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Mobilities, Translocal Economies and Emotional Modernity : from the factory to digital platforms between China and Taïwan

Beatrice Zani

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***Mobilities, Translocal Economies, and Emotional Modernity*.**

From the Factory to Digital Platforms, between China and Taiwan.

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LYON UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITE LUMIERE LYON 2

Ecole Doctorale 483 Sciences sociales

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Mobilities, Translocal Economies, and Emotional Modernity.

From the Factory to Digital Platforms, between China and Taiwan

Beatrice Zani

Supervised by Professor Laurence Roulleau-Berger

Co-supervised by Professor H-H. Michael Hsiao

A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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To my father and my aunt,

to my Chinese jiemei,

to my translocal families

"It becomes therefore evident that it is the nature of human beings which makes the multitude gathering together, based on affections, fears or common ambitions, as well as on a collective desire of revenge against the collectively experienced injustices"

Baruch Spinoza, Theological-political Treatise

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Bouzid, Maison des Sciences de l’

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Introductory Considerations

The Odysseys of an Orange, Fluorescent Bra

Stocked into a suitcase, an orange, fluorescent bra crosses the Taiwan Strait. It is a plastic-silicon made bra and its shape and colour look quite old fashion. I was offered this bra by Fujin, a Chinese migrant woman who lives and works in Taipei, where she sells bras and underclothes in a little lingerie shop. Where does this orange, fluorescent bra come from? How did it arrive to Taiwan? What I was given seemed to me a low-value, cheap and quite old fashion piece of lingerie, which could not really fit Taiwanese fashion tastes. Who could buy such a product? Apparently, it represented for Fujin a very good business in Taiwan.

The bra is commercialised in Taiwan but, like the rest of the lingerie sold by Fujin, it comes from the global factory of the world: China. It is part of the "made in China" production. It had been sewed and assembled in a textile factory in Southern China, by the little hands of rural migrant workers, of whom Fujin has been part of. The bra I was offered in Taiwan had hence been made and resold by the very same woman, Fujin.

This is the narration of the paths, the journeys, the travels of this orange, fluorescent bra: an artefact made in China by Chinese migrant women who creatively turn it into a consumption commodity. It is the tale of its articulated commodification and commercialisation processes, of its movements, circulations and wanderings, which follow the uncertain rhythms and the disparate tempos of its producers-consumers-sellers' mobilities. The bra navigates through spaces, places, lives and experiences in which it is animated. However, the trails of the bra are not simple itineraries of travel inside a luggage carried by a migrant. They represent translocal patterns of motion, local and global experiences of mobility and immobility (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), of simultaneity and of interconnection, but also of deceleration and stasis (Salazar and Smart 2011). The bra, its biographies and geographies take shape and contribute to forge the new, material, social and emotional fabrics of the global world on novel, *sui generis* scales, of which some we have yet to imagine.

This research is about globalisation, and its mutability, malleablility and polyformism. It is a work about orange bras, but also about chicken feet, self-phones and *WeChat* groups. It tells the stories of milk powder, of hidden garages and multinational global companies, of Chinese migrant women, transnational highways and discrete back-roads existing all at once and co-producing each other. This orange, fluorescent bra is more than what it looks like: behind its mobilities are hidden new material, social and emotional worlds that I aim at discovering. Questioning its biography (Kopytoff 1986; Lau

2014), its social (Appadurai 1986) and emotional life (Illouz 2009, 2018) requires investigating the social, economic and emotional careers of its producers.

The curious shape and colour of this production and consumption good leads me to question its origins and the roads it underwent to arrive to a lingerie shop in the suburbs of Taipei. The answer might seem obvious: who does not wear "made in China" underclothes today? Produced in China, its commodification and transportation pattern may not seem more unusual than an ordinary import-export process. However, it is. And this is the beginning of my narration. How do the little hands of the factory of the world, China, belong to? Who are the workers who fabricated the bra and who, later, commodified it? How did they open for new commercial circuits to resell the bra in Taiwan? How are the logistics, the economic circuits, the modalities of displacement set and reproduced?

Logistics generate mouvements, routes, trails, travel practices and systems, by transporting an object from place to place, through and across, behind and beyond borders and frontiers. These mobilities derive from markets, from production, commodification and selling processes. However, markets are socially constructed (Grannovetter 1994; Callon 2002) complex systems of exchange of both material and symbolic goods (Fassin 2001; Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2004). A plurality of actors, objects and subjects, but also of norms and rules, of communication practices, of emotions (Illouz 2007, 2018), of imagination, and of affections are intertwined and entangled in their construction and performance.

The logistics of this bra's journey and commercialisation paths represent vivid, dynamic and performative social and emotional experiences. These creative circuits do not belong to the "cold apparatus of capitalism" (Illouz 2007), of the global production chain. They are composed of the lived daily lives, social practices and emotional experiences of the individuals who, through their journeys, on a physical and virtual scale, produced its vibrant, social and socialized commodification process. The bra moves, migrates and circulates. Its mobilities are imbued with and, in turn, sustained by a multiplicity of social norms, economic practices, emotional dynamics, affections and multiscale interactions. Investigating the trails, the logistics and the geographies of the bra leads to question the biographies, the migrations and the daily practices of the actors who made the movement of such object possible.

Following the bra and the articulation of its circuits through and across spaces, places and social worlds enables to map, to draw a cartography of its *sui generis* and creative biographies and geographies of interconnection which take shape and place across the new seas of globalisation. On the road, the bra

goes through a plurality of local and global spaces, it fluctuates on digital platforms of communication, it meets people and sustains their interactions. Biographies and geographies of objects and subjects transcend economic exchange and commercial activities. Social and emotional relationships, affectional ties and reciprocity bonds are produced through and supported by the travel of this object. But let me proceed with order.

Migrating and Re-migrating

This orange, fluorescent bra has been produced within a textile multinational enterprise in Canton, Southern China, by a young rural woman, Fujin, who had left her home village in the inner province of Chongqing and migrated to the city to work in the factory. The bra, this orange assemblage of plastic and silicon, had been socially and emotionally constructed by Fujin, even before its material process of fabrication around a crowded and disciplined assembly line. It pre-existed her labour and migratory experiences through a work of imagination, of aspiration and of emotional projection, the "capacity to make present that which is absent" (Illouz 2009: 378). It leaned and relied on an individual project of subjectivity-making, of social status attainment and of modern identity transformation. It was an individual, subjective project co-produced and co-supported by an articulated *global device* composed of the Chinese State, and the transnational market, which spread a precise discourse of modernity and on modernity, aimed at directing rural women's' bodies towards the cities to exploit their labour.

This textile artefact made inside a multinational enterprise implanted in Southern China is emblematic of the ways the global market has penetrated Chinese society and the structure of its labour market since the end of 1980. Allied with a State seeking for development and modernisation, it has ably and discretely imposed a modern discourse on globalisation to Chinese society and economics. The goal was clear since its advent: taking advantage of the succulent, cheap and docile labour stock represented by the massive young and unskilled population residing in inner rural areas (Solinger 1999; Pun 2005).

In internal China, rural-to-urban migration has been growing since the beginning of 1990s, when masses of rural workers migrated from the countryside to the global cities (Sassen 1995) to sell their labour in the huge multinational companies, developed and managed by transnational businessmen, among which many were from Taiwan (Tseng 2014). Internal labour migrations have been framed within a clever, specific discourse co-produced by the Chinese state and the global market, articulated through a depreciative and disqualifying representation of the Chinese countryside, skilfully opposed

to an idyllic, metropolitan image of global, modern cities where social mobility and economic independence were possible. What could be more illustrative of a modern urban status than a fancy fluorescent bra? The implementation of specific migratory policies has however generated new social, economic and moral barriers for rural population in the city (Roulleau-Berger 2013a) and reinforced a disqualified social positioning, source of labour exploitation and economic marginalisation.

Nevertheless, the social and emotional life of this bra is not solely shaped within subalternity. It is a translocal, mobile life, which moves and rotates, through multiple adaptations, negotiations and resistances among plural spaces and different regimes of normativity, inside and outside China, on a local and a global scale. The bra's life is socially emotionally constructed: from the assembly line, women's sufferings of exclusion, disqualification, maltreatments were projected on this production object. At the same time, it is through the very production of the bra that migrant working women (*dagong mei* 打工妹) progressively develop new aspirations and ambitions. These are fuelled by and generated from the social and emotional significance attributed to this commodity: a modern status, economic independence and a metropolitan, urban identity.

However, made by migrants inside a textile factory, in China the bra remains a mere object of production, on which desires and ambitions of upward social mobility are projected on, but which are rather unachievable within the Chinese urban apparatus. Aspiration, transformation and project-making are experienced by women on an imaginary mode, which is partially, but crucially, generated from and supported by this very same bra's material, social and emotional fabrics. Its production reveals to be more than a manufacturing activity. It leads to a progressive awareness among rural migrant women of the constraints existing in the Chinese city. It brings about the development of creative tactics to negotiate and to cope with a condition of subalternity, which becomes the pivot around which new migratory projects are designed. While assembling plastic and silicon, weaving its wools, the emotional gap between what is desired and what is concretely attainable emerges.

This bra represents and generates the plural, malleable and fluid processes of subjectivation and of subjection women undergo during their pluri-mobilities, constructed within the frame of multi-scalar (Kloosterman and Rath 2001), local and global opportunities and constraints. Thereby, the social and emotional processes of subjectivity-making engendered during industrial labour experience of which the production of the bra is paradigmatic of cannot be reduced to the mere production-consumption dilemma. They raise questions about the strategies of resistance women can creatively produce to

overcome a condition of subalternity, which becomes increasingly liable, temporary, fluid, hence dismantlable.

The imaginaries and aspirations that this object brings about lead women to re-move, re-migrate, to take new roads towards unknown lands of possibility for transformation and for *becoming*. The global city, and foreign Taiwanese multinational companies where women work in become places for encounter and for the discovery of novel places, of new *Ithacas* to move towards. In the age of global migration (Castles and Miller 2003), it is within the cities and the factories that further migratory projects can be formulated and negotiated. New translocal encounters between migrant women and Taiwanese foreign high-skilled workers or managers occur following the tempo of globalisation and the local forms it takes in the large coastal cities where Taiwanese companies are implanted. Taiwan as a new land for opportunities is socially and emotionally constructed as a place where the making of modern subjectivities becomes possible.

A project of re-mobility and re-migration to Taiwan is thereby formulated, within the complex articulation of Taiwanese restrictive and gendered mobility regime and migratory policies which organise and constrain movement, by imposing marriage as the *conditio sine qua non* for migration, settlement and residence in Taiwan. By moving to Taiwan, women do not only experience geographical relocation and spatial displacement, but also a shift in terms of marital status, strictly embedded in rigid *politics of imposed identity* (Ong 1999). Migrant working women become spouses in Taiwan: their identity and their rights are hence highly dependent on and entangled with their marital status.

Reformulating Modernity, Dismantling Subalternity

From Chinese cities to Taiwan, women *on the move* experience constant ordeals of social contempt and misrecognition. The persistence of old and new local and global hierarchies and inequalities draws lines of continuity among in the times, spaces, identities (Tarrius 2000, 2001) and emotions of women's mobilities. These constantly challenge migrants' subjectivity-making processes and upward social mobility aspirations. Several biopolitical devices operate within the sphere of marital and labour regimes in Taiwan, generating new obstacles for Chinese migrants during their tortuous paths towards recognition. What was socially, economically and emotionally perceived as an opportunity tends to re-position women into a condition of subalternity. That being said, evoking the diverse ordeals of

subalternity, of daily violence experienced at home or of marginalisation in the labour market requires to investigate the persistence of creative subjectivities who can invent new tactics and strategies, deploy weapons (Scott 1987) and "tricks in the art of doing" (De Certeau 1980; Roulleau-Berger 2004) to resist.

The trails of the orange bra are intrinsically embedded and sustained by the practices and the strategies that women produce to cope with disqualifications and misrecognition. Its displacements and movements elucidate the multiple and creative tricks and techniques women invent to overstep, and overturn a condition of subalternity, negotiating and re-framing an alternative modern project at their own terms. Such processes occur at the crossroad between objects and subjects' biographies and geographies, within the new fluid scales of the local and the global worlds, where resources can be mobilised, and opportunities can be negotiated. Its *sui generis* paths illustrate women's mobilities, which cross diverse social, economic and moral orders.

Migrants make the experience, circulate through and even transgress local and global inequalities and hierarchical normative regimes. Notwithstanding, the process of social (Kopytoff 1986; Ingold 2000) and emotional commodification (Illouz 2018) the bra undergoes elucidates the ways women can transcend orders of misrecognition and vulnerability and reframe or "reset" modernity (Latour and Leclercq 2016) for themselves and by themselves. Globalisation, and its asymmetries, the inequalities and hierarchies it generates reveal to be more and more liable, porous and malleable. When the local meets the global, when the hierarchies encounter with ambitions and aspirations, when immobility is transgressed by motion, obstacles become surmountable and new roads towards autonomy, independence and social mobility can be taken.

inside which such processes occur. From a manufactured object, the bra is progressively and creatively turned into a commodity (Kopytoff 1986; Lau 2014), which is individually and collectively socialised. Local orders are overturned. Women's individual emotional ordeals of suffering, of frustration, and of dissatisfaction enter the collective dimension of inter-actions, of affectional bonds and of socialisation processes, of which the bra's biographical turning point (Abbott 2001), from an artefact to a commodity, is illustrative of. Globalisation opens new seas, where navigational skills can be mobilised, together with a plurality of social networks and emotional ties dispatched within a multiplicity of *glocal* places and spaces.

The commodification and commercialisation processes of the objects progressively transgress and transcend the project of global, capitalistic modernity, which had initiated, oriented and supported women's labour migrations in internal China and later marriage-migration to Taiwan. Women re-frame a different modernity. It is a modern, collective project designed and shaped within a field of endless possibilities (Clifford 1980), of whose contours are drawn by a kaleidoscope of transnational emotions and affections, ambitions and aspirations. It is a fluid, malleable and evolving *emotional modernity,* constructed and re-constructed all along the mobility paths and of which some outlines may be yet to be defined.

It appears as more and more visible that a low-value, plastic bra bears the trace of women's project-making and ambitions, which it concurrently contributes to shape and frame. Transforming the bra from a manufactured artefact into a consumption object might not correspond to a simple commercial process. To some extent, the social and emotional life and career-making of this object and of the subjects it interacts with jumble mix and merge. The bra does not merely follow subjects' geographical displacements, but it contributes to forge new translocal itineraries. It personifies subjectivities, emotions and identity-making processes, whilst jointly supporting them.

The trails, the displacements, the journeys of a little bra elucidate the multiple, vaporous, invisible and mutating techniques by which Chinese proletarians, oscillating between conditions of fragility and subalternity all along their migratory paths, individually and collectively set new sails between global capitalism and local consumption, fuelled by their determination of surviving and resisting, improving their status within the diverse spaces and temporalities of their mobility.

The routes, the roads and the roaming of the bra bring me to examine how individuals' biographical temporalities and spatialities are entangled with objects' mobilities, hence their links and connections. The bra circumvents spatial, social and moral boundaries. It evades highly monitored national borders' controls. It transgresses the frontiers of the physical and the material. It enters de-materialised, digital worlds. It connects temporalities, but also spaces, places and people. The bra's producer, owner and seller's biographical and migratory paths fusion with the diverse, heterogeneous mobility patterns of the object itself. This occurs on, through and across the new trails, routes and configurations of a mutating and fluid globalisation. How was this process of commodification brought into being? How far can the bra move? Answering to these questions may ask an effort of imagination (Mills 1940), as well as of virtual displacement on the scale of digital worlds. We might need to turn our smartphones on.

What could initially seem a mere commercial act of buying and selling stuff has progressively revealed to be a complex global adventure. When local and global production and consumption dynamics meet with individuals' biographical and mobility patterns, new configurations appear. The process of social and emotional commodification and commercialisation of the bra is anything but creative, innovative and curious. It is designed, framed and developed inside socially (Grannovetter 1994; Callon 2002) and emotionally (Illouz 2007, 2018) constructed markets, of whose some are yet to be opened.

Following and *tracking* (Marcus 1995) objects and subjects' mobilities make it possible to delineate and to map these novel geographies of the *glocal*, which link together a variety of people, of places, of spaces on the multiscale, translocal level of a mutable and malleable globalisation. The trails, journeys and wanderings of the orange bra are thus the frame to apprehend the economies generated by women, and women's mobilities themselves. These multipolar economies[2] elucidate the presence of discrete, invisible *back roads*, opened inside the interstices of global capitalism and globalisation. They might not be visible within global official trading and economic circuits since they are made in the little hyperlocal sections of globalisation where daily life experiences and social practices occur. However, "invisible" does not mean inexistent or unimportant. It designates something hidden, unexpected or unpredictable, which takes place within the new unimagined spaces of the global.

[2] I borrow Laurence Roulleau-Berger's conceptualisation of "multipolar economies", in the frame of the "worlds of the little urban production" (1999, 2016).

Digital technologies, *online* communication applications and virtual worlds are part of the new spaces where the commodification and commercialisation processes occur.

They connect the different and multiple spaces -poles- of women's migrations, through processes of constant territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Sassen 1995, 2006a). Back-roads can be physical or virtual, formed and shaped in the plural little social microcosmos of migrant women's transnational lives, all at once instantaneously interconnected. Spatialities and temporalities mix and merge on different, mutable scales. The rhythms of mobility vary: accelerated, speeded up and compressed, but also slow down or blocked by the obstacles and the walls objects and subjects find on their roads. What is *on the move*, what is in motion crosses, transgresses, transforms and transcends fixity, rigidity and stability. Spaces, places, social worlds, economic orders, but also status positionings and rigid identities reveal their porosity. Mobility becomes instantaneous and *orbital*. It oscillates, separates and connects poles, and generates constellations of social practices and emotional links.

Thereby, these creative, physical and virtual, local and global, commercial paths and economic patterns challenge social borders, geographical boundaries and moral frontiers. The objects commodified and commercialised on these new and original trails "contest" (Steiner 2005) markets. Digital applications, instantaneous communications and emotional circulations break the plurality of walls women have been confronted to during their labyrinthine and complex mobility patterns, from the Chinese countryside to the urban factory, from China to Taiwan, and back to China. The economic and emotional cartography of the commercialised objects' movements, as well as of women's *orbital mobility careers* demonstrates the hybrid and syncretic convergence between the logics of the global market and economic and emotional hyperlocal practices, located within women's daily lives and increasingly cosmopolitan existences. On the back-roads of globalisation, an *emotional petit capitalism*[3] emerges, defined by and through objects and subjects' experiences of *in-betweenness* (Bhabha 2002), of rotation and of instantaneity. It can take different, mutable forms, taking alternative back-roads, which sometimes intersect, sometimes sidestep the highways of global market and multinational trading circuits.

[3] I borrow here Eva Illouz's outstanding expression of "emotional capitalism" (2007). I will discuss the way I reframe and use this expression in the theoretical frame of this work (part 1, the Theoretical Frame, chapter 4 and chapter 5).

Within the complex frame of a dialectic between the local and the global, the physical and the virtual, the material and the emotional, the challenge is to draw a cartography of mobilities and movements, where scales, temporalities, places and spatialities mix, merge and overlap. Mapping these multiple and polymorph social, economic and emotional spaces circumnavigated and all at once interconnected opens a discussion of the rhythms, the tempos, the shapes and forms of globalisation. The back-roads, trails and paths of the *glocal* economies cross, merge and mix with the main roads of global markets. What are the fluid, heterogeneous forms that globalisation can take? Women's translocal *emotional petit capitalism*, generated through social networks and developed on back-roads constitutes the mutable and polyhedral substance of globalisation. Thus, globalisation might also emerge inside such social, economic and emotional hyperlocal sections, all at once imbricated.

Structure of the Text

By tracking the floating movements and multiple mobilities of the bra, the structure of this work follows objects and subjects' mobilities, from the countryside to the city in China, from the Chinese city to Taiwan and, later, back to China. Following and analysing women's' biographical, migratory and professional careers leads to a progressive investigation of the ways their mobilities are created through and sustained by new physical and virtual, material and emotional, social and economic practices. Through an understanding of the translocal inter-actions which creatively connect spaces, places and people, I will show the polymorphism, malleability and mutability of globalisation. Based on actors' experiences, practices and discourses, this later bring about a reconceptualisation of modernity and of the possible forms and shape that cosmopolitan existences and mobility careers can take.

However, before entering the core of the analysis, I develop a first discussion where I elucidate the construction of the research object and my approaches to fieldwork. Therefore, in a ***before-method*** (Sassen 2013), I some raise epistemological questionings and reflections about the strategies and the tactics I have embraced to approach the global and the mobile. I also sketch some broader epistemological, theoretical and methodological considerations about the ways I have conceived and construced my (field)work. These three levels are strictly intertwined and inseparable. In **part 1**, I define the theoretical frame which sustains my rationale. Later, in **part 2**, I draw the outlines for experimental methodological theory. I firstly present the methodological tools I have adopted (chapter

1), before illustrating the policy of fieldwork (chapter 2) and ultimately describing my co-constructed, floating and translocal field sites (chapter 3).

