, and at that time, we thought that work overseas might be a good alternative way to achieve our goal of a balanced life… and save more time and space for ourselves.

Claire's narrative reveals that the push factor motivating her to consider working overseas was not purely related to economic considerations, as she and her husband occupied advantageous job positions and earned good salaries while working at the

TSMC in Taiwan. Instead, their main reason for considering work overseas was the search for a better-quality and balanced lifestyle. Further, they knew that they could earn the same or even higher salaries in foreign countries and also request to work shorter hours than in Taiwan. This meant that working overseas was a way to achieve their two goals of having a balanced life and earning good salaries at the same time.

7.3.2 "*We bought a house in Taipei; however, it was really a struggle to decide to work as expatriates when we already had a son.*"

It is interesting to note that in recent years there have been increasing numbers of Hong Kongers choosing to immigrate to Taiwan. In 2016, 4,057 Hong Kongers obtained long-term resident permits to live in Taiwan, and the figure has grown annually. In 2019, the number reached a peak of approximately 5,000 Hong Kongers successfully obtaining resident permits to live in Taiwan. Further, according to the statistics there are more than 80,000 Hong Kongers currently living in Taiwan (on either a temporary or permanent basis). Nora Chiang & Lin (2018) also point out that there have been two emigration waves from Hong Kong to Taiwan since the late 1990s. In 1997, many Hong kongers chose to leave Hong Kong for the political reason that they were afraid of losing their free and democratic lifestyles, as Hong Kong was handed over from its previous colonial British government to the CCP government. Although at the time most Hong kongers chose to emigrate to northern and western countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, some instead decided to emigrate to Taiwan. Many in this wave of Hong konger immigrants chose to enter the catering industry and operate Hong Kong-style restaurants, such as dim sum houses (香港飲茶) or siu mei shops (燒臘店), for a living in Taiwan. However, after the millennium the demographic structure of Hong konger immigrants in Taiwan significantly changed, as increasing numbers of Hong kongers with professional backgrounds or work experience in academia, finance, business, real estate, or even medicine chose to emigrate to Taiwan. Many chose to emigrate because Hong Kong had much higher living pressures than Taiwan, including the highest housing prices and living expenses in Asia. More recently, many young Hong kongers have decided to emigrate to Taiwan because the relations between Hong Kong and mainland China have deteriorated due to conflicts over a variety of political and economic issues. In this regard, Taiwan has become as an ideal

emigration destination for people from Hong Kong, as it has maintained a free and democratic lifestyle for its citizens and also has reasonable housing prices and living expenses. It was further discovered that even though Taiwan and Hong Kong still have some cultural differences, the majority of the participants in the study were able to integrate into the Taiwanese host society without difficulty. Moreover, many of them have successfully occupied white-collar and professional job positions in the mainstream labor market and earn high salaries. Thus, Nora Chiang and Lin do regard these Hong Kong immigrants in Taiwan as privileged migrants.

Given the previous migration context, Claire's husband decided to emigrate to Taiwan because he successfully secured a job position at TSMC. During his work at TSMC, he met Claire, and the two got married. As mentioned in the narrative provided by Claire, both she and her husband earned good salaries in Taiwan. However, they also felt tired spending the majority of their time working and found that they did not have enough time for themselves. In searching for a more balanced lifestyle, working overseas became an opportunity for them to achieve their goal. Moreover, TSMC has established long-standing cooperative relationships with many other high-tech companies, including the Dutch company ASML Holding (艾司摩爾), which has branches and offices in Belgium. Under a cooperation scheme between TSMC and ASML Holding, the companies have organized a mutual exchange program for their employees and engineers to conduct joint cooperative technological or product innovations. As TSMC and ASML Holding have a program that provides their employees the opportunity to work overseas, Claire and her husband thought that it would be a good chance for them to achieve their goal. Moreover, working as expatriates overseas could help them earn higher salaries than in Taiwan, which was another attractive reason for them to go. Claire shared her motivations and considerations regarding working overseas, saying:

> *…as TSMC has quite close cooperative relations with ASML, TSMC has frequently sent employees to ASML to exchange and learn the latest semi-conductor technical developments… in 2016, TSMC recruited volunteers to work as expatriates at ASML's Belgian branch… at that time, my husband and I were attracted by this overseas work opportunity since work as an expatriate can make*

us to earn 2 to 2.5 times higher salaries than in Taiwan…and we did also hear about it being easier and there being less working pressure at foreign high-tech companies than in Taiwan… so at that time, we voluntarily told our company that we were willing to be sent out to work as expatriates overseas…

Because Claire and her husband had already bought a house in Taipei and had had a son, whether or not to leave Taiwan and work overseas became a difficult decision for them. However, Claire's parents were willing to help her in taking care of her son and also further encouraged them to move. Thus, Claire parents' support became the main reason that they decided to work overseas. She said:

…however, when we wanted to make a decision regarding work overseas or not… we did face the difficulties and struggles in making the decision since my husband and I had already bought a house in Taipei, and we also had a little son (he was only 1 year old) … so when we decided to work overseas, this meant for us is that we not only had to give up our life in Taiwan and leave our Taipei home but also meant that we could not see our son every day… so, it was quite a struggle for us at that time… however, both of our parents encouraged us to move since they also knew that we could get better salaries and have a better quality of life overseas than in Taiwan… thus, we sent our son back to my parents' home in Kaohsiung, and I asked for their assistance in helping me to take care of my son while we were working in overseas.

According to the traditional point of view, people believe that white-collar professional emigrants (like Claire and her husband) may face fewer difficulties and have a higher level of international movement capacity than their low-skilled and blue-collar counterparts when deciding work overseas. However, the truth is the opposite. Many migration studies have previously revealed that in addition to having long-term expatriate programs, many multinational companies also use short-term assignments and expatriate schemes to send their employees to foreign countries. Most of the time, both the long- and short-term overseas work programs involve frequent international travel, irregular working hours, and long absences from home, meaning that time spent with family members is limited. This means that although working as an expatriate can

allow an employee to earn a higher salary and achieve a better quality of life than in their home country, working overseas still has a number of costs for the expatriate. One of the serious issues is how to manage family relations, as the worker may be absent from home for long periods of time and unable to take on the responsibilities of family and childcare while working overseas. As in the case of Claire, many studies on expatriates have also identified family reasons as being the main consideration factor that influences people's willingness and motivation to work overseas. Moreover, it has been found that an expatriate's work performances and the relations with their family members may be influenced by the family's attitude towards work overseas (Lazarova et al. 2010; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011). This is why Claire's parents' support became the most important factor in she and her husband's decision to work overseas. Mäkelä & Suutari (2015) have also reminded scholars that its need to pay more attention on exploring how professional expatriates manage their family relations and other related issues, as international work schemes have become more flexible, irregular, and dynamic than before. They also argue that it is not an appropriate perspective to assume that only low-skilled and blue-collar emigrants face difficulties in working overseas; in truth, even high-skilled, professional, or "privileged" emigrants face challenges during their international journeys and work and life experiences in foreign countries.

7.3.3 "*Since my husband works here together with me, I regard the apartment in Belgium as my home, but it is temporary and incomplete.*"

Since Claire and her husband have already worked in Belgium together for several years, I was curious about what the meaning of "home" was for her while working as a professional expatriate worker on a contract basis in a foreign country. In response these questions, Claire pointed out two vital aspects regarding the meaning of home for her while working in overseas. One important aspect that she mentioned was the social relations contained within the home. Second, Claire explained that she and her husband plan to move back to Taiwan in the future, which affects her perception of the place she is currently living and the meaning of home for her. Claire said:

> *…I have to say that since my husband and I work together in Belgium, and we also live together here, I do regard the apartment that we rent in Belgium as my*

home. However, if my husband did not come with me, I would consider the place I am living now merely as a dormitory or as my room but not my home… you know, the meaning of home is always related to people and especially family… so for me, yes I regard the house in Belgium as my home, but I know it is just my temporary home, as my husband and I will go back to Taiwan in the future. Moreover, it's an incomplete home since our son does not live with us in Belgium.

Claire's narrative reveals a number of important aspects regarding the meaning of home for her. First of all, the meaning of home for her is tied to social relations and who is living in the house with her. Similar to Claire, some other expatriate research participants working in Belgium together with their partners or spouses did mention that if their husband or wife did not accompany them to work and live in Belgium, they would not regard the place or house in which they were living as their home. In contrast, if the Taiwanese expatriates worked and lived in Belgium together with their partners, they would be more likely to consider the place or house in which they were living as their home, no matter whether it was on a temporary or a permanent basis. It is important to note that the role that family social relations play in the homemaking processes may be more important for pan-Chinese immigrants in particular because traditional Chinese and Confucian cultures regard the family rather than the individual as the fundamental unit of the society. This kind of family and cultural value is quite different from those in the West, as Western cultures tend to be more individualistic and value the importance of the individual in society formation. Moreover, in pan-Chinese societies people are taught from an early age that they must put their family first and do their best to maintain intimate and harmonious relations family members (Hwang, 1999; Ward & Lin, 2010). These traditional Chinese and Confusion cultural values provide a possible explanation for why Claire and other Taiwanese expatriates put so much emphasis on the importance of their family members or spouse/partner relations in their homemaking experiences in Belgium. In Claire's case, the fact that her son did not come to live with them also gave her feelings of incompleteness and led to her regarding her home as incomplete. Other migration studies have also demonstrated the important role that family and social relations play in the homemaking processes for immigrants. Taking elderly pan-Chinese immigrants living in Australia as her research subject, Liu (2020) found that living together with family and having friends and social

networks in the host societies both had a significant positive impact on these elderly immigrants in gaining a sense of social inclusion and obtaining a feeling of belonging. These also acted as social and emotional supports in their emigrant life. As outlined in the discussion in the previous chapter, the meaning of the Chinese character of home (家) suggests that all family members should live together under the same roof. If family members do not live together under the same roof, it may be thought in traditional Chinese culture that a home is not complete.

Because Claire has a feeling of incompleteness due to the absence of her son, I asked her how she compensates for this situation. She replied that because her son is still quite young and is being taken care of by her Taiwanese parents, she does not worry too much about him. However, she does not want to absent from her son's growth process or to be regarded as a bad mother. Thus, she maintains frequent communication with her aged parents and her son using a variety of social media platforms. In so doing, she compensates for her absence from her son and her aged parents. She said:

> *…but thanks to the fact that my Taiwanese parents assist me in taking care of my son, I do really release my worries about him… to see my son, my husband and I frequently make video calls back to my parents by LINE or Skype to talk with them and of course also my son… indeed, social media plays a very important role in my daily communication with my family in Taiwan… it lets me see my boy and parents, and that can help me to understand their situation… and of course, I feel warm when talking with them even on these digital platforms*.

The high mobility and long-time absences from home due to Claire's job, have challenged her in making her motherhood into a regular practice while working overseas. Because she cannot spend time with her son physically, she heavily relies on social media both in providing care for her aged parents and for sharing her motherhood practices with her little son. The discussions in the previous chapters have already revealed the important role that social media plays in immigrants' lives and especially in emigrant parents' daily parenting practices. Using social media and internet platforms, emigrants can hear or see their aged parents, children, and loved ones who left behind. Moreover, because social media and internet platforms provide emigrant

parents with low-cost and easily accessible approaches to showing care and turning their parenting into practice, in this regard, various types of mediated parenting practices among different emigrant groups have been reported in previous studies (Madianou & Miller, 2012; Madianou 2014). Zheng et al. (2019) also indicate that learning how to use different social media and internet platforms to show their motherhood and turn parenting behaviors into practices is an important learning and empowerment process for most contemporary migrant women. In this way, they learn to be "migrant mothers," as they cannot always physically accompany and care for their children.

7.3.4 "*I have several homes, and the meanings of home for me are mobile and sometime blurry.*"

Furthermore, the meaning of home for Claire is complex, as she has several homes located in the different places. Further, there is no single home or place in which she can gather all of her family members together at the same time, a situation which has caused her to have mixed and ambivalent feelings regarding the notion of home. First, Claire explained why she has many homes in different places. She said:

> *…since my husband is a Hong konger, he has his home in Hong Kong, and we bought a house (our own apartment) in Taipei, and when we still worked and lived in Taiwan, I, my husband, and our son all lived in Taipei together… however, as we decided to work overseas, we sent our son to my parents in Kaohsiung, and they assist me in taking care of my son.. so you see, I have so many homes… I have a temporary home in Belgium, my husband and I have our own home in Taipei, I have my parents' home in Kaohsiung, and my husband also has his old home in Hong Kong… you know what… so many homes means that there is no place that can gather all of my family members together…*

Because her family members came from and live in different places, Claire does not have a single home but instead has several located in different places. Her unique circumstances made me curious about what her perceptions of home, given that her family was separate and living in different places. Claire explained her feelings and

perceptions as follows:

> *for example, sometimes my husband would go back to Hong Kong to visit his parents, and then I would miss and worry about him. However, while working overseas with my husband, I would miss and worry about my parents and my son. Still, when I, my husband, and our son lived together in Taipei, I would miss and worry about my parents and especially my dad since he was diagnosed with cancer two years ago… so you know, no matter where I am, there are still some family members who cannot get together… these situations are a bit sad for me… moreover, these situations make me feel uncertain and lack a sense of safety… so for me, my home is always on the move, and the real meaning of home for me has become blurry since there is no single home or place that I can see and gather all of my family together*.

Accordingly, several of Claire's circumstances regarding her personal life have made the meaning of home for her complex and difficult to define. First of all, the cross-border marriage with her Hong Kong husband made her home become more international. This situation has meant that Claire and her husband, sometimes, had to navigate separation issues in their relationship, as her husband goes back to Hong Kong for a period of time by himself. Further, although Claire regards the house that she and her husband living in Belgium as her home, she still has feelings of incompleteness and cannot regarded their Belgian house as completely or fully home because her little son does not live with them. However, if they move back to Taiwan, they will take their son and live in Taipei. In this regard, there is no single house or place in which all of her family members can gather together, this complex family situation further makes her feel uncertain and have the perception that her home is always on the move.

In fact, some other migration studies regarding expatriates' homemaking experiences have revealed narratives and feelings similar to Claire's. For example, Kõu & Bailey (2014) took Indian high-skilled migrant workers and overseas expatriates as their research subject and examined their experiences of international movement and homemaking processes. They found that because of the high mobility and frequent movement that come with working as an expatriate, these Indian high-skilled and professional migrants working overseas had the common feeling and perception of

being constantly on the move to fulfill their job and work requests. The high-mobility and the uncertainty of their lives thus made it more difficult for them to clearly and explicitly explain the real meaning of home during their stay in foreign lands or throughout their international journeys. Taking British expatriates working and living in Dubai as an example, Walsh (2006) also explored the meaning of home for them as well as their sense of belonging and homemaking experiences. She found that because most of these British expatriates did not stay in Dubai forever but returned to their homeland or moved to other countries to fulfill the obligations of their work needs or company requests, they did not define the place they lived in Dubai as their real or permanent home. Moreover, as their jobs required them to maintain the capacity for flexibility and high mobility, they used the term "mobile home" to explain the meaning of home for them while working overseas as expatriate professionals. Thus, these previous related studies provide some possible explanations for the reason that the meaning of home for Claire is quite complex and difficult in making a clear definition. It may be that she considers a number of different places as her home simultaneously because frequently moving is a part of working as an expatriate professional worker (Cai & Su, 2020).

