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Gender and Transnationalism in Asian Context: Transnational Family of *Taishang*

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Abstract

Globalization, facilitated by the powerful and instantaneous worldwide communication and transportation, not only produced rapid flow of capital, goods, services, and people but also reshaped the spatial organization of social relations at every level. The concept of transnational social space was proposed to capture the reconstitution of the new spatial organizations across national territory; and "transnational family" was viewed as a site wherein transnationalism was sustained and practiced and to delineate how women were affected by and affect globalization. This paper addresses the question of how globalization as manifested in the movement of capital and people cross borders affects the configuration of family as a unit of production and reproduction, the meaning of home as a fixed place of belonging, and the boundaries of family as spacious organization of social relations. Data came from in-depth interview with a group of the boss wives of Taiwanese businesses (Taishans) in two coastal cities in China collected in 2006-2007. Analyses show that: women are the incorporated members of the transmigration process. Transnational relocation of family business has also impacted the gender relations within the transnational family by reinforcing the reproductive responsibilities of "homemaking", including transnational mothering. Three types of transnational family or global household reconfigurations were identified as a result of the transnational relocation of Taiwanese family firms to China: the split-reassembled transnational family, the relocated transnational family, and the split-spread global family. Finally, the spatially diffusion of family accompanied with transmigration further leads to the re-interpretation of the meaning of home.

Keywords: *gender, transmigration, space, global householding, family, transnationalism, Taishang.*

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Asya Bağlamında Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Ulusötesicilik: Taishang'nın Ulusötesi Ailesi

Öz

Dünya ölçeğindeki güçlü ve anında iletişim ve ulaşım sağlayan gelişmelerle hızlanan küreselleşme uluslararası sermaye, mal, hizmet ve kişilerin akışını hızlandırmıştır. Bu, yeni ve şiddetli bir zaman-mekan sıkışması dönemine yol açmıştır. Küreselleşme toplumsal ilişkilerin uzamsal organizasyonunu her düzeyde degiştirirken ev ve bir yere ait olmanın anlamını da dönüştürmüştür. Makro düzeyde ortaya sadece yeni bir dizi 'küresel-şehir' çıkmamış, coğrafya ile toplumsal alan arasındaki uyum da giderek ortadan kalkmaya yerel ve küresel birbirinden ayrılmak yerine birlikte yapılanmaya başlamıştır.

Ulusötesi göçün günümüzdeki hızla dönüşen doğasına bakarak ulusal sınırların fiziksel olarak dağıldığı, çok yerli bu yeni 'ulusötesi alanda' eridiği görülmektedir. Evin anlamının da giderek coğrafi olarak yapılanmış olmaktan çıktığı ve akışkanlaştığı söylenebilir. Ancak, dünya ekonomisinin temeli ve toplumun en temel birimi olan aile veya hanehalkının, yakın zamana kadar küreselleşme ve uluslararası göç çerçevesinden yapılan çalışmalarda göz ardı edildiği görülmektedir. Halbuki bu yeni gelişmelerin analizi göstermektedir ki, sermayenin hareketi sadece üretimin yerini değişitirmemiş ailelerin de sınırların ötesine taşınmasına neden olmuştur. Böylece hem göç veren hem de göç alan yerler açısından hanehalkı yeniden kurulmuş, toplumsal cinsiyet politikaları çoklulaşmıştır. Bunların sonucunsa, 'küresel hanehalkı' kavramı ulusal sınırları aşan hanehalkının varlığını idame ettirme sürecini anlatan bir kavram olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışmada ulusötesicilik, küresel göçmenlerin günlük yaşantılarını anlamak için bir bakış açısı olarak önerilmektedir. Çin'de çalışan ve çoğunluğunu Tayvanlı iş adamlarının eşlerinin oluşturduğu katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen verilere dayanan bu araştırmada şu soruların yanıtları aranmaktadır: göç süreci üretimin küreselleşmesini nasıl toplumsal cinsiyetli hale getirmiştir, bu süreç aileyi sosyal ve fiziksel alan olarak yeniden nasıl kurgulamıştır, bu kadınların kimlikleri ve aile kavramı ulusötesi göç deneyimleriyle nasıl çelişmiş ve yeniden nasıl yorumlanmıştır. Çalışmanın Asya ölçeğinde uluslararasılaşma, toplumsal cinsiyet ve aile kompleks alanındaki literature bir katkı yapması amaçlanmaktadır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler**: toplumsal cinsiyet, ulusötesi göç, mekân, küresel hanehalkı, aile, ulusötesilicik.*