By tracking objects and subjects' mobilities, the structure of the text diachronically follows women's mobility patterns from China to Taiwan and from Taiwan to China. The narration starts from women's migratory processes and professional experiences in China (**part 3**), where the orange, fluorescent bra is manufactured. I draw a cartography of migrant women's urban and professional career making-processes from the countryside to the city and its factories (chapter 1). I investigate the multiplication of urban and professional patterns of labuor and migration in the city (chapter 2) to show the individual and collective social, emotional and affectional strategies Chinese migrant women (*dagong mei*) develop to cope with a subaltern position (chapter 3) and their progressive construction of cross-border marriage-migratory paths (chapter 4).

Stocked inside a luggage, the bra accompanies women while migrating to Taiwan. In **part 4** I reflect on women's cross-border, translocal mobilities, forged through navigations between local and global seas. I analyse how local and global hierarchies and mobility regimes mix and merge in the new Taiwanese social, economic and familiar orders, re-positioning women in a subaltern position, declined under diverse geometries (chapter 1). Hence, I firstly discuss the individual and collective social, emotional and affectional strategies women collectively develop inside physical and virtual worlds to cope with disqualifications (chapter 2), before focusing on their traslocal economic practices which exceed the local order. This leads to a reflection on globalisation and to the definition of *emotional modernity* (chapter 3).

In **part 5**, I discuss Chinese migrants' transnational cosmopolitan experiences, under the prism of *orbital mobility career* formation during re-migration to China. Navigating through re-migration biographies and geographies, I identify the ways mobilities back to China are constructed oscillating among a plurality of temporalities, spaces, places and identities (chapter 1). This helps to illustrate the new tactics women deploy to re-take their place in urban China, by mobilising translocal social resources and affectional ties, opening new poles of the economies they had generated before in Taiwan (chapter 2). I conclude my rationale through an analysis of the cosmopolitanisation of biographies, through the definition of *orbital* mobilities and the production incessant movements and circulations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait (chapter 3).

I end my work by an **(unconcluded) conclusion**, where I sketch some synthetic, final remarks and I open the stage for the discussion of future research perspectives, analytical approaches and mobile, fluid and globalised field sites to investigate the malleable forms that globalisation can take on continually rerouted and porous roads.

Before Method

Mobility is everywhere. It has become a constant, rather than a variable, in the contemporary social landscape (Schultermandl and Toplu 2010: 11-17). Studying what is *on the move* has been the huge challenge of this work. Apprehending the mobile, what is on displacement and what, on the contrary, is immobile has been at the core of my preoccupations before, during and after field research. It has been concurrently a matter of questioning my theoretical and epistemological positioning, but also the sociological practice itself as challenge in terms of methodological choices. Let me start from this.

In his "new mobility paradigm",

emotional levels, mobility will be conceived as an open field of possibilities, of projection and transformation. Mobility is a *becoming*.

Before entering the core of the theoretical and methodological architecture of my research, some preliminary reflections about movement and motion in a globalised world urge. Drawing on her "before method", I borrow Saskia Sassen's expression (2013) to open a space for discussion about the ways, the tools and the categories I have analytically chosen to construct and examine the object of my study. As Sassen has claimed, it is crucial "to explain, even before method, the what, the how and the why of an inquiry" (Sassen 2013: 79). Indeed, it is a matter of fiction. This is a narrative *mise en scène,* since my research is empirically-based, and fieldwork has simultaneously preceded and constructed the analysis while I was carrying it out. The analytical lens and the methodological tools I have adopted to approach my field sites are not axioms constructed *a priori*. I want to stress here that there is no logico-deducting intent in this rationale.

However, in this work I do not start from the presentation of the field sites, but I firstly develop some theoretical and epistemological reflections about the analytical tools and methodological instruments I have been using to approach my field sites. I consider crucial to reiterate that this choice is more a matter of stylistic and formal construction, aimed at "opening our*selves* up in ways we are not in ordinary life" (

My puzzles have therefore been framed and re-framed according to the complexity, the mutability and the porosity of what I had under my nose while conducting fieldwork. Field sites and methods go together. They are progressively accompanied by the theoretical concepts which enable their description. There should not be confusion among the theoretical, epistemological and methodological levels of the research. Nevertheless, these three dimensions reveal to be highly entangled and overlapping, since they concurrently shape each other. They cannot be conceived as fragmentally independent.

I would like to emphasise that in this work, *mobility* is an epistemological paradigm (Tarrius 2000, 2015), a theoretical concept (Sheller and Urry 2006), but also a useful methodological tool (Hannam et al. 2006) to apprehend the social.

Firstly, it is an analytical instrument helpful to describe and analyse the mobile, plural and changing social, economic and moral configurations of the practices of those who generate and make the experience of movement and motion, as well as the context in which such mobile biographies and practices are constructed. Secondly, it represents the pragmatic frame in which such moving, and fluid activities take place in. Ultimately, it is at the base of the mobile fieldwork I have carried out, where I had to be, physically and virtually, constantly *on the move* too, following subjects, objects and emotions on their diversified and labyrinthic roads.

Mobility can be understood in a plurality of ways, which are, at their turn, instable, moving and floating. Mobility, movement and motion which characterise contemporary social, economic and moral worlds are crucial elements to be considered in the process of construction of the research object, as well as in the choice of the analytical concepts and methodological instruments to apprehend it. My analysis, my understanding and the methods I employed have been, in this sense, mobile as well.

Hyperconnection, *simultaneity* and *instantaneity* constitute the new the temporalities of globalisation and make human and non-human (Law 1987; Latour 1988; Callon 1998) mobilities increasingly compound. Traditional dichotomies of "territorial" and "sedentary" have been overstepped (Tarrius 2000, 2001). The challenge has thus been to develop a constant work of scaling and re-scaling (Sassen 2006a; Debarbieux 2019). It has been crucial to articulate processes of proximity, of separation and of connectivity of objects, subjects and emotions which are permanently on the move. Thereby, I have been confronted to "a tangled, complex, mosaic of superimposed and interpenetrating nodes, levels, scales and morphologies" (Brenner 2004: 66) of the social that somehow I needed to explain.

Emerging mobilities simultaneously *shape and are shaped* by incessant, entangled dynamics of territorialisation-deterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) and reterritorialisation (Sassen 2006a) which are globalisation's spatial and temporal counterpart. They take place both on the physical and corporeal, but also virtual -digital and emotional- levels of displacement. Biographies and geographies reveal to be strictly overlapping. At the same time, mobility exists within the *inner* (Beck 1999), intimate and emotional dimensions of subjectivity and identity-making processes (Roulleau-Berger 2016). Imaginative travel, emotional journeys, and the movement of images and communication must also be included in the analysis of mobility practices. How can we account for continuous and contingent, instantaneous, accelerated or relented movement which is intrinsic to contemporary social worlds and societies?

The matter is not simple. If, as affirmed by Callon "social science is no more outside the reality it studies than are natural and life sciences, as it actively participates in shaping the thing it describes and it is influenced by them" (1998: 34), sociology shall be mobile as well. Why not taking movement, instantaneity and mobility as a starting point? Urry (2007) has convincingly suggested the necessity for a theoretical and ontological shift in sociology: from the social as society, to the social as mobility (Urry 2000).

Within this *mobile* frame, the research design, in terms of concepts, analytical tools as well as methods could not be fixed, rigid or stable. The problematics I raised are situated and situational. Temporary and liable, they may vary and change over time, since objects and subjects' lived experiences and practices may vary too. In this perspective, my questionings and puzzles have constantly been challenged, framed and re-objectified according to the empirical evidence I had under my eyes. The defiance has thus turned into processes of "destabilising stabilised meanings" (Sassen 2013: 80), and of accepting the "epistemic vertigos" (Roulleau-Berger 2015: 9), which emerged from the continuities, discontinuities, displacements and roaming on local and global, *moving* field sites, where situations, practices and experiences shift and vary, following the accelerated or slowed down tempos of globalisation.

The difficulty of studying local and global mobilities lies not solely in the multiple spaces where field research has been carried out. It has also derived from the precarious perimeter of the analytical concepts I employed and the floating methods that the research design has required.

The challenge has hence doubled: I had also to identify the appropriate analytical lens and tools to frame a mobile object, as well as "methods in motion" (Hannam et al. 2006) to empirically observe and describe the social and its complexity. Therefore, the considerations that I develop in the next chapters did not fall from a *Hyperuranion*. Despite their conceptual and theoretical dimensions, they are deeply anchored in the ethnographic work and intrinsic to the *order of things* observed on fluid and malleable field sites.

Globalisation makes the social highly mobile. Beyond this *petitio principii*, the point that needs to be borne in mind is that this social *in motion* does not fit anymore into rigid, fixed and static taxonomies of local and global, of physical and virtual, of material and emotional. The complexity, malleability and fluidity of social worlds and of social life can be apprehended only by considering these only apparently separated "plateaus" (

of imagination" (Sassen 2006a: 3), difficult to account for. Its malleability and fluidity have required, as suggested by

Part 1: Theoretical Frame

Glocal Mobilities

Heuristically, the theoretical frame which sustains my argument is aimed at apprehending the *mobile*, multiple processes of dislocation and relocation inside and outside spaces, places and temporalities generated by the overlapping mobilities of subjects, objects and emotions. To draw a cartography of such intertwined, translocal and hyperconnected movements, I position my argument in a complex - even if inexhaustive- theoretical, epistemological and analytical frame to apprehend the movement co-produced by the actors on different levels.

Firstly, it is a matter of understanding how objects and subjects' biographies and geographies are constructed oscillating between subjectivation and subjection processes, between movement and stasis within different places, spaces and temporalities. Seeking for modernity and autonomy, women's mobility paths are situated at the crossroad between local and global experiences of domination and subalternity which frame and restrict women's social, economic and moral re-positionings. However, being situated and situational, subaltern positions are liable and temporary. They are susceptible of being "undone". Such a frame helps the discussion of the strategies adopted by women to re-frame modernity at their own terms, through local and global, physical and virtual, material and emotional practices (chapter 1).

Secondly, I reflect on the role and the importance of social networks, social and affectional resources in women's mobility patterns (chapter 2). This enables, in chapter 3, to discuss individuals' experiences of mobility in terms of career-making, a concept useful to apprehend the experiences of migration, circulation and movement by integrating the structures of opportunities and constraints, social, economic and moral resources, as well as individual competences in the analysis of mobility paths.

Later, and crucially, I attempt to delineate some elements to include emotions, emotional experiences and affectional practices in the analysis of mobilities and migrations. Emotions are socially and situationally constructed, and they are conceived here as a *resource*, a *competence* and a *practice*. Emotions, their production and their performance, link objects and subjects' biographies and geographies. They generate new creative interconnections between the human and the non-human, the physical and the virtual, the material and the affectional. Mobility and immobility are performed on a physical and corporeal but also virtual, emotional and affective levels (chapter4).

Ultimately, by positioning objects, subjects and emotions *on the move*, I focus on the new social and economic practices which emerge among the diverse, local and global, physical and virtual spaces

crossed during mobilities. Drawing on the empirically-grounded case of cross-border, instantaneous entrepreneurial activities, I discuss the production of innovative, creative forms of capitalism by women *on the move*. Based on the articulation of empirical observations of the situations and of the experiences, this leads to a critical investigation and attempts to re-definition of the innovative articulation between local and global, physical and virtual, material and emotional practices. This helps to re-consider the mutable, malleable and polymorph substance of globalisation (chapter 5).

To conclude the framing of the analytical lens and theoretical tools I have opted for in the construction and the analysis of my research object, I enounce the research hypotheses which underpin my work.

Chapter 1: Subalternity and Modernity

From China to Taiwan, from Taiwan to China and *in-between* the two countries, women are *on the move*. This migration represents a complex, polyhedral and polyform process of different mobilities. It undergoes, crosses and circumnavigates different spatial and temporal seas, which need to be included in the analysis. In his *Anthropology of Movement* (1989) and in the construction of his "mobility paradigm" (2000), Alain Tarrius has pointed out the extent to which "time, space and identity" are highly entangled and strongly intertwined within multiple and diverse types of movement(s).

Before, during and after local and global navigations, the subjectivities and the practices of the actors of migration change and vary. They are constructed and re-constructed according to a plurality of configurations, which draw the field of possibility (Geertz 1973). Migration as a process requires to be apprehended in terms of movement and potential movement (Urry 2000; Sheller and Urry 2006), which are forged by a multiplicity of experiences, within the diverse and changing social, economic and moral worlds migrants go through. Individuals' paths are certainly highly subjective, unique and irreducible. However, they are positioned within plural worlds, social and institutional structures which also interplay in the making of biographical and migratory patterns and which cannot be neglected.

Oscillating between mobility and immobility, between movement and stasis (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), a plurality of opportunities, of constraints, of obstacles and of possibilities progressively emerge on migrants' roads. At each step and stop of mobility, objects and subjects are confronted to the proliferation of barriers, *i.e.* metaphorical "borders". Balibar (2002) has described borders in terms of "polysemy" and of "heterogeneity". Their "multiplicity" and their "hypothetical fictive nature do not make them less real" (2002: 76). Migrations and mobilities generate a transfer of subaltern positionings from local to global orders, at a translocal level. Inequalities, hierarchies, and injustices are produced both at a local and a global level. Despite the significant differences in terms of social, economic and moral orders which vary according to the spatialities and temporalities of migration, subalternity is a position which characterises Chinese migrant women status within the plurality of spaces of their migration.

1. Im-mobility, Subjectivation and Subjection

In the frame of constant, endless movements among times, spaces and locations, drawing a cartography of migrant women's translocal experiences and practices is a rather an arduous task. The difficulty derives from the multiscale and transnational dimension of migrations and mobilities which, on a physical, but also virtual level, position and re-position the individual within a plurality of social, economic and moral worlds, which are constantly changing. Individuals' positionings and re-positionings are built in situations (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Quéré 1997) which are socially constructed, thus temporary, variable, and liable.

In this sense, in a context of im-mobility and *motility* (Kaufmann et al. 2004) -the potential for mobility- the social reveals to be highly unstable. Thereby, the challenge is to capture, describe and analyse the making of the individual inside -but also outside, through and beyond- a mobile social world. If migrants as actors are capable to forge their existence and to project themselves towards a future of possibilities, their constant shifting among places, spaces and temporalities imposes to consider the different local, situated and localised constraints which weight on the individual at each step of the migratory career (Becker 1963; Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2007). Mezzadra and Nelson (2013) have crucially pointed out that in the analysis of the contemporary globalised world, it is fundamental to investigate "the mutations of labour, of space, of time, of law, of power, and citizenship that accompany the proliferation of borders" (2013: 7). I set aside an approach which defines the individual as oppressed by social structures. Nevertheless, during their multiple mobilities, objects and subjects face situations of immobility, of immobilisation and of stasis, which require investigation and examination too.

The empirical evidence of the migratory and mobility processes observed on the field sites also imposes avoiding excesses of voluntarism, since the subjects often face ordeals – relations of power - of mortification and of strong vulnerability inside the social worlds. Nevertheless, such forms of social misrecognition, economic and cultural injustice (Fraser 2005) and subalternity that the individual experiences seem to never corrode the *selves*. In spite of the strong constraints and pressions deriving from the social norms, these prove their ability to cope with such ordeals.

Migrant women's mobility patterns are articulated along situations of strong subordination to the norms which characterise the social worlds they (temporary) live in and a capacity to adapt, to negotiate and to resist to oppressions. Despite the heterogeneous ordeals of injustice and

misrecognition (Fraser 2005) that women face within the different orders they go through, they develop strategies to maintain self-awareness and self-esteem, through processes of subjectivity making and re-making, in order to adapt and to resist to power relations and normative constraints.

In this sense, the concept of s*ubjectivation* enables to apprehend the making of the subject on a double binary. It helps to conceive the signs and the modalities through which the plural forms of power are exercised on the individual. Concomitantly, it also accounts of the patterns, the strategies and the techniques imagined, designed and developed by the individuals to construct their *selves* and subjectivities within the different social and moral worlds they go through. In Foucauldian terms, in the analysis of subjectivity-making processes, *subjection* actively plays into the game. It is defined as the overlapping, jumbling relations of power which shape the subject, imposing strict codes of conduct and behaviour (Foucault 1989), and which "are put in place by schemes of surveillance, of discipline, of control and administration" (

Translocal systems of governmentality manage and affect the movement of populations, through specifically-designed *apparatuses* (Foucault 1975; Agamben 1995), which become "programs of action" (Latour 1994) for the individuals. In this perspective, mapping women's paths from the Chinese countryside to the Chinese city, from the Chinese city to Taiwan, and, eventually, from Taiwan back to China shows how the different, merging and juxtaposition regimes of governmentality can shape and direct border crossing experiences and transnational interactions. Despite their differences, the family, the state and the labour market, at different levels, constantly condition and give structure to the migratory patterns (Ong 1999).

Thus, it is on the cross-border and the translocal scale of globalisation that subjectivity-making processes should be conceived. These are "practices favouring flexibility, mobility and repositioning in relation to markets, governments and cultural regimes" (

need to cope with the production and reproduction of transnational forms of inequalities, hierarchies and subalternity. Nonetheless, *mobility regimes* can be deconstructed, dismantled and overturned.

Alternating among multiple experiences of spatial and temporal location, dislocation and relocation, mobilities are constructed according to new, creative, *sui generis* translocal and mobile economies of the *selves*. These correspond to the variegated and rich ensemble of strategies employed by the subject to construct a new image of *herself*, simultaneously *for herself* and *for the others* (Balibar 2011). Hence, *subjectivation* lies in a constant effort, a work of construction and re-construction of the *selves* through ordeals (Martuccelli 2006), oriented towards the achievement of a modern horizon (Appadurai 1999).

The multiplicity and changing nature of the spaces, places and temporalities which characterise the social, economic and moral worlds women traverse during their labyrinthic migratory paths, together with the pluralisation and singularisation -individualisation, but also collectivisation- of trajectories proves that the impacts of governmentality and restrictive *mobility regimes* can be lessen and even neutralized to some extents. The relation to social norms, and the acceptance and interiorisation of codes of conduct and behaviour became fluid and fragile in such context of liable, temporary, translocal social positionings.

2. Doing and Undoing Subalternity

Local and global social orders, composed of "norms, rules and clusters" (Strauss 1978) represent the landscapes inside which individuals' actions occur. Within the mobility paradigm, the *social* is conceived as being highly *mobile*, hence susceptible *of transit, of transition, and of transformation* (Svašek 2014). The definition of the contours of the social worlds results from a perpetual, incessant, and unrestrainable process of making and unmaking of conditions, situations and the experiences by the actors who inhabit and perform the social, economic and moral landscapes they are positioned inside. Yet, the processual dimension of the making of the social reveals how social worlds are movable, mutable and malleable, rather than static. In the frame of the polyhedral, polyform and multi-located movement that I presented above, mobility or, at least, its potential -*motility*- draw new, dynamic and floating outlines of social landscapes.

Constructivist approaches to the social -hence its emergence, production and reproduction- have convincingly suggested that social worlds, which can be physical but also virtual, material and immaterial, immobile and mobile, are subjected to a "constant process of construction of reality"

(Berger and Luckman 2006) by the actors who simultaneously face the *order of things* as it is set, while permanently making and doing, through socialisations, diverse *disorders* to "take their place" inside the social worlds. Experiences, statuses, des-affiliations, and ambitions influence actions and interactions (Becker 1963; Goffman 1973; Strauss 1978). They actively interplay, shape, frame and construct the social as it appears. The dichotomy between social order and the "aspired reality" is only apparently binary. It can be apprehended under the prism of the long-standing and endless debate in sociology about the influence of social structures and constraints on individuals' inter-actions, and it still opens for debates and questionings. Affirming that this gap is not dual, but rather plural enables to conceive its ontologically multi-situated dimension. The *orders of things* and the orders of individuals' lives and experiences are certainly established and practiced within the situation(s) they co-exist in.

At the very same time, the mobility paradigm imposes to conceive their encounter, interaction, dialogue, but also collision and conflict on a dimension which transcends the fixed and rigid spatial and temporal borders. Social worlds and social realities are hence constructed and re-constructed through a plurality of interactions among individuals who move among places, spaces and temporalities, and who need to cope with the lingering influences of a plurality social structures. If, in a *diachronic* and *diatopic* perspective, at each step of their career migrants capitalise social, economic and moral resources (Roulleau-Berger 2010) and increase their opportunities, by acquiring knowledge and competences, they do also need to cope with a variety of constraints. Local and global, global and local orders contribute to "foster, shape and disable local and global agency" of actors (Lazar 2011: 76).

Among the different translocal spaces Chinese migrant women go through during physical and virtual, corporeal and digital mobilities, several techniques of discipline and control draw the contours of their paths and can potentially inhibit their individual and collective inter-actions. It is thus necessary to question the strategies, the tactics that women can produce to adapt, to negotiate, and to cope with the *apparatuses* of control and normalisation of conducts and orientation of actions (Agamben 1995) within the spaces and places they traverse. Within their patriarchal family in the rural community of origin in China (Jacka 1997, 2012, 2018; Tong 2012) or their new family in Taiwan, inside the Chinese and Taiwanese cities they live and work in during internal and cross-border migrations, Chinese migrant women face a plurality of translocal constraints. These are translated into situations of vulnerability, of precarity and, more broadly, into a condition of subalternity.