7.3.5 The differences between ethnonational identity performances in public and private life

With regard to issues concerning her big (national) home, nationality, and ethnonational identity, Claire at first explained that her colleagues at workplace are constituted by people from a variety of countries and with various ethnonational backgrounds. As Claire's workplace has such a high level of ethnonational diversity among the employees, her ethnonational identity has become less important. On the one hand, this diversity helps people to feel comfortable showing their true selves no matter on the ethnicity or nationality. On the other hand, these international and open-minded workplace atmospheres make the employees more open and tolerant to difference. Claire shared some of her perceptions concerning her own identity and experience in showing her Taiwanese identity at the workplace. She said:

...I came from and grew up in Taiwan, so of course I identify myself as

Taiwanese, there is no doubt… but, I have actually found that where you come from is not an important issues at my workplace… because my coworkers have come from many different places, so it is quite okay to be and perform your truth self… I feel very comfortable showing my Taiwanese identity and sharing something interesting about Taiwan with my colleagues… for example, one time I made Taiwanese bubble tea to share with my colleagues, They were so happy and showed interest towards things about Taiwan… you know, I also felt happy to see my colleagues show their willingness to learn more about Taiwan… that is pretty good… and of course my colleagues also share with me things about their home countries, such as India, Japan, or other European countries… and we enjoy this kind of cultural sharing and exchanging (文化交流)… and I think because of this open and international workplace atmosphere, people are open-minded to trying new things and tolerating different ideas and perspectives… thus, where you come from is not that important in an international company like my workplace. People here are quite international, open-minded, and no one will treat you in a different way due to your nationality or ethnic background. Moreover, my colleagues would not think that people who come from Taiwan are like this or from India are like that… no, this kind of stereotype is not welcome and acceptable at my workplace because everyone knows that everyone is different and has their own story.

Enchautegui-de-Jesús et al. (2006) argue that when a workplace has higher levels of ethnonational diversity among its employees, this has a positive impact on the company in constructing an open-minded, tolerant, and international organization and workplace atmosphere. This is reflected in the narrative shared by Claire; her colleagues at workplace came from various places and have a variety of distinct ethnonational backgrounds, which further making that everyone at the workplace feels safe and comfortable in showing their ethnonational identity. It is also interesting to note that Claire's experience is echoed in Wilson's narrative, which also demonstrated that in high-tech multinational companies and workplaces, ethnonational and nationality issues are not of high importance because the employees come from different places and have distinct ethnonational and cultural backgrounds. Both Claire and Wilson's narratives reveal that their colleagues do not use cultural essentialism to judge others at their workplaces. Instead, their intercultural competences further enable them to accept

and tolerate people with different backgrounds and perspectives. Moreover, with their open-minded workplace atmosphere, Claire and her colleagues construct a cosmopolitan identity and downplay the importance of issues regarding ethnicity, nationality, and culture differences, instead showing their open-mindedness and willingness to accept others' differences during their mutual interactions. However, it is also important to note that even though both Claire and Wilson have constructed a cosmopolitan attitude and identity, this does not mean that there are no differences or boundaries among them and their colleagues. On the contrary, Claire and Wilson's experiences demonstrate the possibility that people can cross or navigate boundaries and differences without modifying their initial ethnonational identity or ethnic affiliation. Taking Claire as an example, modifying or changing her original Taiwanese identity at her workplace is not a precondition to further constructing and performing her cosmopolitan attitude and identity at the workplace context (Moroşanu, 2017; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt, 2018).



Figure 7.4 Claire's bag, Tatung steam cooker, and favorite oyster noodles

Source: Provided by Claire, with authorization to use.

In addition to her experience of issues related to ethnonational identity performance at her workplace and in public life, I was also curious about how Claire negotiated and performed her Taiwanese identity in her daily and private life. After several online chats and interviews, Claire invited me to visit her private house near

Leuven and to have a cup of coffee with her at a coffee shop. During the visit, I found two things very typical of Taiwanese tastes in her house. One was her big blue Taiwan bag, and the other was her Tatung steam cooker. Then, I asked Claire what their meanings were for her. She replied:

> *… you know, I like that bag so much… first of all, the bag is quite big. I can put a lot of things into it… and you know, I like the color with the Taiwanese Hakka flowers in blue. It also has a very big and obvious word "TAIWAN" and "臺灣" … you know, I enjoy it while walking on the street, people will look at my bag. From their face, I can tell that they think my bag is pretty cool and beautiful… one time, when I did my shopping at the supermarket, someone suddenly started chatting with me and said, "oh, you came from Taiwan… I like Taiwan so much, your foods, night market, friendly people, and also your natural scenery," and she further asked me: "where could I buy the bags like yours'? I love the color and Taiwan's logo." During our short chat, I felt so happy that a foreigner had such a good impression with my country, since she had two weeks travel experience in Taiwan… you know, the bag is like as a symbol to tell others that I came from Taiwan. You don't have to say loudly, the bag tells everything… so I like to take this bag with me to go to the supermarket or sometimes to work. The bag helps me to tell everyone that I am Taiwanese in a beautiful way with the bright blue color and big "TAIWAN" logo.*

Aside from the bag, Claire further shared the meaning of her Tatung steam cooker with me. She said:

> *… I guess most of the Taiwanese immigrant homes would have a Tatung steam cooker. I think the cooker has become a symbol of Taiwan… you know, when you have such a cooker, you can make a lot of different dishes. It is so powerful, and every time I see the cooker, it makes me think about Taiwan… moreover, I like to use the cooker to cook one of my favorite Taiwanese foods: Taiwanese oyster noodles (蚵仔麵線, Hézǐ miàn xiàn)… I like that dish so much…. Except for the oyster, it is so good to put cilantro (芫荽) and bean skin (豆皮), and of course it's also necessary to add some Kimlan soy sauce (金蘭醬油), you know… when you*

put all these food ingredients together and use the Tatung steam cooker… it is a 100-percent Taiwanese taste, since all of these things represent part of Taiwan's cuisline cultures.

In recent years, Taiwan printed fabrics (臺灣花布) have become famous, not only in the Taiwanese fashion design industry but also in people's daily dressing, especially for women. It is interesting to note that Taiwan printed fabrics are influenced by the traditional Hakka fabric culture and have gradually become a fashion and cultural symbol of Taiwan. Among the different Taiwan printed fabrics, three images are frequently used. First are the images of various flowers, including peonies, orchids, chrysanthemums, hibiscus, hydrangeas, and so on. Most of these flowers have their own symbolic meanings. For example, peony means "noble" (高貴), orchid means that someone's mind is clean and fresh (亮節), and hydrangea refers to "reunion" (團聚). The second type of image depicts lucky beasts, such as the dragon or phoenix (龍鳳). These images are always printed on red fabric because the color red symbolizes luck and fortune in traditional Chinese culture. In this regard, red fabric with an image of a dragon or a phoenix is mainly used to celebrate newly married couples. In addition, the image of a crane (鶴鳥) symbolizes longevity, and printed fabric with a crane is thus mostly used to bless elderly people in their health. The third type of images are supplemental, such as those of fans, plaid patterns, or abstract drawings. However, due to the images of lucky beasts are no longer as popular as they used to be, people in the contemporary era are buying cloths or fabrics with lucky beasts less and less. The reason for this is that people regard these traditional lucky beast images as out of fashion. Because of this, printed fabrics with flowers are more popular in the fashion design industry and are also more acceptable to consumers nowadays. Taking Claire as an example, her bag belongs to the first category. It is made of blue Taiwan printed fabric with many images of unknown but beautiful flowers and has a large "TAIWAN (臺灣)" logo and four small words in Chinese "美麗寶島" that communicate that Taiwan is a beautiful island. Since these traditional Taiwan printed fabrics have been re-popularized in Taiwan's fashion industry and in people's daily dressing, some scholars argue that Taiwan printed fabric is one of the most representative fashion design products reflecting the beauty of Taiwan (Jan & Lee, 2008 ; Lin & Xiao, 2012). Thus, bringing the Taiwan printed fabric bag shopping and to work is one of the ways Claire shows her

Taiwanese identity, in a banal rather than an official way.

In addition to the printed fabrics, the Tatung steam cooker in Claire's kitchen is another object symbolic of Taiwan. The Tatung company's steam cooker product has already been regarded as one of Taiwan's ethnonational products, and it thus to some degree represents Taiwan's national image (Chin, 2013). To make an analogy, the meaning of the Tatung steam cooker to Taiwanese seems similar to that of Louis Vuitton to French people. In other words, both of these products to some extent represent the national images of their respective countries. Tracing back the product history of the Tatung steam cooker, it was first sold in the 1960s, accompanied by its famous product song with the lyrics "Tatung is a good quality national product of Taiwan" (大同、大同國貨好). It is interesting to note that after more than five decades, this product is still famous in Taiwan, and most people in Taiwan are able to sing this song. Furthermore, the Tatung steam cooker has maintained its original shape even though the company has conducted some innovation of its functions and has changed some of its colors. Because this series of products has maintained its original shape and appearance over the past five decades, these products have carried the life memories and food practices of a number of generations of Taiwanese people. In 2019, the steam cooker sold nearly half a million units in Taiwan alone, while it also sold nearly half a million in the international market. The important role that the Tatung steam cooker plays in the Taiwanese immigrant's life and food practices overseas was also found in a study conducted by Chi (2011). He interviewed Taiwanese immigrants and international students based in the UK and examined their experiences using the steam cooker in their daily food practices. He also investigated the meaning of this product for these settled immigrants or temporary international students while living in a foreign land. He found that for these overseas Taiwanese emigrants, the Tatung steam cooker was not only an appliance for cooking but also carried the collective food practice memories and taste preferences particular to Taiwanese people. In this regard, the meaning of the Tatung steam cooker for Taiwanese (especially those who living in overseas) is not only material as a cooking utensil but also plays an important role as a symbol of Taiwan. Thus, Taiwanese people connect the steam cooker with national images and life memories in Taiwan while living in overseas.

It is true that the Tatung steam cooker is one of the most famous and frequently used electronic appliances both for families in Taiwan and in overseas Taiwanese homes. When I have had the opportunity to visit my research participants' private homes during my fieldwork in Belgium, I always find the steam cooker in their kitchen or elsewhere in the house. Claire further shared with me that she likes to cook Taiwanese oyster noodles, her favorite dish, using the steam cooker. These noodles are quite a famous street vender dish (小吃) in contemporary Taiwan. A study conducted by Li (2012) found that the history of oyster dishes could be dated back to ancient Taiwan. Based on archaeological findings, the earliest oyster dish with noodles could be traced back to several hundred years ago in coastal villages in the southwest of Taiwan. This dish has not disappeared from Taiwanese people's dining tables or food menus. It is still popular in contemporary Taiwanese daily food practices, though it is not so famous in mainland China as in Taiwan. In this regard, the dish has been seen as one of the most representative Taiwanese foods. In the narrative provided by Claire, she shared that she likes to cook oyster noodles using the Tatung steam cooker and that she adds in spices, such as cilantro and *Kim Lan* soy sauce to the noodles to make the dish taste similar to the flavors that she used to eat in Taiwan. In sum, as she uses the Tatung steam cooker to cook oyster noodles, it can be seen that Claire's food practices while living in Belgium mean a lot to her. These food practices do not only fulfill her dietary needs but also help her connect and recall homeland memories and national images regarding Taiwan while living in a foreign land.

By using Taiwan printed fabrics and the Tatung steam cooker to cook Taiwan-style oyster noodles, Claire performs her Taiwanese ethnonational identity unconsciously. In fact, her Taiwanese ethnonational identity performance experiences echo the perspective of "banal nationalism," a viewpoint of nationalism that was first proposed by Billing (1995). Billing first criticizes the traditional idea of nationalism, claiming that it is too focused on an elite angle and top-down approach, according to which the idea of nationalism and people's ethnonational identities are constructed by macro political discourses, facilitated by wars or other huge historical events, or propagandized by politicians. In contrast, Billings provides an alternative way of understanding nationalism and peoples' ethnonational identity. He claims that in ordinary life people do not often talk about large-scale issues regarding nationalism or

ethnonational identity in their daily narratives. Instead, people tend to show their ethnonational identities in very banal ways. He further argues that people construct, negotiate, and display their ethnonational identities and attitudes towards nationhood through four kinds of banal behaviors. The first kind of behavior is "talking the nation," which refers to how people talk about the concept of nation or ethnonational identity in their daily and ordinary narratives. This is in contrast with merely focusing on what politicians say. The second type of behavior is "choosing the nation," which refers to people's choices, such as which school they wish to study at, or which television show they expect to watch as schools and TV channels may be operated by different nations. The third type of behavior is "performing the nation," which refers to the ways in which people show their national symbols or images in daily life. Finally, the fourth is "consuming the nation," which refers to the products that people are more likely to buy in their daily purchases. In summary, the aim of Billing's perspective is to remind scholars that the concepts of nationalism and peoples' ethnonational identities are double-sided. It is not enough merely to pay attention on the top-down, macro side and the politicians' perspectives; it is also important to bring ordinary peoples' views and daily practices into consideration. Since Billing proposed this new theoretical concept, an increasing number of scholars have used the concepts "everyday," "banal," and "bottom-up" as viewpoints from which to conduct their studies rather than applying only the macro, elite, and top-down approaches in exploring people's attitudes towards nationalism and their subjective ethnonational identity performances in daily life (Hutchinson, 2006; Skey, 2009; Bonikowski, 2016). The viewpoint of this school of thought, an appropriate research question would be to ask how nationalism and peoples' ethnonational identities are produced and reproduced on a daily basis, and in a banal way as opposed to ask what the origin of nationalism is or what factors influence peoples' ethnonational identities. In this regard, this school of thought provides an alternative way to think about nationalism, asking how people perform and (re)produce their ethnonational identities in everyday life using a variety of banal means (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008).

Taking Claire as an example, she performs her Taiwanese ethnonational identity in several banal ways. For example, she likes to take her blue Taiwan printed fabric bag with "TAIWAN/a beautiful land" written in large letters across it with her shopping and

to work. Her behavior echoes Billing's category of performing the nation, as the bag she takes has become a material carrier for displaying her Taiwanese identity to others. Moreover, Claire performed her Taiwanese ethnonational identity in her purchasing preferences by buying the Tatung steam cooker rather than a similar product from another countries or brands while living in Belgium. In this way, her behaviors are in line with Billing's concept of consuming the nation. Last but not the least, the fact that Claire insists in using *Kim Lan* soy sauce to cook her favorite oyster noodles so as to replicate the Taiwan-style taste she prefers, is another way in which she shows and (re)produces her Taiwanese and ethnonational identity on daily basis and in banal way.