Introduction

Globalization, facilitated by the powerful and instantaneous worldwide communication and transportation, has produced rapid flow of capital, goods, service and people. This in turn could lead to a potential consequence of a new and violent phase of 'time-space compression' (Massey, 1994: 20). Globalization may reshape the spatial organization of social relations at every level, from macro to micro, and alter the meaning of home and locality and the relations between territory and nation. And, the concept of transnational social space has been proposed to capture the reconstitution of the new spatial organizations across national territory; the term of transnationalism or transnationality was advanced to denote the simultaneity and persistency of socio-political ties and practices reaching beyond national borders. Among all the levels of new spatial organization, the realm of 'family' or 'household' was viewed to be a site where the micro-politics and social practices of transnationalism played out in everyday life. Thus, the emergence of 'transnational family' was identified as an important site for understanding the process of globalization and gender, particularly for feminists. For family or household is not only considered as the private sphere where women belong but also the domain of social reproduction and consumption. Delineation of how transnational family resulted from transnationalization due to globalization will therefore reveal how women both affect and be affected by the process and contribute to the feminist understanding of the agency of women in globalization process. Moreover, the exponential increase in international migration in Asia has been accounted as one of the main drive of current transnational migration and contemporary social change in the region over the last two decades (Yeoh, Huang & Lam, 2005). This meant that the 'transnational family' as a form of living arrangement in which social ties and practices may develop and reconfigure in multiple locales across borders is becoming more common for a wider spectrum of people among Asian societies.

Taken this as point of departure, this paper expanded the task further to address the question of how globalization as manifested in the movement of capital and people cross borders affects the configuration of family as unit of production and reproduction, the meaning of home as a fixed place of belonging, and the boundaries of family as spacious organization of social relations. Specifically, the following questions will be examined: (1) how the transmigration induced by globalization of production is gendered; and (2) how it affects the reconfiguration of family both as a social and geographical space; and (3) how the identities of these women and their meaning of family are contested and re-interpreted in the process of their transnational migration.

Theoretical Backgrounds

As mentioned previously, globalization, facilitated by the advent of modern communication and transportation technology, has resulted in the fast mobility of capital and people across national borders and thus brought about the realignment between space and place and the emergence of 'transnational social space' (Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013; Pries, 2001). Globalization may reshape the spatial organization of social relations at every level, from macro to micro, and alter the meaning of home and locality and the relations between territory and nation. At macro-level, geographic place is being realigned according to the new global realities, and there emerges a new set of global cities. Thus, Tokyo seems to more relate to New York than to any Japanese city. At micro-level, the meaning of home becomes diffused rather than geographically distinct, and the boundaries between public and private, as well global and local, are implicitly dissolved as they are increasingly crossed by breaking down of physical barriers. In short, the local and global as well as the private and public appeared to constitute, rather than separated from, each other. Thus, home as a place of belonging becomes contested.

Similarly, vast flow of transnational migration associated with the new international division of labor also takes on a new quality which greatly challenges the congruence of geographic and social spaces of traditional international migration. Not only migration processes across borders are viewed as a more or less permanent state, instead of as a one-time, unidirectional change in location (across borders), but the new transmigrants form a qualitatively new social group in new social fields. These new social fields were viewed as built upon both the receiving and sending regions and may be considered as 'de-territorialized' social spaces (Massey, et al., 1999). Alternatively, the concept of transnational social spaces was developed and extended to refer to the new social 'interlacing coherence networks' which are spatially diffuse or 'pluri-local' or 'multi-sited' and comprising a social space that is not exclusively transitory (Pries, 1999). Transnationalism or transnationality is becoming a new social reality of life for these transmigrants as well as those who were non-migrants (Ong, 1999; Levitt & Waters, 2002; Smith & Guarnizo, 2003). Transnational family, composed of a set of pluri-local social ties and practices among members spreading across national boundaries, constitutes one most important social institution of the new transnational social spaces.

Although 'transnational family' is becoming increasingly common for both the transmigrants and non-migrants alike and there is increasing attention paid to this topic. However, as a social institution sustaining the transnational social space, what is 'transnational family' is a vex issue. By their nature of being fluid or not fixed in physical locality, "transnational families constitute an elusive phenomenon – spatially dispersed and seemingly capable of unending social mutation" (Bryceson & Vuorela,

2002: 3). Not only are they able to constitute across boundaries but also to redefine themselves as a family over time contingent on spatial practicality as well as material resources and emotional needs. Contemporary analyses of 'transnational family' may be grouped into three categories. One emphasized on how the various aspects of 'doing family' (Yeoh, Huang & Lam, 2005) among the female migrants in Asia; one centered on how the 'construction of family' among the transnational migrants to European Community (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) was carried out dispersed geographically; and, one focused the practices of 'home making' by the European women of transnational professionals (Coles & Fechter, 2008). Each approach is discussed below.

Asian Transnational Family

The focus of transnational family studies among the Asian transnational migrants centered on the analysis of 'doing family' across borders practiced by the predominantly female transnational domestic workers. Due to the restrictive and conservative migration policies regarding transnational labors in East Asian nations, 'split household transnational family', wherein the core members are distributed in two or more nation-states, is the dominant form of family for these transnational labor migrants. For this type of transnational family, the basis upon which the spatially dispersed membership derives its reality of family was believed to be "from both material bonds of collective welfare among physically dispersed members (and) also a shared imaginary of 'belonging' which transcends particular periods and places to encompass past trajectories and future continuities" (Yeho, et. al., 2005: 308). Therefore, transnational 'circuits of affection, caring and remittance' through various means of modern global communication were developed among the Filipino, as well as other Asian, women migrants in order to maintain a 'sense of being connected' with children and to keep their families physically and emotionally intact at their absence (Parrenas, 2005). In other words, through the practices of transnational 'mothering' and 'being wife', not only the roles of motherhood and wife were played out across boundary, but also a sense of family was maintained. Moreover, the patriarchal ideology of gender norms was retained despite the physical absence of these migrant women from the family to participate in global labor market.

