

# Employment Experiences of Chinese Immigrant Women

## *An Exploration of Diversity*

BY VALERIE PRESTON AND GUIDA MAN

*Ici, les auteures identifient quelques uns des facteurs qui affectent les immigrantes récemment arrivées qui sont en recherche d'emploi, en examinant leurs antécédents, leurs expériences dans leur recherche et les défis majeurs qu'elles rencontrent avant de trouver le travail qui leur convient, elle termine sur une discussion pour une politique d'implantation de ses recherches.*

*Once we have the job, we have self worth, we have the confidence to handle the problem not just housework but everything. ... If you have no work, you may not even do the housework. Once you have a job... You can solve your problem. (AC FGC2: 18)<sup>1</sup>*

*When I was working, ... the days passed quickly.... My point is we can handle our lives when we have the chance to work. (DT, FGC2: 18)*

These are the words of two women discussing the importance of paid employment in focus groups. Both are recent immigrants from Hong Kong struggling to obtain and keep appropriate, steady employment. Their words express the desperation of many recent immigrants who have higher unemployment rates than the Canadian-born and who are concentrated in poorly-paid and insecure service, sales, and production jobs (Chui and Devereaux; Badets and Howatson-Lee).

The marginalization of recent immigrants is typical of contemporary industrialized societies (Sassen), however, in the Canadian context, it is unexpected. The Canadian government has pursued a highly selective

immigration policy that means recent immigrants are better educated than the average Canadian, the majority arrive with some knowledge of English or French, and increasingly, immigrants are selected on the basis of their skills, work experience, and financial resources (Badets and Howatson-Lee; Reitz). In 1997, approximately 125,491 people entered Canada as economic migrants and their immediate family members. In the same year, approximately 85,000 people were admitted on the basis of family reunion and humanitarian grounds (CIC).

Researchers and policy-makers are struggling to explain the unsatisfactory economic experiences of these carefully selected immigrants. They are concerned about immigrant women, who had a higher unemployment rate, 21 per cent, than immigrant men, 14 per cent, and Canadian-born women, six per cent, in 1995 (Badets and Howatson-Lee). Immigrant women's educational attainments do not reduce their chances of unemployment. Unemployment rates for recent immigrant women do not decline significantly with higher education, unlike the rates for Canadian-born women (Badets and Howatson-Lee). Persistent unemployment suggests that immigrant women continue to earn less than immigrant men and Canadian-born women and men, a trend that was well established in the 1980s (Preston and Giles; Boyd).

To identify some of the factors affecting immigrant women's employment, this study explores the job-search experiences of four groups of women who immigrated recently to Toronto from Hong Kong and

Mainland China. The research is inductive and exploratory, since little previous research has taken account of the challenges faced by well-educated immigrant women when they look for employment commensurate with their educational attainments and work histories.<sup>2</sup>

### Methodology

It is well documented that immigrant women are stigmatized on the basis of their immigrant status, gender, and increasingly, on the basis of colour (Ng 1996). Employment audits in the 1980s found that employers differentiated among applicants on the basis of accent, colour, and gender, thereby excluding many female immigrant workers (Henry and Ginzberg). Surveys in Toronto have confirmed that many recent immigrants feel that they suffer discrimination in the labour market on the basis of colour (Infantry). Married women with children also face employers' suspicions and concerns that

---

**The marginalization  
of recent  
immigrants is  
typical of  
contemporary  
industrialized  
societies, however,  
in the Canadian  
context, it is  
unexpected.**

---

domestic responsibilities will curtail their performance on the job. State regulations designed to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of colour, accent, marital status, and immigrant status have not effectively addressed the root causes of the problem nor do they take into account the contradictory demands of paid

---

**Among the more recent immigrants, educational attainments that often exceed those of the Canadian-born adult population are offset by limited fluency in Canada's official languages.**

---

employment and unpaid domestic work for immigrant women.

This research is informed by a theoretical perspective in which gender, race, ethnicity, and class are central social relations in the construction of contemporary social life (Ng 1993a). Fluid and dynamic, the relations of gender, race, ethnicity, and class are subject to temporal and spatial variations. They are historically and spatially specific. Due to inequitable gender relations in contemporary Canadian society, women occupy a subordinate political and economic position relative to their male counterparts. As a result, the lived realities of women's lives are different from those of men (Harding; Smith). Recognizing the subordinate position of women, we conducted research in the interests of the participants, rather than only about them. As researchers, our goal is to provide women with an understanding of how their everyday experiences are constituted by larger so-

cial processes. We have placed women as subjects of the study that takes account of structural processes and individual negotiations.