Material and immaterial "borders" multiply (Balibar 2002; Agier 2014) in the Chinese cities and inside the factories where women are employed, but also inside Taiwanese familiar and marital regimes as well as in the labour market. Structural constraints can wield considerable influence on women's biographies, generating asymmetries and disparities among individuals, and producing new inequalities and hierarchies at a local as well as a global level (Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2018). Albeit refusing a determinist approach crushing the individual under social forces, it is still necessary to acknowledge the experiences of vulnerability, humiliation, precarity and, broadly, of "mortification of the self" (

Visible or invisible, manifested or imperceptible, negotiation can potentially occur even within strong constraints and rigid normative regimes, what

> our*selves* and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it brings the elsewhere home."

Movement and mobility are here considered as essential components of transition and transformation. The local can be contested by experiencing, practicing and performing the global, and vice versa. Social, economic, familiar and moral orders are locally produced, situated and localised. They can hence be transcended and transformed in the desired directions through physical and virtual, material and immaterial, body and digital actions oriented towards new global spaces, places and positionings. Following Butler's rationale (2002, 2004), my intention is to conceive subalternity as a constructed, socially and temporary produced condition. It can therefore be "undone" through *sui generis*, creative socialisations, novel emotional performances, economic activities and *glocal* projects, which cut across the rigidity of norms and constraints, inscribed into fixed spatialities. As Butler claimed (2004:8):

> "projects dealing with identity politics are ultimately focused on "distinguishing among the norms and conventions that permit people to breathe, to desire, to love, and to live, and those norms and conventions that restrict or eviscerate the conditions of life itself."

Local *politics of imposed identity* (Ong 1999) can generate global *politics of self-positioning and re-positioning* (Butler 2002) within a myriad of new constellations, configurations and arenas. Individual *selves*' delineations are continually shaped, re-shaped, re-adapted inside, outside, through and across spatial, geographic, normative, and moral borders. Social, economic and moral regimes become discursive *heterotopias* (Foucault 2001). They turn into new spaces of passage (Lago 2007) and transit (Hardt and Negri 2000; Lago 2007) for individual and collective formation, learning and capitalisation of resources which enable the transformation of the *selves* and of the social. In this sense, as I will show throughout this work, the rapid transition towards modernity which characterises contemporary China and sustains migratory paths enables to conceive *subjectivation* in Foucauldian terms, as the formation of subjectivities who face power effects (Martuccelli 2002).

At the same time, it is possible to frame this active shaping of migrants' subjectivities as part of a wider project of modernity and globalisation. It is thus a highly localised and temporary situation, susceptible to change in the future. At the same time, the making of modern *selves* allows individuals' re-positioning inside the social worlds they traverse. The making of modern *selves* requires negotiations to improve autonomy and independence *vis-à-vis* constraints that limit action. It is a matter of progressive, *multi* and *trans* local process of distancing situated normativity. Social and economic constraints, material and immaterial boundaries, physical and virtual borders are spatially,

temporarily, geographically and socially constructed. Therefore, they can be challenged, transgressed and transcended, floating between local and global landscapes.

The pluralisation of experiences and the multiplication of practices allow the emergence of individual and collective working-out of ordering and disordering. The growing patterns of migration and movement, of social mobility and emotional re-positioning call into question the capacity of the *mobility regime* to "manage" (Ambrosini 2018) and "govern" (Agier 2014) migrants' actions. Migration produces "turbulence" (Papastergiadis 2000). Therefore, oscillating between order and disorder, it is a matter of conceiving domination and subalternity as a temporary, liable and precarious condition, which can be overstepped through multi-situated, translocal, and instantaneous re-positioning inside different social worlds.

Globalisation generated a new gendered and class order (Sassen 2006b; Roulleau-Berger 2014a), vector of hierarchies, inequalities and misrecognition (Roulleau-Berger 2014b, 2017), often behind the mask of (hyper)local micro-orders. The multiplication of labour (Hardt and Negri 2000; Mezzadra and Nelson 2013), under different forms and shapes, has increased the situation of injustice (Fraser 2005), of misrecognition and of social contempt that individuals *on the move* are confronted to. Local and global "underclasses" have emerged (Mingione 1991; Roulleau-Berger 2016).

Notwithstanding, the rapid, hyperconnected socialisations (Giddens 1990; Bauman 2000; Beck 2003; Sassen 2006a) produced by globalisation enable potential contestations. As a matter of fact, *glocal* movement, under its different facets, enables multi-local, instantaneous existences which, being ontologically fluid and unstable, challenge the static and rigid structure of the local *devices* and apparatuses of power. To understand such complex processes, it is necessary to position processes of subjectivation and subjection, movement and immobility, stability and change within the broader, malleable, physical and virtual dimension of local and global mobilities.

Situations, contexts and environments, to quote

Subalternity, as a constructed condition, characterises women's migratory and mobility paths' and generates sufferings, violence and strong vulnerability. At each step of the career-making, it can be "done and undone", "made and unmade".

As suggested by Negri (2008), it is from the Foucauldian paradox incarnated by the couple subjectivation/subjection that the potential for contestation appears. The production of local and global, mobile, transgressive and creative subjectivities is the pivot around which subalternity can be "undone", "unmade", *i.e.* deconstructed. In the folds of Foucauldian theory there is the possibility to think the exceedance of existences (Negri 2008), thus the affirmation of resistances and the deconstruction of subalternity. The immanence of norms -which are always situated and liable- described by Foucault allows to conceive a new normativity, constructed around the possibility of transforming an order and of *becoming*. Subalternity, experienced inside patriarchal familiar institutions, multinational factories, restrictive mobility regimes, marital orders or segmented and inegalitarian labour markets produces its own defect, deficiency and contradiction.

Giuseppe Sciortino has rightly observed that "the notion of migration regime allows rooms for gaps, ambiguities and right strain: the life of a regime is the result of continuous repair work through practices" (Sciortino 2004:2004:32). Mobile lives and translocal, instantaneous existences transcend local orders and produce new translocal disorders. "Is it a matter of thinking biopolitics as an ensemble of biopowers?", asks

(2015: 416-417). Women's translocal, transversal and transgressive social, economic and emotional practices of contestation can "shake the worlds they are surrounded by" (Lallement 2015: 417), forging, creating and re-creating new ones, of which some are probably yet to emerge. Subjectivity and creativity are the cornerstones sustaining the infrastructure of plural, original, and growing forms of contestation of subalternity.

This theoretical frame suggests that concurrent processes of *subjectivation* and *subjection* do not necessarily produce the normalisation of codes of conducts and a smooth unification of migratory careers. On the contrary, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and globalisation give rise to *sui generis*, creative, performative subjectivities, translocally positioned, whose experiences are fragmented, coherently and meaningfully, inside, outside, through and across the translocal, instantaneous spaces, places and locations where static norms lose their coercive power.

3. Inside, Outside and Through Modernity

Based on these considerations, I assume that aspiration, imagination and projections (Ong 1999; Appadurai 2000; Moore 2004) shape and frame women's mobilities all along their biographical, migratory and professional paths. Appadurai's analysis (1999) of the social, cultural and emotional *scapes*[5] characterising an interconnected, simultaneous and rather "compressed" (Chang 1999, 2010) contemporary world may be helpful to elucidate the frame inside which migrations, mobilities and movements take form. The social, economic, moral, cultural, and emotional landscapes among which women navigate reveal to be increasingly complex and complexified. I consider such *scapes* as crucial in orienting, directing and supporting a plurality of different mobilities which, in a global, modern context, largely play into the game when the actors of migration define their paths, construct their careers, produce social and emotional interactions, and, more broadly, attempt to define the shape of their life course.

When being on Chinese and Taiwanese field sites, inside rural and urban areas, I have constantly been confronted with an omnipresent discourse about modernisation and modernity. Such expressions, employed by the actors, did not only refer to the architecture of Chinese social and economic

[5] According to Appadurai's theorisation of *scapes* (Appadurai 1999) -ethno, techno, financial, media and ideological *scapes*- global cultural flows penetrate hyperlocal spaces producing a precise representation of the social world and of the social life. However, according to him, it is not a matter of vertical, hegemonic and hierarchical penetration of the global inside the local, but a new link between different, horizontal, juxtaposing levels and scales, which articulate, move and shift from the global to the local and from the local to the global and produce new social landscapes of imaginary.

development, but seemed to be intrinsically related to the making of individuals' *selves*. It is a *horizon of hope* (Appadurai 2000, 2004): a project to achieve, directing fuelling movements, supporting migrations and framing biographical and professional trajectories. Implicitly, such real or imagined modern infrastructure, frame or horizon inside which women's mobilities are inscribed imposes further problematisation and questionings about what modernity is or might be.

Global modernity, or "modernity at large" (Appadurai 1999) reveals to be increasingly *compressed* in China (Chang 2010; Roulleau-Berger 2018). Chang Kyun Sup has qualified "compressed modernity" as a condition in which "changes occur in an extremely condensed manner in respect to both time and space, and in which the dynamic coexistence of mutually disparate historical and social elements leads to the construction and reconstruction of a highly complex and fluid social system" (Chang 1999, 2010). Implicitly, this leads to processes of continuous change, unpredictability, variability in the construction and re-construction of complex and fluid social configurations, which can take a plurality of forms and of shapes. The compressed dimension of time and space generates novel possibilities for translation into lived situations and practices by the actors who experience modernity, and who can, potentially, contribute to frame it.

Reflecting on Chinese modernity and modernisation processes, in 2018, Laurence Roulleau-Berger and Liu Neng have guest-edited a special issue about "Compressed Modernity and Chinese Temporalities", where the question of modernity and its declinations in China is analytically asked. Roulleau-Berger (2018) has pointed out how contemporary social processes in China are produced at the crossroad among a premodern, a modern and a postmodern regime, which lead to the emergence of new inequalities and hierarchies (2018). Global modernity, as a discourse, as a practice and as a horizon of *becoming*, accompanies, frames and orients women's life patterns, social positionings, professional and mobility patterns. It embodies contradictory processes of subjectivation and subjection. It generates imaginaries, fantasies, illusions and projections, as well as sufferings, frustrations and disqualifications. Modernity is concurrently an englobing experience of the social and a vector of inequalities, hierarchies and vulnerability for Chinese migrant women.

Throughout movements, mobilities and translocal social, economic and emotional practices, it progressively becomes a matter for women to re-frame, and "reset" (Latour and Leclercq 2016) modernity at different terms. Hence, it urges to understand the modalities of production of modernity by the actors along their mobility paths, as well as its temporalities, spatialities, emotions and, broadly, its uses.

Since their entrance in the first step of their migratory career (Becker 1963; Roulleau-Berger 2010; Rea and Martiniello 2014), it seemed to be for young rural migrants a matter of "entering the modern world", by breaking with their rural "backward" pasts to define a diverse future. The implicit conception of construction of modernity through transition, transformation, ruptures and change which emerged, on the field sites, by women's tales has been theorised and analytically framed by Alain Touraine, in his *Critique of Modernity* (1992) first, and in his *Defense of Modernity* (2018) later. Visibly, as claimed by the first Touraine (1992), "modernity is a central presence within our ideas and practices […] often challenged, rejected and redefined" (1992: 11). It consists on "a characterising feature of the order of the contemporary world and generates new conflicts and tensions between the reason and the subject" (1992: 15), who goes through a "path towards herself" (1992: 319) and who, through action and resistances tends to affirm her *self* (1992: 338). Against a univocal, rigid and static definition, modernity is almost dialectically identified in the struggle, in a permanent conflict between the affirmation of the subject and the order of things, or, to quote B. Brecht, "between a free spirit who clashes with the existing apparatuses of power" (1992: 339).

The complexification, in terms of acceleration of time and space (Giddens 1990), deeply affecting social relations, social life and social landscapes, at a local or a global level, of the contemporary world lead to an abundant production of reflections on (post)modernity, which would be difficult to summarise here. An interesting argument has been advanced by Harvey (1989) while analysing the contemporary condition of what he qualified of "post-modernity", *i.e.* an era characterised by extended flexibility in all the fields of individual and collective existences. Within the growing process of globalisation, Harvey observed, the world has shifted from a modern to a post-modern condition. This is the very essence of late capitalism, whose "modus operandi is a new regime of flexible accumulation, in the realms of business, philosophy, high finance, production systems, labour markets and consumption" (Harvey 1989: 11-14).

Certainly, the locution "post" does not represent a novelty in the sociological and philosophical reflections on modernity (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). However, the interest of

ontologically, theoretically and methodologically speaking, called for a “new” modernity, more aware of its intrinsic rationale. He demanded a shift, a move towards a “reflexive” modernisation (1999), founded on the very appreciation of “knowledge and awareness” (Beck 1999) in the social practice which is, in a globalised world, subjected to risks, to precarities and to new instabilities. On his side, Bruno Latour (1994) suggested to approach modernity as “one epistemology among many” (1994: 9), imbued with plural, diverse meanings, and contradictory sets of attitudes (Latour and Leclercq 2016).

In 2001, Eisenstadt's has coined the pioneer expression of "multiple modernities", declining the word at its plural form. He advanced that in the globalised context of dialogue, imbrication and mixture between local and global sites, practices and ideas, we assist to a continual "constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs" (2001: 2).

It seemed clear that the Western patterns of and to modernity were not the exclusive and authentic ones (Eisenstadt 2001; Bhabha 2002; Chang 1999, 2010; Roulleau-Berger 2016, 2018). This conceptual framework leads to the challenge and the contestation of hegemonic and arbitrary (Beck 2003; Roulleau-Berger 2016, 2017) classifications and categorisations. If, in China and in Taiwan, a capitalistic discourse about global modernity seems to be ubiquitous and pervading migrant women's social practices, subjectivity-making processes and migratory experiences, the empirical and theoretical challenge turns around an understanding -and a tentative definition- of the significance the actors, through practice, attribute to it.

The defiance is hence double: avoiding a superimposed, arbitrary taxonomy of modernity detached from actors' perception, discourse and performances, while attempting to identify a plausible definition and a pertinent conceptualisation. On this crucial point, I quote here Roulleau-Berger's most recent conceptualisation of the necessity of methodological cosmopolitanism in migration theories (2016, 2017: 231):

> "sociology of migrations requires the deconstruction of universal, ethnocentric and hegemonic categories that it questions", and challenges, "the universalist vision of the social sciences […]"

Rooted in ethnographic evidence and actors' experiences, I consider Appadurai's reflection (1999) on "modernity at large" helpful to frame my arguments and, at least partially and temporary, solve this conundrum. Reflecting on globalisation and modernisation, he pointed out the increasing role simultaneously played by media and migrations in defining today's global world. Media, new technologies, digital platforms, together with innovative and peculiar forms of mobilities create irregularities, ruptures, conjunctions and disjunctions -"discontinuous continuities and continuous discontinuities" (Roulleau-Berger 2011)- in social life and practices, leading to the constant, endless change and re-frame of the social and cultural spaces.

Electronic media provide new perceptions of locations, of places and of temporalities (Latour 1994; Thompson 1995; Hine 2000, 2015; Lewis et al. 2008; Lallement 2015, 2018) which invest the

experiences of migration and of mobility. They transform the sense of distance and enable subjects' new performances, changing their everyday practices and discourses. Distinctive modernities can – or cannot- emerge, "reflecting the novel patterns of institutional life, new self-conceptions and new forms of collective consciousness" (Eisenstadt 2001: 13). By calling back on my previous considerations about emotions, aspirations and multiple projections within mobile space of multiple possibilities of transformation, I embrace Appadurai's analysis of *imaginative work* (1999, 2003) to conceptualise the situated, creative and *sui generis* modernity produced by migrant women. What does this mean?

Undoubtedly, when analysing the Chinese context of accelerated modernisation since 1980s (Lee 1998; Pun 2005; Li 2010; Roulleau-Berger 2018),

and problematise the different dimensions of modernity starting from individuals' local and global experiences and practices. Thus, it is a matter of developing "a theory of rupture that takes media and migration as its two major interconnected diacritics and explores their joint effect on the work of imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" (Appadurai 1999: 45-46).

Imagination has a creative power (Appadurai 2004; Darling-Wolf 2014). Oscillating among a plurality of social, economic and emotional spaces, on a physical but also virtual level, it is critical to identify the ruptures and continuities within the new processes of location, dislocation and relocation of women's social and moral positionings, which enable new definitions, appropriations and translations (Callon 1986, 2002) of what modernity means to them.

Within this rather complex, floating and mobile context, emotions, feelings and affections are crucial elements employed by the actors in their definition of modernity. Considering emotions as a "fuel for action" (Lutz 1990), supporting subjectivation processes, socialisations, intersubjective, translocal practices and *glocal* activities, it urges to investigate their role in actors' capacity and willingness of project-making, in terms of mobility and change.

For these reasons, in this work I will attempt to describe and analyse the ways, strategies and techniques produced by migrants to re-envision their *emotional modernity*. It is a matter of questioning the spatialities, the temporalities and the practices through which an *emotional modernity* is framed by actors, while, at its turn, it co-produces them. The definition is not rigid or static, but rather dynamic, mutable and malleable. It follows the rhythms, the tempos and the spaces of actors' mobilities and *glocal* practices, which constantly change, mutate, and vary. Non exhaustively, it might be conceived as a modernity made in the little sections of migrants' everyday lives and experiences, produced by their new intimacies and affections within materiality and immateriality, and performed inside digital platforms. Emotional modernity may hence emerge in the frame of liquidity, fluidity and simultaneity.

Corroborated by women's experiences and practices generated throughout their translocal mobilities, it is a matter of understanding the ways the constant transformations of individuals' *selves* and of subjectivities within a *glocal* spaces, places, but also social, economic and emotional worlds contribute to the re-appropriation and re-definition of modernity by actors. They come into social worlds, evolve and progress through and across physical and virtual, social and emotional borders, and contribute to forge and re-forge the social in a variety of ways.

Empirically grounded, situationally constructed, *emotional modernity* is forged through migrant women's translocal experiences and *glocal* emotional practices for the appropriation or attempts to appropriating modernity and modernities (Clifford 1980: 7) through original translations. Their emotionally modern practices may correspond to a kaleidoscope of possibilities of being and of *becoming*. The performances and translations of modernity by the actors are mutable, malleable and may change over time, over space and over situations. Many more could -or could not- appear, taking different shapes, forms, according to the situations and relational contexts of opportunities and constraints.

The aim is to show the extent to which *translocality* and globalisation contribute to enlarge the "field of possibilities" (

being, but on their shared position in a process of differentiation that, in the course of a difference *to be made*[6], which is the minimal definition of both action and meaning" (2016: 481).

To sum up and to set the bases for further developments in next chapters, I assume that in the frame of instantaneous movement, endless mobilities and high spatial and temporal compression (Giddens 1990; Bauman 2000), the couple composed of e-motions, physically and virtually experienced, and often performed inside and through digital platforms constitutes a suitable starting point for delimiting and attempting to define an *emotional modernity*. It is a matter of new, creative, imaginative social orders produced by mobile, translocal and emotional subjects and objects.

[6] This stress is emphasised by me.

This complexification of the social, economic, but also moral and emotional worlds imposes prudence when analysing the structural effects on the individual making processes. Migration, circulation, and rotation are framed and shaped by rules and norms aimed at orienting, at different levels and under different forms, mobility and immobility, location and re-location processes. However, the very pluralisation of movement itself -physical or virtual, corporal or emotional- reveals to be a resource for subjectivation and self-affirmation. When movements and mobilities are multiplied inside diverse physical and virtual, geographical, social, economic and moral worlds, self-positionings increase as well. If, on the one hand, this leads to an augmentation of the ordeals that migrants face and need to cope with, on the other hand, it implies a pluralisation of the experiences, hence an intensified capitalisation of knowledge, skills, abilities and resources.

1. Affectional Resources and Social Networks

The repertories of resources and competences are crucial in shaping migratory paths and experiences. They largely contribute to forge individuals' *selves* inside the social worlds (Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2013b). Resources are mutable, and their capitalisation depends on the situations lived and performed by the actors, individually or collectively. Social resources are considered here in terms of networks and defined as a system of social actors in constant change, aimed at sharing resources (Lemieux 2018), which can be normative, statutory, material, and informational (Lemieux 2018). Researches on international migration and transnationalism have broadly considered social networks as being part of social capital (Lin 1982; Portes 1998; Guarnizo et al. 2003), which is central to share information and seize opportunities (Coleman 1988, 1990). However, by following Roulleau-Berger's rationale (2014a, 2017), I consider not only the social, but also the economic and moral resources of which individuals dispose or can capitalise.

Social resources are inscribed in relationships of interdependence (Lin 1982). They exist only relationally (Grannovetter 1973; Lin 1990: 31-32). Resources are produced, mobilised and actualised inside social networks, whose morphology needs to be discussed. But, before addressing this question, it would be relevant here to briefly mention the existence of what Eva Illouz (2007) has qualified of "emotional resources", which are composed of feelings, sentiments, affections an intimate reflexivity. Emotional resources interplay with social resources inside social networks. In this sense, I consider action as relying in the morphology of networks (Grannovetter 1994; Callon 1998), which are, at their

turn, imbued with a high emotional component. Social and emotional resources are increasingly intertwined; they can be bodily experienced through physical interactions or virtually performed through digital inter-communications.