Contemporary European Transnational Family

Analyses of this type of transnational family were based mainly on the experiences of transnational migrants from the economically less developed (Eastern European) nations to the more advanced (Western European) nations (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Unlike the restrictive migration policies of the receiving nations of East and

Southeast Asia, the less formidable migration barriers of receiving nations of the EU have facilitated easier mobility and reconstitution of family among spatially dispersed members of the contemporary European transnational migrants, at both originating and receiving nations, at different life cycles. Today's European transnational families, such as Turkish migrants in Germany, are characterized more by an elastic relationship (of family members) to their place of origin, ethnicity and national belonging, rather than by maintaining the sense of family intact (Erel, 2002). Thus, there is different sense of belonging with reference to the past and to the future between both genders and generations within the family. This may raise questions about the relationships between transnational families and the nation state as well as the difference in political and cultural identities between the first and second generations of the transnational families. The concept of family may be viewed as 'real' for some members but as 'imagined' (community) for others of the same transnational family (Vuorela, 2002). To delineate how the crisscross and clash of cultural values and political identities within contemporary European transnational (migrant) families, the term 'frontiering' was proposed to illustrate the confrontation between genders, generations and individuals within the families; while the term 'relativizing' was suggested to refer to the variety of ways individuals establish, maintain or curtail relational ties with specific family members and local networks. In other words, family may be conceived as an imagined community with a shared feelings and mutual obligations materialized through the selective formation of familial emotional and material attachments of members on the basis of their temporal, spatial and practical considerations. Transnational family of this type is more fluid and may be constantly under construction by members dispersed across national boundaries and cultural and political identities.

Western Expatriate Family

In addition to the 'split-household' and long-distance mothering practices employed by the contemporary transmigrant women to maintain their transnational family in Asia and the 'fluid family' of European transmigrants as analyzed above, transnational family may be presented as 'relocated family' for the western expatriates. It is a "family choreographed movement" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002: 17), wherein the whole family, including wife and children, moving along with husband's employment overseas as observable among European-North American expatriates or transnational professionals (Coles & Fechter, 2008). For this type of transnational family, the concerns centered on the how the transnational relocation impacting the inner logics of family. Specifically, the following impacts on the family relations have been identified. One is the reinforcement of the traditional gender

division of labor between spouses as a result of the incorporation of wife into transnational migration and relocation initiated by husband's employment or assignment abroad. For these expatriate wives, not only did they often have to interrupt their own career or withdraw from labor market, but also have to play the role of "supporting husband's professional commitment and sustain the well-being of the family more generally, including kin-work" (p.7). The wives often become the 'incorporated' women of the transanational corporations of their husbands (Gordon, 2008). The other impact of transnational relocation of family manifests itself in everyday social practices of 'home-making' of wives. This involves the reconfiguration of material cultures such as foods and household goods to recreate the feeling of 'home', a sense of 'belonging' abroad, and thus to establish a sense of connection with the home(land) (Walsh, 2008). Thus, it is 'making a 'home' away 'home', or 're-making a home'. Moreover, this 're- making of a home' includes the mothering of children which requires creation or reproduction of an idealized 'American' childhood in foreign land and education of children to maintain 'Americanness' for cultural identity in the case of American expatriates (Moore, 2008).

Global Householding

In a different vein, household as an institution charged with the reproduction of labor for the labor market and as a unit of consumption for goods and services purchased in the market, not only its function as unit of social reproduction has been severely repositioned under the neo-liberal policy of globalization, but also its constitution was recomposed spatially in the neo-liberal global political economy of the late 20th century. The idea of 'global householding' was put forth to inquire into the linkages between the household and larger structural issues such as demographic transitions and shifts in the global economy and their impacts on whole society and daily lives (Douglass, 2006; 2012). The term '*global householding*' refers to the many ways in which the various processes of household sustaining are increasingly occurring across national boundaries, for example, through transborder marriages, overseas education, labor migration and war displacements (Douglass, 2006: 423).