The study explores Chinese immigrant women's employment experiences in the Greater Toronto Area.<sup>3</sup> Chinese immigrant women are women who were born outside Canada and who are perceived as immigrant women by other Canadians. They often include women of colour and women from Southern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and other locations within the third world who do not speak English fluently or who speak English with an accent (Ng 1996). Among immigrant women, some are considered to be "Chinese" and consider themselves to be "Chinese" on the basis of appearance, accent, and their own place of birth or that of their ancestors. Notice that Chinese immigrant women are not necessarily distinguished from other Canadian women by citizenship. Although the majority of Chinese immigrant women begin their lives in Canada as landed immigrants with fewer citizenship rights than Canadian-born women, many landed immigrants become Canadian citizens. Despite being citizens, many women find that they are still considered "immigrant women" in their daily lives.

Focus groups that allow participants to voice their own experiences were the main source of information. Content analysis was used to identify aspects of each issue that warrant further investigation, new issues, and possible links among issues.<sup>4</sup> The focus groups were organized with the help of two community agencies: The Centre for Information and Community Services and Woodgreen Employment Resource Centre that serve different groups within Toronto's growing Chinese population. Focus group participants were invited by the agencies to participate on the basis of several assumptions. We began with the assumption that the employment experiences of recent immigrant women

from Hong Kong and China would be sharply differentiated. Hong Kong immigrants are better educated than the adult Canadian population (Statistics Canada 1996a). They speak English more fluently than other immigrant groups and they are also more affluent than the average Canadian. In contrast, the educational attainments of immigrants from Mainland China are bifurcated between those who have arrived since 1971 and earlier immigrants. Among the more recent immigrants, educational attainments that often exceed those of the Canadian-born adult population are offset by limited fluency in Canada's official languages (Statistics Canada 1996b). Unlike immigrants from Hong Kong, few immigrants from Mainland China bring substantial financial assets to Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Differences in the social capital available to the two groups of immigrants was also expected to affect women's employment.<sup>6</sup> Migrants from Hong Kong enter a well-established immigrant community which has strong economic, social, and political ties to its country of origin, one of the most market-driven capitalist economies (Li). In comparison, immigrants from China are more isolated socially, often arriving as students and sponsored family relatives (Liu). With limited financial resources, the immigrant community from Mainland China is less well developed than its Hong Kong counterpart. We expected women from Hong Kong would have more access than their counterparts from China to social networks that provide information about job opportunities and referrals to employers.

Women from Hong Kong would also have access to employment in a growing ethnic enclave that has developed to serve recent, affluent Cantonese-speaking immigrants in Toronto, whereas women from Mainland China who speak Mandarin were expected to have less access to these jobs. Employment in ethnic enclaves may be a double-edged

sword (Waldinger, Aldrecht, and Ward). On the one hand, Chinese entrepreneurs and managers may be more willing to hire Cantonese-speaking and even Mandarin-speaking employees whose experience and credentials they may evaluate more confidently. By hiring Chinese employees, many service firms are also able to serve better their growing Chinese clientele. However, employees' earnings and working conditions are often undesirable as entrepreneurs and managers struggle to reduce costs in an increasingly competitive market (Liu).

Despite the differences in the women's backgrounds, previous research suggests that many will encounter barriers in the labour market due to their accents (Henry and Ginzberg), lack of Canadian experience, and lack of recognition of foreign credentials (Boyd; Ng 1996). As women, they also share the challenge of accommodating the competing demands of paid work and unpaid domestic labour, a dilemma that is aggravated by the increasingly transnational nature of contemporary migration that takes the form of astronaut families (Man 1997, 1995, Lam). Faced with Toronto's dismal economic circumstances in the first half of the 1990s and economic growth in Hong Kong, one partner, usually the man, often returns to Hong Kong to work while the other stays with the children in Canada. The women who stay behind act as single parents negotiating all the changes and adjustments due to immigration on their own. Although the extent of the astronaut phenomenon is not known, we expected that the absence of a partner would constrain the employment decisions of some women from Hong Kong.