Social and emotional resources connect the individual with the worlds she performs in, but they concurrently contribute to forge such worlds. Thereby, social and emotional networks are not considered to be contextual elements, but rather ontological entities (Callon 1998, 2002). An individual is caught up in a network of social, economic and emotional relations, *i.e.* in a flow of intermediaries which link, connect and reconstitute practices, situations, but also subjectivities and identities. The singularity and uniqueness of individuals' characteristics are thus projected inside the social space and, when interacting with the structures and the *others*, inside and outside networks, they contribute to the career construction and, broadly, to action (Rosenfeld 1992).

An important part of this work will be dedicated to the examination and the discussion of what social, emotional and affectional resources are and the ways they are produced and re-produced among spaces, places and temporalities. I develop in chapter 4 my reflection on emotions. At this point, I simply advance that emotions, which can be generated individually or collectively, play a crucial role in shaping and orienting inter-action and socialisation processes. They are hence crucial at the level of social networks' mobilisation. The repertories of social -social networks and ties- and emotional resources -affections, feelings, sentiments- together with abilities, competences, skills and knowledge are fundamental for movement: they produce mobility or, at least, they represent the very basis for its potential -*motility* (Kaufmann et al. 2004).

Networks and emotional resources are important tools women can mobilise to face daily experiences of disqualification and misrecognition during their mobilities. A consensus has been reached on the role of social networks, or *ties* (Faist 2000) as central social resources, shaping and directing migrations. Networks are generated and performed through interaction (Lin 1982, 1999; Rosenfeld 1992), and they contribute to fill in the gap between social structures and the individual characteristics (Guarnizo et al. 2003; Pécoud 2004; Ambrosini 2008; Rea and Martiniello 2014). Within a transnational frame, scholarship has shown the extent to which social networks of migrants can be mobilised while crossing and traversing national borders (Van Der Leun 2006; Ambrosini 2008, 2018), or within the integration processes in the society of arrival, and especially in the labour market (Portes 2003; Parker 2004; Ambrosini 2008). When *mobility regimes* (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) are inegalitarian, social networks can be a particularly helpful instrument to face precarity and to overstep insecurity and

uncertainty[7]. Networks represent important vectors for the transfer of migratory and mobility knowledge (Bian and Ang 1997; Ambrosini 2008). They are channels to share information and resources, which provide material and support through practices of reciprocity and mutual help. Along these lines, Wihtol de Wender (2001: 10) has even suggested that networks are "the necessary condition for mobility and develop beyond closed borders", contributing to the emergence of transnational communities and diasporas (Faist 2000; Vertovec 2009; King 2012). Reflecting on the composition of social networks as a condition for migration and mobility, social resources have been defined by Lin as "goods -material or symbolic- that can be accessed and used in social actions" (1999: 33).

In this regard, I would like to stress, as suggested by Madeleine Akrich, Bruno Latour and Alain Callon (2006) that non-human, hence objects, products, commodities, but also infrastructures, technologies, and digital platforms are ontological components of social networks. Technical and logistical developments in transport and telecommunications have not only accelerated (Giddens 1990; Urry 2000; Castells 2006) -or reduced- the speed of goods and information displacements and circulations. They have also generated new ways of mobilisation of the resources and processes of socialisations. Creative and innovative modalities of networking have emerged at the frontier between physical and virtual worlds.

Technologies and digital platforms do not only correspond to the context, the frame inside which mobility occurs, but they are constitutive, inherent, essential part of networks as well (Callon 1998). In a recent empirically-grounded study about makers communities, Berrebi-Hoffmann, Bureau and Lallement (2018) have provided a renovelled definition of networks, considered as "polymorphic ensembles of interactions and relationships of whose status is constructed according to the conditions and the products of social action" (2018: 238). They have importantly suggested how from a "hard core" of individuals -hackers- multiple local and global chaining processes of different networks can emerge. New technologies, digital platforms, nodes, ripples, socialisation processes and affectional ties mix and merge in the production and development of sui generis, malleable networks of migrant women, performed *online*, *offline* and in-between these two dimensions.

7

Broadly, international scholarship agrees in recognising the importance of social resources and networks for migrants in socioeconomic status attainment during migration (Sun and Hsiong 1988; Portes 2003; Ambrosini 2008), even if their degree of mobilisation can vary according to the opportunities and constraints faced during migration. The strength of social bonds also requires consideration. Granovetter (1973) has distinguished between "strong" and "weak" ties, suggesting the cohesive power of "weak ties", composed of friends, which positively influence inter-actions, information spread, mobility, and economic activities during migration (1973). In this respect, by re-framing Polanyi's concept of "embedness" (1983), economic sociology, through the works of Granovetter (1973) *in primis*, DiMaggio (1994), Callon (1986, 2007), Lallement (2007) and others, has shown how economic action is embedded within professional relations and networks[8] (Granovetter 1973, 1994): economic activities are related to and/or depend on actions -or institutions- which have no economic content nor objective.

However, doing away with Polanyi's formulation,

good", aimed at promoting individuals' specific actions (Coleman 1988, 1990). For him, social capital inheres in the structure of relations among actors. In this sense, Social ties, their collective production and reproduction reveal to be crucial during mobility patterns, situations and experiences.

In his understanding of the contribution of social capital to the framing of social interactions and economic practices, Nan Lin (1999) developed a "positioning method" to doubly apprehend the structural position of social capital and to measure the resources circulating in the networks. Drawing on the Bourdieusian distinction, he has also distinguished between *inherited* and *acquired* social resources, which contribute to action. Inherited social resources (Nan 1999) derive from familiar, parental or kinship ties, while the acquired resources are represented by the social networks that women can capitalise and mobilise at each step of their career. All along mobility paths', previous socialisation processes sustain the progressive development and re-development of social networks and of their performances.

On the field, I have observed that these old and new repertories of *social, emotional and affectional resources* can be combined in a variety of ways, giving rise to new, creative social and emotional configurations, which require further investigation. They can be translocally reproduced through spaces and temporalities. In this sense, an analysis which considers only the effects of *path dependency* in networks formation, resources accumulation and shaping of migratory paths may not be appropriate. On this point, in their analysis of Overseas Chinese transnational business activities, Isabelle Thireau and Hua Linshan (1999) have reflected on the ways cultural and social resources are not only reproduced, but also transformed in the process of interaction and negotiation between social actors (1999: 188-189). In their analysis of *qiaoxiang* ties, they suggested that the use of social bonds and kinship ties to develop economic endeavour is not culturally determined, but it derives from a complex, overlapping ensemble of individual competences, opportunities, and constraints, inscribed in a specific historical, economic and political context (1999: 190).

Crucially, a situational, empirical equilibrium urges. It is a matter of identifying a frame not to picture an individual overdetermined by social resources (Thévénot 2006: 234), and merely reduced to her socialisations, which may overdetermine competences, thus action and practices.

What is more, I ascertain a certain paucity, or at least marginality, of specific researches on the emotional dimension of social networks and on the way emotions and affections can influence networks' formation and reproduction, at the crossroad between local and global practices. Studies

have shown how migrants' social networks contribute to the achievement of the migratory ordeals, as for integration and settlement processes in the society of arrival, the access to the labour market, providing individuals with broad and heterogeneous ensembles of information and knowledge (Peraldi 2002; Portes 2003; Van der Leun and Kloostermann 2006; Ambrosini 2008; Guarnizo and Smith 2008). Notwithstanding, the substance, the formation and the reproduction of such networks is often neglected, even if it reveals to be a crucial element of mobility, especially within the globalised frame of "global connections" (Tsing 2005). When networks connect people among spaces, places and temporalities, on a physical but also virtual level, I assume that translocal, multi-situated social and emotional ties can be at the basis of an innovative articulation between global and local practices and socialisation processes. International migration studies have considered social networks as existing translocally. The transnational "social field" (

Through networks and networks' performances -*online* and *offline*, locally and globally- migrants continuously define malleable and "moving social worlds" (Becker 1982), of which the frontiers are porous and fluid, as fluid are territories, spatialities, temporalities, relationships and anchorages (Tarrius 1989, 2000). Norms, practices, experiences are mutable, but constitutive of the socialisation processes in which migrant women are engaged through networks' performances. This implies questioning the effective and situated connections which derive from social networks and virtual nodes of people, in their generation, development and reproduction among a variety of spaces and social worlds. As suggested by Alain Tarrius (2000, 2001), it becomes crucial "to read collective movements during international migrations" under the lens of the ways they are related, or "dependent on both pre-established interpersonal competences and sources of new social relationships" (Tarrius 2000, 2001: 112-113), which can be observable in their daily activities, socialisation processes, emotional interactions or economic practices all along mobility paths.

2. On and After Kinship

Anthropologists primarily, and sociologists later, have deeply analysed social networks and social relations by considering both the role of kinship (Weston 1997; Sahlins 2001, Carsten 2000, 2003) and of friendship within their formation and development. Nevertheless, these case studies remain anchored to very local contexts and situations and do not take mobility into account. They are rarely applied to the field of international migrations and transnationalism. Hence, in my work, I would like to draw on a conceptualisation of both kinship and friendship formation to define the theoretical and analytical tools under which prism describe and examine social networks of women during translocal migrations. Along these lines, I consider crucial to introduce an investigation of the role of emotions and affections within the collection, development and mobilisation of these social and emotional resources (Illouz 2009; Svašek 2014) in the translocal field, hence from local to global practices, from global to local practices and between the two. Moreover, the analysis of transnational social networks and affectional ties produced by women opens for the possibility of exploring simultaneously material and immaterial connections (Sassen 1995, 2006a) among *glocal* spaces, places and temporalities.

Based on the *sui* generis, creative and innovative practices of solidarity, of mutual help and reciprocity that I have observed among the informants on the field sites, my concern is hence to articulate the definition and the understanding of migrants' translocal social networks with the specificities and the peculiarities of the localities they are firstly produced in, *i.e.* Chinese rural communities. Later, it is a

matter of projecting their formation and re-formulation on a broader global scale of transnational migrations.

Nevertheless, this exercise requires caution to avoid ethnocentric or even culturalist interpretations of local cultures, which leads to the production of arbitrary taxonomies and, even, hegemonic knowledge (Bhabha 1990). The challenge is, as claimed by Geertz (1973), to build a bridge between the "experience-near" forms of description that Chinese migrants women used to talk about their social and emotional worlds, and the "experience-distant" concepts that inhabit academic texts, abstracting the specificity of situations and allowing for comparisons to be drawn between them[9]. A useful tool is maintaining the analytical eye as close as possible to the situations observed on the field (Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2016), questioning the sense and the meaning that actors attribute to their practices and experiences. For a broader heuristic, I would like to give few elements to understand the definition and performance of the social, emotional and affective ties produced by migrant women during their pluri-migratory paths. My rationale and arguments are mobile (Urry 2007). Strongly anchored within the empirical situations observed, I dress these issues *a posteriori* after a long process of internal, step by step cumulative knowledge which is centred on the *praxis* -hence the significance, experience and performance- of the actors.

Scholars, and firstly Fei Xiao Tong (1968), have long and abundantly reflected on the importance played by social networks in China in framing, supporting and enlarging migrations (Bian and Ang 1997; Li and Tian 2010). Basing his analysis on the local and specific characteristics of Chinese society, organised around "a differential mode of association" (*chaxu geju* 差序格局), Fei (1968) has suggested that the structure of social networks (*shehui guanxi* 社會關係) is crucial in framing social life within rural communities. Through this concept, Fei interpreted the non-equivalent, ranked categories of social relationships on which Chinese society rests upon. *Guanxi*, social networks, have been considered by Chinese scholars as important social capital, hence an ensemble made of "social networks, reciprocity norm and the resulting trust" (Li and Li 2013: 78). Networks are composed of family members, relatives or even friends and based on moral obligations of mutual help and reciprocity. As the family seems to be the primary institution for socialisation in rural China, members of personal networks are often considered as part of an extended family, where kinship and non-kinship

[9]"To grasp concepts that, for another people, are experience-near, and to do so well enough to place them in illuminating connection with experience-distant concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life, is clearly a task at least as delicate, if a bit less magical, as putting oneself in someone's else skin. The trick is not to get yourself into some inner correspondence of spirit with your informants. Preferring, like the rest of us, to call their souls their own, they are not going to be altogether keen about such an effort anyhow. The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to (Geertz 1973: 58).

ties overlap and merge in the production of sui generis social relationships and mutuality ties (Fei 1968).

Reflecting on kinship and non-kinship social and emotional ties, the anthropological tradition has advanced some interesting points to apprehend the ties and practices of reciprocity among people who are "intrinsic to each other" (Sahlins 2001: 14). Schneider (1968) *in primis* has distinguished between the *order of nature* (a "shared substance of blood") and the *order of law* (based upon a customary "code of conducts") to explain kinship nature and formation.

does being “sisters” (*jiemei*) mean to women? How is this affective tie forged and shaped by multi-situated practices and experiences?

In his study of streetcorner men in Washington’s ghetto, Liebow (1967) has observed the importance for vulnerable populations of taking refuge in friendship, which is both a resource in terms of individual and collective security and a shield to protect dignity. He has explained how kinship can be used as a model for friendship, especially when this is characterised by a current exchange of money, goods, services and affective support. Therefore, he demonstrated that interpersonal community is not a delimited zone, but an ensemble of relations between different people, which metaphorically constitutes a “spiderweb”.

Social resources encounter with emotions and affections: practices of mutual help and reciprocity are produced. If subalternity as a temporary positioning follows women's during their mobility paths, so do social, emotional and affectional resources. Such resources can therefore be learnt, mobilised and re-actualised in a plurality of places, spaces and temporalities. Social, emotional and affectional practices of mutual support and reciprocity become translocal. They can be produced and re-produced from local to global contexts, from the global to the local contexts when actors identify similarities between the past and the present in the ways of "being together" and "living together" among "sisters".

Chapter 3: Mobilities, Im-mobilities and Migrations

1. Migrating, Circulating, Rotating: A *Career*-based Approach

Individually and collectively, Chinese migrant women's paths are shaped within movement. They migrate, they circulate, they go back and forth, they can stop or roam inside, outside, and through a plurality of physical and virtual, local and global, material and emotional spaces. Giving evidence of such complexity is a delicate and challenging task, which constantly requires the ethnographer to scale and re-scale, frame and re-frame the spaces and temporalities of mobility. This is crucial. Space and time are extremely discontinuous. They can be accelerated or slowed down. They can be liquid (Bauman 2000) or compressed (Giddens 1990). And so are individual and collective experiences, which vary according to the multiplicity of opportunities, ordeals, constraints and possibilities they encounter on the road.

Mobility and immobility, location and relocation certainly enable migrants to make the experience of *project* making. However, paths and migratory roads can be characterised by multi-situated hierarchies (Roulleau-Berger 2014a, 2017) and inegalitarian normative regimes, vulnerability, arbitrary positionings, and subalternity. The social can dialectically be a "field of possibility" (

Concomitantly considering structural constraints, but also individuals' experiences, practices, and understandings, Becker (1963) distinguished between two overlapping levels within this progression: the "objective" and "subjective" dimension of the career, which changes, progresses and varies over time. He focused on the situational and situated configurations of individual's biographical trajectories, conceiving the possible arrangements of individual experiences inside the social worlds, in non-determinist terms.

Through an empirically-based approach of jazz musicians' professional and biographical experiences, it was for Becker (1963) a matter of "transforming individuals into activities" (1963: 81), hence concentrating on their experiences, practices and situations in *mobile* terms. The notion of change, of *transformation* in the career-making process seems to be fundamental. Stability is substituted by motion, and structures by processes (Becker 2002: 88-90), or, to quote

processual perspective” (2001: 112). Within a “moving perspective” (

In this regard, it cannot be omitted that familiar or marital times and times of migration are more and more entangled, coupled and re-coupled (Wang and Hsiao 2009; Yeoh 2016). Following social, economic, familiar and emotional opportunity and constraint structure, migratory paths become multi-directional and the careers' orientations can be inversed, reversed and rerouted. For example, in some cases, migrant women re-migrate to China after divorce. Articulating my analysis along the career-making processes, I conceive mobilities as intrinsic to individuals' existences and life-course shaping. For this reason, I do not adopt an approach in term of "return migration" (Cerase 1974; Gmelch 1980; King 2000), but rather of mobility, re-mobility and re-migration (Xiang 2013; Coutin 2015; Ho 2019).

As claimed by Xiang et al. (2013) the notion of *return* establishes the directionality of mobility in ethical terms instead only in physical terms. In the frame of a pluralised and permanent "temporary mobility regime" (Ley and

(Sassen 2006a) under the prism of simultaneity, instantaneity and interconnection, in a global context of time and space compression generated by virtual practices and digital communications.

Ultimately, it may be useful to scrutinise and include what Beck (1999) has called the *dialogic -día,* across; *logos*, discourse, knowledge, reflexivity- sphere in the analysis of life and migratory trajectories. Hughes (1937) has noticed how individuals apprehend their life and can understand and interpret the different actions, situations and experiences occurring in the social world. Later, Goffman (1968) has also pointed the importance of individuals' understanding of their positioning and of the "image of the self" (1968: 127-128) forged at each situational configuration of their existence. Taking long distance from neoclassical migration theories -and, especially, approaches in terms of rational choice-, *capable* does not mean strategic, calculator of costs/benefits or maximiser (Massey etl a. 1993; Cassarino 2004 amongst others).

To quote Ricoeur (1988), migrants are "capable of speaking, of acting, of narrating and acknowledging" (1988: 209). By the means of self-awareness and reflexivity, women can transform their positioning and re-positioning. They can move and circulate among spaces, places, temporalities and identities. As Becker (1963) has suggested, the career is also and importantly built by the changes in the perspectives, desires, motivations, and intents of the individual. Across times, spaces and reflexivity, women's career will be understood as a possibility of *becoming*: changing contexts, crisis and unprecedented experiences contribute to forge *novelty* regarding the future shape that biographical paths can take (Bessin et al. 2010). To "read movement", as Tarrius has explained (2000, 2001), it becomes fundamental to seize the overlocking relation of time to space and of space to time: "the relations between spaces and times suggest the combination between spatial contiguities and temporal continuities which help to apprehend the social in a dynamic and processual perspective" Tarrius (2001: 112).

To sum up, within a "moving perspective" (

2. Multiscale Experiences, *Orbits* and *Figures of Navigation*

To indicate and describe such complexity, malleability and fluidity of movement and of mobility, I identify in this work some *figures of navigation*. These can be considered as three malleable and mutable typologies of the careers, made and re-made all along women's life course and their spatial, social and economic re-positionings. They correspond to the making and re-making of biographical sequences processes, which vary over time, space and diverse scales of mobilities and social, economic and moral positioning. I have distinguished three figures: the "trapped-in-migration lives" (*yuangong* 員工), the "suitecase carriers[13]" (*paodanbang* 跑單幫) and the "*glocal* bosses" (*laobanniang* 老闆娘).

The metaphor of *navigation* incarnates and supports the idea of movement and mobility, which are intrinsic to objects and subjects' biographies and geographies. Navigation elucidates the different and malleable processes of career-making-and-re-making, through temporalities, spatialities and positionings occurring within the multiscale, juxtaposing dimension of the global and the local, the physical and the virtual, the material and the emotional.

The idea of "figure" corresponds here to a precise, situated, temporary and liable step of the career making process, to which are associated some social economic and emotional characteristics. This helps to show the forms, the perimeter, the shape of objects and subjects' multiple, complex and pluralised navigations and movements across status, positionings, activities, practices and situations. By considering both the objective and subjective dimensions of the career (Becker 1963), the constitution of a typology becomes hence a "methodological facility" (Tarrius 2001: 114), a tool for the heuristic. It helps to position the biographical sequence inside the temporal, spatial and scalar dimension of the biography. However, it cannot be else but strongly anchored in the ethnography of experiences: "the typology helps at a certain moment of the research path to identify convergences in terms of meaning and significance, and of proximity of forms, in order to articulate the numerous and microscopic empirical observations to units of collective attitudes" (Tarrius 2001: 114-116).

Crucially, these *figures of navigation* cannot be taken for granted: temporary, liable, mutable, they are far from being complete. My concern is not to identify an exhaustive typology of paths, but rather to advance ethnographically informed considerations about the transformations of the *selves* and

[13] See the idea and analysis of "suitcase commerce" developed by M. Peraldi (2002) in his studies on transmigrants' entrepreneurship and informal economies between Marseille (France) and Northern African countries.

practices throughout spaces, times, social and emotional relationships, and *glocal* situations. Exploring the biographical paths, the daily experiences and the translocal practices of these figures imposes to keep in mind that migrations and social, economic and moral mobilities do not only occur in diverse spaces, temporal and emotional frames, but also actively produce, constitute and structure them. Co-production and mutual interrelation are constitutive of social, economic, temporal, spatial, moral and emotional patterns. In his reflection on space and its construction, De Certeau (1980) has claimed that "a space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables […]". Space (

From such complexity, patterns diversify. Social translations of biographical and social trajectories multiply.