7.3.6 Summary

The narratives and emigration life stories shared by Claire reveal her experiences of homemaking and the meanings of home has had for her while working as an expatriate professional worker in a foreign country and during her international journeys.

Before Claire decided to work as an expatriate in Belgium, she and her Hong Kong husband had for three years worked together at Taiwan's largest semi-conductor company TSMC (台積電). She and her husband both earned good monthly salaries that several times higher than those of laborers in Taiwan's other industrial sectors; however, the nature of the workplace in the high-tech industry also requires the employees to work long hours. The unbalanced work and private life conditions motivated Claire and her husband to consider working overseas, as they knew that public (work) and private life tend to be more balanced in Western workplace cultures. While considering working overseas, Claire did face a number of
difficulties in making the decision to emigrate, as she had already had a son and bought a house with her husband in Taipei. In this regard, working in a foreign country meant that she has had to give up some part of her life in Taiwan. For example, she cannot always spend time with her son and aged parents. Her decision- making experiences reveal the fact that not only low-skilled and blue-collar migrant workers face difficulties in emigrating. In fact, high-skilled and professional immigrants also pay the price and lose some part of their lives because of the international movement. After they had

decided to work overseas, Claire and her husband obtained their jobs at ASML via a mutual expatriate exchange program between TSMC and ASML.

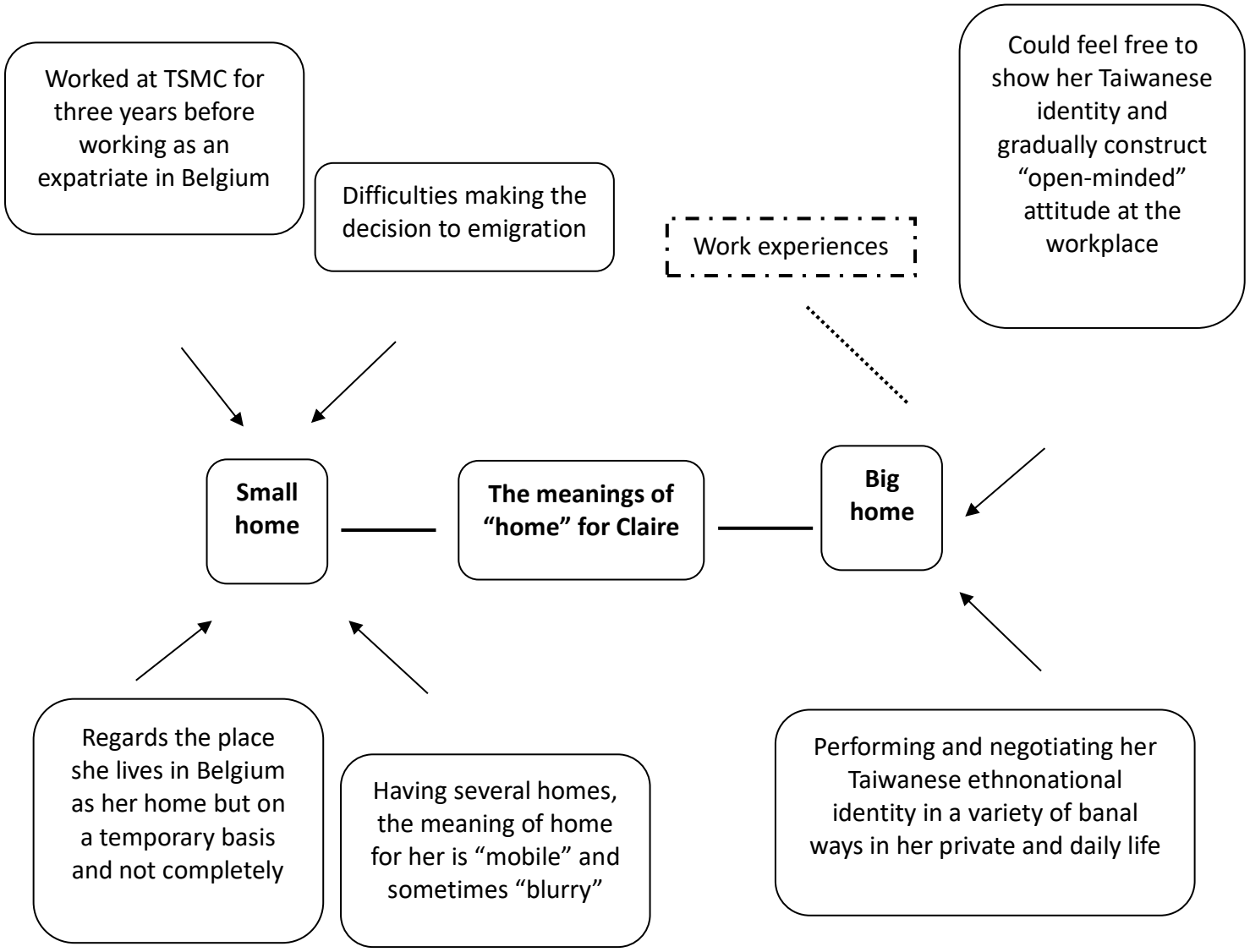


Figure 7.5 The intersectional meanings of "home" for Claire

Source: This study.

With regard to the notion of small home, Claire does consider the house she and her husband live in in Belgium as her home because she lives there together with her husband. However, she does not regard her home in Belgium as permanent, but rather as temporary one. This is because she and her husband do not plan to stay in Belgium forever but are planning to move back to Taiwan after they complete their job contracts.

It is also important to note that because Claire did not take her son to Belgium living with them, she still feels that her home in Belgium is not complete. Accordingly, her narrative shows the significant role that family relations play in people's homemaking experiences. Claire's subjective perceptions and interpretations regarding her home in Belgium are also affected by the values of traditional Chinese and Confucian cultures (Hwang, 1999; Ward & Lin, 2010; Liu, 2020). Further, as Claire has many homes located in various places (the temporary home in Belgium, the apartment she bought with her husband in Taipei, her old home in Kaohsiung where her son and parents live, and her husband's home in Hong Kong), there is no single place in which all of her family members can gather together. This part of Claire's life circumstances further influence her perceptions regarding the notion and meaning of home, making her feel that her home is always in a mobile condition. Her feelings of uncertainty, in turn, make the meaning of home "blurry" for her.

With regard to the issues of big home and ethnonational identity, Claire's narrative reveals two different identity negotiation and performance experiences between her public (work) and private (home) life. At her workplace, her colleagues come from a variety of places and with various ethnonational backgrounds and nationalities. The high level of ethnonational diversity among the employees lowers the importance of issues regarding nationality and ethnonational identity in people's interactions. Since diversity has become common in workplace environments, the employees at Claire's workplace are quite used to working and interacting with cultural, ethnic, and social others, and they do not treat people in different ways because of their distinct backgrounds. This workplace environment not only makes the employees feel more comfortable in showing their true selves (including the ethnonational parts of the self), but further gives them a higher level of tolerance towards differences at the workplace. In this regard, Claire does not feel difficult or uncomfortable showing her Taiwanese identity in front of her colleagues, as people are not concerned about nationality in this international and open-minded workplace environment. Working at this workplace, Claire and her coworkers gradually construct cosmopolitan attitudes and personal identities. Moreover, based on my participant observation while visiting her private home in Belgium, I was surprised to find that Claire performs her Taiwanese identity in a number of banal ways in line with Billing's (1995) theory. For example, she likes

to take her blue bag made of Taiwan printed fabric with her to go shopping and sometimes to work. The bag has a large and obvious “TAIWAN” logo and has thus become a way for her to perform the nation and her Taiwanese ethnonational identity. A couple of other banal ways in which she performs her Taiwanese ethnonational identity include using Tatung steam cooker to cook Taiwan-style oyster noodles and insisting on adding the Taiwanese soy sauce made by the brand of Kim Lan. These two behaviors echo Billing’s ideas of choosing and consuming nation, respectively.

In summary, Claire’s narratives reveal some important characteristics regarding the notion of home in the migration context. Namely, they reveal that home entails various personal meanings and emotions and does not merely refer to the material/physical building or space. The meanings of home for people are complex and multi-layered and are intersectionally influenced by each person’s distinct life circumstances and backgrounds. No single domain or interpretation could cover all of the different angles regarding the meanings of small and big home in people’s real lives and during the immigration journey.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the author takes Taiwanese professional migrant workers working and living in Belgium as research subject and examines their homemaking experiences during their international journeys. The author successfully recruited and interviewed seven Taiwanese expatriates in Belgium, and by analyzing Wilson and Claire’s emigrant life stories and subjective narratives in detail, this chapter demonstrates the complex and multilayered nature that the notion of home has for people, especially those who are on the move.

Table 7.1 The intersectional meanings of “home” for Wilson and Claire

Dimensions/cases	Wilson	Claire
Small home	● The long-hour work labor conditions were the vital push factor that motivated	● Before working as an expatriate professional in Belgium, Claire and

	Wilson to leave Taiwan and work overseas even though he earned a good salary. ● Different life and work experiences in Indonesia and Belgium. ● In his expatriate life overseas, his bed, sofa, and luggage help Wilson to obtain feelings of home. Further, driving car to explore his neighborhood and the city further increase his sense of belonging to in Belgium. ● Maintaining the relations with his original family and providing care for his aged parents by regular visits and travels together.	her husband had worked together at TSMC. However, the unbalanced work–life conditions made them decide to work overseas. ● Faced difficulties in making the decision to leave her life and home in Taiwan. ● Claire regards her house in Belgium as her home but also as temporary and incomplete. ● Because she has several homes in different places, the meaning of home for Claire is complex and multilayered.
Big Home	● Prefers to show his professional rather than ethnonational identity at the workplace. ● With regard to issues of ethnonational identity, Wilson identifies himself as Taiwanese. However, regarding the issues of the relations between Taiwan and mainland China and	● At the workplace, Claire feels comfortable showing her Taiwanese identity. Issues of nationality and ethnicity are not so important to her because her colleagues come from different places and have various ethnonational

	the future of Taiwan, Wilson supports maintaining the status quo in the present and pursuing Taiwan's independence in the future (維持現狀以後走向獨立).	backgrounds. ● In Claire's private (home) daily life, she performs her Taiwanese identity in several banal ways, including performing, choosing, and consuming the nation.

Source: This study.

According to the narratives shared by Wilson and Claire, both occupied good job positions and earned above average month salaries in Taiwan before they moved to work as expatriates in Belgium. However, the long-hour work requests and workplace labor conditions made both of them feel tired and motivated them to try to find alternative living and working arrangements. Wilson and Claire's narratives both reveal that economic considerations were the critical push factor motivating them to decide to leave Taiwan and work in a foreign country. At the same time, the economic considerations for Wilson and Claire are quite different from those of their low-skilled and blue-collar migrant worker counterparts. However, Smith and Favell et al. (2006) argue that even though the reasons and considerations for leaving their home country are different between high- and low-skilled migrants, their main goal is generally the same: to search for a better life. In working as expatriates in their host country of Belgium, Wilson and Claire have had quite different homemaking experiences.

Wilson experienced quite different life and work experiences in Indonesia and Belgium even though he worked as an expatriate in both places. In Indonesia, his life and work experiences echoed the idea of the privileged migrant, as his company offered him a number of exclusive benefits that made him feel that he was different or "higher" than his local Indonesian coworkers. Working and living in Belgium has not given Wilson the same feeling that he is special, as his company in Belgium has treated him like all the other employees. With regard to the notion of small home, three pieces of domestic furniture facilitate Wilson to obtain a sense of home while living in Belgium:

his bed, sofa, and luggage. Further, the car not only increases his personal capacity for mobility but also allows him to explore the nearby communities and cities, increasing his sense of belonging in a foreign land. His narrative reveals the important roles that furniture and the capacity for personal mobility play in people's homemaking processes and identity formations. Further, regularly visiting and traveling together with his original family has allowed him to maintain relations with and provide care to his aged parents. In terms of big (national) home, Wilson prefers to present his professional identity as an engineer rather than Taiwanese ethnonational background at the workplace. His identity performance practices echo the idea of nested identity, which refers to the fact that people can strategically perform different layers of identities so as to fulfill the practical needs in different life circumstances (Díez Medrano & Gutiérrez, 2001; Genova, 2016). Regarding the issues of ethnonational identity and the relations between Taiwan and mainland China, Wilson fully identifies himself as Taiwanese and supports Taiwan in maintaining its existing relations with mainland China. At the same time, he supports Taiwan in constructing a new country and pursuing further independence from mainland China in the future (維持現狀以後走向獨立).

Moreover, Claire and her Hong Kong husband faced difficulties in making their decision to emigrate, as they had already bought their own house in Taipei and had a son before they came to Belgium. Supported by Claire's parents, she and her husband did decide to leave their lives and work in Taiwan and apply to work as expatriates in Belgium to search for a more balanced lifestyle. Because Claire and her husband live together in Belgium, Claire regards her house in Belgium as her home. However, because Claire and her husband do not plan to stay overseas forever and because their son does not live with them, she merely views her Belgian home as temporary and incomplete. Further, as Claire has many homes located in various places and because no single place can be used to gather all of her family members together at the same time, she uses the term "mobile" to describe her perceptions regarding the meaning of home for her. With respect to the big (national) home, she identifies herself as Taiwanese. And she feels safe and comfortable showing her Taiwanese identity at the workplace because issues of nationality and ethnicity are not important to her coworkers, who come from different places and have various ethnonational backgrounds. In this domain, Wilson and Claire's narratives both reveal that a higher

level of ethnic diversity at the workplace has positive effects for the employees in constructing a cosmopolitan attitude and obtaining higher levels of tolerance towards differences (Moroşanu, 2017; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt, 2018). In contrast to Wilson, Claire shows her Taiwanese ethnonational identity in private life through a number of banal practices, including performing, choosing, and consuming the nation in her daily dressing styles, product purchase preferences, and food-making practices (Hutchinson, 2006; Skey, 2009; Bonikowski, 2016).

Overall, both Wilson and Claire's narratives reveal that the meanings of home for them are various and different. Moreover, they are intersectionally affected by their own life circumstances and distinct personal backgrounds, and they have thus experienced different homemaking experiences while working and living as expatriates in Belgium. For Wilson and Claire, the notions and meanings of both small and big home are dynamic and fluid.