We sought participants who had arrived in Toronto after 1986 (the year when immigration from Hong Kong increased sharply) and ideally, no more than five years ago. Recent immigrants are more likely to recall their experiences accurately and completely. The women were invited to

participate by agency staff who wanted to represent the range of circumstances of their clients. In the Woodgreen Employment Resource Centre, Mandarin-speaking women participating in language and employment training were asked to participate. At the Centre for Information and Community Services, women who had just completed a training course to enhance their resume-writing and job-search skills participated. Women from a weekly women's group composed mainly of homemakers also participated in the focus groups. We included the homemakers to determine whether the challenges of finding suitable employment had caused them to withdraw from the paid labour market.

#### **Employment experiences of recent Chinese immigrant women**

Of the 24 participants, 12 had emigrated from Hong Kong and 12 from Mainland China. Among the women from Mainland China, Guangdong, home for one third of the women, was the most frequent city of origin. Most women entered Canada as dependents of principal applicants who came under the independent class as skilled workers and under the investor, and business classes. Only four were sponsored by family members, predominantly husbands, already in Canada. There are minor differences in length of residence between women from Hong Kong and Mainland China. Women from Hong Kong are slightly more likely to have lived in Canada for at least five years at the time of the focus group. They are also more likely to have lived in Canada previously. In such cases, the women typically received their post-secondary education in Canada, returned to Hong Kong after graduation, and then, immigrated to Canada with their family members in the 1990s.

With one exception, the women who participated in the focus groups were married. Marital status was not

a selection criterion, however, the overwhelming predominance of married women, all dependent immigrants, reflects current immigration trends in which men dominate as principal applicants. Women from Mainland China were slightly more likely than women from Hong Kong to have dependent children at home.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, women who had immigrated from Hong Kong were more likely to have "astronaut" husbands, whereas the partners of all Mainland Chinese women were living in Canada.

The success of current immigration policies is reflected in the women's educational attainments. Among the women from Hong Kong, every one graduated from high school with seven having some post-secondary education. Although not all the women from Mainland China reported their educational achievements at a focus group, five women had at least one university degree or college diploma and all had some high school education. The women are well educated compared with previous immigrant groups such as the Portuguese (Giles and Preston). Prior to immigrating, all of the women had worked full-time in responsible, often well-paid, positions that ranged from university professor, medical doctor, and business owner to executive secretary.

Currently, the women from Hong

---

**Prior to immigrating, all of the women had worked full-time in responsible, often well-paid, positions that ranged from university professor, medical doctor, and business owner to executive secretary.**

---

Kong who participated in the focus groups are much more likely to be unemployed, volunteers, and students than women from Mainland China. Despite being enrolled in language classes for at least half the day, more than half the women from China were working part-time or full-time, compared with only two

---

**The women who  
have found  
paid work are  
overqualified for  
jobs that are mainly  
in the restaurant  
and beverage  
industry, retailing,  
and the  
garment industry.**

---

of the women from Hong Kong. The low rate of labour force participation among women from Hong Kong is made possible by the affluence of their households in which the woman's income is not essential for survival. The women who have found paid work are overqualified for jobs that are mainly in the restaurant and beverage industry, retailing, and the garment industry.

Most women, i.e., seven of the nine who are employed, are working in businesses operated by Chinese owners and managers. These jobs in the ethnic enclave are often exploitative. Several women commented that they work for low wages on an irregular basis. Often wages are paid in cash without any benefits. As a result, the women cannot qualify for unemployment insurance, a requirement to be eligible for many training programs, and they are not accumulating pension credits.

In sum, the women who participated in the focus groups are well

educated, experienced workers, often with accreditation in professions such as engineering, medicine, and accounting. Yet, the vast majority are unemployed or working part-time in jobs for which they are overqualified. Only three of the twenty-four women were employed full-time. The transcripts from the focus groups provide some clues to their unsatisfactory employment situations that are rooted in the paid labour market, the domestic sphere, and the links between them.