Local and global effects of contexts, the labour, mobility and marital regimes, the structure of the markets and the situations of employment generate obstacles towards the affirmation of creative subjectivities (Roulleau-Berger 2016), who seek for recognition, for a modern status and who struggle to "take their place" in the social worlds they are positioned in. To different extents and at different levels, individuals prove a capacity to cope with structural constraints, negotiating opportunities within the social inequalities or familiar orders, transgressing local, segmented and hierarchical labour markets to explore new seas for commerce and trade. However, the different declinations of social, economic and moral orders persist through contestations. Subalternity undergoes processes of transnational re-production. The fragility and liability of norms and orders enable their challenge: women's careers are constructed through ordeals of adaptation, negotiation, disobedience, transgression at each step of their biographical pattern and at each stop of their spatial, social and moral itinerary.

To describe the shape of motion and of the mobility career, I borrow from physics the notion of *orbit* to visualise the innovative, plural and pluralising forms that the career can potentially take. Metaphorically, the image of the *orbit* seems helpful to me to visually identify the complexity of the career-marking as a growing process of accelerated interconnection between times and spaces, showing how the diverse processes of socialisation and individualisation are certainly rooted into local practices and frames, but also projected towards a translocal horizon.

The *orbit*, which is a gravitationally curved trajectory of an object around a planet, allows to think the repetition of a course, but also its innovation and change. Metaphorically speaking, if, in some cases, Newtonian mechanisms are pertinent to explain the repetition of such movement, the dialectic between movement and stasis (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) produce overlapping situations of mobility, immobility and mooring (Sheller and Urry 2006). Accordingly, when talking about *orbits*, figuratively, the Einsteinian theory of relativity, which accounts for perturbation, reversibility and variation, helps to metaphorically imagine the complexity of rotations and of circulations.

Considering the overlapping levels of structures and constraints, but also opportunities, of social networks and economic resources as well as individuals' competences, knowledge and skills is critical in the investigation. It requires to constantly orchestrate these overlapping levels in the analysis of

situations, experiences and practices[14]. Amongst others, Aldrich, Wald and Waldinger (1990) have proposed an "interactive framework" to position the negotiation of opportunities and the structural constraints which may inhibit action. This reveals to be a pertinent prism under which observing and analysing the progressive, complex and bifurcated processes of social, economic and moral re-positionings of actors all along their career-making. However, inside and outside mobile social worlds, opportunities and constraints are negotiated within a plurality of spaces and orders, which impose hence a multiscale and translocal translation of this analytical frame.

Chapter 4: E-motions

Migration, as I have suggested so far, is a constant, endless process of construction and deconstruction, production and reproduction of a plurality of social configurations among places, spaces and temporalities. The mobile dimension of migrants' career-making processes and the fluidity of their positionings and re-positionings within the social worlds they cross engender crucial transformations in practices and experiences. At the same time, the continuities and discontinuities which emerge and are visible throughout the analysis of migratory careers seem to take place and shape on the emotional level of individuals' existences.

The cases observed on the different field sites required to take the emotional dimension of mobility and of migration existences into the account of migrants' mobile, translocal and hyperconnected lives and practices. It seems to me that the study of emotions and feelings enriches the understanding of migrations and mobilities. At each step of the migratory career, during every interaction inside the different geographies of mobility, emotions, emotional ties and emotional practices are omnipresent. As I will advance in the lines which follow, migration, and more broadly, mobilities can be appreciated as an important research field on "the spatiality and temporality of emotions" (Bondi et al. 2007: 3).

1. For a Sociological Approach of Emotions

Observing, describing and analysing the making of the individual within *mobile* social worlds impose to constantly keep in mind the fluidity and malleability of social life and of the practices which are engendered by movement. Mobility, transition, and movement are processes at play when people and things cross geographical, social and cultural boundaries as they move through time and space. The complexity of such a frame is related to the heterogeneous definition of movement itself, which does not only imply physical, body and material displacement, but also endless processes of "inner mobility" (Beck 2003), which provoke the shifting and the roaming of sentiments, emotions and feelings too.

The spaces, locations and temporalities traversed by migrants are not only social, economic or geographical, but they are also imbued with a highly emotional significance (Appadurai 1986; Svašek 2007 amongst others). In this work, I consider emotions as crucial characteristics of the social worlds subjects inter-act in and contribute to forge. Thinking the social, social life and social practices requires paying attention to the emotional processes which underpin their co-construction and performance.

As suggested by Martha Nussbaum (2004), “emotions draw the landscape of our social and affectional life”.

emotivity generate knowledge about the self and society that can produce, reproduce or defy relations of power, hence impact the subjectivity-making dynamics. They examined discourses on emotions and emotional discourses as social and cultural practices. Hereinafter, they defined emotions as being phenomenologically experienced (1990: 12), as well as vehicles for symbolizing and affecting social relations: "emotions are not simply reactions to what happens, but interpretations of an event, judgment of a situation". They generate interactions (Myers 1986: 106).

Progressively, anthropologists and sociologists have developed new conceptions which challenge traditional biological or psychological understandings of emotions, acknowledging the social (Illouz 2009) and cultural (Ahmed 2004) dimension of emotions. From a functionalist perspective, by focusing on emotions as situations and practices, Arlie Russell Hochschild has forged the expression of "emotional work" and "emotional labour" to investigate subjects' capacity to "manage their heart" (Hochschild 1983), hence their feelings, within specific social settings, especially in the field of employment in the era of global capitalism.

More recently, and on a similar line of inquiry, Eva's Illouz first works (2007) have investigated the emergence of an intensely specialised, modern "emotional culture" (2007: 79), which builds a bridge between the Market – thus the economic dimension for social life- and the construction of the self. She has shown how "market-based cultural repertoires shape and inform interpersonal and emotional relationships, while interpersonal relationships are at the epicentre of economic relationships" (2007: 79-80). Emotions do not exist by themselves, but they are constructed within a specific socio-economic frame which today corresponds to the era of late capitalism. Exploiting the market metaphor, emotions are conceived as a resource in the frame of what she called an "emotional capitalism", which has forested a specific discourse, mainly informed by the language of therapy in modern times, aimed at developing techniques to manage and control emotions.

Later, by observing and analysing the overlapping link between consumption and emotions (Illouz 2009), Illouz has also shown the extent to which emotions can be commercialised. Through the examination of economic processes of both production and consumption (2009, 2018), she has recently forged the expression of *emodity* -an emotional commodity- to explain the extent to which "commodities produce emotions and emotions are turned into commodities" (2018: 8).

In this work, I consider Illouz's rationale about of the social construction of emotions and of emotional processes (2007, 2018) as a fundamental pillar in the analysis. I use and discuss her conceptualisation of both the emotional production of capitalism and of economic practices (2007), as well as the interplay of emotions and affections in the commodification processes of objects (2018). However, the strong differences in terms of actors involved, of scales, of social worlds, of commercial activities and emotional practices will lead me to sketch different conclusions on such socially and emotionally co-constructed economic processes.

In France, the sociological approach to emotions is still struggling to take its seat. Didier Fassin has re-framed and re-formulated the notion of "moral economy[15]" to take into account the repartition, the circulation and the exploitation of moral sentiments and emotions in social practices (Fassin 2001: 11-12). However, his interpretation is large, and it includes norms, behaviours, institutions, traditions in the analysis of the formation of a moral economy. Hence, it does not primarily and centrally focus on the ways emotions are constructed through social practices. Importantly, very recently, A. Jeantet (2018) has investigated the sphere of work under the prism of emotions, which are crucial to think the individual within his/her consubstantial links with the social (Jeantet 2018: 7).

On a different perspective, another socio-anthropological current has focused on the interlink between the emotional experience, considered as highly physical, *i.e.* "embodied" (Lock 1993; Lyon 1995) and the process of subjectivity-making. Along this line, it was a matter of understanding "the relation between lived experiences, affects and/or emotions encountered by embodied human subjects" (Lock 1993: 133-141). Therefore, based on the

contributing, as far as possible, to a sociological understanding of emotions, conceived here as a *resource*, a *competence* and a *practice*, deeply affecting the co-making of the individuals and the social.

Emotions are generated from and at their turn sustain social and economic processes.

Emotions are part of daily being-in, moving through and across, as well as relating to social, economic and moral worlds. It is hence probably more suitable to refer to emotions as processes. Conducting fieldwork, I have been confronted several times to the "cultural forces of emotions" (Rosaldo 1989: 7), *i.e.* to a plurality of powerful, visceral, even contradictory, emotional states, which were often at the very basis of women's inter-actions and activities. Joy, enthusiasm, excitement, expectation, aspiration but also fear, anxiety, revolt, frustration, anger, disillusionment were some characterising emotional states experienced, constructed and performed by the actors during their social life. To what extent mobility and immobility processes are shaped and framed by such emotions?

It seems that migration and mobility, location and dislocation, are processes which produce relations of attachment and proximity. They also contribute to distance and detachment, all imbued with strong emotional connotations. Therefore, how are emotions produced and re-produced along mobility paths? Are there similarities in terms of emotional experiences and practices throughout spatial and temporal mobilities? *Mobile* feelings and sentiments of hope and nostalgia, ambition and imagination, deception and disillusionment but and supported a plurality of mobilities. They opened senses of belonging and attachment, anchorages to spaces, places, people and practices. How can emotions produce and affect social inter-actions? How do emotions generate and sustain socialisation processes? When objects and subjects circulate together, how do emotional processes produce human, but also non-human (Latour 1987) mobility and how is human and non-human mobility shaped by emotional processes?

If emotions are defined as a socially constructed, situated practice, equipped with a cognitive dimension (Nussbaum 2004; Illouz 2007) given by the actors, how can they move and circulate inside, outside and around the physical and digital spaces, as well plural social worlds? In this perspective, it is necessary, for each situation and within each context, to define which kind of emotions are produced. What is their heuristic scape to apprehend action? Instead of confining them inside the intimate sphere of symbolic places of individuals' interiority (

and contradictory. Situations and inter-actions are constructed from and, at their turn, sustain the production of repertories of heterogeneous emotions.

Emotions can be put into series. They can be classified. In his study of migrant workers in Cyprus, Zembylas (2010) has distinguished between *positive* and *negative* emotions produced and experienced by migrants. As for Chinese migrant women, nostalgia, loneliness, disillusionment, sadness, frustration, anger, deception, but also determination, ambition, aspiration, excitement, enthusiasm, joy might be good examples of the constructed emotions I have observed on the field.

Such negative emotions can generate individual and collective action and re-action since they open the field for contestation and for transgression. Potentially, they can produce the circumstances for the dismantlement, the "undoing" (Butler 2004) of inegalitarian positionings, disqualifying conditions and oppressive situations. When order is perceived as unacceptable and unfair, emotions might sustain resistance(s). On the contrary, in other cases, negative emotions can also lead to inaction, to the acceptance of a situation which, although perceived as being unjust, intolerable, "indecent" (Margalit 1996) is thought to be difficulty contestable or breakable. The empirical situations and the social, economic, institutional and moral specificities of the case studies open the discussion for the role of emotions in producing or inhibiting action.

Curiously, but not surprisingly, "positive" and "negative" emotions can co-exist and co-emerge together in situation. At the same time, conflicts, clashes and contradictions among the different regimes of emotions can also appear. They can be both individually and collectively constructed. Observing and apprehending their articulation with the repertories of social resources that actors can mobilise generates questionings about the conditions of production of inter-action within emotional practices. Social resources and affections mix and merge within the generation and development of emotions. How can emotions turn into a resource for inter-action?

Emotions connect individuals to society, to societies. They link the actors to the places, the spaces and the temporalities they are located in. Emotions support action and inter-action, on physical and virtual levels. Migration -internal, international, cross-border or transnational- offers privileged lens through which to observe and apprehend emotions (Conradson and Mckay 2007; Lau 2014; Svašek 2014). Migration seems to me an almost inevitable element of that affects emotions, as they are concurrently corporeally embodied (Ahmed 2004) and socially constructed (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). At their

turn, migrants' emotional experiences and performances also affect migrations and mobilities' orientations.

However, pushing the rationale beyond movement *stricto sensu,* emotional dynamics do not only exist within and through migratory processes, but they generate re-embodiments and re-embednesses, new disembodiments and disembednesses as long as mobilities occur. They engender movement, hyper-connection and simultaneity and hence contribute to the production of *glocal* practices, links and interrelations. Also, they might engender settlement, stops, bifurcations, immobility and stasis. Considering emotions as resources and practices raises the question of their construction *in motion*, *i.e.* of their transfer and re-production during the different times, spaces and identities of migration. This also raises puzzles about the ways emotions contribute to orient movement back and forth, *i.e* the extent to which they push it further or sustains its rerouting.

Built in the hyperlocal microcosmos of everyday life practices, emotions, and their performance as a practice, can be displaced, transferred within the global "space of flows" (Castles and Miller 2003), inside, outside, across and through borders. Repertories of positive and negative emotions undergo processes of transnationalisation, *i.e. a translocal re-production and translation of emotions and of practices of affections*. Emotions which have been situationally produced in a variety of contexts and circumstances, can be re-produced inside new ones. Implicitly, this leads to the investigation of the relation between emotions and globalisation. Doubtlessly, situations change. Nevertheless, such processes of reproduction of emotions and affections support an understanding of emotions as resources, which can thus be learnt, mobilised and re-mobilised.

Migratory processes are important vectors of changes in emotional and affectional lives. As affirmed by Conradson and Mckay (2007): "far from being a secondary, unimportant dimension of mobility, affects and emotions are central aspects of international migrations" (2007: 172). Emotions participate to the production of different kind of translocal activities and practices, although the absence of physical proximity. They can be appropriated, translated and performed within the multiple transnational spaces of migration. They engender geographical, spatial and temporal affective continuities and discontinuities.

Crucially, this may be even more true when integrating new technologies of communication and digitalisation in the analysis: connecting multiple places and people, when emotions encounter the digital worlds of instantaneous, virtual communications, the co-presence of migrants "here and there"

and the sociality and socialisation processes which follow facilitate the constitution of transnational emotional bonds across distance and through time. Thence, emotions escape the intimate sphere of the body and enter the social, contributing to the production of creative affectional interactions and social life. Emotions as a practice exit the subjective sphere of the individual to be collectively appropriated, translated into inter-actions, hence co-performed within the physical and digital worlds actors interact inside. The collective performance of emotions through situations and experiences can lead to the negotiation and the production of social norms.

Given my previous considerations about women's positioning and re-positionings in a condition of subalternity, the analysis of emotions may help to apprehend their potential for transformation and change. The development of emotional discourses and, conversations can lead to new, *sui generis* interactions and practices of affections, which fuel and support action (Lutz 1990), deconstructing and "undoing" hierarchies and subalternity to a certain degree. Floating, shifting, when collectively performed, emotions take the shape of what I qualified, borrowing a dance metaphor, of *choreographies of affections,* which are situated and situational (Petitat 1999), collectively produced inside the social world of the subjects.

Curious, innovative and variable ways of feeling and expressing emotions and sentiments emerge. These can be learnt, therefore they can be produced and reproduced along spaces and through temporalities. *Innovative* socialisation processes follow the tempo of emotions production and reproduction and they are accompanied by grammars (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2003) and vocabularies, socially and culturally defined by the affectional groups within emotional situations. The figurative image of a *choreography*[16] (Cussins 1998; Cox 2015) refers to a sequence of "steps", hence of practices, of activities, of individual and collective performances. It embodies and transmits the idea of movement and motion, co-designed, co-produced and co-performed inside a roaming space, and following a plurality of rhythms, of *tempos*. With the development of digital technologies and virtual communication infrastructures, emotional lives and experiences are no longer conducted solely in physical and corporeal proximity, but they are also practiced and displayed in a variety of virtual situations and simultaneous interactions, including across and through distance and space over time.

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[16] See the pioneer work by Cussins' (1998) on the "ontological choreography in infertility treatment". A choreography is conceived as a set of practices through which individuals can exercise their agency (Cussins 1998: 577). More recently, Aimee Meredith Cox (2015) has proposed an interesting definition of "choreography" in her work *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship* (2015). According to Cox, a "choreography" is the ensemble of the strategic methods used by the residents of Fresh Start residents to dismantle social and moral hierarchies and local marginalisation forms. The activities, based on dance and poetry, developed and performed by the actors enable a negotiation of misery, poverty, segregation and racism. They support the production of new images for the actors themselves regarding identity and citizenship.

In this regard, in the frame of the development new digital technologies and the "affective turn" (Ticineto Clough and Halley 2007), I advance the figurative expression of *emotional algorithm* to figuratively express the imbrication between digital worlds, socialisation processes and emotional encounters, occurring during *online* and *offline* performances and interactions. This vibrant expression metaphorically elucidates the possibility for subjects to meet inside the digital world and, fueled by sentiments and feelings, to collectively produce inter-actions.

The idea of *algorithm* embodies the contingency, plasticity, liability and temporality of virtual meetings and socialisation processes. Occurring inside the virtual worlds of *online* applications, such interactions and intersubjective conversations make sense only if considered within the rather contingent and variable situations they are generated in. For instance, anger, shame, solitude, loneliness are strongly situational and situated feelings, which can change and even disappear. They often represent the starting point of emotional conversations inside the virtual groups of discussion employed by women, but, like an algorithm – a numerical combination- they could have taken another shape, form or content within another context or inside a different social and emotional world.

However, generated by *online* encounters, starting from an *emotional algorithm*, *choreographies of affections* are dynamic socialisation processes which shift from and between a digital and a physical stage, through which individuals experience, interpret, share and translate the changing situations they face and the floating social worlds they live in. *Choreographies of affections* incarnate emotional and affectional movement itself. They materialise individuals' constant and polyform emotional positionings and social re-positionings, which shape their subjectivities. Inside a *choreography*, new physical and emotional proximities are generated: individual bodies can meet and merge inside space and through different forms. Their contact generates creatives figures, shapes and configurations.

2. Material, Social and Emotional Fabrics

An important contribution to the analysis of emotions in the construction of social life and practices comes from the anthropological study of material culture (Appadurai 1986; Ingold 2012), which has partially influenced my analysis. Within the mobility paradigm I have embraced, as well as the emotional turn I wish to develop, the analysis of material culture, and specifically of objects and artefacts' movements, can elucidate the complex interlink among people, things, social processes and emotions. This may be even more true when crossing, traversing and transcending geographical, social and moral boundaries as they move through time and space. The socialisation processes, the economic

activities and entrepreneurial practices I have observed on my floating field sites have accentuated the necessity of including objects' movement in my reflection.

Emotional dynamics build bridges between objects and subjects' movements, which reveal to be highly tangled. Objects, products and commodities have been considered progressively as more and more relevant in the exploration by cultural anthropology of the ways in which individuals' lives and objects are entangled, inaugurating new projects of research and new analytical frames. Appadurai (1986) in the collective volume he edited, has advanced how the circulation of commodities can shape social life.

understanding of subjective transit and change in terms of their status, identity formation and emotional subjectivity.

Following the postmodern tradition inaugurated by Ian Hodder (1989), archaeologists have also investigated the "meanings of things", proving the interlink between material culture and subjects' symbolic expressions. Numerous scholars have remarked (Latour 1994; Leavitt 1996; Svašek 2007, 2014; Lau 2014) that the relationships between subjects and objects, between people and things, are mutually constitutive processes. To quote Daniel Miller, objects, commodities and artefacts are "active participants in a process of social self-creation in which they are directly constitutive of our understanding of our*selves* and of the others" (1997: 215, 2005).

These theorisations helped me to frame and examine the jumbling, overlapping, synchronic and pluriform social, economic and emotional geographies generated by objects and subjects' migrations, circulations and mobilities.

During physical and virtual, body and digital movements, objects and subjects' careers can meet, cross and merge, giving rise to creative and innovative social, economic and emotional configurations. In this perspective, as shown by Svasěk in her collective volume *Moving Objects, Moving Subjects* (2014), the link between objects, subjects and emotional processes occur not solely "when individuals share space and time with objects, but also when they are engaged in inner dialogues" –through the production, consumption or use of objects- "recalling or imagining other people, past *selves*, places and other phenomena" (2014: 13-14).

Through objects, people carry memories, build bridges among close or distant people, places, spaces and temporalities (Raulin 1996, 2000). Objects carry feelings, attachments, anchorages, but can also enable projection towards the future. Through the emotional practices and experiences generated through the use and performance of objects and commodities, subjects develop new "affective possibilities", influencing the vision they have of their *selves*, of their identity and of their experiences in the world (Miller 2005). In this sense, as suggested by Raulin (1996) objects provide individuals with symbolic landmarks, which support the interpretation and re-interpretation of their social and cultural identity according to their personal experience (1996: 177).

Migrants perceive "where they are" and "who they are" through a vision in motion (Büscher et al. 2010), forged and practiced through the alignment of material objects, commodities, images or digital

technologies. Along these lines, I consider material "stuff" (Miller 2010) -objects, products, commodities- as able to make-up places and spaces, attributive of meanings (Augé 1990), significances and emotional connotations. "Consumption deeply structures social and cultural temporalities" (Raulin 2000: 206). Objects, artefacts and stuff are hence -as observed by Sheller and Urry (2006) in their analysis of the contemporary forms of mobilities *supra* discussed- always *in motion*. They are assembled and reassembled in changing configurations between spaces and temporalities.

Layered in this conceptualisation, I have adopted Marcus' methodological advice of *tracking*, "following the thing" (1995) through space and time to account for the role of material objects in describing social, economic and emotional processes: social and material fabrics, social and material worlds are highly, intimately related (Ingold 2012).