Chapter Eight
General Conclusion and Discussion

8.1 Introduction

In my thesis, I chose the Belgian Taiwanese immigrant community as a subject and examined the following research questions: What are the Taiwanese immigrants' experiences of homemaking (「家」的製作」) in Belgium? What are their experiences of managing their "dual home" relationships between home and host countries? What does the concept of home mean for them in an immigrant context? How can they feel "at home" in their experience of daily life? In order to explore immigrant daily life and homemaking experiences in a foreign land, the data in this study was mainly compiled during two years of online and offline ethnographic fieldwork and participant observations, including semi-structured and photo elicitation interviews. During my three-year stay in Belgium (2017–2020), I successfully entered into the Belgian Taiwanese immigrant community, conducting online fieldwork with several Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities on Facebook as well as doing offline fieldwork as a Chinese language teacher at the Ecole Sun Yat-Sen in Brussels. By conducting both online and offline ethnographic fieldwork, provided me with many opportunities to meet Taiwanese immigrants. In the course of my fieldwork, I did my best to participate in the public and private lives of Taiwanese immigrants, including sharing in important life events, such as birthdays, retirements, and even funerals. I therefore constructed deeper and more equal relationships with my research participants rather than merely conducting research-driven interactions. This meant that I expect myself to interact with the research participants "naturally", and in fact, many of them even became as my friends in real life. Since our fieldwork relationships were more equal, these provided me with more opportunities to participate and engage in my research participants' real lives. I visited some of their homes and participated in their private and family lives by going on day trips, shopping, and having meals with them together, rather than just conducting one-off interviews (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

In this thesis, I successfully conducted multiple interviews with 42 Taiwanese immigrants by applying purposive and snowball sampling techniques to recruit the

research participants. These research participants were experiencing a variety of migration trajectories and each had different personal characteristics, social and economic status, and durations of stay. By considering these different factors, I categorized these participants into four sub-groups: restaurateurs, housewives/immigrant women, working holiday makers (WHMs), and professional migrant workers and expatriates. However, it is important to note that this preliminary categorization is mainly based on my own fieldwork and participant observation experiences, since the Belgian government does not have explicit demographic data and information about Taiwanese immigrants. The categorizations I have made here are not fixed as people can change their status and category by making different migration decisions. For example, some of my research participants came to Belgium initially as WHMs. After gaining a Belgian boyfriend or getting married with a local partner, their category may be changed from WHMs to that of housewives/immigrant women. Therefore, the criteria that defined this categorization was mainly based on the status held by my research participants at the time I met and interacted with them.

8.2 Research findings in this study

The immigrant life stories, and homemaking experiences shown in this study reveal some natures regarding the notion of "home" in the migration context that each immigrant's homemaking experience in a foreign land are different. Their homemaking and life experiences are further influenced by a variety of personal characteristics also individual immigration trajectories. Moreover, the notion and meaning of "home" for an immigrant is not static but dynamic and fluid reflecting an individual's distinct lived circumstances. In addition, there is no single aspect that covers all of the meanings that the notion of "home" plays in an immigrant's life. Therefore, the notion of home for the research participants in this study is multidimensional. This could be formed by tangible or intangible forms ranging from physical dwellings, daily religious practices, transnational social spaces, to furniture or personal belongings, familiar foods, neighborhood mobility, family letters, the sense of belonging, ethnonational identity, as well as interpersonal relationships. In conclusion, the notion of home in the migration context is an outcome that is socially constructed by the dialogical and mutual interactions between individual immigrants and their cultural environments and lived

circumstances both local and also transnational. Accordingly, the findings of this study challenge conventional perspectives regarding the notion of "home," which is consolidated in a physical building, while also to do with being rooted in a specific place. The homemaking experiences shared by the Belgian Taiwanese immigrants in this study, on the contrary, demonstrate that the notion of home for them is not necessarily a physical building, or dwelling. Immigrants living in a foreign land could further obtain a sense of "feeling at home" from different locality scales, from an individual's private dwelling to familiar environments or surroundings in a community, city, or even country. Furthermore, many of the Taiwanese immigrants in this study maintain close interactions with their families in Taiwan and also regularly travel back and forth between home and host countries. In this regard, they construct the transnational social space not only in connecting their previous life in Taiwan with the current one in Belgium, but also these transnational connections and communications practices further make their notion of home that goes beyond the limits of a single national border (Bonisch-Brednich & Trundle, 2010; Philip & Ho, 2010).

Furthermore, international immigration does not only mean that people leave their home country and (re)build a new "home" or search for a sense of home in their new place of settlement. Immigration also means people leaving behind their previously familiar culture and lived circumstances. Therefore, immigrants also have to face difficulties in navigating differences between their own and host cultures, and further face problems with how to identify themselves culturally and ethnically while living in a foreign land. This is due to the fact that people's ethnonational identity is not merely decided by themselves but also affected by how "others" see and consider about them. In this regard, people may have different ethnonational identities and performing strategies in specific lived circumstances in order to fulfil practical needs. It is true that the research participants in this study utilize different ethnonational identity labels for describing themselves in various lived circumstances, and some of them choose to perform different parts of their ethnonational identity between their public and private life domains. In fact, it is important for immigrants to seek out an individual or collective sense of belonging to an ethnic or cultural community. Vivero and Jenkins (1999) indicated that if an immigrant does not successfully find a sense of belonging to an ethnic or cultural community, then they may become culturally homeless, and face

serious problems with how to identify themselves culturally and ethnically in the host society. Moreover, in this study, I applied the concepts proposed by Magat (1999) where she utilized the term “big home” to refer to people’s sense of belonging and identity ethnically and also nationally in the migration context. In this regard, the big home, in the migration context, could be understood as an intangible, cultural, and ethnical home where immigrants could gain a sense of belonging and feel comfortable in showing their “true self” culturally and ethnonational. The aim for Magat in proposing the term “big home” was to make a distinction with the concept of “small home” since the small home refers more to people’s personal domain and private life.

Taking Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium as an example, this study demonstrates a series of issues that they have to face and deal with regarding “big home” and an individual’s ethnonational identity. These include how they identify themselves culturally and ethnically. Do they regard themselves as Taiwanese, Chinese, or Belgian? Moreover, what are the meanings for them in using these different ethnonational identity labels in immigrant life? Do they consider Taiwan or Belgium to be their home? Accordingly, these questions all relate to what their subjective perceptions and viewpoints regarding the concept of “big home,” or their ethnonational identity and sense of belonging, mean for them. With regard to the “big home”, it is interesting to find that, in this study, the research participants apply different ethnonational identity performance and negotiation strategies in their daily life in order to fulfil their practical needs and further correspond to distinct lived circumstances and interpersonal relations. Although, “Taiwanese” is the most acceptable and popular ethnonational identity label applied by the majority of research participants in this study to depict their cultural and ethnonational identities, some of the research participants, still accept and apply other ethnonational labels or sentences to describe themselves, including “I am Chinese from Taiwan” (我是來自臺灣的中國人), “Chinese”, and “Taiwanese for being, Belgian for learning” (臺灣人身分是本質、而比利時人身分則還在學習當中). Moreover, it is also interesting to note that some of the research participants are more likely to perform the “Taiwanese” part of their identity in their private life, at home, or in the family. Although, they devote more effort to performing as a “Belgian” in their public life or while interacting with their Belgian counterparts. However, since discussing ethnonational identity issues is still sensitive, to some degree, especially when

Taiwanese immigrants interact with their mainland Chinese counterparts, “downplay” and “transvaluation” are two of the most frequent ethnonational identity negotiation strategies that are applied by the majority of Taiwanese immigrants in this study. Since these two strategies can help to avoid an embarrassing situation or even potential confliction while interacting with other mainland Chinese (Tajfel &Turner, 1986; Li, 2016; Li, 2017).

Although the majority of research participants tend to downplay the issue of ethnonational identity in their daily life, a few participants do apply more direct or sometimes aggressive ways to perform their identity. Some even experienced a significant change regarding their individual ethnonational identity from “Chinese” to “Taiwanese” after emigrating to Belgium. Similarly, as with “small” homemaking experiences, the meanings of “big home” for Taiwanese immigrants are various and people utilize distinct strategies to find a sense of belonging toward big home, and to perform their ethnonational identities in different lived circumstances in order to fulfil practical needs. Thus, the findings regarding “big home” making and searching experiences, in this study, further echo the perspective that people’s ethnonational identities are dynamic, and fluid; that it is a temporary outcome socially constructed by ourselves and also affected by others. This means that people’s ethnonational identity and their perception regarding the notion of “big home,” in the migration context, is not only related to how an individual identifies themselves. It is also concerned with how others regard them as well as the interaction experiences between an immigrant and their counterparts in a host society (Jenkins, 2000; Ang, 2017).

Moreover, the research participants in this study demonstrate various viewpoints and have subjective meanings or interpretations regarding the notions of both “small” and “big” homes. However, it is still possibly to find some common grounds for the majority of research participants in (re)building or (re)searching notions of “small” and “big” home that allow them to “feel at home” in the migration context. Indeed, when people decide to leave their home country and emigrate to a foreign land, they may at first face a challenge in finding a physical space (building or dwelling) in which to live. Therefore, renting or (re)building a physical house or dwelling is the common experience shared by the majority of Taiwanese immigrants. However, it is important

to point out that owning or having a physical space for living does not necessary means that immigrants have achieved a sense of "feeling at home." In fact, this sense of home is highly related to an individual immigrant's lived experience. Taking the restaurateurs as an example, Aunt Zhang did not really regarded Belgium as her home and could not gain a sense of home even though she had lived in Belgium for several years in her initial arrival in the 1970s. This was because she regarded Belgium merely as a place for her to make money. Once Zhang started to operate her own restaurant with her husband, and could work and live with her child, she gradually began to feel at home in her immigrant life in Belgium. Similarly, the majority of the Taiwanese working holiday youths do not considered the apartment or dwelling they rent as their "home" in Belgium since they are only allowed to stay and live in Belgium for one year maximum because of visa regulations. Moreover, the study further found that the professional migrant workers and expatriates who came to live and work in Belgium with their partners or families were more likely to regard Belgium, or the place where they living as their "home", or to gain a sense of home while living and working in a foreign land than their counterparts who worked and lived in Belgium by themselves. In this regard, although owning or (re)building a physical house or dwelling is fundamental for an immigrant to live and re(start) their new life in a foreign land, having or owning a physical house or dwelling is not the only pre-condition for an immigrant to gain a sense of "feeling at home." These feelings are further affected by individual immigrant's distinctive lived circumstances, such as how long they intend to stay, how does the individual immigrant consider the place in the host society where they are living, and whether they came alone or live alone (Liu, 2011; Liu et al., 2019).

Another vital aspect for immigrants to obtain a sense of "feeling at home" in a foreign land is related to the social relations they have in their immigrant life. Interpersonal relationships with family and friends are two of most important types of social relations that can assist the Taiwanese immigrants, in this study, to construct their sense of belonging in Belgium, and gain a sense of home in their immigrant life. For instance, the majority of individuals from the restaurateurs and housewives/ immigrant women categories regard Belgium as their home because their family members are living with them. Having a husband and children are two of the most important aspects that can help those immigrants to construct a sense of belonging and a sense of home

while living in Belgium and toward their Belgian immigrant life. In fact, it was quite common to hear narratives such as, “where my husband is or where my children are, there is my home,” or “because my children are living and growing up here [i.e., Belgium], of course Belgium is my home.” In addition to family relationships, having a network of friends is another important aspect that enables an immigrant to construct a sense of belonging and gain a sense of home in their immigrant life. Having friends in the host society has a critical impact not only on immigrant’s sense of belonging but also on their psychological well-being. The research participants who have limited friendship networks have a higher likelihood of feeling lonely. Since they have a finite social life, in this regard, they do not have any choice but to spend most of their time with the family or doing domestic work. On the other hand, immigrants with their own friendship networks may have higher sense of belonging toward their immigrant life and also the place of Belgium. For example, many Taiwanese immigrants say that regularly gathering together with other Taiwanese immigrants not only makes them feel happy but also assists them in knowing that they are not alone, since many other Taiwanese counterparts share similar life experiences. Thus, the study found that having a family and a network of friends is crucial for immigrants in helping them to construct a sense of belonging and identity in a foreign land, and in assisting them to gain a sense of home in their immigrant life (Liu, 2020 ;Chiang & Leung, 2011; Philip, 2000).

It is also important to note that the life of an immigrant in the current time is quite different from that of their counterparts who emigrated a hundred years ago. With the rapid developments in transportation, information, and communication technologies, immigrants nowadays can more easily maintain connections and interactions with family members, relatives, or friends who have been left behind in their home country. It is possible to travel regularly back and forth between home and host countries or to use instant communication techniques to find out about their family’s situation in the home country. Since conducting transnational travel, communication, and interaction practices has become easier and cheaper than before, immigrants nowadays have the capacity to keep and manage their dual “home” and family relations across national borders. In this regard, the notion of “home” for the immigrant, nowadays, does not only refer to a physical space rooted in a particular place or nation country, it can also be a social space that exists transnationally across national borders. The common

experience found in this study is that the majority of research participants frequently use different social media platforms or digital communication devices for maintaining a high frequency of communications with their family in Taiwan. These transnational communication practices are vital for these Taiwanese immigrants since digital communication and interaction behaviors assist them to connect with their family in the home country, even though they do not live in Taiwan and are not surround by their family in a physical sense. In addition, watching daily news and entertainment shows on Taiwanese television through the Internet similarly assists the research participants to gain a sense of home and connect their life experiences in Taiwan with their present life in Belgium. Interestingly, in this study, for many Taiwanese immigrant women and housewives, making a garden in Belgium becomes a transnational social space for connecting their lives in host and home countries by growing and cultivating some special "Taiwanese" vegetables and spices brought from Taiwan. These distinct transnational practices help them to gain a sense of home transnationally (Golob, 2013; Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017).

Moreover, since a sense of home for immigrants can be present in a tangible as well as intangible forms, in this regard, some special materials and cultural symbols can also help to make them to gain a sense of home or make them feel at home. Family letters, bed, sofa, bookcases furniture, Ta Tung steam cooker, family photos, and even a car, are some of the tangible things that are frequently mentioned by many of the research participants in this study. For Aunt Zhang, for instance, the family letters she wrote, sent, and received not only helped her to understand her family's life situation in her home country, but she also indicated that every time she red letters from her Taiwanese family, they made her feel warm, and helped her feel at home even though she could not see or interact with her family face-to-face. Many other research participants shared similar narratives, for Huai-shen, the bed, sofa, and other items of personal furniture also assist him to feel at home since he spends so much time lying on his bed and sofa for resting, reading, and also sleeping. In this regard, the meaning of the furniture for him is already more than just its material nature, on the contrary, these tangible materials further provide social and psychological benefits for immigrants and help them to feel at home while living in a foreign land (Boccagni, 2017; Sandu, 2013).

In addition to tangible material, it is also interesting to note that several of the research participants in this study gained a sense of home by connecting intangible heritage cultures with the notion of home. Many research participants shared similar narratives to Selena Lu and indicated that making and consuming Taiwanese food with family and friends in their immigrant daily life not only released their sense of "food nostalgia," but that eating and sharing such foods with their loved ones made them "feel at home" while living in a foreign country. Moreover, by maintaining some cultural traditions and virtues in their immigrant life, such as educating children about the traditional Confucian cultural virtues of filial piety, and celebrating traditional Chinese festivals like the Lunar New Year, Moon festival, and Dragon Boat Festival, the research participants in this study could gain a sense of home. These intangible cultural traditions and virtues can become a symbolic and cultural home for Taiwanese immigrants in their life in Belgium, further help them to feel at home. It is also important to note that the meaning of home for these Taiwanese immigrants can change through time and throughout different life stages. For example, some of the older immigrants who had retired from the Chinese catering industry did not regard Belgium as their home during the first few years of living here since most of them were spending the majority of their time earning money or operating their own restaurants. For them, Belgium, at the time, was merely a "temporary" place in which to earn money and improve their life circumstances. However, since many of these older immigrants had lived in Belgium for three or even four decades, the meaning of home had changed for them. Although Taiwan was initially their home, however, since the period of time they had lived in Belgium was becoming gradually longer than the length of time they had lived in Taiwan, they were beginning to see Taiwan as their "homeland" rather than their "home". Belgium, on the contrary, gradually changed from being a place for merely earning money to being their "home." In fact, many of the research participants shared similar ways of describing the meaning of home at different stages of life, saying that as time goes on, an initially unfamiliar foreign land will become your "home," and that your original home in your home country will become a remote "hometown" (日久他鄉變故鄉) (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017; Ang, 2017; Liu,2015; Hage, 1997; Doyle, 1992).