### **Job search**

Several difficulties dominated the women's discourses about finding suitable work. All of the challenges have been documented elsewhere, but it is illuminating to trace their effects on well educated women with extensive work experience in their countries of origin. The experience of looking for work often channeled the women into ethnic businesses owned and operated by other "Chinese."<sup>8</sup> Their reliance on friends and relatives and Chinese newspapers as major sources of information about job vacancies narrowed the opportunities that they considered. However, concentrating on jobs offered by Chinese employers was a pragmatic and effective response to the barriers they encountered. Each woman noted that her search for work was impeded by lack of familiarity. Women from Hong Kong were accustomed to a growing economy with perennial labour shortages in which employers lined up to hire high school, college, and university graduates:

*In Hong Kong, we graduated in July. Since companies knew that we finished examinations on May 4, they would come to the Accounting College to hire us. Once you get the experience, you can easily get the next job. (AC, FGC1: 9)*

For women from Mainland China, the entire process of applying for

work was unfamiliar. Many felt embarrassed and annoyed to apply for jobs for which they were often overqualified. Hazel's experience is typical:

*I think the unforgettable feeling for me in searching for a job is the contrast in moods.... I felt it even embarrassing to ask for a job as a cashier. I think that kind of work is very easy and when I have to look for it, I feel I am underrated. (HX, FGW1: 15)*

Responding to newspaper advertisements was also complicated because some of them spoke neither fluent English nor Cantonese. As a result, women from Mainland China relied almost exclusively on their social contacts to find the first job, a reliance that channeled them into Chinese-owned and Chinese-operated businesses.

Even after applications led to interviews, the women reported difficulties. Several women from Hong Kong noted that Canadian interviewers were usually pleasant, leaving the applicant with the impression that the interview had been successful. They were shocked to learn later that they would not be hired. A woman also remarked that her application included a glowing letter of reference from her previous employer in Hong Kong. She was surprised to find that the complimentary tone of the letter was questioned by potential employers who asked if the author of the letter was a relative.

These women all grappled with employers' demands for Canadian experience, lack of English fluency, and employers' failure to value their credentials and experience. Some women, mostly from Hong Kong, worked as unpaid volunteers, a strategy often recommended by employment counsellors. Other women who were more anxious to find paid work learned to emphasize their willingness to work hard and the evidence of their competency from previous jobs in China and Hong Kong. In

desperation, some women lied. One woman who had been told at interviews that employers wanted “Canadian experience” describes her feelings when a friend took her to an interview with the owner of the clothing factory where the friend was working:

*She brought me to the interview and stood beside me. He asked if I had the experience. I had never lied and wanted to say no. She stared at me and I said I had worked before. She taught me before (the interview) to lie about my work experience. He changed his attitude.... He told me to fill out a form.... That was the first job I found. At the time, I was very happy. (LA, FGW2: 19)*

Women from Mainland China were very aware that limited knowledge of English would impede their employment prospects. Warned by relatives and friends, most were willing to accept almost any work, regardless of their previous expertise and employment. Among women from Hong Kong, reactions were more mixed, with some women eager to take any job, while others withdrew from paid work to enroll in English-language courses or other post-secondary job-related courses.

Women actively sought to obtain the credentials and qualifications required for employment in Toronto. Not all of them were convinced academic qualifications should be so important, particularly women from Hong Kong:

*But in my generation in Hong Kong, degree holders were not common. At that time, working in a company, if you have ability and good performance, you can work your way up.... But Canada puts too much focus on educational background which makes it very difficult for us to obtain work. (AC, FGC: 8)*

The costs of retraining, both the

direct costs of tuition and books and the foregone income, concerned everyone. Several women from Mainland China couldn't afford retraining without a subsidy to replace their lost wages. Everyone was also worried about their job prospects upon graduation. Several women were considering training as health aides for the elderly because they anticipated job openings in this sector, but not because the work was inherently attractive to them.

### Domestic relations

Regardless of their family incomes, all of the married women reported that domestic responsibilities limited their efforts to obtain suitable employment. As mothers and wives, the women were primarily responsible for child care and housework. Several women reported that their husbands helped with meals and some housework, but the mothers of young children had to schedule paid employment to accommodate their children's schedules. Linda, the mother of a preschool-age boy, is in a typical situation:

*I have to wait until my husband come back from work before I can go to work in the evenings. (LQ, FGW1: 12)*

The high cost of daycare is beyond the means of many families who are waiting to be granted subsidy. Even women whose children attend school full-time feel their work schedules are constrained by child care. They must be home after school to take care of their children:

*But in the afternoon, I need to pick up my kid. That means I need to manage my time. If my kid did not need to go to school, I would be able to work. (LC, FGC2: 4)*