I scrutinise and attempt to show how an orange, fluorescent bra makes social class, status, migration, marriage, mobility and plural, translocal social, economic and emotional resources of export, import, expansion and generation of markets possible. As I will detail later in my methodological considerations, the fact of *tracking*, of following, of travelling with an object (Marcus 1995, 1998), and the subjects it is associated to, reveals to be an interesting and useful means to apprehend the new affective and emotional possibilities of production of social and economic worlds during multiple, polyform and polyhedral movements.

The rationale is developed in the frame of the emergence of hybrid systems of mobility, composed of "material ties and mobilities" (

Objects and subjects' biographies and geographies reveal to be highly imbricated and interconnected and offer a favoured lens under which observe and apprehend the complexity, the plurality and the polymorphism of mobility. The bra has a social life and a biographical, migratory career. How was it produced? How was it acquired? How did his buyer get her money? Who drove it? What are the social, economic and emotional relationships and ties existing behind its production, consumption and commercialisation?

It has been fabricated by Fujin while working in a textile factory in urban China. It reified her desires, ambitions and aspirations, as well as her daily sufferings around the production line it was fabricated on. The bra embodies Fujin's emotions, sustains her subjectivation processes as well as the development of strategies to cope with subalternity in Taiwan. Its movement to Taiwan, and its commercialisation draw the contours of Fujin's new ambition and self-esteem. The translocal, and transgressive commercialisation of the bra, produced in China and re-sold in Taiwan through physical and virtual economic transactions, illustrates the creative strategies, sustained by individual and collective emotional processes, women can develop to face subalternity. From an individual performance, the bra is collectively appropriated and becomes a vector of new social, professional and emotional socialisations among women who share similar migratory paths, mobility experiences and a subaltern condition.

Its commodification and commercialisation processes are concurrently generated by and, at their turn sustain, social (Ingold 2000) and emotional (Svašek 2014; Illouz 2018) processes. Produced, consumed, transported, commodified, and commercialised, the bra's career suggests a redefinition of the link between the social, the economic and the emotional. Its commodification emerges through and sustains the contestation of markets and borders, of statuses and positionings. It generates new social and emotional connections among people, spaces and places, enabling Fujin, like many other migrants, to negotiate, challenge and transgress hierarchies, misrecognition and domination, reconstructing their *selves* and re-positioning themselves inside, across a plurality of social worlds.

The social, economic and emotional significances and meanings attributed to the orange, fluorescent bra vary according to the social spaces, temporalities and identities built through and concomitantly generating migration. Its commercialisation produced attachments, sentiments of belonging, anchorages, but also discontinuities, disaffiliations, change and projection towards different futures. The bra's movement does not only follow, but becomes intrinsic, synchronic and constitutive of women's biographical, migratory and professional careers. The two are mutually framed and shaped.

Its movements, roaming, displacements, rotations from China to Taiwan, from Taiwan to China and its translocal existence between the two places illustrate the complexity, variability, multiplicity, simultaneity and hyperconnection of mobility itself.

3. Imagination, Projection and "Aspirational Infrastructure"

So far, I have defined emotions, sentiments and affects as being embodied in individuals' relationships. Socially and culturally constructed, they can be corporeally and virtually performed within a plurality of situations, circumstances and social configurations. Considering emotions as *resources*, *competences* and *practices*, which frame, shape and sustain migrations and mobilities might be an interesting approach and innovative analytical perspective. Notwithstanding, it may generate the risk of a simplistic and naïve analysis. In this regard -and to protect myself from eventual and possible objections- I would like to stress on the fact that emotions always occur in situations, inside temporary, mutable social worlds. They are intrinsic to social life and interactions. Emotions are socially constructed. In consequence, they exist and make sense, ontologically and theoretically, only if articulated with other repertories of social, economic and moral resources in the social order, the social world they are performed in, as well as the broader landscapes crossed during migrations.

Emotions accompany migrants during their pluri-mobilities and represent, as importantly suggested by Catherine Lutz (1990) a "fuel for action", for re-action, and for inter-action. Along a pragmatist line of understanding, it seems that emotions generate, articulate and sustain significances and meanings of inter-actions and practices by actors. Nostalgia and memory, hope and aspiration, dissatisfaction and unfulfillment enable and support spatial and temporal mobility, as well as new forms of social and economic positionings and re-positionings. From sentiments, feelings and affections *aspirational possibilities* emerge.

Within an emotional landscape supporting the social, and inside a social which influences the emotional, some considerations about the *infrastructure* (Jensen and Morita 2015; Shrestha 2018) of mobilities are required and necessary. Arjun Appadurai's (2000, 2004) argument has provided a major contribution in showing how emotions such as hope, desire and aspiration are vectors of action and interaction among individuals. They support decision making and sustain actors' capacity of moving, shifting inside the interstices of social structures and constraints, to negotiate with hierarchies, inequalities and conditions considered as unacceptable (Roulleau-Berger 2002). Simultaneously, an *infrastructure* can be defined in a plurality of ways. As claimed by Jensen and Morita (2015),

infrastructures may be interpreted as "ontological experiments" (2015) since their meaning, content and *modus operandi* vary according to social situations, contingent circumstances and actors' multiple performance[17]. Infrastructures are certainly represented by roads (Harvey and Knox 2015), waterways (Corte 2012), or even -and this is a point that particularly catches my attention in this work- by databases, *online applications* or *digital platforms*. However, infrastructures are not only technical. A broader definition has been advanced by Larkin (2013), who claimed that an infrastructure is "an object that creates grounds in which other objects operate" (2013: 329), suggesting its strong cultural, social and economic, and even moral embeddedness (Larkin 2013).

Infrastructures frame the field for different, creative and *sui generis* forms of social practices, interactions and activities. They hold the capacity to "make new forms of sociality and social landscapes […] defining novel forms of politics, and reconfiguring subjects all at once" (Jensen and Morita 2015: 83-84). Infrastructures are not static or rigid, but rather contingent, hence fluid and dynamic (Shrestha 2018). I will show in my work that the diverse, plural and floating mobilities occur inside, through and within diverse kinds of infrastructures -which can be physical or virtual, local or global. However, they all seem to take a highly emotional significance, which directly derives from the meaning attributed by the actors who act and perform inside it. For these reasons, women's migratory and mobility paths can be understood within the frame of what Shrestha has qualified of *aspirational infrastructure* (Shrestha 2018) inside which individuals constantly project themselves, capitalising, negotiating and mobilising resources to (re)position themselves towards a future of possibilities.

Imagination and aspiration are hence important emotional resources that, when articulated with other social and economic resources can engender physical, corporeal movement, spatial displacement, and emotional mobilities. Aspiration is the capacity to imagine the difference, the possibility, and the future (Appadurai 2004; Sellar and Gale 2011: 122). Imagination is the ability to project one's *self* towards what in the future is desired, wished, hoped (Appadurai 2000). It supports movement, mobility and "motility" (

corporeal or emotional movement. Imaginaries are here defined as “representational systems that mediate reality and form identities […] they represent possible worlds that are different from the actual world and are tied into projects to change it in particular directions” (

moral statuses throughout movement. The representations of their *selves*, of the places, spaces and configurations they are positioned in contribute to strengthen women's ambitions of transit and transformation. Individuals' representations of experienced situations and social worlds, together with the appreciation of their own social, economic and moral positioning generate feelings of acceptance or of dissatisfaction, as well as new ambitions and desires to change their present. Knowledge and competences, together with shared information forge the *horizon of hope and of becoming*, imbued with different, complex, contradictory and sometimes even conflictual meanings, which multiply the opportunities for moving and re-moving. Individual and collective discourses about the future opportunities and existential configurations strongly support project making, thus a plurality of actions in the present and in the future.

Chapter 5: The Production of the *Glocal*

So far, I have attempted to conceptualise the new, creative links which emerge between subjects and objects who move, circulate, rotate inside and outside a plurality of diverse and mutable social orders and social worlds. I have defined the entangled, intertwined connections between objects and subjects' movements, between biographies and geographies, between the social and the emotional. To conclude the conceptual framework inside which I situate my rationale, I propose now a theoretical shift, to project my considerations on the global scale of mobility, attempting to contribute to a global economic sociology.

More precisely, since I focus on the innovative practices generated by the actors inside, outside, through and across borders, I would like to discuss the new translocal, transversal, and even transgressive economic activities which create new social and labour relations, connections and imbrications between local and global cosmos. Based on an analysis of the circulation and mobility patterns of subjects and objects, I try to delimit a preliminary frame inside which inscribing later a cartography of the translocal, multiple and polyform economies produced by migrants. This leads to a discussion of the creative forms that globalisation, made inside its little, hyperlocal sections, can take.

1. Scaling and Re-scaling

I have started the presentation of the conceptual architecture of this work by drawing some reflections on movement and mobility. I have advanced some theoretical instruments and conceptual tools to apprehend the making of subjects and objects' trajectories and careers throughout a plurality of places, spaces and temporalities. I have furnished some elements to apprehend the role of the diverse social, economic and emotional resources in generating new forms of socialisations during the mobility paths and experiences of dislocation and relocation. I would like now to discuss how such resources and competences are turned into practices displayed on diverse physical and virtual, local and global levels. My concern is to identify the analytical lens under which investigate the extent to which economic practices are generated and performed on multi-sited, polyform and floating spaces and how they contribute to new encounters, dialogues and imbrications between local and global situations.

Studies on the translocal and transnational social, economic and cultural processes cannot be considered recent anymore. Breaking with a long-lasting "methodological nationalism" (Glick Schiller and Povrzanovic Frykman 2008), which considered the state as the essential "container" of social

practices (Beck 2003), since the beginning of 1990s, scholarship about the plurality of activities taking place outside the rigid borders of national states (Glick Schiller et al. 1992, 1995; Portes et al. 1999; Sassen 1998; Guarnizo and Smith 2008; Vertovec 2009) has proliferated. The locution of *trans* (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Ong 1999) to qualify such processes makes now consensus. It is positioned before a heterogeneous set of concepts to formalise and legitimate a growing field of studies of social practices which occur in the global arena of an increasingly interconnected, hypermobile and globalised world. The growing processes of globalisation and the expansion of international migrations have opened new "spaces of flows" (Castles and Miller 2003) where subjects, objects, commodities, discourses, and ideas move and circulate.

It is not be possible here to provide an exhaustive summary of such research perspectives and conceptualisations.

Nevertheless, transnationalism remains a "contested terrain" (Portes et al. 1999: 279) of study. As suggested by A. Ong (1999), the locution *trans* alludes to "something which is moving through the space or across lines […] as well as its changing nature" (1999: 36-37). If there is agreement on the pertinence of this locution, what may be problematic is the suffix before which it is positioned, hence *nationalism*, which makes direct reference to nations and states: the very same analytical units and "container theory of society" (Beck 2003) it aims at overcoming and escaping from.

The idea of *trans* refers the floating, roaming, moving phenomenological nature of a process. It can be associated to a multiplicity of spaces and boundaries. Essentially, it dismantles any sort of fixity or rigidity within the social world. *Trans* as a prefix can be positioned before a huge variety of concepts and notions -states, borders, but also regimes of normativity, norms, rules, constrains, etc- aiming at their challenge and contestation. To quote Aiwa

challenge and surpass multiple and multiplying spaces and societies, physical borders and national frontiers. Simultaneously, they can also transgress little, hyperlocal social, economic and moral orders.

Certainly, the advantages of *transnationalism* as a heuristic tool are to overstep a rigid conception of immigration from one site to another. However, it is important to conceive the plurality of sites and places inside which migrants inscribe their activities and practices: departure and settlement occur inside multiple societies and social spaces. Within such dynamics, multiple, complex and pluralising processes of mobility and re-mobility occur. There is not *one* society of departure and *one* society of arrival or of settlement (King 2000; Sinatti 2011), but many societies of temporary stay (Ley and Kobayashi 2005), from which further and potentially endless movements, displacements and re-mobilities (Ho 2019) can start and continue (Urry 2007). Therefore, is it not only suitable to examine the multiscale dimension of global and local processes (Sassen 2006a: 19-20). A design of a new, extended geometry and geography of locality, localism and, implicitly, of translocality and translocalism also urges. In the analysis of trans-local, trans-border, trans-national mobility, a constant concern about immobility is fundamental when framing the examination (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007).

This must be accompanied by an interpretation that considers not only the intrinsic inscription of transnationality within a variety of localities -villages, regions, neighbourhoods, cities, hidden garages, lingerie shops, beauty salons, etc.- but which also considers the innovative hyperlocal microcosmos which emerge through an extended and creative use of electronic media, cyber devices and digital platforms (Lewis et al. 2008; Rogers 2013). Christine Hine (2000, 2015), Nicole Constable (2003), and Michel Lallement's (2015, 2018) works among others have crucially pointed out how the internet and the new electronic devices have produced new opportunities for individuals to get in touch, to communicate and to be connected in unprecedent ways.

In my rationale, I present and discuss how the use of digital platforms and of virtual infrastructures contributes to new socialisation processes and to creative economic and emotional activities. These three are strictly embedded and performed on digital platforms. Consequently, it is necessary to consider the virtual worlds as fundamental spaces to produce local and global interactions and practices. On this account, I suggest that the use of the locution *trans* should include the microenvironments of interactive digital technologies, imbued with local to global and global to local extensions. This means thinking the possibility of exiting the material dimension of the physical world, conceiving a plurality of experiences and performances which take place within dematerialised and dematerializing processes

of connections, since people, but also machines, images, information, commodities, power and money are on the move (Urry 2007).

Trans-locality, trans-mobility and trans-nationalism as analytical tools need to be extended to new territories (Hall 2010), which include the virtual reality of the digital overlapping orders between the local and the global. Hence, the challenge is huge: give evidence of the complexity of mobility and immobility systems, of local and global practices, of circulations and roaming between physical and virtual, material and immaterial, corporeal, informational and imaginative levels.

2. Labour, Economies, and (Contested) Markets

These considerations require to be translated on the level of empirical situations and practices, from which theorisation can emerge. To show the innovative, *sui generis* and highly entangled interconnections between the local and the global, I draw on the case study of translocal economic activities and entrepreneurship. It is for me an appropriate angle to approach the emergence of the *glocal*, through physical and virtual, material and immaterial, corporeal and emotional practices. I acknowledge that, in line with their analysis of transnationalism, scholars have in recent years developed abundant reflections on migrants' economic practices, self-employment and entrepreneurship (Landolt et al. 1999; Tarrius 2002; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Portes 2003; Ambrosini 2003, 2018). Empirical studies have shown how, on a transnational level, migratory and mobility processes are often accompanied by the emergence and the progression of what Landolt, Autler and Baires (1999) in their pioneer work on Salvadoran migrants in Los Angeles have called "a vibrant entrepreneurial community embedded in a web of social relations" (1999: 295-296).

In the United States (Portes et al. 1999; Portes 2003; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Vertovec 2009), in Western Europe (Peraldi 2002; Tarrius 2002; 2015; Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2014a; Van Der Leun 2006; Ambrosini 2003, 2018), but also in China (Bian and Ang 1997; Zhou 2004; Démurgier and Xu 2011) and in Taiwan (Wang and Hsiao 2009; Yuniarto 2014) studies on transnational migrants' entrepreneurship have not stopped growing during the last decades.

Conceptually, these studies have shown the crucial link between social structures and economic constraints -especially in terms of vulnerability, inequalities and hierarchies in the labour market- and the level of individual's competences (Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2014a), skills and knowledge, summed to the fundamental dimension of social capital (Portes 1998) and social networks of migrants who

make these activities possible -that I have previously defined. It might be useful to call back on my previous considerations about social resources and networks. By re-framing Polanyi's concept of "embedness" (1983), economic sociology, through the works of

Italian labour market by Maurizio Ambrosini (2008, 2012, 2013) among others represented important contributions to the undestranding of transmigrants economic practices. In these studies, the expressions of "informal economy", "underground economy", or even "economies in the shadow" appeared. They have been coined to qualify the plurality, heterogeneity of these transnational, cross-border economic activities developed by migrants and immigrants, which exit the formal segments of labour market and of regulated economy. This phenomenon, and its conceptualisation encompasses a huge diversity of situations and activities, which comprise the production and distribution of goods and services, which do not enter the formal regulation of trading agreements and rules (Ambrosini 2003; Waldinger 2004). Such economic activities can be legal and illegal -in terms of commodities and distribution practices-, visible or hidden (Reyneri 2013) in the markets, and, broadly, "unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated (Castles and Portes 1989: 2).

As a matter of fact, the differences in terms of organisation, logistics of production and distribution, of the channels and the social networks employed, as well as the commodities commercialised make a holistic definition of what an informal economy is rather difficult. Moreover, if international scholarship has advanced the increasing role of new communication technologies, *online*, virtual applications and digital platforms in the globalisation process, what catches my eye is that researches on the digitalisation of economic activities are still limited. In his work on hackers' communities in San Francisco region (2015), Michel Lallement has shown how the cyberspace has become a site for action, for practices, for socialisation processes, professional experiences and for new definitions of the *di-vision* of work and labour (2015: 215-216). He has crucially raised questionings about the ways an increased digitalisation of practices co-produces among individuals "new ways of thinking, of feeling and of acting" (2015: 215). This directly configures new "subjective and creative spaces for work and for employment" (Lallement 2015, 2018).

Also, and exigently, new technologies are nowadays affecting labour experiences and practices: "multiple networks of individuals and communities can stock and exchange information in real time to produce goods and services, but also to consume, to play, to transfer knowledge or to share resources" (Lallement 2016: 20). However, grounded studies on the virtual dimension of trading and business, the *e-commerce,* generated and performed in the cyberspace, together with their link with the *offline* counterpart of economic practices may reveal useful to understand the new relationships to work developed by individuals. In this sense, they may shed new light on individuals' novel ways of "integration within a community, the di-vision of labour and of social world they produce, as well as

the construction of identities" (Lallement 2015: 408-409).

regulations, but also buildings, advertising displays- protected from the market and by the market (2005). Without setting a conceptual distinction between formal and informal, he has coined the expression of "contested market" (Steiner 2005; Steiner and Trespeuch 2014), which I consider helpful to elucidate some characteristics of the economies I apprehend in my work. According to him (2005), in a *contested market*, "contested" -banned, forbidden, immoral- commodities are sold and commercialised, breaking with moral norms and social rules. It "contains many social microstructures, rules and norms that frame interactions so that transactions can take place" (Steiner 2005: 205).

When localised and situated markets become oppressive and do not enable Chinese migrant women to "take their place in", they can be contested and transgressed through a plurality of practices which overstep their local borders. During their pluri-migrations, in China, in Taiwan and, later back to China, women enter and exist a plurality of segments of local and global labour markets. In China, the structure of the Chinese global industrial labour market is locally segmented and stratified (Roulleau-Berger 2009 2015). The labour regime in the industrial sector – the urban factories- is strongly unfair and disqualifying (Pun 2005). Moreover, its hierarchies and its structure of inequalities persist over time. Women make the experience of its unfair and disqualifying structure during rural-to-urban migration first and during re-migration from Taiwan to China later. Taiwanese local labour market is also characterised by segmentation, stratification, as well as legal obstacles to entrance and integration for Chinese migrant women.

However, such markets can be contested and transgressed through the concurrent mobilisation of social, economic, affectional and emotional resources at a translocal level. Contestation goes through two embedded and interrelated patterns. Firstly, new markets are created at the very intersection between practices of contestation and transgression (Steiner and Trespeuch 2014) and a digitalisation of the economic activities (Lallement 2015). Contested, virtual markets emerge at a *sui generis glocal* scale: they socially, emotionally and affectionally constructed. Thus, labour oscillates between new material and immaterial levels which lead to material and immaterial performances (Hardt and Negri 2000). If contestation emerges through the creation and development of alternative, lowly-visible markets, which are global, virtual and de-materialised, there is something more to say.

The segments of the new markets are socially and emotionally constructed by women. However. they are not detached from the other, material ones. What should be noticed is that the points of junction, the juxtaposing segments between official and alternative, material and virtual markets are made through contestation (Steiner 2005). It is a contestation of both the economic patters, in terms of trails,

roads, transportation practices, as well as of the commodities commercialised (Zelizer 1994; Satz 2010). The orange, fluorescent bra, like chicken feet, milk powder, facial masks, plums against constipation or pills to treat osteoporosis are curious and emblematic examples of the goods and products which, through different platforms and infrastructures, and *via* diverse paths, circuits, and "back roads" circulate across the borders.

The above-mentioned researches provide important insights to frame and apprehend the potential relations among the social, moral and emotional dimensions of exchange, business activities and, widely economies. If this phenomenon remains ubiquitous and omnipresent in different parts of the world, it is yet extremely diverse (Hyden 2007: 35). When the moral sphere of social and emotional life merges with economic transactions and exchanges, a plurality of heterogeneous and compound economies can emerge.

Markets can hence be not only socially (Grannovetter 1994; Callon 2002; Steiner 2005), but also emotionally constructed (Illouz 2018). According to the commodities sold, to the logistics adopted, to the circuits and trails followed, to the social and affectional relationships involved, and to the floating, accelerated or slowed down tempos of trading processes, a plurality of economic practices and markets can raise inside local and global spaces.