As a response to the declining rates of fertility and marriage of women, global householding through cross-borders marriage with non-citizen spouse, particularly among rural men, become a prominent form of family formation in some East Asian countries. Similarly, increasing rates of aging population coupled with a shortage of labor population has induced another form of global householding in several countries in Asia observable in the form of millions of women from lower income countries circulating among the households of richer countries (both within and outside Asia) as living-in domestic helpers and caretakers for children and the elderly

(Douglass, 2012:17). Migration of the female labor across national borders also produces re-householding of the families at both ends of originating and receiving societies (Lan, 2003). Other forms of global householding include sending children (with or without mother) abroad for education among the well-off families of the East Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, and increasingly China (Huang & Yeoh, 2005). This arrangement resulted in separation of household members across national boundaries. One type of these families was dabbed as 'astronaut family' wherein wife accompanied child(ren) abroad for the purpose of study and husband stayed behind to make money and the family joint together periodically during the school vacations and special holiday vacations. Yet, despite of long periods of physical separation, family members retain strong family solidarity. In this sense, global household is similar to transnational family.

These studies are revealing in pointing out the complexity of globalizing effect of transnational migration and capital at the micro-level as manifested in women as agents and family as unit of production and production. The psychological, socio-cultural, economic and political implications of these processes are extraordinarily complex and arguably involve as much as one-quarter of the world's population. Scholars have hardly begun to map this vast terrain, which is especially marked by structural hierarchies of gender, sexuality, ethnicity/race, class and national location. The subtlety and the mechanism of the process remained to be examined. And this will be the focus of the following analysis using the experiences of group of Taiwanese boss wives as they relocated to China with their family enterprises.

Methodology

Data Collection

Participants of this study consist mainly of the boss wives of Taiwanese businesses (Taishans) in two coastal cities of Dongguan and Shenzhen in China which were designated as the first two free economic zones since the opening-up in 1978. These two cities also had the highest concentration of the relocation of the so-called 'traditional' Taiwanese industries in the 90s. These traditional Taiwanese businesses were characterized as labor-intensive and low-technological and low-capital requirements, consisted of manufacturing industries in clothing, footwear, home-furnishing, plastic wares. Most of them were small-scale family businesses or firms in Taiwan which were forced to relocate to south-east Asia and then China during the restructuring process of late 80s.

Data for this analysis came from the in-depth interviews conducted from winter through spring of 2007. In-depth interviews with selected sample of 24 boss wives

currently residing in either China (22) or Taiwan (2) were conducted from January to April of 2006 and 2007 to obtain detailed information on the decision-making process, the experiences and subjective assessment of their relocation, their involvement in business, and family arrangements at different stages. Questions about the allegedly prevalence of extra-marital sexual liaisons of Taiwanese businessmen and how they coped with it were also included in the interview. Most of the interviewed boss wives had assumed administrative functions within the women's committees at various local chapters. Many of them were the earlier migrants to the areas and may be seen as senior members of the community of boss' wives. They were also knowledgeable about different patterns of relocation experiences and heard and witnessed the coming and going of marriages. They served as informants of the community of boss' wives. Table 1 and 2 is a summary of the socio-demographic backgrounds and relocation experiences of the 21 interviewed boss wives used for this analysis. Another 3 interviewed women were bosses and owners of their business, and thus were excluded from analysis.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Interviewed Taishang Wives

No.	Names	Age	Education	Industries (f.b.)
001	LSC	50	Senior H (v)	Gifts & Home furnishings
002	PLQ	52	Senior H (v)	Chemical factory
003	LSQ	50	Senior H (v)	Plastic product (trading)
004	YMS	54	Senior H (v)	Footwear (trading)
006	TYH	42	College (Acct.)	Financial service (investment)
007	YBQ	48	College (B.A.)	Electronic parts
008	SRY	50	College (Acct.)	Electronic parts
010	CBY	35+	Univ. (food management)	Food service (restaurant /bakery)
012	LYJ	35+	college	Food service (cafe')
013	LSJ	46	College (v.)	Footwear (retail)
016	TLR	55	H.S. (V)	Footwear (manufact.)
017	LJR	35+	college (->MBA)	Women's accessories (customjewelry)
018	LPJ	60	H.S.	Computer products
019	YMH	39	college	Gift-products (manufact.)
020	PJD	35+	college	Leisure service (SPA shop)
021	LMJ	50	H.S. (V)	Gift-product (artificial flower)
022	WZY	45+	H.S. (V)	Plastic products
027	TYQ	24	H.S. (V)	Service (beauty salon)
028	CWZ	58	VHS +Univ.training course	Sporting goods (manufact.)
029	YRL	60	VHS	Lighting product (manufact.)
030	CYM	48	college	Gift-products (manufact.)