To conclude, according to the discussion above, the immigration life stories shared

by my research participants in this study demonstrated several important aspects regarding the notion of home for them and in the migration context. In the context of immigration, the meaning of home is dynamic and fluid rather than static or unchangeable. Moreover, how immigrants gain a sense of home in their life is further influenced by an individual's distinct lived circumstances and personal characteristics. In this regard they have quite different homemaking experiences that are embodied by their own distinct situations. However, although homemaking experiences vary from person to person, the stories and narratives shared in this study reveal that the notion of home in the context of immigration is multidimensional rather than a single aspect. This means that no single dimension could cover all of the aspects regarding the notion of home. Several dimensions including physical, transnational, social relationships, tangible materials, intangible cultures, as well as the issue of time were frequently mentioned by research participants regarding their homemaking experiences in Belgium. Therefore, it is more appropriate to consider immigrants' homemaking experiences as an ongoing process, and that their main reason for doing so is to obtain a sense of home and to feel at home in a foreign land. In this regard, the notion of home for immigrants is in the making rather than consolidated object (Yee Kelly,2018; Mollett and Faria, 2018; Levin, 2014). The main findings in this study are set out in Table 1.

8.3 Contributions of this study

The following section aims to discuss some of the contributions made by this study. As an empirical contribution, this study is a seminal research that systematically examines the lives and homemaking experiences of Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium. This study fills the gap in research outcomes as the majority of existing studies mainly focus on the life experiences of Taiwanese immigrants in English-speaking countries, especially in the United States. Few studies have examined Taiwanese immigrants' life experiences in European continent and a systematic study focusing on Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium still could not be found yet. Moreover, I also expect that this thesis could further improve the invisible states that Taiwanese immigrants have faced in the Belgian mainstream society and also in the academic literatures (Lin, 2018).

With regard to the methodological contribution, several different ethnographical and qualitative research approaches were applied in conducting this study and collecting research data. This included several years of immersive participated observations online and offline as well as the application of both netnography and ethnographic methods involved of conducting the online participant observations among several Taiwanese immigrant virtual communities on Facebook and working at the Ecole Sun Yat-Sen in Brussels for the offline fieldwork. Accordingly, these research methods' applications enabled me to collect research data as well as participate in both of Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' online and offline life. In addition, both semi-structured and photo-elicitation interview methods were used to collect research participants' narratives and voices, and also visual data that related to their daily life and homemaking experiences in a foreign land. During the data collection process, 42 Taiwanese immigrants were successfully recruited to participate in the study, and many of them generously shared their private photos or pictures relating to their experiences of living and homemaking in their emigrant life in Belgium. These visual data provided by the research participants made a significant contribution during the interview process enabling more detailed discussion between me and the research participants, moreover, facilitate me could easier understanding of the participants' stories and the meanings they lay behind regarding the notion of home in the migration context (Pink,2004; Diefenbach, 2009 ; Adams,2015; Bates, McCann, Kaye, & Taylor, 2017).

Furthermore, it is also important to note that this study is a seminal research outcome that applies the theoretical concept of intersectionality into the discussion of immigrant homemaking experiences. In fact, the concept of intersectionality originated from gender studies and especially black women's studies. Initially the concept of intersectionality was applied in order to explain the disadvantaged social position faced by black women in mainstream US society, not merely due to the color of their skin but also intersectional affected by other individual or even societal factors simultaneously. Therefore, the core concept of intersectionality in gender studies aims to remind us that a single aspect (like skin color) is inadequate for examining black women's lived experience and their disadvantaged life situations. Therefore, it is more appropriate to understand black women's lived experience and their social status by considering different levels of individual and societal factors simultaneously (Collins,2009; Clarke

& McCall, 2013; Carastathis, 2014).

This study does not only apply the concept of intersectionality, it innovates theoretically by proposing a new concept of "intersectional home" (交織的家) in order to exam and explain Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking experiences in a foreign land. Moreover, the life stories shared by the research participants in this study reveal that their homemaking experiences are not merely affected by a single factor, they are instead influenced intersectionally by a variety of personal characteristics and distinct lived circumstances. In this regard, the new concept of "intersectional home", proposed in this study, explains effectively why the meaning of home can vary from person to person. The other contribution made by this study regarding theoretical developments is that the author does not only explore the immigrants' homemaking experiences regarding their private home/small home, but also examines how they negotiate different ethnonational identity labels and how they identify themselves culturally and ethnically by applying the concept of big home/national home. By using the concepts of "small" and "big" home simultaneously, this study demonstrates how Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' "small" and "big" homemaking experiences are simultaneously and intersectionally affected by both of their individual characteristics and other societal backgrounds. Therefore, the findings in this study do not simply challenge the convention perspective that regards the notion of home as static, but further points out that the notion of home in the context of immigration is multidimensional, intersectional, and fluid rather than unidimensional or unchangeable (Yee Kelly,2018; Mollett and Faria, 2018; Levin, 2014).

Although only eight of the forty-two research participants' experiences are detailed fully in this study, the remaining participants' stories have provided abundant and useful information, increasing my understanding of Taiwanese immigrants' daily life experiences and homemaking practices in a foreign country. Notably, the homemaking practices and migration life experiences presented and discussed in the previous chapters seem to vary from person to person. However, it is not suggested that similarities in storyline and characteristics of homemaking cannot be found in their various and distinctive life and homing experiences. In the following paragraphs, I would like to further apply, combine, and revise the theoretical concepts proposed by both Magat (1999) and Boccagni (2017) and also employ the concept of

intersectionality in assisting me to make induction findings and find similarities and differences with regard to homemaking practices and migration life experiences among the four sub-immigrant groups in this study. I retained but revised the original hexagonal homemaking scheme proposed by Boccagni in incorporating Magat's concepts of small and big home. In fact, I made the initial diagram octagon as I thought Boccagni's original diagram and explanations ignored the important role of big home (ethnonational identity/home) play during immigrant's homemaking practices. Among the different personal characteristics and affected aspects, I further found that **"immigration trajectories," "socioeconomic status (occupations),"** and **"generations"** are three vital factors that could intersectionally affect immigrants' homemaking practices and life experiences in a foreign land. However, it is also necessary to explain that the dotted lines in red shown in the figures refer to the different aspects of home are dynamic, fluid, and possible intersectional influence with each other.

Figure 8.1 shows the similarities in homemaking experiences that were shared by many of my restaurateur research participants in the study. This sub-group of immigrants migrated to Belgium or arrived in Europe mainly in 1970s. At the time, most of them had limited financial capital and social resources, therefore they had no choice but to spend the majority of their time working. They needed to earn as much as possible, improve their circumstances, and search for better career developments owning and operating their own restaurants rather than merely being part-time workers or hour-wage earners. Moreover, as the main characteristic of the Chinese catering industry is that it is operated by immigrants and their families, having their own restaurant is the vital and first step of homemaking for many Taiwanese restaurateurs. It enables them to obtain a sense of home and start to feel a sense of belonging in the host society. Thus, having their own restaurant or not is the first concern for many Taiwanese restaurateurs in establishing their own private home.

However, as the time goes by, many of the Taiwanese restaurateurs in this study have already retired from their previous work in the catering industry and spend most of their retired life accompanying their children and grandchildren. In this regard, the family has become their center of life after retirement. Therefore, their family, children,

and grandchildren become the major components in constructing their immigrant lifeworld and their sense of home. However, as those early Taiwanese immigrants have already lived in Belgium for more than four decades, some of their parents have already passed away. The meanings of Belgium and Taiwan for them, therefore, are changed. As they have lived in Belgium for more time than in Taiwan, Belgium in turn becomes their home. Taiwan, in contrast, changes from home to homeland. Accordingly, their previous memories of Taiwan are also blurring. However, as many restaurateurs' family members are still living in Taiwan, the notion of a distinct home for them mainly refers to their homeland in Taiwan.

As in their retirement life, many of the older generation spend much time with their grandchildren playing in the parks surrounding their community or private houses, public spaces, or places like the community park and surrounding facilities, also help them to obtain a sense of home. Moreover, gathering, sharing and eating food with their Taiwanese or sometime pan-Chinese friends of similar age and occupational background also plays a very important role for them in the homemaking process. Traveling, food sharing and eating, and playing Mahjong are three social activities they frequently conduct. These co-ethnic and pan-ethnic friendships are important for these early Taiwanese restaurateurs as most of them have limited social interactions and local networks in the host society. In this regard, those friends who share cultural and ethnical proximity have become a vital resource and link with the country of Belgium, and thereby construct a sense of belonging and home in their immigrant life. Accordingly, those co-/pan ethnic friendships constitute the major part of home in the proximity domain.

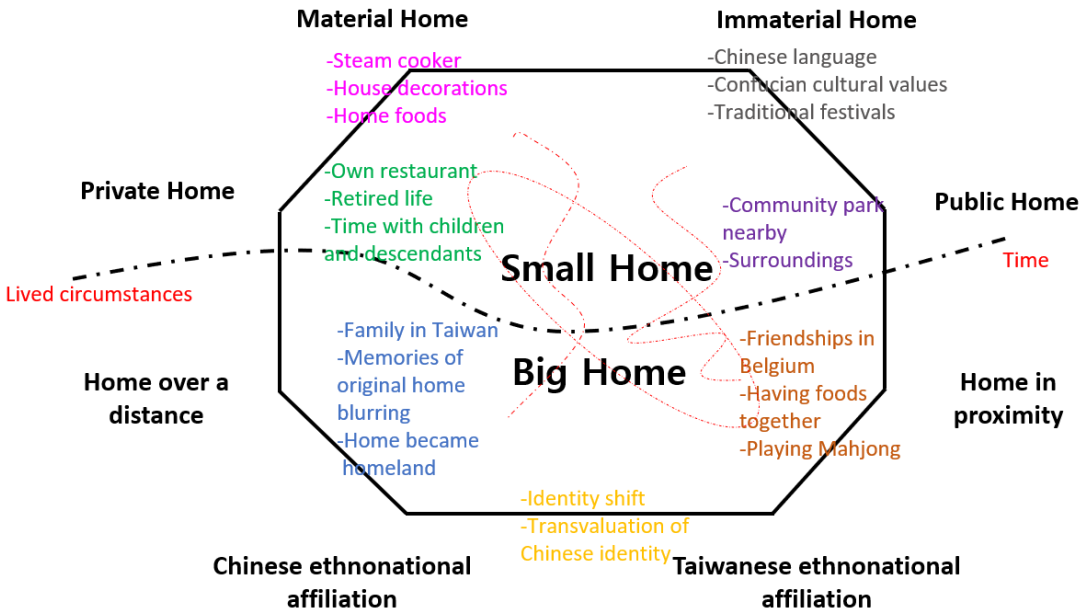


Figure 8.1 Similarities of homemaking practices shared by Taiwanese restaurateurs
Source: This study.

Furthermore, with regard to the material and immaterial dimensions, domestic furniture, special home decorations, and home food constitute three important domains of their material home. The TA Tung steam cookers, TA Tung dolls, family pictures, family letters, international phone cards that hang or decorate the walls in houses, and toys played with by their children remind elderly Taiwanese restaurateurs of home and make them feel at home. Moreover, they also emphasize the importance of the Chinese language, traditional Chinese festivals, and Confucian cultural values helping to provide a feeling of home. For example, speaking Mandarin Chinese and writing traditional Chinese characters are two meaningful cultural references to present their affiliation of home culture. In addition, celebrating some traditional Chinese festivals especially the Lunar New Year with the younger generation and holding onto some of the traditional Confucian cultural values can also help them to develop a sense of home since they are still cherishing their own heritage culture.

Regarding their big homemaking and ethnonational identity negotiation, as most of them grew up between the 1950s and 1960s, under the KMT's Chinese nationalism

education, they tended to identify themselves as “Chinese” since the Chinese identity label was accepted by the majority of people in Taiwan before they migrated to Belgium. It was not a difficult issue for them to identify themselves as Chinese at that time. However, their ethnonational identity started to face challenges, especially after 1978, when the CCP government opened its national border and began to allow its citizens to emigrate overseas. As the population of new Chinese immigrants from Mainland China to Europe, including Belgium, increased, from the 1970s onwards, these early Belgian Taiwanese immigrants and restaurateurs started to feel confused and faced difficulties in convincing themselves and also others to continue holding their original Chinese identity. Based on my fieldwork and interview experiences, it was interesting to find that two of the ethnonational identity negotiations and transformations happened among this sub-immigrant group. Some of them have experienced significant ethnonational identity change and have shifted their identity from Chinese to Taiwanese. They no longer use the Chinese label to describe themselves as they have discovered that the international situation is not as the KMT government educated them when they were young. However, in contrast to shifting their ethnonational identity, the majority of these early Taiwanese immigrants and restaurateurs still identify themselves as Chinese, however they attach different meanings and interpretations to this identity label in order to distinguish between themselves and Chinese immigrants from Mainland China. Accordingly, the transvaluation identity negotiation strategy is more frequently used for these Taiwanese restaurateurs than shifting. Still, a few of the elderly restaurateurs insist on their original Chinese identity and do not change, however numbers of these people are decreasing.

Figure 8.2 shows similarities in homemaking characteristics shared by the sub-group of Taiwanese immigrant women/housewives. The majority of these women migrated to Belgium through intercultural marriage and mainly married Belgian husbands, but they are limited by language barriers since many of them can only speak Chinese and English rather than local Belgium languages of Dutch and French. This not only creates difficulties finding an official or a full-time job in the mainstream labor market, but it is interesting that, based on my observations during the fieldwork, these kinds of disadvantages and job-searching situations are more likely to happen to immigrant women whose previous work experience and professional life related to

humanities and social science disciplines. This is because those professional knowledges and work experiences have its own context, making these women's human capital and previous work-related values harder to transmit and accumulate after they leave their homeland and migrate overseas. In contrast, immigrant women whose professional expertise related to international business or technologies may have an increased possibility of finding an official or full-time job since their professional knowledges and work-related values are shared internationally and are less likely to be affected by a different local context. In this regard, their human capital is more likely to be transmitted and accumulated overseas.