Only one of the 24 women commented that once she had a well-paid full-time job, her husband would take care of the children so he could

study at college or university. The restricted schedules of women who are responsible for child care conflict with employers' demands for long and flexible work hours. Even daycare hours that extend from approximately 7:00 am until 6:00 pm are insufficient. In job interviews for secretarial office jobs, Karen was asked if she could work long hours:

*I had a job interview... which I felt the work was good ... but ... you had to work from nine to six.... He also said that when the office needs to finish projects, you have to finish everything before you leave.... I have two kids, how much money would that cost.... I could not even earn enough to pay for babysitting. (KW, FGC: 6)*

In Hong Kong and China, these women had relied on family members and domestic workers to take care of children and housework while they participated in the labour market. In Toronto, isolated from family members and unable to afford domestic help, the women struggle to accommodate the schedules of paid work and domestic responsibilities on their own.

Even when women found employment with suitable work hours, their husbands and children were not necessarily supportive. Women from Hong Kong reported that their husbands and children were shocked by the loss of status and authority that women experienced when they took poorly-paid service jobs in Toronto. Family members sometimes complained that the women's wages were too low relative to the costs of commuting and it was not worthwhile for the women to work. Some husbands argued that their partners who had been employers themselves in Hong Kong would not be able to tolerate the dictates of a boss. None of the women from China had similar experiences, perhaps because women's incomes were essential for household survival or because of more equitable gender relations

within the household. Additional research is needed to explore these explanations.

### Conclusions

The relations of gender, race, ethnicity, and class intersect in complex ways to marginalize the Chinese women who participated in the focus groups. Employers' demands for Canadian work experience and the reluctance of professional organizations to accredit foreign professionals coupled with some of the women's limited fluency in English, channel these highly educated and experienced workers into poorly-paid service and manufacturing jobs in the Chinese ethnic economy. Lack of familiarity with Canadian society, particularly the social norms involved in applying for and interviewing for jobs, further exacerbates these women's difficulties in the stiff competition for stable, well-paid jobs. Their vulnerability is heightened by the conflicting demands of domestic responsibilities and paid work that limit their employment options. Despite the human capital that each woman has brought to Canada, complex social processes in the spheres of paid and unpaid domestic work confine most to the secondary labour market (Ng 1996, Peck).

Dissatisfied with the frustrating experience of searching for employment equivalent to that which they had had in Hong Kong and China, the focus group participants identified several policy changes that would enhance their employment opportunities. Many of their recommendations arise from the difficulties of satisfying the demands of competing roles as mothers and paid workers. Embedded in the women's discourses is a pointed critique of current language-training programs. All of the women recognized the importance of improving their fluency in English, but their efforts to attain fluency were stymied by programs that fail to provide training allowances and adequate child care. Women

from Mainland China cannot usually forego an income no matter how small, so they are unable to take advantage of child care subsidies. Hong Kong women who are not eligible for child care subsidies find it difficult to arrange affordable child care at the same hours as language training is available. The difficulties that these women have had gaining access to language programs are not new (Fincher *et al.*), but their persistence is a reminder that language programs warrant reconsideration and revision.

Recognizing that Canadian work experience is a prerequisite of many employers, several women asked why the government was not more actively involved in linking immigrants to potential employers in the labour market. Some women recommended that information about government services and programs be made more widely available. Rather than posting the information only at employment centres, they recommended that information about job training programs should also be available at community centres where immigrants are already taking language classes. Training programs were seen as a way to overcome employers' unwillingness to recognize work experience abroad. Upon successful completion of the training program, a certificate would be issued to assure employers that the woman was well qualified. Without exception, the women wanted governments at all levels to develop programs that would encourage employers to hire recent immigrants who do not have "Canadian experience." Their recommendations were sophisticated, ranging from cooperative work programs to providing wage subsidies for employers who hired recent immigrants.

Several women commented on the wastefulness of Canada's immigration policies that encourage qualified professionals to migrate without being able to utilize their skills. They argued that investment in short-term living allowances, available for a week or a month, would make training

programs more accessible and lead to greater economic benefits from immigration. Programs to promote entrepreneurship among immigrant women, particularly those who had owned businesses previously, were also justified on the same basis.