Table 2: Relocation Experiences of the Interviewed Taishang Wives

No.	Year to China		Work status in		Arrangement of Children at the time of relocation
	husband	wife	China	Taiwan	
001	1992	2001	Finance manager	Pre-school teacher/h.wife	2 sons stay in Taiwan w/ wife until going to College or to U.S.
002	1988	1994	boss/ owner	boss wife / owner	2 daughters stay in Taiwan with g.mother, after graduation from H.S., 2nd daughter moves to China, one stays in Taiwan.
003	1990	NA-stay inTaiwan	b.w. (in charge Taiwan's part)	b.w.	2 sons, stay in Taiwan (w/wife) under the care of husband's sister.
004	1994	1995	boss/ owner	work at maternal fb	1 son (3 months) taken along when wife moved to China and educated in Taiwanese school.
006	1998	1998	Financial consultant	Financial consultant	2 sons(6th grade & kindergarten) stay in China for educ. under the care of local nanny
007	1989	NA1991 to Malaysia	b.w.	account. clerk clothing	2 boys were taken to MA (by wife) 2 years after fb moved there.
008	1995, Malaysia 2005, China	2005	finance (b.w.)	housewife	Children grown up and study in the U.S. when wife moved to China.
010	1990	2000	boss/ owner	International hotel (professional)	No child, live with husband's family (local Chinese); husband was Chinese in H.K., and studied in Taiwan as oversea Chinese.
012	2000	2001	boss/ owner	Accounting clerk	2 daughters (6thgr and 5 yr.) stayed in Taiwan taken care by in law and own mother for a year until move to China in 2002
013	1990	1992	b.w. finance/ boss	H.S.(V) teacher (beautician)	2 sons (2yr, 5yr) went to China with wife and educated in local school.
016	1991	1991	b.w.-> boss	b.w.	Took 3 children along when moved to China; 2 older daughters work in China, youngest son back in for Military service after HS in China.
017	1995	1995	b.w. general manager)	Secretary/ Admassit.	2 children (5yr, 1yr) born in China and educ. in local school ; 1 step-son work in the Chinese family business .
018	1997	2002	b.w. (non involved)	insurance agent	4 daughters' grown up/ married in Taiwan; children were cared by wife when small.

Table 2 continued					
019	1992	1995	b.w	Sales agent /baby goods	2 kids moved with wife to China and were educated there.
020	1990	1995	boss/ owner	airline steward	2 daughters (10yr & 5yr) born after wife moved to China.
021	1987	1987	boss/ owner	Operators (Q.C. inspector)	1 step son (28yr) from Taiwan and 1 own son (13yr) born after move to China; both are in China.
022	1994	2000	b.w. (finance)	Acquisition (mechanical factory)	1 son (5yr) moved to China with wife and study in Taiwanese school.
027	2004	2004	boss/ owner	beautician	1 daughter (3yr) born after move to China.
028	divorced/ single	1990	manager /share-holder	floor manger	2 sons stay in Taiwan. 1st with father; 2nd under the care of wife's mother, with hired child care helper.
029	1998	1998	b.w.	b.w.	2 sons in college & H.S.; both stayed in Taiwan then one went to study in U.S. and one stayed in Taiwan for college and then to fb in China.
030	2000	2000	b.w.	in charge of shipping in f.b. (trade)	3 daughters 1st(8th gr) move to New Zealand 2nd (6th gr)->China-> Zealand 3rd (2nd gr)->China

Analyses and Discussions

Who Are the Bosses' Wives?

Before answering the main research questions, it may be informative to look at the socio-economic characters of the interviewed boss wives. Majority of the interviewed boss wives fall in the range between 44 to 55 years of age. If 50 is used as the dividing line, then about half (50%) of the boss wives (N=10) is over 50 while the other half was under 50. Those between 40 and 49 (N=6) and under 39 (N=5) were about a quarter of total sample respectively. These figures reflect more of the characteristics of the active members of the women's committee as being older, earlier migrants, better established and thus more involved in community affairs. In terms of the industries of family business, most of the boss wives, especially the more senior ones, were in the social called traditional industries, i.e., manufacturing industries and chemical/plastic industries. These were the leading exporting industries behind the Taiwan economic miracle of the 70s. On the other hand, for those very young wives, they were more likely to be running their own business in service industry, restaurant, café and beauty shop/spa.

Difference in the age seems to relate to the year of movement /migration to China for these wives. The senior cohort of wives belongs to the first-wave of relocated Taiwanese business to China, which is between 1989, and mid-90s, and concentrate in the family firms of manufacturing industries with low capital and technology requirements. The second stage of Taishang relocation during the late 90s involves industries with larger capital requirement and higher technology threshold. Conceivable, the relocating firms of the second stage may be larger corporations or small firms required to move by being part of a cluster of production relocating to China. In addition to industries relocation, as more Taiwanese move and settle in the coastal cities of China and accompanied by the accumulation of wealth and concentration of Chinese in the free economic zones, there emerges new demand for various services of urban areas. The in-depth interview data indeed reveal an interesting change in the status of the more recent migrating wives. They are more likely to belong to the spouses of Taiwanese managers (Tai-Kan). They tend to be younger and more ready to start their own business in the service, such as S010, S012, S020 and S027.