However, as the majority of immigrant women who are research participants in this study do not have expertise in technology or engineering professions, many have faced difficulty in finding an official job or full-time employment. Many of them do not have any choice but to give up their expectations of entering the Belgium mainstream labor market, and reluctantly become full-time housewives taking most of the responsibility for domestic work and other duties concerning caregiving and parenting. Even though some of these women could successfully find job positions in later life as their local language proficiency was good enough, being a full-time housewife is a common experience shared by the majority of Taiwanese immigrant women. Accordingly, both their migration trajectories and occupations as full-time housewives make a significant impact on their daily life and also their homemaking experiences.

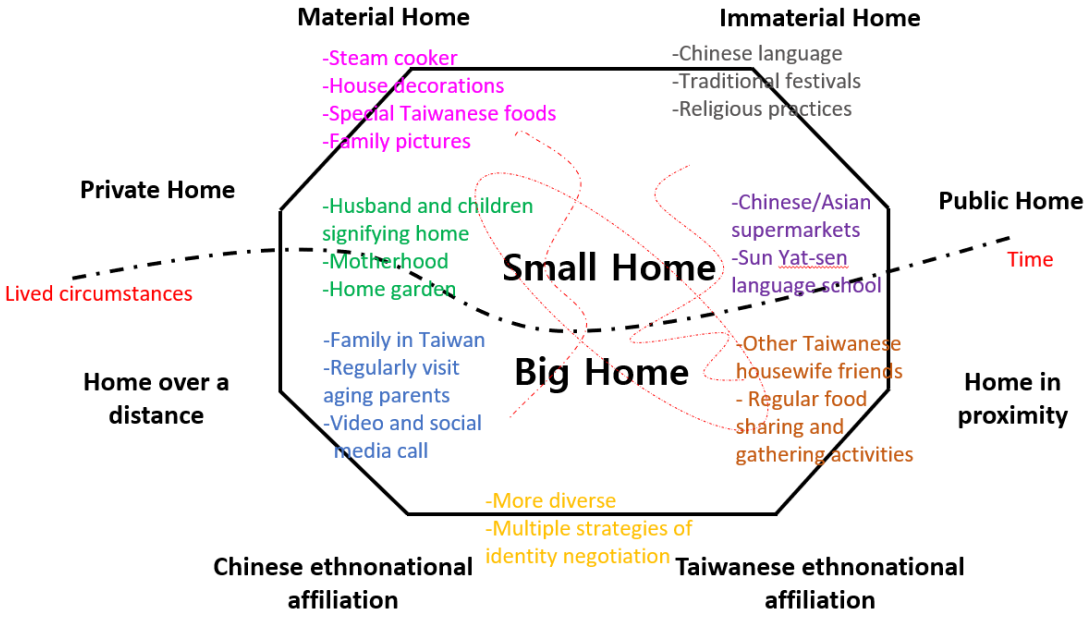


Figure 8.2 Similarities of homemaking practices shared by Taiwanese women and housewives

Source: This study

It is not surprising that being full-time housewives, many of them spend the majority of their time in their family-life domain, therefore, they put a strong emphasis on their relations with husbands and children in constructing the notion of private home. Narratives such as, "where my husband and children are, there is my home" were quite common. Obviously, they make close connections between their private home and family relations with husband and children. Moreover, practicing motherhood and showing mother-love toward their children, accompanying their children, and doing the gardening at their home also play an important role for these immigrant women in constructing their private home and helping them to obtain a sense of belonging and feeling at home.

As the majority of these women's aged parents were still living in Taiwan, maintaining close relationships and frequent interaction with their Taiwanese family via regular visits and online/digital communications are vital strategies in maintaining links with their distance home in Taiwan. In addition, many Taiwanese immigrant women/housewives like to do their grocery shopping at Chinese/Asian supermarkets, accompanied by their children, in order to prepare and make food for their families. In

this regard, these Chinese/Asian supermarkets further become as their public "home" since these women enjoy and treasure the time that they spend with their children shopping. In addition to those (pan)ethnic supermarkets, the Sun Yat-sen language school in Brussel also provides home feeling for many Taiwanese immigrant women/housewives. Since these women face difficulties finding an official or a full-time job in the mainstream labor market, some turn to work as adjunct and weekend Chinese language teachers. As this language heritage school's staff and educational team is mainly constituted by Taiwanese women immigrants, teaching language courses and having lunch together every weekend in a shared ethnical space further gives them a sense of home. As they spend the majority of time occupied by family and domestic work, their limited social networks and friendships with other Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese immigrant women/mothers mean that it is positive for them to construct an immigrant mother's social collective identity by regularly gathering for making, having, and sharing foods together. Many of the research participants told with me during the fieldwork that they cherish their "Taiwanese mother gathering time" and when they get together, it gives them a feeling of belonging and being at home.

In a similar way to the restaurateurs, the women's TA Tung steam cookers, family pictures, the daily making of Taiwanese food, and the furniture within their houses are all important components in constructing a material sense of home. In addition, most of the Taiwanese immigrant women/housewives also insist on teaching and asking their children to learn and speak Chinese. They also expect their children to experience some of the traditional festivals, the Lunar New Year being the most important one. However, compared to their restaurateur counterparts, they emphasize the importance of traditional Confucian culture values less as they are relatively younger than the restaurateurs' generation.

Furthermore, regarding big homemaking practices and ethnonational identity negotiations, it is important to point out that this sub-group of immigration does not have an obvious migration period. In this study, the group's age range varies from women in their 20s to 50s making it difficult to form a general conclusion regarding ethnonational identity. However, there is still a trend that can be seen whereby elderly immigrant women are more likely to accept the Chinese identity label or related

ethnicity and cultural values. In contrast, younger immigrant women are more likely to use Taiwanese in describing their ethnonational identity affiliation.

It is also important to point out that many of the immigrant women and mothers do not like to talk about sensitive identity issues in their daily life; however, one common ethnonational identity negotiation and performance strategy can still be found. This can be summarized as "*being Taiwanese at home but trying to act as Belgian in public life.*" In fact, this is quite a common identity negotiation and performance strategy that is applied by many Taiwanese women and housewives since they feel comfortable to show their Taiwanese identity in front of their family or Taiwanese friends and colleagues by making Taiwanese foods at home, chatting about Taiwanese issues with colleagues, and talking about Taiwan with their close friends or relatives. However, they would not do so when interacting with their Mainland Chinese counterparts or local Belgian friends since they feel that it would not be appropriate to talk about their homeland with others who may not feel that it is interesting or in order to avoid possible conflict. As they have opportunities to interact with local Belgians at their children's schools or in other social occasions, they further expect themselves to learn how Belgians think, talk, and interact with each other. Many of these immigrant women believe that they will spend the majority of their lives living in Belgium. They, therefore, do not like to be treated and regarded as "outsiders," foreigners," or "cultural others" forever. Many of the immigrant women use their free time taking courses and learning about local Belgium culture in order to understand the country in more depth, although they do not think they can be totally Belgian since their Taiwanese cultural and ethnonational backgrounds play important roles in their life and identity affiliations.

Figure 8.3 shows some of the shared homemaking practices among Taiwanese working holiday youths while working and living in a foreign country. Limited by the regulations of the working holiday visa, the Belgian government only allows working holiday youths to stay and work for a year maximum. In this regard, the majority of Taiwanese WHMs do not regard Belgium or the dwelling they rent as their home. Instead, they are more likely to consider themselves as sojourners who stay in the host society temporarily. However, the majority of the Taiwanese WHMs are made up of young and highly educated female participants, some of whom meet and make local or

Belgian boyfriends during or after their WH program. These women may change their initial migration decision of returning home after completing their WH program if they decide to settle down because they are engaging with new intercultural intimacies. Moreover, it is interesting to note that many of them hold flexible attitudes toward their intimate relationships as some of them responded to me during my fieldwork, "*I'm still young … so, if my relationship with my boyfriend is stable, then maybe I could stay here longer…, if it is not…, I don't think it is a big problem for me, if that happened, then I will go back to Taiwan.*" As they have flexible and open-minded attitudes with regard to their intercultural intimacies, the notion of private home for them are still in the making. Accordingly, two different perceptions with regard to the notion of private home for those Taiwanese working holiday youths emerge—for some WHMs who do not intend to stay in Belgium, they would neither regard Belgium nor the dwellings they rent as their home. In contrast, some other WHMs who engage in intimate relations with their local or Belgian partners, would be more likely to hold a dynamic point of view when defining their notion of private home in this foreign country.

Notable, many of the Taiwanese WHMs merely consider Belgium as their relay station enabling them to experience exotic cultures, lifestyles, and also earn money. Maintaining frequent communications and interactions with their family in Taiwan by utilizing different digital equipment is one of the vital daily transnational communication practices of managing and cultivating their relations with home at a distance. By doing so, they can obtain emotional support from their family and, moreover, the effect of "online togetherness" could further help them to gain a sense of home or make them feel at home via different forms of video or digital joint appearance and participation.

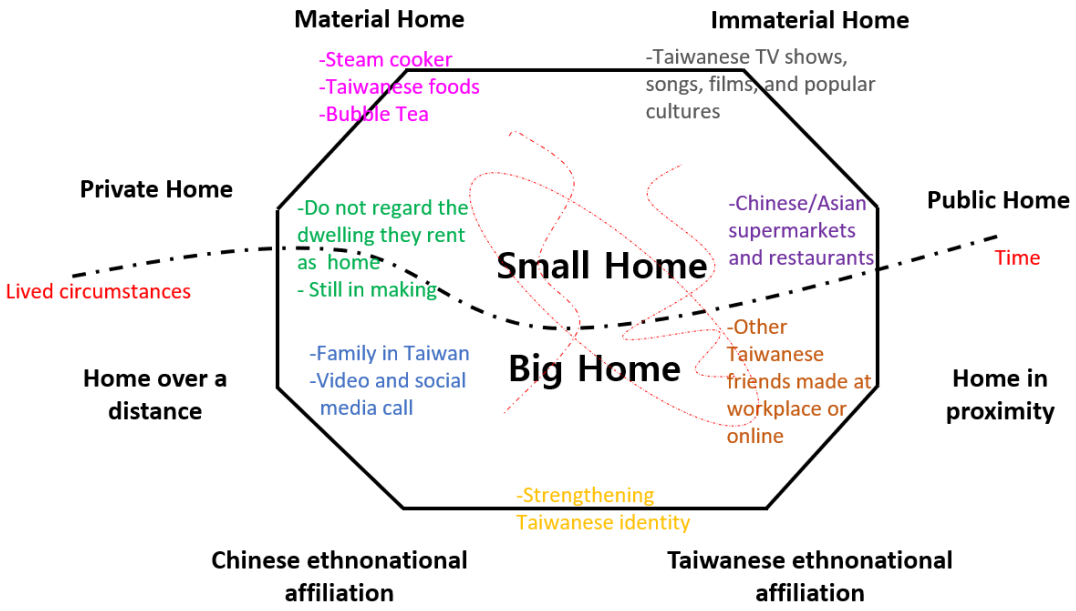


Figure 8.3 Similarities of homemaking practices shared by Taiwanese WHMs

Source: This study

The temporary nature of WHMs in the host society makes these Taiwanese youths find, attach, or connect their sense of home through specific materials. In this respect, bubble tea is the most frequently mentioned material that gives them a sense of home since bubble tea has already been regarded as the most representative Taiwanese food culture worldwide. It was interesting to find that many Taiwanese working holiday youths indicated that when they were missing Taiwan or their home, they would either go to buy bubble tea at a beverage shop or buy the necessary ingredients and make bubble tea by themselves.

Accordingly, the making and consuming of bubble tea is meaningful for those Taiwanese working holiday youths since drinking Taiwanese bubble tea not only releases a sense of nostalgia but can also help them make an emotional connection with their homeland in Taiwan. In addition to obtaining a sense of home via specific Taiwanese foods and food ingredients, frequently consuming Taiwanese popular culture including watching Taiwanese TV shows, listening to Taiwanese popular music, or watching Taiwanese movies through YouTube or other streaming video platforms can give these WHMs a feeling of home even though they are not physically in their Taiwanese home at the time.

Moreover, some specific public spaces within the city can also give these Taiwanese WHMs a feeling of home. Chinese/Asian supermarkets and Chinese or Taiwanese restaurants are the public spaces which are frequently mentioned by these Taiwanese working holiday youths as many of them spend much time grocery shopping for necessary food ingredients to make their daily meals. Notably, in their daily food making, they prefer to cook and eat Taiwanese or Chinese styles of foods as they are used to its taste and flavor, and they further connect this style of food with the notion of home. In conclusion, several different popular culture and home-style food consumption practices do constitute important aspect of creating the notions of material and immaterial home for Taiwanese working holiday youths while working and living in a foreign land.

Furthermore, about their perceptions of big home and ethnonational identity, it is important to point out that the majority of Taiwanese WHMs are working in the pan-Chinese ethnic or related business sectors that are mainly operated and constituted by Mainland Chinese employers and co-workers. Therefore, this makes their workplaces important sites of ethnonational identity negotiation based on interaction experiences with their Mainland Chinese counterparts. Many of the Taiwanese WHMs share similar interaction experiences and indicate that it is peaceful and that they do not have conflicts most of the time when they are working together or having conversations with each other. However, if the topic of conversation goes deeper, or touches on issues about politics, sensitive cross strait relations, or ethnonational identity, then differences with regard to political attitudes and ideologies between the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese become severe. Those Taiwanese working holiday youths' interaction and communication experiences with their Mainland Chinese counterparts do not help them to blur differences and boundaries between each other. Their interactions, in contrast, make these Taiwanese working holiday youths realize that they are not and cannot be the same, even if they share many cultural or ethnical similarities with their Mainland Chinese counterparts. Both the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese speak the Chinese language and are also significantly affected by sharing traditional Chinese and Confucian cultures and values. However, there are still differences with regard to political and ethnonational issues between each other despite Taiwanese working holiday youths feeling that they have close and positive relations or friendships with

their Mainland Chinese counterparts. Moreover, as the majority of these Taiwanese working holiday youths identify themselves as Taiwanese, in this regard, their interaction experiences in Mainland Chinese-dominated workplaces result in the strengthening of these youths' initial Taiwanese identity.

Last but not least, figure 8.4 demonstrates some of the shared homemaking practices among Taiwanese expatriates and professional migrant workers living and working in Belgium. These Taiwanese expatriates and professional migrant workers' length of stay in Belgium are determined by work contracts signed by them and their host companies. On average, their length of stay in Belgium is between three and five years. In this regard, these professional migrant workers are also categorized as a type of temporary migrant. However, it is interesting to note that as their length of stay is typically longer than their working holiday counterparts, the different length of stay and sense of time affect how they perceive and define the notion of home in a foreign country. They tend to regard the dwellings they rent as temporary home in the host society. The contract basis of their work and uncertain nature of expatriate life and work conditions also makes some of the research participants feel that their private home is always on the move as they are sometimes asked to work in a third place. In this regard, temporary and mobile are two of the important terms they usually use in describing the meaning and notion of private home for them. As with their working holiday and immigrant women counterparts, utilizing different social media or digital platforms, and regularly or annually visiting their homes in Taiwan are all important strategies in maintaining and managing relations with their homeland and family in Taiwan.