Concurrently, when economic practices and markets are socially, emotionally and affectionally constructed, new definitions of *labour* emerge (Lallement 2015) too. Labour can be creatively defined and re-defined. Labour relations, labour activities and labour performances can also undergo processes of adaptation, of re-framing and of individual and collective negotiations. Arlie Russel Hochschild (1983) first, and Eva Illouz later (2007) have questioned the new "emotional labour" produced in a modern capitalistic frame. Hochschild has qualified the "emotional labour" as a "suppression of feelings", *i.e.* the correct and right feelings adapted to the job which is being performed. On her side, Illouz (2007) pushed this reflection further by suggesting that the emotions produced at work at the time of late capitalism are dictated by a precise organisation and division of labour, which limits actors' capacity and possibility to freely express feelings and sentiments at the job place, by dictating the feelings which should be felt.

What I assume is that during women's translocal and transgressive, physical and virtual entrepreneurship, emotions and affections matter. However, differently from Hochschild (1983) or Illouz's (2007) conceptualisations, it is not necessarily a matter of colonisation of the sphere of

sentiments by the capitalistic apparatus and its logics. The repertories of positive and negative emotions interplay with the economic activities since they are generated from and, at their turn sustain their production and performance. Emotions vary from market to market, from a professional frame to another, from a segment to another of heterogeneous labour markets. However, they are omnipresent. They contribute to the definition of inter-actions, of new professional socialisation processes, and to the development of business and commerce. Emotions play a role in the choice of the products commercialised, they frame the commodification processes and the relationships with clients.

Along these lines of inquiry, it is possible to presume that the meaning of labour changes and varies on these new markets. On novel, "contested" (Steiner 2005), physical and digital, material and immaterial, social and emotional markets, how is the very meaning of labour – as a relationship and a *praxis*- redefined by the actors?

Also, and not less importantly, what should be stressed is that not only actors, through their performances, but also material artefacts, products and immaterial infrastructures -physical or digital- all at once contribute to the social and emotional construction of new markets and new economies. Appadurai (1986) has clearly pointed out how one is not born a commodity, but rather it becomes it. The process of transition and transformation of objects follows subjects spatial, social and emotional (Illouz 2009, 2018) movement. The orange, fluorescent bra is an outstanding example of how the status, the identity and the "career" (Appadurai 1986) of an object can change, according to the significance -social, economic and emotional- attribute to it.

3. Global Capitalism and *Emotional Petit Capitalism*

The jumbling link and tangled relation between objects and subjects' biographies and geographies makes me suppose that social and material fabrics, social and material worlds, are intimately connected. Hence, objects, for instance the orange, fluorescent bra, can be commodified, de-commodified and re-commodified, according to different tempos, dynamics and outlines which go along with women's translocal mobilities, as well as local and global practices. The very plastic, malleable and variable significance and meaning that women attribute to the economic transactions and to the objects they commercialise make the configurations, dynamics and geometries of economies rather disparate and variegated. They change according to the diverse and localised contexts of production, of consumption, of trading and of commercialisation. Thereby, a conundrum emerges. How to qualify, if that is possible, such heterogeneous, physical and digital, translocal, often transgressive, and highly emotional

economic practices? Avoiding essentialism and reductionist analysis, since I acknowledge that the qualifications by scholarship listed above are rather fluid, opaque and heterogeneous, I have opted for a different theoretical loom and argumentative path.

Theoretically, drawing on Eva Illouz's conception of the place of emotions in the expansion and development of capitalism (2007), and strongly grounding my analysis in the empirical evidence observed on the field sites, I will attempt to clarify the role of emotions in engendering and promoting economic activities and entrepreneurship, simultaneously elucidating the highly emotional and affectional dimensions of these very same practices. Objects and subjects' circulations, connections, dialogues produce innovative, creative forms of capitalism, which is performed at the physical but also virtual level of the emotional socialisations generated during and by the mobility experiences. In this regard, I propose a re-formulation of Illouz's expression of *emotional capitalism* (2007), by applying this concept to the local and global, physical and virtual, material and immaterial entrepreneurial activities generated by women. From Illouz's rationale I borrow a conceptualisation which considers markets and economic activities as being socially and emotionally constructed**.**

Nevertheless, differently from Illouz's (2007) analysis, in the situations I have observed, it was not a matter of "emotional culture of capitalism" (2007) which manages, orders and directs actors' lives and activities (Illouz 2007). Emotions and affections contribute to the production of economic activities and practices, through the lived situations as well as through the individual and collective performances by the actors. Markets, economies and commodities' emotional production does not derive from the "cold intimacies" promoted by the apparatus of late capitalism, as in Illouz's understanding (2007). On the contrary, emotions, affections and their individual and collective performance open the field for economic exchange and transactions, which are generated from and, at their turn, support commercial and entrepreneurial practices.

In this sense, I aim at producing an understanding of the logics and the logistics, the paths, the networks and the sentiments which sustain and promote economies. This may elucidate the extent to which the combination between social and emotional resources generates such polyhedral and polyform economies.

On new circuits, which connect the local and the global, products, commodities and goods are commercialised not only to provide women with a secured income and an employment when the access to the local labour market is obstructed. Sustained by feelings and sentiments, economies are driven

by imagination and aspirations which can contribute to new emotional attachments, sense of security and self-fulfilment, of home (Ingold 2000, 2012) and of community among migrants, overstepping nostalgia and homesickness. In the cyberspace, and within the plurality of spaces, places and temporalities of women's mobility, the analysis of women's translocal economic activities will lead me to reframe Illouz's (2007) conceptualisation towards the theorisation of an *emotional petit capitalism*, grounded and intrinsic to the novel relations which emerge between the local and the global, between the physical and the virtual, between economies and emotions, between objects and subjects' biographies and geographies.

Oscillating between global production and local consumption, women set sails through global capitalism. By the means of their economic practices which invest the hyperlocal microcosmos of their daily lives, they circumnavigate circumnavigating the circuits of transnational trading. Accordingly, I have deliberately chosen to take distances from the traditional dichotomies of formal/informal, visible/hidden, legitimate/illegitimate, legal/illegal, overhead/underground economies since -as stated above- I consider these taxonomies as being insufficient for apprehending the complexity, malleability, changeability and polymorphism of women's capitalistic practices. Such constructed divisions, although seducing forms of scientific *prêt à penser* may, even if involuntarily, re-produce old and new forms of hegemonic knowledge (Beck 2003; Roulleau-Berger 2016), arbitrary categorisations (Bhabha 2002) and, to some extents, even "methodological nationalism" (

should be declined at its plural form of capitalisms, or, more generally, to the possibility of emergence of capitalism, especially what it emerges in a non-Western context, under creative and uncommon forms. Markets undergo constant metamorphosis (Lallement and Sarfati 2009), at the crossroad between global capitalistic logics and daily survival necessities.

As claimed by U. Beck (1999: 37), the singularity of the process of globalisation lies in its ramification, in its plural and pluralistic shapes, and in its auto-definition by and through a multiplicity of practices: global social worlds as floating arenas of transformation are subjected to endless processes of making and re-making, of definition and redefinition. The global does not correspond to the sum of national societies and localities; yet, it is a horizon of exploration, of investigation, experimentation and new operations, characterised by intrinsic multiplicities and a clear absence of integrability (Beck 1999: 38-39).

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device which the social sciences as well as the actors contribute to forge". When framing deterritorialisation, Deleuze and Guattari (1980) -among others- were mistaken: the aptitude of capitalism to break bonds, reciprocity and destroying solidarity may not be irreversible. Other forms of capitalisms can emerge, generated at the intersection among new emotional ties, translocal practices of mutuality and simultaneous communications on digital platforms. I ask and question how new, diverse capitalistic strategies and actions can be re-negotiated, re-appropriated or newly forged by actors.

Capitalism is a culturally (Bayart 1994; Boltanski and Chiapello 1999; Yaginasko 2002; Ong and Li 2008), socially (Callon 1998, 2002) and emotionally (Illouz 2007, 2018) produced process, through which people constitutionally re-think and re-formulate their goals, meanings and practices. Thereby, the challenge is to understand how the economies I have observed, tracked and followed between China and Taiwan are made of complex relations of affections and profit, of accumulation and distribution, of mutuality, reciprocity and individual achievement, but also different clashes and conflicts. In framing and re-framing with their own tools, strategies, practices, discourses and emotions, the *lex mercatoria* reveals to be strongly influenced by a *lex adfecta*[20], where emotions, symbols and imaginaries largely contribute to the social and cultural construction of markets and, to some extent, of capitalism as well. For these reasons, capitalism and global capitalistic practices cannot be framed solely as exclusive or expulsive (Bayart 1994; Callon 1998, 2002; Sassen 2014).

In her works about the worlds of the "little urban production" (1999), Roulleau-Berger has remarked that little, lowly-visible economic practices emerge at the crossroad among an economy of proximity, a symbolic economy and an adaptative economy[21] (1999: 20). However, as she suggested, these lowly-legitimate and weakly visible economies exist within "zones of contact" with other economic worlds: they mix, jumble and juxtapose with the "worlds of the huge and legitimated production" (1999:21). "Little" and "big" worlds, "weak" and "strong" actors cannot hence be dissociated (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2007), since they exist inside and thanks to a constant dialogue, co-producing each other. Individual and collective *mobile* experiences are hence arranged or fragmented in a permanent oscillation between these worlds (Roulleau-Berger 1991, 1999). The frontier and separation mark between the world of great production and little production[22] becomes fluid and porous (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2007).

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[20] The "merchant law" and the "affectional law".
[21] In French, « économie de la débrouille ».
[22] « Les mondes des grands et les mondes des petits » (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2007).

In the definition, the development and improvement of translocal emotional and affectional economic practices, different forms of exchange and of capitalisms mix and merge in a hybrid and syncretic way. On the one hand, during their rural-to-urban migratory experiences in China, when working in the multinational factories of Chinese Southern cities, women indirectly observed global capitalistic practices since, around the assembly line -manufacturing bras and lingerie, Huawei self-phones or Apple laptops- they partially contributed to its performance. On the other hand, both in China and in Taiwan, women are unable to develop social and economic mobility within that kind of global capitalistic frame. Therefore, they develop tools, strategies and practices to contest markets and forge novel ones. In this frame, new, creative capitalistic practices emerge.

Partially inspired to the "rules of exchange" (Fligstein 2001) women had learnt in China, *emotional petit capitalism* emerges in contestation of that very same economic circuit. However, such a transgression is not sectional, univocal and fragmentary. Indeed, certain itineraries of *emotional petit capitalism* bypass the high-roads of the global distribution chain. Its paths take hidden back-roads materially or immaterially dug. However, in some cases, these new economic circuits and routes are forged by migrant women at the crossroad, at the point of junction between high roads and back roads, between the official global distribution chain channels and novel, lowly visible, immaterial circuits.

The logics of the exchange, the structure of hierarchies and of competition which characterises the functioning of global capitalism do not completely disappear in the performance of *petit emotional capitalism.* In Chinese migrant women's practices, conflicts, antagonisms and new forms of subordination can also emerge. Continuities and discontinuities exist and need to be considered in the analysis (Roulleau-Berger 2011, 2016). Acknowledging the multiplying points of junction in terms of capitalistic practices leads me to the formulation of the following question: can these forms of capitalism be really separated?

Along these lines of inquiry, the ongoing discourse about "the West and the Rest" (

opened local, localised *reinventions* (Clifford 1980; Bayart 1994; Mbembe 2001). Capitalism is made and not born (Bayart 1994). It can hence be reinvented. It can take multiple and diverse forms, which follow not only the desires, the ambitions articulated into actors' practices, but also the *sui generis* forms associated to the tempos and rhythms of the novel markets and economic trails opened by its performers. There is not one capitalism, but several capitalisms. Conceiving this plurality opens a better understanding of the multiplication of its possibilities and of the potentially endless forms it can take.

In any geographical space -local, translocal, national or global- the coexistence of heterogeneous capitalistic practices may be possible. *Emotional petit capitalism*, performed on translocal, contested and emotional markets is an open field of possibility (Clifford 1980; Ong 1999): objects and subjects, physical and digital platforms, sentiments, emotions, imaginaries, identities, together with material and immaterial infrastructures, humans but also non-humans (Akrich et al. 2006) encounter, merge, jumble to produce economic activities, which might be socially, culturally and emotionally constructed all at once.

4. On and Beyond Globalisation

The turn to *transnationality* and progressively, to *translocality* in sociology that I have presented until now enables me to better position objects and subjects' mobilities, as well as material and social fabrics, which go through, oscillate, circulate and roam among the plurality of spaces, places and locations of globalisation.

The theoretical and conceptual frame I have identified and constructed so far has suggested the highly mobile dimension of situations and practices observed on the field sites. Epistemologically speaking, this assumption leads me to constantly question and re-question the plurality of boundaries, which characterise the field sites situations and practices are generated and performed on, but also the analytical tools and theoretical lens to apprehend and describe such mobile phenomena. Against a "sedentary" production of knowledge (

and to temporarily conclude my long premises, I would like to briefly discuss its use and its heuristic impact and significance.

To answer theoretically to this theoretical question, it is better to start with an empirical example. The orange, fluorescent bra, made in plastic and silicone which moves around in internal China, crosses and re-crosses the Taiwan Strait and circulates inside and outside digital platforms draws the contours for different kinds of movement, of mobilities, of patterns and trails which may enable to explore the local, translocal and global connections which underpin globalisation. Fabricated inside a multinational company in China, its very first production process derives from the implantation of global enterprises in China and its openness to global markets. It proves the emergence and proliferation of new forms of globalised labour relations (Ong and Li 2008; Roulleau-Berger 2016), through *extraction* (Sassen 2014) and exploitation of the little fingers of migrant working women inside the factories, around the assembly line, where working time is extremely long, working conditions are poor, and wages are low.

At the very same time, the imaginaries associated to this fancy product point out the global circulation of representations, ideas and discourses coming from modern, capitalistic and metropolitan discourses, which have invested the Chinese society during the last forty years (Pun 2005). However, the rationale needs to go further. When the bra crosses the Strait, its displacement suggests the need of more considerations. As a traveling object, commodified in China, and re-commodified in Taiwan, the cartography of its production, commercialisation and consumption chain reveals cross-border, translocal and transgressive trails: this living object crosses territories and diverse social, economic and moral landscapes.

Marriot and Minio-Pauello's (2012) topography of oil from the Caspian Sea to England, Barndt's study of the tomato production chain from Mexico to Canada (2008) or Rothember-Aalami's research on the Nike chain (2004) all importantly elucidate the extent to which the analysis of *trails*, *i.e.* the paths, the patterns, the movements, of products and commodities raises questions about global production and social justice within a globalised and globalising world. However, these important works about commodity chains and production processes tell the stories of the cold scenarios of the political economies which sustain fabrication dynamics, treating individuals -subjects, rather than actors- as abstract labour force, subjected to the global forces of production.

The story of the orange bra I narrate in my work takes a different direction. It gives me the chance to investigate the complex, complexifying, plural and pluralising lives, trails, mobilities of the objects and the individuals -actors rather than subjects- which draw new, creative geographies of globalisation.

I am concerned not only with the geographies of power (Massey et al. 1993; Sassen 1995, 2014) which shape the global world, but also, and especially, with the discrete, less visible, made-in-little, social, economic and emotional practices which sustain and underpin new relations between the local and the global, forging a new *glocal*[24] scale (Robertson 1995; Robertson and White 2007; Alexander 2003; Sassen 2006; Ritzer 2012 Roudomentof 2016). Robertson (1995) has defined the *glocal* as the "outcome of the historically long struggle between the local and the global.

technologies, media and communication infrastructures beat the rapid tempo of the new links and connections among people, spaces, nations and ideas.

These definitions of globalisation are certainly illustrative of some of the characterising features of this phenomenon, but they are also partially deficient. They correspond to a highly stable representation of national and transnational, local and global connections I partially disagree with. My work shows that the translocal, local to global and global to local connections of globalisation are anything but fixed, rigid and stable. Quite the contrary. The paths, the trails and the roads undertaken by the orange bra, are mutable, fluid and uncertain. They reveal a strong liability and fragility.

In this regard, important critiques have been raised. The works of Ulrich Beck (1999, 2003) have sustained the necessity of a *cosmopolitan turn* to apprehend globalisation and global phenomena. Not only it is a matter of overstepping a long-lasting methodological nationalism which has been dominating social sciences through a "self-centred narcissism of the national outlook" (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 3), which conceived the national-state as the only frame inside which including social, economic and cultural phenomena. Also, the "cosmopolitan outlook[25]" and "methodological cosmopolitanism" advanced by Beck (1999) become the *condition sine qua non* for the study of the new dialogues, encounters, and conflicts between the national and the transnational, between the local and the global. Beck has hence conceived cosmopolitanisation as a "multidimensional process, which has irreversibly changed the historical nature of social worlds" (Beck and Sznaider 2006:9) and which "comprises multiple loyalties as well as the increase in diverse transnational forms of life and kinds of cosmopolitan globalisation" (Beck and Sznaider 2006:10).

To understand such complexity, which means the non-universality (Bhabha 2002) and the alterity (Roulleau-Berger 2016), it is a matter of developing a cosmopolitan discourse on globalisation, a "nonlinear, dialectical process, in which the universal and the particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles" (Beck 2003: 72).
Along the lines of the critique, Saskia Sassen (1995, 2006a) has convincingly stressed the necessity, the imperative even, to redefine, theoretically, but also methodologically and empirically the spatial

[25] "The whole conceptual world of the 'national outlook' becomes disenchanted […] a de-ontologized, historicized and stripped of its necessity […]" (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 17). It is hence, for Beck, a matter of identifying an interpretative alternative which replaces ontology with methodology: "to replace the current prevailing ontology and imaginary of the nation-state with a methodological cosmopolitanism" (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 22-23).

dimension of globalisation as a process and the phenomena it generates, and it is produced by. Globalisation, as crucially pointed out by Raulin, "recomposes, in a novel way, the local and the global, by inversing such polarities" (2000: 24). The local, and the locality hence become strategic sites to apprehend global situations and experiences: the global is localised in a variety of nations, regions, cities (Sassen 1995, 1998) and even neighbourhood (Raulin 1990, 2000).

The global can be thought and apprehended inside the territories, the hyperlocal microcosms where daily social and economic life is produced and performed. It is hence, according to Sassen (2006a, 2014) a matter of *multiscale globalisation*, which requires to be observed and described under the new lens of *critical geographies of scale* (2006a: 7). The roads, hidden and discrete, crossed by the orange bra, but also by milk-powder, chicken feet and facial masks through and across the Taiwan Strait become visible only through a "decomposition of globalisation in a plurality of transborder circuits" (Sassen 1995), inside which a plurality of places can be situated: new, micro environments, hyperlocal sections emerge inside the locality, the urban and the rural sites, the garages, the platforms for trading, the airports inside which goods and products, but also subjects and emotions fluctuate, circulate and rotate. The local and localities are hence conceived here as highly fragmented.

Moreover, spaces and territories have to be decomposed not only in a plurality of micro sections, hence the nations, the regions, the cities and the neighbourhoods (Sassen 1995). Several infrastructures, whether physical (Jensen and Morita 2015) -waterways, airports, roads, trading platforms, islands, etc- or technological and virtual (Latour 1987; Akrich et al. 2006; Hine 2015) -telecommunication channels, virtual applications, digital platforms- beat the rhythms, the tempos of accelerated, slowed down, or uncertain global and local, local and global, or *glocal* movements.

Concurrently, this rich ensemble of considerations about the exigency of scaling and re-scaling processes (Sassen 2006a; Debarbieux 2019) to think the overlapping, synchronic but also dissonant and disembedded processes between local and global spatialities need to be transposed on the temporal scale of the speed and the rhythm of connections. As I have suggested,

negotiation and re-design, on the move, on the road. The space is progressively produced, negotiated, defined and re-defined according to the possibilities, the opportunities and the adaptations that objects and subjects find on their multiple, disordered, improvised ways.

The “spatial practices which structure everyday life” (

progressively forged to describe the types of globalisation produced and performed by composite actors.

These empirically grounded studies were associated with migrants' and migrant workers' transnationalism, transnational economic practices and translocal connections and have provided important knowledge to apprehend the porosity, the fluidity of national borders and the capacity of challenging, transcending and transforming frontiers and boundaries into a resource for survival and resistance to inequalities and hierarchies. However, by setting a clear separation between what may be considered of legal and illegal, of visible and underground, these researches have re-produced epistemological pyramids and of ranking between main-roads and back-roads, between the tempos of global business and of hidden transnational economies, between official trading pathways and illegal markets made in the shadow, between high-value and low-value goods, between Nike shoes transported on cargos and orange bras displaced inside a luggage. Along these lines, reflecting on actors' status, Camille Schmoll has suggested that the complex interactions existing between informal and formal economies in the marketplace shows that the common dichotomy between "transnational actors from above" and, on the other retail, small scale, informal commerce is a "fiction" (Schmoll 2006).