The Incorporated Women: Gendered Transmigration

An outstanding dimension of the process of transmigration is the gender difference in the timing and pattern of their first relocation to China between husband and wife. Similar to the experience of the 'incorporated women' undergone by the expatriate wives of the western countries, there appears a process of incorporation on the part of Taiwanese boss wives. That is, the wives were never the initiator of the transnational movement. They were most likely the passive or reluctant followers of transnational movement. Consequently, there is almost always a time lag between the year of business' (i.e., husband's) and wife's relocations. Majority of the wives (13/20) would wait for a period of time after their family businesses and husbands had already moved to China before deciding to relocate themselves (and children). The time lags range from one year to ten years for the wives to finally decide to take residence in China. There is one wife, S003, who still remained with two sons and in charge of family business in Taiwan and has never even travelled once to China. One wife, S001, although decided to stay longer with husband in China after 10 years of intermittent transnational visits, still has not considered herself as settled or moved to China. The factors influencing their decision of timing, according to in-depth interview information, include business' needs, wife's work commitment, children's education and the conditions and safety of living in China. Thus, among the other interviewed wives (7/20) for whom there was no or little time lag between spousal relocation were either in the more advanced stage of life-cycle of family when the children already finishing school, or in the starting stage of family-life cycle wherein there

were no school-aged children (or only pre-schoolers)[1].

However, despite all these concerns, all the wives, except two, eventually decided to follow the husband and became incorporated into the transmigration process and settled in China. The factor which has the leading pulling effect on wives' decision appeared to be the overwhelming concerns over the prevalent phenomena of extra marital affairs, 'bao-er-nai' (contracting second-wife), among Taiwanese businessmen and its threats on their marriage.

Women become incorporated into the transmigration process not only through embodied movement to reunite with husband and settle in China, but also by being integrated into the production process of transnational family business. This process of being incorporated into production process differed from that of western expatriated wives who were encouraged by the transnational corporations to involve into their husbands' oversea career and employment advancement as supportive spouses. Almost all of interviewed wives (re/)assume the responsibility of being the 'boss wife' of the newly relocated family business after joining the husband in China, despite their former status as housewives (2) or having other employments (15) while in Taiwan. The term 'boss wife' (tou-jia niang) implies that women as wives of boss of family business are the un-paid workers of family business (Kao, 1999). Literally, 'tou-jia-niang' means mate/mother of head of family. Translated into practice, it refers to the role of wife both as the helper and/or partner of the business and care-taker of the owner and his children (Chou 2011). Boss wives were characterized as 4Is-1s labor for the family business in Taiwan. That is, they were the informal and invisible workers, often unpaid and untitled, in family-owned enterprises; yet, their labor is indispensable and indivisible to business operation; and they assumed spontaneous roles across production, business (as boss' deputy) and family (as wife and mother) spheres. Boss wives as workers of small-and-medium sized family business in Taiwan was viewed a unique category of labor resulted from the logic of capitalism and its interaction with patriarchal family ideology to maximize the labor utility of married women in both production and reproduction (Greenhalgh, 1994; Kao, 1999; Lii and Ke, 1999; Lu, 2001).

In addition to being boss wives, through transmigration due to marriage, women may also become boss of family business or has business of their own. For example, S002 (age 52), seasoned boss wife in Taiwan, decided to move to China to replace her husband and has been in charge of their relocated business of chemical production since 1994 when she found out that her husband was having affairs with local woman. Another wife, S021 (age 50) was a QC operator of factory in exporting zone in Taiwan, moved with husband to China in 1987 to start a business of making plastic flowers for export, but went through divorce in 1989 (due to husband's extra marital affairs) and took over the business since then. She, remarried

in 1994, also started a new business venture, opening a gym, in Shenzhun in 2004. Finally, the younger cohort of these Taiwanese wives, instead of taking over the family business practiced by their senior counterpart, were more likely to start their own business in service such as beauty shop/spa, café, or restaurant, which are not necessarily related to husband's family business.

Relocation and Reconfiguration of Family

How did the relocation of business affect the reconfiguration of family? If household is viewed as site of social reproduction and family as place of belonging, when defined in spatial and temporal terms, three different types of transnational family may be identified from the household arrangements made by the Taiwanese boss wives (Table 2).

The first type, split-household family, refers to a dynamic form of transnational family consisted of initially geographical dispersion and then partially re-assembled and reconfiguration among family members across national borders at different stages of family life. There were two ways that the original family may be split into two households residing across national borders. Typically, the family will be separated, initially, into two parts; one single household of husband in China, the other partial family consisted of wife and school-aged children in Taiwan for a substantially period of time. Then, when the children reach the age of independence, usually, finishing high school or entering college, the wife will migrate and settle in China. The children will stay in Taiwan or go oversea for college education. The family remained separated but was reconstituted in different way: one consists of conjugal family of husband and wife in China, while the children may (or may not) consist of another household in Taiwan or elsewhere. Almost one-third (N=5) of families fall in this category, including S001, 002, 008, 018, 022.

In addition to the two steps (split-reassembled) transformation, split-household family may come in one step. That is, in some cases, the original household would be split into two: a conjugal family consist of husband and wife moving to China and a household of the older and grown-up children remained in Taiwan (S021, S029), at the time of business relocation. Or, in other cases, at embankment of family business and conjugal couple to China, the grown-up children were decided to migrate to other parts of worlds to study in the US (S001, S008) or New Zealand (S30). This arrangement produced a split-household transnational family spread beyond the confine of Taiwan-China connection to reach other part of Asia or other continent.