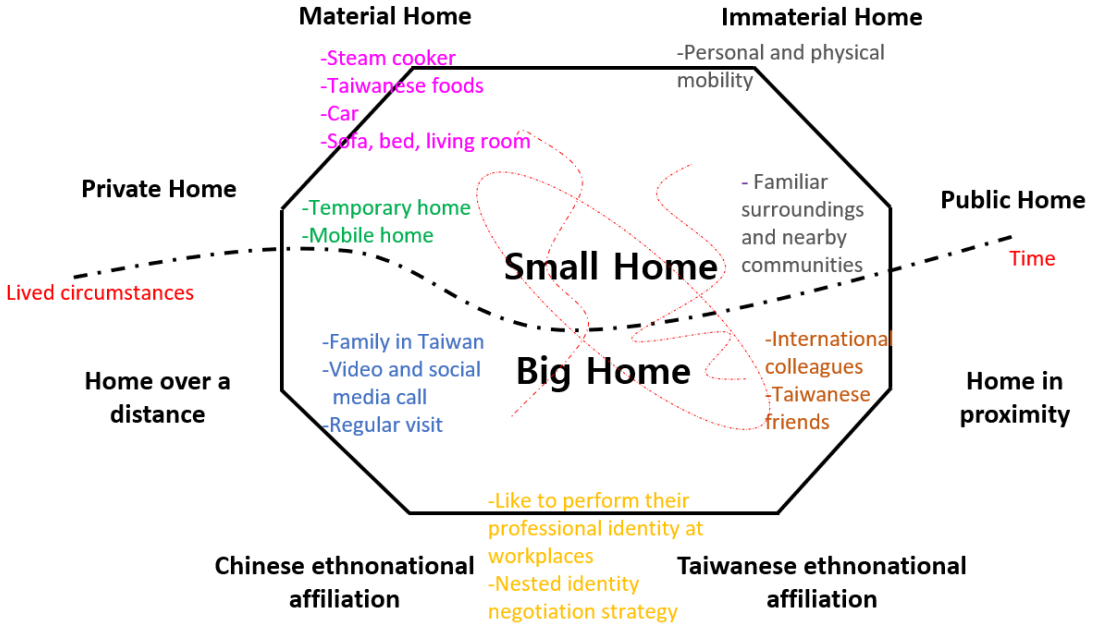


Figure 8.4 Similarities of homemaking practices shared by Taiwanese expatriates and professional migrant workers

Source: This study

It is interesting to note that some of the furniture in the dwellings of professional migrant workers, such as the sofa, bed, bookshelf can help to give a sense of home or make them feel at home as they spend much time using this furniture and resting after their daily work. Notably, having a car or not is also important for some research participants in obtaining sense of belonging and feeling at home in the host society. Some research participants perceive the car as more than a vehicle used for transportation purposes. Instead, buying and having cars in the host society also has a symbolic meaning suggesting that the research participants have long-term plans for staying in Belgium. Therefore, cars can also make them feel rooted with a sense of belonging while living and working in a foreign land. Accordingly, as these professional migrant workers enjoy better economic conditions than their working holiday counterparts, even though both of these two migrant sub-groups are in Belgium on a temporary basis, these Taiwanese expatriates and professional migrant workers put more emphasis on their personal or physical mobility by travelling and exploring intra/inter countries. Many of them indicated that if they did not have the capacity for mobility or if they could not travel physically, then it would be impossible for them to

make connections with the host society. In conclusion, with regard to the aspect of immaterial home, they emphasize the level of mobility they have in their migrant life. Accordingly, as they can be mobile and move freely in their migrant life, some familiar public spaces, such as the surrounding and community where they live also provide them with a sense of home. Moreover, their colleagues in the workplace and Taiwanese friends in their private life both increase their sense of belonging in their migrant life while working and living in Belgium as they have more local and international friendship networks than their working holiday counterparts.

Furthermore, with regard to professional migrant workers' big homemaking and ethnonational identity negotiation and performance experiences, most of their workplaces especially in the high-tech industrial sectors are constituted by highly diverse employees with different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. Notably, these ethnically diverse workplaces, in turn, reduce the level of importance of ethnonational identity issues in the workplace and during interactions between Taiwanese migrant workers and their coworkers. In this sense, many of the research participants are more likely to apply the nested identity performance strategy and prefer to show their professional identity rather than perform their ethnonational identity in the workplace or when interacting with their colleagues. This means that for these Taiwanese expatriates and professional migrant workers, their workplaces are not important sites or social fields for them to negotiate or present their ethnonational identity as their colleagues are from all around the world, thus making issues of ethnonational identity less important. They are more likely to show their Taiwanese identity in their private life or when gathering with their Taiwanese friends or counterparts together.

8.4 Limitations, discussions and future research suggestions

This research is an anthropological study that applies both ethnography and qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. According to philosophical ideas behind of ethnographic and qualitative research, the main goal of this study is to explore a variety of immigrant life and homemaking experiences in a foreign land rather than find a causal relationship between different statistical variables or construct a generalized explanation model. In this regard, the research findings in this study could merely be generalized to explain someone who shares or has similar lived circumstances or life experiences with the research participants in this study. Notably, the research findings in this study are individual and context based, which means that each immigrant's life story presented here is unique. In this regard, the research findings in this study provide an interpretive rather than the scientific-driven academic knowledges. Thus, the aim of this study is not to try and provide a generalized conclusion or a scientific model, the life and homemaking experiences presented here are subjective, special, context based, and intersectionally affected by each immigrant's distinct lived circumstances and different personal background. Therefore, the author expected that this thesis will make people understand more about the diversity of Taiwanese immigrants' real-life and homemaking experiences in Belgium (Carminati, 2018).

Notable, since all my research participants are first-generation immigrants living in Taiwan, they mostly link their perceptions regarding home with their homeland. Moreover, they construct deeper relationships with other Taiwanese counterparts. However, it is not appropriate to consider that they live only in Taiwanese ethnic friendship bubbles. On the contrary, the truth is that many of my research participants, including myself, have positive encounters with other ethnicities, and therefore construct beautiful friendships beyond Taiwanese ethnic boundaries in immigrant life. During my fieldwork, it was interesting to find that positive intercultural experiences and friendship networks beyond Taiwanese immigrant communities also play important roles in Taiwanese immigrants' homemaking practices. In the following paragraphs, I will further share some narratives observed during my fieldwork with regard to my research participants' friendship making experiences and how their different friendships

play roles in their homemaking practices.

It is important to point out that although fewer elderly Taiwanese restaurateurs identify themselves as Chinese and would apply different cultural references in making different interpretations regarding their Chinese ethnic and identity label like the research participant Alice Ho has done. However, this does not mean that those elderly Taiwanese restaurateurs do not have good friendships with their Mainland Chinese counterparts. One of my research participant's narratives was impressive. TU is a 64-year-old female just retired from her previous job working in the catering industry for several decades. She has no problem interacting with her Mainland Chinese friends, and what is more interesting is that she further organizes the so called "seven-flower" entertainment group. Other elderly Taiwanese female retired restaurateurs constitute the majority, but the group also includes some of the retired female restaurateurs from Mainland China. TU frequently gathers with other "six-flower" friends playing Mahjong or having trips together to other countries. In TU's own words:

> *It is no problem for me hanging out with my Mainland Chinese friends…, and I think that nationality and different political ideologies should not be the main consideration in making friend[s]…, there is no political problem between [me] and my Mainland Chinese friends…, I think the person who can be my good friend or not is not determine by their political attitudes, however, it influences our personalities*.

It is true that many elderly Taiwanese restauranteurs indicate the most important factors influencing the quality of friendships and their willingness to make friends with Mainland Chinese counterparts are not their nationality or political ideologies but their personalities and the level of sincerity during interactions.

Moreover, during my fieldwork, I found that the Sun Yat-sen heritage school and the social integration classes in the local community have become vital social fields for Taiwanese immigrant women encountering others with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and therefore, construct positive encounters and friend networks beyond the Taiwanese community.

As the Sun Yat-sen heritage school is mainly constituted of Mainland Chinese immigrant descendants and their parents, the school becomes a vital node and offers many of my research participants the chance to meet and further construct friendships with Mainland Chinese immigrant parents. As I had been the Chinese language teacher at the school, it was interesting to find that some of my research participants (who were also teachers at the school) had quite positive and peaceful interaction experiences with Mainland Chinese immigrant parents especially at lunch-time since teachers' foods at lunch on every weekend are cook and provide by those Mainland Chinese immigrant parents. Some of those parents would eat lunch together with us (meaning Taiwanese teachers). The frequent conversation topics ranged from their immigrant lives, parenthood practices, food-making, family life, and, of course, their children's learning progress. In addition, my Taiwanese colleagues and Mainland Chinese immigrant parents would sometimes help each other making or purchasing some special Chinese foods like "roast duck," "Chinese sausage," and so on by WeChat or from other Chinese restaurants. Moreover, at the end of each semester, some of those Mainland Chinese immigrant parents would invite their children's Taiwanese teachers and students to go out on daytrips. Taking myself as an example, I had one experience participating in a daytrip with my Mainland Chinese students and their parents in Belgium, and during the trip, we happily talked to each other and had no barriers interacting with each other. In this regard, the political issues merely play a minor role at the school and the interactions between my Taiwanese colleagues and their Mainland Chinese immigrant parents. Generally, there have been no big problems or barriers for Taiwanese teachers and Mainland Chinese immigrant parents interacting with each other at the school or in an educational context.

Moreover, many of my research participants (especially immigrant women) requested to take social integration courses in their communities to improve their Dutch or French language proficiency. The language and social integration courses they take become an important social field for them to meet with others with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and enlarge their friendship networks beyond the Taiwanese immigrant community. Some of my research participants (immigrant women) indicated that it was quite good for them taking these language and social integration courses,

which could help them not only improve their language proficiency but also enlarge their views regarding different cultures and meet with people from different places with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, one of my research participants, Lin Liu (a 29-year-old immigrant female), has made good relationships and shared delightful friendships with her classmates who were also immigrant women coming from Thailand and Hong Kong. Although they do not have much free time to interact with each other, they sometimes get together and have coffee or cake after classes. However, for Lin Liu, having these inter-cultural friend networks and taking language and social integration classes together is important for her to construct a social collective identity. Taking courses and learning together further makes Lin Liu feel less lonely, and sometimes they provide emotional support for each other when having difficulties learning and regarding the progress of courses.

Accordingly, it is interesting to find that the Sun Yat-sen heritage school and social integration courses play important roles for Taiwanese immigrants meeting new people, interacting with other cultures and ethnicities, and constructing and expanding their social networks beyond their original Taiwanese ethnic communities. However, the social functions that the Sun Yat-sen school and integration courses offer are different. At the Sun Yat-sen school, where plenty of opportunities are offered to my Taiwanese research participants to access the Mainland Chinese immigrant community, the social integration courses and classrooms have become vital social nodes for my research participants to meet new people and make friends beyond their Taiwanese and pan-Chinese ethnic bubbles.

Furthermore, the Taiwanese high-skilled migrant workers and expatriates are more dynamic and internationalized since their workplaces are more culturally and ethnically diverse. Taking Wilson as example, he is the only Taiwanese engineer in his team, however, his colleagues come from all around the world from India, Japan, the US, and other European countries. In such an international work environment, Wilson has made good relations with his international colleagues. He sometimes travels and mountain climbs with his international colleagues. Wilson further indicated that nationality and ethnic background are not important considerations while making friends as his coworkers come from all around the world with many different cultural and ethnic

backgrounds. In this regard, he has no problem interacting and making friends with those of other cultures and ethnicities even though he still has many Taiwanese friends in his migrant life.

According to the above narratives and my fieldwork observations, it is important to point out that it is not appropriate to regard that Taiwanese immigrants only live within their own ethnic bubble. However, it is true that, as all my research participants are first-generation immigrants/migrants living in Belgium, they are more likely to mention and link their perception regarding the notion of home to Taiwan. They also feel more easy and comfortable interacting with other Taiwanese counterparts as they come from the same place and share closer cultural proximity. Despite this, many of my research participants still have and further construct positive and joyful friendships with people of different cultures and ethnicities beyond Taiwanese or even pan-Chinese ethnic bubbles.

My friendship making experiences also echoed the previous narratives shared by my interlocutors. In addition to my Taiwanese friends, I have constructed good relations and friendships with other Mainland Chinese colleagues who share the same research room with me – they are JingJing, Tian, and Lin. I do not only maintain frequent communications with them using WeChat but also provide emotional support and share research ideas and progress with each other. Even though we have different perspectives on some political issues, we do not have any struggles with these. Most of the time we keep peace and tolerate each other's different opinions, and thereby construct our individual competences of respecting each other. Except for my Mainland Chinese research colleagues at my professional life, I have one very good Mainland Chinese friend who came to Belgium to teach Chinese language at the Sinology department of Ghent University. Me and other Taiwanese friends frequently gather with her and her son to have food together, travel, and we even celebrate her son's birthday annually. More interesting is that even though sometimes we do have different attitudes and opinions regarding some political issues or sensitive topics regarding Cross-strait relations, those different political attitudes and positions do not make any obstacle for us in maintaining our relations and friendships. It is touching that when I had to go back

to Taiwan, she almost cried and told me that I was her first Taiwanese friend. We shared very good memories and friendships in the past three years while I stayed in Belgium, and it is a pity that she cannot freely come and visit us in Taiwan due to the limitations of political issues between Taiwan and Mainland China.

The aim of sharing the above narratives and experiences is to point out that although all of my research participants are first-generation Taiwanese immigrants living in Belgium, they are more likely to connect their perceptions regarding the notion of home back to Taiwan. However, Taiwanese immigrants do not only live within the Taiwanese community and ethnic bubbles. Many of them have positive experiences interacting with other cultures and ethnicities in their communities, at social integration courses, and the Sun Yat-sen heritage school, further constructing many good quality intercultural friendships that are beyond their original Taiwanese immigrant community. In this regard, it is not correct to regard that Taiwanese immigrants only have social networks within their ethnic bubbles. On the contrary, many of them have positive experiences, share good relations with friends who have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and do not have major problems interacting with their Mainland Chinese counterparts. In sum, Belgian Taiwanese immigrants' social interactions and lives are quite diverse and intercultural. In this regard, it is not appropriate to use the dichotomy perspective of Taiwanese or non-Taiwanese to understand their friendship making and homing experiences while living in a foreign land.

Furthermore, the above discussions demonstrate the different modes by which sub-types of Belgian Taiwanese immigrants negotiate and perform their big home affiliation and their ethnonational identity. The discussions and findings in this thesis clearly show that people's ethnonational identity is not static; rather, it is dynamic, contextually-specific, and embodied in the dialectical processes that are influenced by immigrant's distinct living circumstances, meaning that they have the space and capacity to choose which aspects of their identity they wish to perform in their daily lives and in front of others. Moreover, the varied identity negotiations and performance strategies of those who have gone abroad to live, and work serve to fulfill their practical needs and respond to different social interactions and lived circumstances.