The women's recommendations echo recent evidence that the design and operation of social institutions influences significantly the integration of immigrants in Canada, Australia, and the United States. Comparing the economic success of immigrants to the three countries, Reitz found that those who settled in Canada were more successful because of the design of Canadian institutions, particularly the educational system. Until recently, Canadian education has been funded more liberally than in Australia and with public rather than private funds as in the United States. Access to higher education has reduced income inequalities between immigrants and the Canadian-born. Reitz notes that labour market and welfare institutions have less impact than educational institutions on immigrants' incomes, in aggregate. The experiences of recently-arrived immigrant women in Toronto suggest that women's success may be affected by how policies are linked with each other. More research with a larger and representative sample is needed to ascertain the ways that labour market and welfare policies might be designed to facilitate the goals of educational policies for immigrant women who must accommodate their multiple roles as paid workers, mothers, and homemakers.

The more affluent women from Hong Kong were able to withdraw from the paid labour market rather than accept unsatisfactory working conditions. Nevertheless, all of the women have experienced the triple burden imposed by gender, immigrant status, and visible minority status, often despite the human capital they bring to Canada. By migrating to Canada, these women have become "Chinese" immigrant women.

Their reactions to this new identity and the loss of careers that had been an important part of their identities is remarkable stoicism. Women who had owned businesses in Hong Kong resorted to starting their own businesses in Toronto, although they encountered many difficulties. Professional women were frustrated that their credentials and experience were not recognized, but even they were remarkably realistic about their employment prospects and very willing to consider new jobs and new careers. A woman who had been a doctor in China speaks for all of the participants when she says:

*I was a clinician. In Canada, many people encourage me to study medicine. They say it is not bad to be a laboratory technician, and it is even better to be a physiotherapist. And for the latter, it's easy to get a license. But as a clinician for many years, I don't quite like to be a physiotherapist. I think it over. If I study for four to five years and practice as an intern for four to five years, all together it will be ten years. When I become a doctor, I think its time to retire. So I think... why don't I start a job now? I will find new jobs and new experiences. That is the reason that I don't want to be a doctor anymore. (WJ, FGW1: 5)*

*An earlier version of this paper was prepared for presentation at the annual meetings of the Association of American Geographers, Honolulu, March 23-27, 1999. The research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, Toronto. We are grateful to our collaborators, Maisie Lo and Danny Mui who shared their knowledge and expertise when designing and organizing the focus groups, however, we are solely responsible for any errors.*

*Guida Man received her Ph.D. from OISE/University of Toronto. She cur-*

*rently teaches at the Department of Sociology at York University, and is also a research associate at the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), in Toronto. She has published a number of articles and book chapters on the experience of Chinese immigrant women from Hong Kong.*

*Valerie Preston is Associate Professor of Geography at York University where she teaches social geography from a feminist perspective. She has written extensively about the effects of gender and race on women's geographical access to employment in New York City and the employment experiences of immigrants in Toronto.*

<sup>1</sup> All participants are identified by initials that refer to pseudonyms. Each quote is also identified by the focus group in which it occurred and the page of the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> Man (1997, 1995) has examined in detail the impact of migration on family structure and gender relations within the families of recent Hong Kong migrants. Her research suggests that in Canada, the employment decisions of many women from Hong Kong are affected adversely by domestic relations.

<sup>3</sup> The Greater Toronto Area is the urbanized Toronto region that consists of Halton, Peel, York, and Durham regional municipalities with the amalgamated city of Toronto.

<sup>4</sup> Focus groups are useful in exploratory research because they allow for more interaction among participants that may enrich the discussion. On the other hand, focus groups may also encourage consensus rather than the expression of diverse opinions.

<sup>5</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the past few years, more affluent immigrants from China have brought substantial financial resources, however, this was not the case before 1992 (Statistics Canada 1996b).

<sup>6</sup> Social capital refers to the resources available by virtue of a person's membership in an ethnic community (Portes).

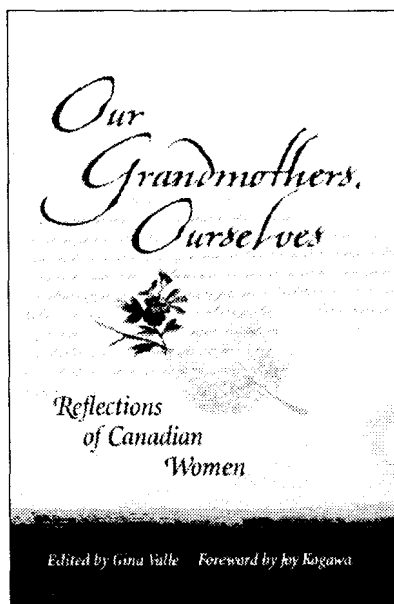
<sup>7</sup> Women defined dependency as responsibility for children who live at home. The ages of dependent children range between a few months and early twenties.