The wives of this category usually were older; belong to the earlier generation of transnational Taiwanese businesses. Since they were older, by the time when their family businesses were forced to relocate to China as a restructuring strategy in late 80s, their families are in a more mature stage of life-cycle. That is, the family is usually

consisted of middle-aged couples and school-aged children. Patriarchal division of labor within household requires these wives to take over the responsibility of managing not only the family, the children and aging parents, but also the business left behind by the bosses.

The second type of household reconfiguration among the Taiwanese transnational business families may be termed as the 'relocated transnational family'. The main feature of this type of transnational family was manifested in the simultaneous movement of the whole family, husband, wife and children, across national boundaries after family business were relocated offshore or husband started own business in China. The distinctive characters of this type of transmigration were two-folds: (1) short or no time lag between husband and wife/children in the timing of movement to China; and (2) the rearing and education of children in China afterwards. Within this category, majority of these families (S006, 007,012, 013, 017,020, 027) tend to be younger, later transmigrants and have small, pre-school aged children at the time of moving, and their children would be raised and educated by enrolling either in local schools or Taiwanese schools in China. Among the senior cohort of wives, there were only few cases which belong to this type of family. One wife was married late and thus was able to take the small child along at the time of moving. (S004) The other wife had older children, taking two grown-up daughters to work in family factory, decided to enroll high-school aged son in Chinese school (S016) at the time of moving. These families maintained their connections with home country through periodic visits with relatives in Taiwan for important family events or during school vacations.

The third type of transnational family, 'split/spread family', may be defined as the split of one household into two partial families settled rather permanently across two sides of the Taiwan Straits. The partial family on the Chinese side may consist of single household of husband, with or without a Chinese 'er-nai', while wife and children stayed and constituted the other partial family in Taiwan. This is almost like a contemporary version of the 'uterine family'[2] as illustrated by the case of (S003). Ms. Lee has remained in the same house, with two sons, in Taiwan over the past 16 years since her husband move part of family plastic business to China in 1990. And she has neither plan nor any intention of moving or even traveling to China. It is her husband who was considered to have split from the family. One unique case of the split householding consists of a single household of mother (a divorced wife) in China and two sons staying with father in Taiwan, but under the care of maternal grandmother with financial support from mother, since the time when our interviewed subject moved to China with the firms in her charge in 1990. Compared with the separated-reassembled family, the uniqueness of this split-household transnational family lies in its semi-permanent de-facto separation between legal spouses into two

households across national borders. The connection and maintenance of the intimate relationships among family members across national and geographical boundaries create transnational social space wherein the meaning of home is questioned.

Re-interpreting the Meaning of 'Home'

As mentioned previously, transmigration resulted from the global movement has the potential of 'unsetting' the spatial meaning of home and belonging by altering the meaning of home as a fixed locality. Thus, how to make sense of belonging within the newly emerged transnational social space assumes particularly importance for the women incorporated in transmigration process. Put it otherwise, how these wives 're-make' the feeling of home away from home(s), (or among homes) transnationally not only provides illuminating clues for grounding transnationalism in everyday life, but also illustrating how women become agents in shaping the global process. How do the Taishang wives practice their home-makings and thus making transnationalism in the process of transmigration?

The most common task among the wives in making home is how to keep the family together, especially at the initial stage of transmigration of husband. That is how to maintain the marital intimacy between spouses and parental intimacy between father and children when the original family separated into two sub-households located in two different national boundaries. In addition to the connections through global communications available from information technology, frequent and regular travels, once every two-three months, between China and Taiwan by husband to visit home for a month was the most common practice. In order to fill their affective role (as well as to insure husband's marital loyalty), wives would also travel, but less frequent and shorter stay, to visit husbands in China. As transmigration advanced in stages and global householding resulted in the re-location and reunited of family (type 1 & 2 family), transnational travels and home visits would diminish in frequency and change in purpose. As these transmigrants began to settle as indicated by making friends among Taiwanese community, the purchasing of house, enrolling children in local school, and feeling secure and adjusted about the neighborhood, these wives still make trips home on the these occasions: Lunar New Year ("you go home for family reunion and ancestor worship for the Lunar New Year"); during the summer vacation ("so the children can enjoy the delicious food of hometown and see their relatives and friends", or participate in summer camps); and to attend the weddings, funerals, or birthdays (heng- shang-si-qing) of relatives' children and relatives (especially parent's birthdays) and close friends (to stay connected with family and homeland). All these activities and practices were meant to enhance the family lineage, a sense of belonging and a sense of connecting, among the members of transnational family, both transmigrants

and non-transmagrants. However, decision regarding whose wedding, funeral, or birthday to attend is not random. It reveals the various ways that transnational family sustaining the transnational social space and relativizing; that is how individuals of the transnational family establish, maintain or curtail relational ties with specific family members across national borders.