In accordance with the aforementioned results of this study, it is important to underline that social categories like race, ethnicity or even nationality are changeable and temporary social construction outcomes, which not only relate to how people see themselves or how others respond to them, but they also influence by how an individual interacts with different lived circumstances. Consequently, the research presented in this thesis echoes perspectives on "everyday ethnicity" and "everyday nationalism" in the sense that peoples' ethnicity and ethnonational identity are not static or constructed by macro-political ideologies. Instead, they are subject to how immigrants (re)articulate, interpret, and make meanings with regards to the social classifications of ethnicity and ethnonational identity in their everyday life and their experiences of social interactions. Here, diversity and the complex nature of ethnicity and ethnonational identity has been demonstrated while also opening up the possibility for others to interpret and negotiate with these social categories, and construct and attach their own meanings and perceptions of it.

With regard to suggestions for future study, as all of the research participants are first-generation Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium, this study is lacking in voices from different generations. However, since the notion of generations has already been verified as one of the most vital factors influencing immigrant's life experiences, thus, the future study could be considered that brings the voices of different immigrant generations into the discussion and further examine the issues regarding what are the meanings of home and homeland for them between/among different generations. In addition, the future study could also compare how lived circumstances and contexts in different host societies further influence Taiwanese immigrants' life and homemaking experiences in foreign land (Liu, 2020; Castañeda, 2018).

Table 8.1 The Small and Big Homemaking experiences (「家」的製作) among eight research participants demonstrated in this study

Subgroups and Concepts	Small Home	Big Home
Taiwanese Restaurateurs	**Case: Aunt Zhang** ➢ Felt lonely and did not regard Belgium as home as hourly-paid workers ➢ Having own restaurant signifies home ➢ Co-ethnic friends help to create feelings of home ➢ Belgium is my home, but I have not integrated into the host society ➢ Making own restaurant a "home" for all Taiwanese in Belgium **Case: Alice Ho** ➢ The family background of "Mainlanders," who emigrated from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949 because of the civil war and reasons for leaving Taiwan	**Case: Aunt Zhang** ➢ Taiwanese for being, Belgian for learning ➢ Ethnonational identity shift from Chinese to Taiwanese by applying the identity negotiation strategy of "fission" **Case: Alice Ho** ➢ Identifying herself as Chinese both in Taiwan and Belgium ➢ Ethnonational identity modification by applying the identity negotiation strategy of "transvaluation" to re-interpret the

	➢ Feels sorry for both sons since she did not spend enough time with them because of hard work in the home-making process ➢ Letters from original family and international phone cards signify home ➢ Emotional struggles and caring for her elderly parents ➢ Deciding where to stay for the rest of her life	content and meanings of being Chinese and distinguishing between her and Mainland Chinese immigrant counterparts
Taiwanese Immigrant Housewives	**Case: Mrs. Zhan** ➢ Husband signifies home ➢ Religious practices signify home ➢ Responsibilities signify home ➢ The Ecole Sun Yat Sen Chinese language school signifies her big home (family) **Case: Selena Lu**	**Case: Mrs. Zhan** ➢ Identifies as "Overseas Chinese" when interacting with Chinese immigrants from mainland China and people who understand the Chinese language ➢ Identifies as "Taiwanese" when interacting with Taiwanese immigrant groups and Taiwanese people ➢ More flexible and tolerant regarding identity issues when interacting with less

	➢ Gender role and cultural expectations of being a good "mother" and "wife" ➢ House decoration as the first step of "homemaking" in a foreign land ➢ Specific foods (pig ears and chicken legs) connect with and signify home ➢ Traditional festivals signify home ➢ Family music concerts signify home	close friends, acquaintances, and neighbors ➢ More serious and concerned about identity labels when interacting with her husband's family members **Case: Selena Lu** ➢ A rootless orchid ➢ In-betweenness of identity
Taiwanese Working Holiday Youths	**Case: Donna Liu** ➢ Poor workplace conditions and low salaries prompted Donna to leave Taiwan to work overseas ➢ Did not regard Belgium as her home since she had very limited social networks ➢ Her Belgian home is "on the way and in the process of being made"	**Case: Donna Liu** ➢ Applied the "downplay" strategy to negotiate her ethnonational identity ➢ Her original Taiwanese ethnonational identity was strengthened

	Case: BaiBai Huang ➢ Disadvantaged working conditions and low salaries in Taiwan facilitated BaiBai to participate in working holiday programs ➢ Maintained connections with his home in Taiwan via a range of ICT and social media platforms ➢ Struggled with the conflicts between emotional and economic considerations regarding whether to return to Taiwan	**Case: BaiBai Huang** ➢ Experienced three phases of ethnonational identity negotiation ➢ His original Taiwanese ethnonational identity was strengthened
Taiwanese Skilled Migrants' and Professional Expatriates	**Case: Huai-shen** ➢ The long-hour work labor conditions were the vital push factor that motivated Huai-shen to leave Taiwan and work overseas even though he earned a good salary. ➢ Different life and work experiences in Indonesia and Belgium. ➢ In his expatriate life overseas, his bed,	**Case: Huai-shen** ● Prefers to show his professional rather than ethnonational identity at the workplace. ● With regard to issues of ethnonational identity, Huai-shen identifies himself as Taiwanese. However, regarding the issues of the relations between Taiwan and mainland China and the future of

	sofa, and luggage help Huai-shen to obtain feelings of home. Further, driving car to explore his neighborhood and the city further increase his sense of belonging to in Belgium. ➢ Maintaining the relations with his original family and providing care for his aged parents by regular visits and travels together. **Case: Claire** ● Before working as an expatriate professional in Belgium, Claire and her husband had worked together at TSMC. However, the unbalanced work–life conditions made them decide to work overseas. ● Faced difficulties in making the decision to leave her life and home in Taiwan. ● Claire regards her house in Belgium as	Taiwan, Huai-shen supports maintaining the status quo in the present and pursuing Taiwan's independence in the future (維持現狀以後走向獨立). **Case: Claire** ● In the workplace, Claire feels comfortable showing her Taiwanese identity. Issues of nationality and ethnicity are not so important to her because her colleagues come from different places and have various ethnonational backgrounds. ● In Claire's private (home) daily life, she performs her Taiwanese identity in several banal ways, including

	her home but also as temporary and incomplete. ● Because she has several homes in different places, the meaning of home for Claire is complex and multilayered.	performing, choosing, and consuming the nation.

Source: This study.

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Appendix 1. Interview Outline

1. Could you please share your international immigration experiences in terms of the reason and background for deciding to leave your original home in Taiwan and migrate to Belgium?
2. After migrating to the new place in Belgium, when you think of home, what immediately comes to your mind?
3. What gives you a sense of home as you live in a new place far from your original home?
4. What are the basic and important components for you to make a place or the sense of home while living in a foreign land?
5. What are the important things that you care the most about when you talk about home?
6. What are the meanings for you between the original home in Taiwan and the new home in Belgium? Which home do you feel you belong to? Why and why not?
7. How do you manage to balance the connections, relations, and feelings of the dual homes between home and host countries?
8. As you have already migrated to Belgium, do you regard Belgium as your home? On the contrary, do you still consider Taiwan as your home? Why and why not?
9. Except for your physical and private home, are there any things (material or non-material) could make you feel a sense of home in the migrant life?
10. Do you face any difficulty and challenges in the processes of homemaking and managing dual homes in your migrant life?
11. In the migrant everyday life, how do you describe yourself culturally and ethnic-nationally? Which group or category do you feel belong to?
12. Do you face any obstacle or challenge in labeling yourself culturally and ethnic-nationally? If so, how do you deal with these problems?
13. Could you please explain why you have chosen this photo/picture when mentioning the concept of home? How does this photo/picture make you feel? How does this photo/picture show what home means for you?
14. Are there any memories, smells, or sounds embodied in this photo/picture when talking about the sense of home?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the topics that discussed in this study?

Appendix 2. The Demographic and Interview Information of 42 Interviewees

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Year of immigration	Occupation	Marital status	Family members	Date of interviews
1.Miko	Female	55	2003	Full-time housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a son, living in Herentals	26/03/2018 13/10/2018 19/04/2019 25/11/2019
2. Amber	Female	33	2014	Unemployment, working as a full-time housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a little daughter, living in Mol	27/03/2018 15/04/2019
3.Cloud (芸)	Female	37	2015	Working as an information manager at Delhaize Supermarket	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a little son, living in Bierbeek	28/03/2018
4.Aunt Zhang	Female	68	1979	Has worked at the Chinese catering industry for more than four decades	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has one son and two grandchildren, living in Brussels	29/03/2018 18/08/2019 03/11/2019 15/02/2020
5.Pei Pei	Female	35	2014	Working as an adjunct administrative assistance working at Chinese language school	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a little son, living together with her Belgian husband and son in Brussels	30/03/2018 17/03/2019
6. Kouei-Lan	Female	68	1974	Retired from her prior job worked at the social welfare department affiliated with city hall	Already divorced with her Taiwanese husband	Has a daughter, however, living alone in Brussels	31/03/2018 17/05/2019
7. Baibai Huang	Male	31	2013	Sushi maker working at Delhaize Supermarket	Has a Belgian boyfriend	He and his Belgian boyfriend, living in Liege	1/04/2018 13/04/2019 11/09/2019
8. Ryan King	Male	38	2010	Unemployment, working as a full-time househusband	Married, with Belgian husband	He and his Belgian husband, living in	3/04/2018 28/03/2019

						Kortrijk	
9. Froggie Lan	Female	37	2014	Unemployment, working as a full-time housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	She and her Belgian husband, living in Brussels	4/04/2018 14/05/2019 13/11/2019
10 Yeyeh Chen	Female	31	2015	Unemployment, however, initially came to Belgium and worked as a working holiday maker at Chinese restaurant	Has a Belgian boyfriend, and got her dependent visa in September 2017	She and her Belgian boyfriend, living in Louvain-la-Neuve	4/04/2018 16/07/2019
11 Lisa Hsu	Female	36	2012	Long-term contract part-time job, working at the chocolate shop in Brussels	Married, with Belgian husband	Has three children, two daughters, and a son, living in Louvain-la-Neuve	5/04/2018
12 Hsiang	Male	41	2006	Tenor, working at opera	Has a Taiwanese girlfriend	He and his girlfriend, do not have children, living in Gent	8/04/2018 19/06/2019 23/03/2020
13 Ping	Female	57	1997	Has worked at LOUIS VUITTON for more than 12 years	Married, with Belgian husband	Has two sons, living in Brussels	10/04/2018
14 Alice Ho	Female	70	1976	Retired from the catering industry in 4 years ago	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has two sons, and one grandchild, living in Liege	23/02/2018 17/11/2018 07/04/2019 13/12/2019 19/01/2020
15 Selena Lu	Female	48	1998	Vocal lecture at music college	Married, with Belgian husband	Has two sons, and a daughter, living in Namur	15/02/2018 24/09/2018 21/12/2019 24/03/2020

16 A-Si	Female	74	1968	Retired from the catering industry in recent years	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has a daughter, and a grandchild living in Brussels	14/03/2018
17 Long	Male	51	1995	Taekwondo coach, working at Chinese language school	Already divorced with his Belgian wife	Has a daughter, however, living alone in Brussels	23/04/2018
18 Hui	Female	56	2002	Housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has one son and a daughter, living in Mechelen	07/05/2018
19 Wen	Female	45	2006	Businesswoman, and local politician's assistance	Married, with Belgian husband	Living in Brussels	21/04/2018 19/06/2019
20 Li Li	Female	51	1990	Working at in a Belgian's private bank	Married, with Belgian husband	Has two children, living in Louvain-la-Neuve	14/05/2018
21 Susan	Female	53	1999	Housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a daughter, living alone in Brussels	03/07/2018
22 Donna Liu	Female	26	2018	Worked as a WHM in Chinese restaurant and duty-free shop	Has a Belgian boyfriend	Living alone in Brussel	17/19/2018 23/04/2019 29/11/2019 17/04/2020
23 Catty	Female	27	2016	Worked as a WHM at Chinese restaurant, massage shop, and Asian supermarket	Has a Belgian boyfriend	Living in Brussels	19/11/2018
24 Yin	Female	53	1986	Working as a nurse at hospital	Married, with mainland Chinese husband	Has one son and a daughter, living in Leuven	14/11/2018
25 Ting	Female	29	2016	Worked as a WHM at Chinese	Has a Belgian	Living in Antwerp	26/04/2019

				restaurant	boyfriend		
26 Jennifer	Female	28	2017	Worked as a WHM at duty-free shop	Has a Belgian boyfriend	Living in Brussel	26/04/2019
27 Amandine	Female	31	2013	Worked as a WHM at Chinese language school	Has a Belgian boyfriend	Living in Brussel	28/04/2019 13/11/2019
28 Sharon	Female	31	2014	Housewife	Has a Belgian husband	Has a son, living in Brussels	28/04/2019
29 Yi Yi	Female	42	2009	Working as a part-time Chinese language teacher, housewife	Has a Belgian husband	Has a son, living in Brussels	08/06/2019 17/10/2019
30 Ling Liu	Female	29	2016	Working for several part-time jobs, housewife	Has a Belgian boyfriend	Living in Brussels	13/06/2019
31 Wilson	Male	35	2016	Working at the ASML	Married, with Taiwanese wife	Living in Antwerp	21/06/2019 21/11/2019
32 Becky	Female	37	2017	Working at the IMEC	Married, with Belgian husband	Has two sons, living in Antwerp	25/06/2019
33 Pang	Female	50	2002	Operating a restaurant	Married, with Belgian husband	Has three children, living in Brussels	04/07/2019
34 Afra	Female	42	2014	Working at an ICT company in Belgium as an engineer	Single	Living in Ghent	06/07/2019
35 Zhi Zhi	Female	39	2015	Working at Haitec	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a daughter, living in Brussels	02/08/2019
36 Mrs. Zhang	Female	44	2015	Working as a part-time Chinese language teacher, housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a son, living in Brussels	15/08/2019 03/16/2020
37 Teacher Yang	Female	45	2013	Working as a part-time Chinese language teacher, housewife	Married, with Belgian husband	Has a son, living in Mechelen	23/09/2019

38 Aunt Liu	Female	63	1991	Operating a restaurant	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has a son, a daughter, and two grandchildren living in Leuven	05/10/2019
39 TU	Female	64	1986	Retired from the catering industry in recent years	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has two sons and three grandchildren living in Brussels	19/10/2019
40 Maio	Female	67	1983	Retired from the catering and retail industries in recent years	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has a son and two grandchildren living in Brussels	23/11/2019
41 Claire	Female	34	2016	Working as an expatriate in ICT company in Belgium	Married, with Taiwanese husband	Has a son, living in Antwerp	06/1/2020
42 Charles Cambier	Female	48	2003	Working as a seller at the LOUIS VUITTON	Married, with Belgian husband	Has two sons, living in Antwerp	17/03/2020

Source: This study