<sup>8</sup> In the transcripts, employers are identified as "Chinese," an ethnic identity that is applied on the basis of language and appearance.

## References

- Badets, J. and D. Howatson-Lee. "Recent Immigrants in the Workforce." *Canadian Social Trends*. (Spring 1998): 16-22.
- Boyd, M. *Gender, Visible Minority and Immigrant Earnings Inequality: Reassessing an Employment Equity Premise*. Departmental Working Paper 91-6. Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1991
- Chui, T. and M. S. Devereaux. "Canada's Newest Workers." *Perspectives on Labour and Income*. (Spring 1995): 17-23.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). *Canada—A Welcoming Land*. Ottawa: Minister of Public works and Government Services, Canada, 1998.
- Fincher, R., L. Foster, W. Giles, and V. Preston. "Gender and Migration Policy." *Immigration and Refugee Policy, Australia and Canada Compared*. Eds. H. Adelman, A. Borowski, M. Burstein, and L. Foster. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994. 149-186.
- Giles, W. and V. Preston. "The Domestication of Women's Work: A Comparison of Chinese and Portuguese Immigrant Women Homeworkers" *Studies in Political Economy* 51 (1996): 147-181.
- Harding, S. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Henry, F. and E. Ginzberg. *Who Gets the Work?* Toronto: Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, 1984.

- Infantry, A. "Opportunity knocks...but not for all," *The Sunday Star* May 2, 1999: A1.
- Lam, L. "Searching for a Safe Haven: The Migration and Settlement of Hong Kong Chinese Immigrants in Toronto." *Reluctant Exiles?* Ed. R. Skeldon. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994. 163-179.
- Li, P. *The Chinese in Canada, Second Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Liu, X. F. "New Mainland Chinese Immigrants: A Case Study of Metro Toronto." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Geography, York University, Toronto, 1995.
- Man, G. C. "Women's Work is Never Done: Social Organization of Work and the Experience of Middle-Class Hong Kong Chinese Immigrant Families in Canada." *Advances in Gender Research* 2 (1997): 183-226.
- Man, G. C. "The Experience of Women in Recent Middle-Class Chinese Immigrant Families from Hong Kong: An Inquiry into Institutional and Organizational Processes." *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 4 (1995): 303-329.
- Ng, R. *The Politics of Community Services, Immigrant Women, Class and State*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996.
- Ng, R. "Racism, Sexism and Nation-Building in Canada." *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*. Eds. C. McCarthy and W. Crichlow. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Peck, J. *Work-Place: The Social Regulation of Labor Markets*. New York: Guilford Press, 1996.
- Portes, A. *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays in Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1994.
- Preston, V. and W. Giles. "Ethnicity, Gender, and Labour Markets in Canada: A Case Study of Immigrant Women in Toronto." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 6 (1997): 135-159.
- Reitz, J. *Warmth of the Welcome: The Social Causes of Economic Success for Immigrants in Different Nations and Cities*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.
- Sassen, S. *The Global City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Smith, D. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Statistics Canada. *Profiles, Hong Kong, Immigration Research Series*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1996a.
- Statistics Canada *Profiles, People's Republic of China, Immigration Research Series*. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1996b
- Waldinger, R., H. Aldrich and R. Ward. *Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Immigrant Business in Industrial Societies*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990.



**Our Grandmothers, Ourselves**  
Reflections of Canadian Women  
edited by Gina Valle  
foreword by Joy Kogawa  
1-55192-270-3 • \$19.95 paper

## A Lifelong Bond

In this unique collection of creative non-fiction, 19 Canadian women of various cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds celebrate the memories of their grandmothers and pay tribute to the significant role they have played in forming their identities. Through short stories, poems, journal entries, letters, and more, grandmother—baba, nonna, yiayia, babcia—emerges as a symbol of strength, a "stitcher of life."



RAINCOAST BOOKS  
[www.raincoast.com](http://www.raincoast.com)

Available at your local bookstore or phone 1.800.561.8583