As the living conditions of the local community further improved and supply of Taiwan-style household items became available locally, the task of home-making is made easy. This, in turn, will lead to reduced needs for traveling back to home land to acquire them. As the frequency of home visit decreases or the length of staying shortened, a feeling of increasing estrangement, if not yet alienation, from old friends and hometown may emerge in the long run. Due to failure to keep-up with the interests, events and vocabularies back home on the one hand, while increasingly acquiring the Chinese vocabularies and accent on the other, these wives were jokingly called 'da-lu-mei' (Chinese girls) by their friends and relatives in Taiwan. As a result, the cultural, if not political, identity of these transnational wives may no longer be fixed. Instead, a process of identity negotiation may be underway and a shift from uni-local or –national identity to multi-sited and plural identities may take place. With this transformation of identity, the meaning of home also began to evolve and the locality/fixity of the family challenged. For some wives, particularly those of the relocated families, home will refer to the relocated residence in China where the Lunar New Year family reunion was celebrated by bringing in-laws from Taiwan; China is where the future of children will be planned; it will also be the intended location of their own retirement. Eventually, for the relocated wives, the only time which necessitates their return to Taiwan is to cast their votes in the presidential elections. A process of frontiering in the form of inter-generation conflict or negotiation between son and father in terms of the locality to have the Lunar New Year Eve family reunion dinner thus set in motion. Given the importance of the traditional New Year Eve family reunion meal in Chinese culture, selection of place other than the patriarch household to celebrate this important family holiday symbolizes the shifting locus of power of family.

For others, particularly wives of the split-households families, the meaning of home remains as fluid as the boundary of transnational space, even as they began to feel settled in the relocated locality. They still celebrate the Lunar New Year in Taiwan, as long as their parents and in-laws still live. For the senior wives whose grown-up children remained in Taiwan, "home is where the children or grand children are" (S018, S029). For this group, undoubtedly, Taiwan is the intended place of retirement, even if they feel at home after long-stay in China. "Because it is going back to where our roots are" (S025). Finally, home can denote both geographical place(s) and memor(ies). For the young wife who worked around Asian cities for an international

chain hotel before joining her Chinese husband and lived with his family, "I have many homes. Home refers to an address of the house I lived in and a memory derived from it" (S010).

Conclusion

Based on the interview data from a groups of migrant women who were wives of Taiwanese businessmen in China, (Taishang) the paper examined the following questions: (1) how the transmigration induced by globalization of production is gendered; and (2) how it affects the reconfiguration of family both as a social and geographical space; and (3) how the identities of these women and their meaning of family are contested and re-interpreted in the process of their transnational migration.

To summarize, these are the main findings of analyses. First, women are the incorporated member of the transmigration process. There were almost always time lags in the years of first relocation to China between husband and wife. Transnational relocation of family business also impacted the gender relations within the transnational family by reinforcing the reproductive responsibilities of 'homemaking', to remake home away from home, and maintaining a sense of connection between father and children and spousal intimacy during the absence of husband. For those wives with school-age children, the task of schooling the children properly in preparation for their career development in China or returning to Taiwan for college in the future constitutes a major element in the mothering of the relocated transnational family. For the split-household transnational family, mothering includes long-distance monitoring academic performance and supervising everyday lives of the older children in high school or college via international calls and electronic devices and frequent travels across borders. However, women become incorporated into the transmigration process not only through embodied movement to reunite with husband and settle in China, but also by being integrated into the production process of transnational business.

As to the effects of globalization and its concomitant emergence of transnational space on the formation of household and the meaning of family, three types of transnational family or global household reconfiguration were identified as result of the transnational relocation of Taiwanese family firms to China: the split-reassembled transnational family, the relocated transnational family, and the split-spread global family. Among the factors related to the type of household reconfiguration, the timing of relocation of family business and the stage of family life-cycle, specifically the age of children, and living conditions of the relocated place. Finally, the spatially diffusion of family accompanied with transmigration further leads to the re-interpretation of the meaning of home. For the Taishang wives, the notion of home as a place of

belonging is no longer a fixity, spatially or temporally. Home may defined as multi-sited and fluid: where they are now, or where the Lunar New Year family reunion is celebrated, or where the children and grand children are; or where one will retire to. Or, it may be all the places where one ever lived and had memory of it.

Notes

[1] Another point of interest regarding the timing of wife's relocation as observed in survey data (Chou, 2011) is the larger number of relocation among wives that took place around the year 2000. This increase, as revealed in the interview, had to do with the establishment of Taiwan School in Dongguan in 1999 (and started to operate in spring 2000). Provision of primary and secondary education compatible to Taiwan's education system can insure the continuation of children's education. It can reduce the transitional risk and uncertainty of relocation to an unfriendly, if not politically hostile, environment. This is an especially important consideration for the younger family with small children. The rapid improvement of the living conditions and provision of safe residential areas and apartment complexes in the cities, instead of living in factories, were also essential to the relocation decision of wives.

[2] 'Uterine Family.' Denotes distant fathers and close-binding mothers who, depending on who is defining it 'cherish' or 'spoil' their sons generate strong son-mother bonds and use (or exploit) these against their husbands (the father of the boys).

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