These reflections bring me back to my previous questionings about legitimacy and reality. What is globalisation? Is it taking novel shapes and designs? How and to what extent can the trails, the paths and the circulations of objects and subjects reveal the mutable and mutating forms and substance of *translocality*? How can the journeys of everyday life of people contribute to the making of globalisation? Probably, the orange bra's mobilities are slowed down, mutable, rotating, precarious and uncertain. Perhaps the routes it undertakes are fluid and messy, as well as the lives of the women who produce and commercialise it. However, as I will attempt to show, order and disorder, main-roads and back-roads, official and low-legitimated paths can meet, cross and merge. The orange bra and the chicken feet sometimes go through the same trading circuits of multinational companies, sometimes they do not. Local and global landscapes may be part of the same world. They can cross and traverse the same spaces and places, what may be different are the social and emotional meanings attributed to them. Refusing any ontological and epistemological distinction among products, logistics, and trails, I assume that globalisation can be defined in a variety of ways as it ontologically and empirically takes a multiplicity of forms and shapes: globalisation is polyform and plural. It constantly reroutes trails and opens new ones; new articulations, dynamics, configurations emerge through the social, material, economic and emotional fabrics of objects and subjects inside the physical and digital worlds.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptualisation and the questionings that I have been enouncing and discussing so far, the main research hypothesis which sustains this work is the following:

From China to Taiwan, from Taiwan to China, and between the two countries objects and subjects' biographies and geographies entail *sui generis*, creative translocal mobilities. Such mobilities are generated from and co-supported by social, economic and emotional practices which take place between physical and virtual, material and affective, local and global spaces. Objects and subjects' circulations and navigations are generated across a multiplicity of places, spaces, temporalities, emotions and affectional ties, all at once interconnected. Mobility, immobility and moorings are produced by the means of a constant work of negotiation of local and global subaltern positionings, hierarchies and inequalities which reveal their plasticity and fluidity. They can be transgressed, transcended and "undone". At each step and stop of mobilities, women attempt to "take their place" within *glocal* social, economic and emotional worlds. Socially and situationally constructed, emotions undergo processes of translocal production. Social and affectional practices are translocally reproduced. When the local becomes oppressive, the global is constructed as a space for contestation, transgression and transformation. Local and global spaces meet through women's practices and take original shapes. Novel social, economic and emotional configurations of the *glocal* emerge: an *emotional petit capitalism* is forged *in motion*. It challenges social borders, geographical boundaries, markets and moral frontiers.

making of a modern subjectivity generate and are, at their turn, sustained by the construction of migratory, social and professional careers. Emotions are produced by and concurrently support social and economic re-positionings, affectional practices, biographical bifurcations and spatial movements. When local social, economic and moral order are oppressive and difficultly contestable, through transnational encounters in the Chinese global city, women engage in cross-border marriage-migration to Taiwan.

2. The second sub-hypothesis corresponds to the transnational reproduction in Taiwan of social, economic and moral hierarchies that women are confronted to, as well as to their capacity to contest local orders through the navigation of global seas. Inside physical and virtual worlds, using digital platforms, women contest social, economic and moral subalternity. Novel socialisations, affectional ties and emotional practices enable women to set sails between local production and global consumption. Such translocal, physical and virtual, material and affectional entrepreneurial activities are generated from and, at their turn, support heterogeneous emotions. When the local markets become oppressive, women navigate global seas. They contest markets and transgress borders. Individually and collectively, an *emotional petit capitalism* is produced inside creative *glocal* spaces. Social and emotional practices design *translocal multipolar economies*, which connect, physically and virtually, materially and emotionally, the diverse spaces of women's mobility. On hidden back-roads, women's *e-commerce* contributes to the mutable and polyform substance of globalisation. It is a globalisation made in the hyperlocal sections of migrant women's daily lives. Progressively, a plastic and mutable *emotional modernity* is defined and re-defined by the actors of this globalisation at their own terms. Concurrently, objects and subjects' translocal movements and practices are framed by this emotionally modern horizon of transformation and of *becoming*.

3. The third sub-hypothesis suggests that to achieve social mobility and to contest local oppressive order and hierarchies, women can engage in re-migration to China, after divorce. Origin and destination are contested and reversed through re-mobility, which does not correspond to the end of migratory processes. Physical and virtual, material and emotional attachments and anchorages produce cosmopolitan biographies and *in-between* existences between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Social, emotional and affectional ties are constantly mobilised in the production of translocal social and economic practices. Repertories of emotions and affections are reformulated during re-migration patterns. When movement becomes endless, the mobility careers take an *orbital* shape, connecting, materially and emotionally, physically and virtually, the different spaces, places and temporalities of women's migrations.

Part 2: The *Glocal* as a Method

Chapter 1: Epistemological Considerations and Methodological Theory

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concurrently, it requires to re-define what a site for research is. Inside local and global, physical and virtual, material and emotional spaces, the ethnographer is confronted with shifting spatial and temporal field sites and terrains which are no longer fixed geographical containers for social processes (Beck 2003) and which challenge the "traditional rhetoric of scale" (Tsing 2005).

The global as a space but also a "method" (Burawoy 2000) has increasingly come to define the terms of the epistemic engagements (Roulleau-Berger 2011, 2016) of my work. Despite its self-evident facticity, how exactly critically approaching the global? Or, more to the point, how to research the global as method and across scales, temporalities, from the local to the planetary? How do we grapple with the global as contingent, ever changing processes that are continually reimagined, contested, differently appropriated and reconfigured?

Questionings turn around not only processes of globalisation and deterritorialisation, identities and belongings, and the multiplicity, diversity of navigations and their open spaces. It is also necessary to problematise and discuss the methods to use for social research in a context of shifting, morphing and mobile objects and subjects. How to organise what seems apparently to be disorganised? How to frame the disorder generated by instantaneous movements, simultaneous conversations or *online* invisible transactions? How to apprehend the relationship between materiality and mobility? How to make the invisible visible? How to re-assemble the pieces of a puzzle which is concurrently physically dispatched, but virtually imbricated and interconnected? And, broadly, how are our modes of "knowing", "observing" and "apprehending" being transformed by the very processes scrutinised?

These are the crucial puzzles I will try to address while presenting the strategies I have adopted to construct my mobile research object and to investigate its complexity on floating field sites. The ethnographic methods mobilised to think the complex and interconnected scales that intersect in social, economic and emotional practices establish a dialogue with the theoretical and epistemological turns emerged last years as part of sociology of globalisation (Urry 2007).

The study of migration, of movement and of mobility has hence been an open and *mobile* space for imagining, designing and developing a plurality of *sui generis* and creative methods for investigation, especially in terms of ethnographic practice. It turned into a chance to adapt negotiate, but also to cross and merge different methods. As pointed by Schatz (2007), ethnography is a cluster of methods rather than a single one (Schatz 2007: 6). Thus, I consider the following methodological reflections as a privileged and appropriate site for methodological innovation and creativity. The jumping scales I have

been confronted to have been not only intrinsic to my field sites, but also to my methodological choices. Field research has been an experimental moment (Marcus and Fischer 1986). It has been a *moving* practice, increasingly adaptative (Glaser and Strauss 1967) in its choice of methods, which require agility and adaptation to the complex, fragile, fragmented social worlds the researcher observes. In this sense, Marcus' methodological teachings (1989, 1995) have been crucial. Through his expression of "imagining the whole" (1989), he claimed the researcher's ability to visualise and pursue connections, to see activities on a micro-level as a manifestation of macro-level phenomena. He strongly supported an effort of *contextualisation* and embedding, rather than a claim to comprehensiveness (Falzon 2009), which is something that I had to constantly keep in mind.

Field sites are a resource and a constraint (De Sardan 2008: 22) and it is within their coordination that the research can be constructed and epistemologically thought. Doing fieldwork has been a situated and complex *practice* of deconstruction of reality into pieces, which, to solve the puzzle, have been re-assembled through theory and concepts, which were, at their turn, grounded in the field itself, *i.e.* indissociable and necessary. This continuous process of deconstruction and reconstruction has been operated with *approximative rigor* which exists "despite everything", to quote

During the last thirty years, along important critical lines, new research approaches have been developed to investigate the novel objects and subjects of an increasingly globalised world. The aim was threefold. On the one hand, the goal was to discuss, criticise and challenge old, ethnocentric and arbitrary interpretations of culture. Let's think about the link between the earliest theorizing of nomadism and deterritorialisation and their critiques of colonial modes of ordering and knowing (Clifford 1980; Bhabha 1990; Hall 1990). Secondly, in "the age of migration" (Castles and Miller 2003), researches on migrations, on diasporas and on citizenship provided important challenges to the bounded, static and arbitrary categories of nation, of state and of community (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994;

lines. Marcus' "following the thing[26]" approach has revealed to be a useful method to apprehend, through material culture, the social and emotional processes that are constituted inside and articulated around economic practices.

The orange, fluorescent bra I have tracked the trails, the routes, and the patterns of represents the "missing mass" of ethnographic work and, broadly, of social sciences (Latour 1992). From a Taiwanese factory in Southern China to a lingerie shop in the suburbs of Taipei, and then back to a beauty centre in Shenzhen, this artefact has progressively changed its status and identity through mobility. Its movement has been concurrently geographical and moral, and strongly related to the actors of its production as well as of its commodification, who turned to be the same. *Tracking* its paths, elucidating its visible or invisible, material and moral shifting does not only reveal the bra's social (Appadurai 1986), but also economic and emotional (Illouz 2018) life. It also illustrates the changes in terms of social and economic status, of spatial and moral positioning, and of identities of the actors who carry the bra and who put it *on the move*.

Thence, it shows the intertwined connection among objects and subjects' geographies and biographies and the extent to which their articulation is intrinsic to new, *sui generis* forms of globalisation and alternative modernities. Following the bra -like the chicken feet, the milk powder or the facial masks- allows to carve out of field objects that are not located in a particular place and that can be identified in advance, but which maintain a multiple existence across an unpredictable, variable and mutating set of locations. Following a low-value, plastic-and-silicon-made bra can be an appropriate starting point to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, the making of social and emotional processes and subjectivity-making dynamics, the frame of institutional and political rules and regulations, together with the development of markets and economies inside and outside heterogeneous and malleable global spaces and places.

The study of the lived situations, circumstances and experiences of this bra proves that the production of globalisation can properly be the subject of ethnography. Concomitantly, the analysis of the production chain helps to make the opportunity and constraint structure visible. Not only it pictures the diverse, creative strategies employed by the subjects to "reset modernity" (Latour and Leclercq

[26] "There are stories or narratives told in the frame of single-site fieldwork that might themselves serve as a heuristic for the fieldworker constructing multi-sited ethnographic research. This has been a routine technique in the disciplinary history of Levi-Straussian myth analysis within so-called traditional societies. In the framework of modernity, the character of the stories that people tell as myth in their everyday situations is not as important to fieldworkers tracking processes and associations within the world system as is their own situated sense of social landscapes […]" (Marcus 1995: 111).

2016) and to construct new social and emotional worlds through socialisation processes, identity-making dynamics and economic activities. It also makes visible the inequalities of power (Massey 2005) spread through the chain of globalisation.

Tracking the trajectory of the orange, fluorescent bra produced, "consumed" and commercialised by Fujin represents a helpful methodological and theoretical line along which the interaction between the local and the global can be apprehended. However, this approach has also some limits that I have tried to overstep and that I have- I hope- solved, at least partially.

Identifying the circulations, the connections, the imbrications, as well as the translocal pluri-existences of the orange bra requires caution in order not to reproduce the traditional dichotomy between the "spaces of flows" and the "spaces of places" (Castells 1996), which I have already discussed in the theoretical frame of this work. A superimposed "space of flows", which replaces the "space of places" might disconnect the social from any particular place, reifying "flows" as vaporous and unworldly substances, disengaged with the reality they exist in (Tsing 2005). On the contrary, places matter (Sassen 1995; Raulin 1990, 2000). Despite their heterogeneity, fluidity and polymorphism, "it is inside places that we find the ongoing creation, institutionalization and contestation of global networks, connections and borders" (Burawoy 2000: 32).

Following the life of the bra, its circulations, its roamings, its production-consumption-commodification chain has hence represented only part of my ethnographic work. Since the trails and the paths of the orange bra are imbricated with and co-produced by women's biographies and mobilities, they constitute the guideline of my reasoning, a *red wire,* as it is said in French, for narrating the story.

If, on the one hand, movements and mobilities are crucial features in objects and subjects' biographies and geographies, they cannot be dissociated from immobility and moorings (Hannam et al. 2006), which occur locally. An ethnography of the global is not theoretically impossible (Burawoy 2000: 3), but it cannot be separated from an essential ethnography of the local (Sassen 1995; Burwaoy 2000; Roudomentof 2016).

To undercover global processes in their diverse and overlapping spaces and landscapes, the look might remain focused of the locality. This does not mean at all reproducing old or new forms of methodological nationalism(s). Simply, or perhaps not that simply, global processes of migration, mobility and circulation cannot be split from local and from localised practices, experiences and places (Roulleau-Berger 2015, 2016). This point could sound banal. Yet, in practice, it has constantly represented a difficulty while conducting ethnography. Consequently, it has been a matter of "framing globalisation not only in terms of interdependence and global institutions, but also as something which resides in the national" (Sassen 2006a: 3). Where do the global stop and the local begin?

An ethnography of the global cannot be disjoined from a deep and attentive study of the localities -the nation, the region, the cities, the village in the countryside or the neighbourhood- inside which globalisation takes new forms and shapes. "Studying the global does not solely mean to focus on what takes place on an explicit global scale, but also on the practices and the conditions which, whilst occurring on a local scale, are part of global dynamics", as claimed by Sassen (2006a: 18). Tracking the commodity chain, *i.e.* following the social, economic and emotional life of the bra often positions the observations inside very little microcosmos of daily lives and practices, which cannot be neglected -nor methodologically or epistemologically. The hyperlocal, visible or vaporous sections of globalisation represented by local places are here considered as "a privileged insight to the lived experience of globalisation" (Burawoy 2000: 14).

Along these lines, Büscher, Urry and Witchger (2011) have identified "mobile methods", which are important to allow sociologists to move away from a spatially-located notion of society, hence to explore the extent to which movement and immobility co-constitute society. Thus, to articulate the overlapping and plural scales of movement and describe its complexity, they actualised the concept of mobility and suggested that it cannot be separated from the concept of immobility (Büscher et al. 2011: 6):

> "mobility encompasses both large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world […], together with the local processes of daily transportation of travel and material things within everyday life […]."

The local, localities as social microcosmos are certainly crucial in the study of the global. However, apprehending mobilities imposes to focus not only on localities, but also to pay attention to the necessary spatial immobile infrastructures and "institutional moorings" (

The jumbling observation of the global and the local, of the mobile and immobile promotes a "jumping approach" between diverse temporal and spatial scales. The experiences, practices and performances of globalisation often intersect with different scales. The researcher must hence "tune her body up" (Goffman 1989: 125). She needs to be attentive and flexible, able to conceive and apprehend the constant *scaling and re-scaling processes* occurring in local and global social worlds (Sassen 2006a). From the local, the locality and the "place-bound site" (Candea 2009) it is possible to question and problematise the global.

Such a methodological choice has a strong epistemological implication. It promotes a constructivist understanding of the notion of scale, inscribed in the paradigm of the "politics of scale" (Tsing 2005; Debarbieux 2019). This means that spatial -but also social, economic and emotional- scales are not given but co-constructed by the actors, the places, the spaces, the temporalities of the research and the researcher as well. They result from the very social processes through which objects and subjects negotiate, frame and produce them.

Scales can hence be claimed, contested, transformed (Debarbieux 2019). It urges to move beyond conventional hierarchies and spatial distinctions -the "ideologies of scale" (Tsing 2005)- which separate, split the local and the global -and their fragments- into divided and hierarchised units of analysis. The local and the global, the global and the local are not hierarchically ordered (Roudomentof 2016). They co-produce each other. Also, they cannot be considered as two *a priori* units of classification: they are fragmented, plural and mutable. They multiply the possibilities for ethnographic work. A *grounded* globalisation study (Burawoy 2000: 341) imposes an ethnography which starts from the real, spatial and temporal experiences of the local to explore their global contexts. However, let's keep in mind that there is no isomorphism between the local and the global, but connection and imbrication through movement, which is manifold and multiple, combined, accelerated, but also reversible and unpredictable.

2. An Ethnography of the Virtual Worlds

The floating contexts, spaces, places where mobility and immobility occur take new forms and shapes, which are illustrative of the changing characteristics of social life and practices, and which cannot be neglected. As an adaptative and creative method, ethnography needs to consider this dynamism and re-kindle itself accordingly. If these considerations could sound clichéd, their actualisation and translation into practice is not.

If ethnography aims at pursuing a “thick description” (

Acknowledging this raises crucial questionings and challenges as for an ethnography of the internet (Hine 2010, 2015) which needs to be conducted inside virtual, digital and de-materialised worlds. This also requires, once more, to redefine the perimeter of what a terrain, a field for research is. Therefore, it is a non-spatially fixed, physical or geographical container for social processes. Social geography has in this sense brought about a major contribution when claiming that fields can also be "un-sited" (Falzon 2009; Hine 2015), hence detached from fixed and geographically bounded notions of space and place (Amit 1999; Cooke 2008).

Following my previous argument about multi-scalar ethnography, which transcends classical categories of local and global, it becomes fundamental to observe the digital practices of mobile individuals. Two crucial puzzles emerge from these considerations. Firstly, on an empirical level, how does the rise of new digital technologies transform individuals' practices and experiences?

Focusing attention on the cyberspace, and on the "virtual communities" (Lallement 2015) that Chinese migrant women have been constructing and reconstructing inside can be helpful to specify and trace the transnational geographies of objects and subjects. More than the internet broadly, I have hence been concentrating on some specific, situated and "localised" places or sites of the virtual space: the *WeChat* (*Weixin* 微信) groups of *online* conversations among women. This choice was not made *a priori*, but it has emerged progressively, side by side with the rather "traditional" multi-sited ethnographic methods I was using on my field sites. Virtual ethnography has become an imperative for "physical" ethnography as soon as I realised that most of the physical interactions, creative socialisations, emotional processes and economic practices I had under my eyes were being designed and imagined somewhere else. They occurred inside virtual worlds, where they were been concurrently, at the very same time, produced and performed.

Inasmuch as social processes and the social itself were being simultaneously co-constructed inside different digital and virtual spaces, I needed to enter them. The *WeChat* groups where women produced instantaneous communications, innovative socialisations, emotional performances, affectional practices, business transactions and multipolar, translocal economic activities were multi-spatial and multiform. They enable new, simultaneous connections among geographical spaces, people, objects and the very forms of mobility the users engaged in. The virtual, as a space for socialisation and practice, allowed me to construct a *mobile object* which crosses and transcends geographical, material and spatially fixed spaces. It provided a chance to reconsider the shaping of the ethnographic object and to rethink the grounds, the terrains for ethnographic engagement with the field.

The cyberspace has imposed to me as a necessity for the heuristic of my study. The ethnographer must develop sensitivity and adaptability (Goffman 1989) to the various possibilities of communication and connection, which sustain multiple modes of presence and of interactions (Becker 2002). Virtual ethnography has been an "experiment" (Marcus and Fischer 1986) for me, a practice that I have gradually imagined, framed and co-performed with the actors on my field sites. It revealed more and more to be an ordeal of creativity, an inventive methodological strategy to understand and explain the curious and novel textures of social life, where actors were combining *online* and *offline* everyday experiences.

If ethnography is built on the use of embodied experiences by the sociologist as one of her very first means of discovery (Geertz 1973), it urged to immerse myself in the *online* "settings and frames" (Goffman 1973), taking part, at least partially, and always according to the possibilities offered by

circumstances, to the same activities of my informants, “being there”, virtually, with them. Marcus (1995, 1998) has shown that ethnography can usefully study aspects of the social worlds by following objects, people or ideas rather than staying in one place. Before, Geertz (1973) had taught us that each ethnographic insight is singular and unique: it lies on the ways access to the field sites is negotiated and observed through interaction, communication and discussion with the informants. It is hence a subjective account related to the co-presence of the researcher, who acts through “circumstantial activism” (Marcus 1998) to respond to the situation she finds herself in: a bodily-located, mobile understanding.

assumption follows the same theoretical lines which claim that the analysis of the global can be fruitful and pertinent only if orchestrated with a study of localities and of local microcosmos.

The digital, as a broad space for the construction of the social, cannot be separated from its physical, material *pendant, i.e.* the "real" counterpart. *Online* activities do not exist solely *online*. Yet, they are built in dialogue with other spaces. They merge, converge, and circulate in other sites, where they are concatenated with *offline* activities. Virtual networks and digital communities emerged from localised, physical ones. Sometimes they preceded and/or helped the creation of new ones among individuals who possibly would not have the chance to meeting in person or communicating with one another.

This co-articulation of spaces requires further elucidation. In his analysis of the link between media and modernity, Thompson (1995) stressed that an understanding of the functioning of media involves looking both at their "context" – which I call here situation- and at the ways in which they are produced and used. The space in which *online* inter-actions, practices and discourses occur is simultaneously socially and emotionally produced through a technological device -the digital platform *WeChat*- that is itself socially constructed. The production of meaning is hence processual and defined in situation. It can be understood as both the circumstances in which the internet is used (*offline*) and the social spaces that emerge through its use (*online*).

What I did was to develop a physical immersion in my informants' daily practices, together with a permanent navigation through screen-mediated social and emotional territories, exposing to the practices and skills of making sense and forging connections as they became available *online.* This permanent oscillation between the physical and the virtual worlds enabled to set sails between subjects' biographies, material culture and emerging translocal -social and economic- digital practices. It was a matter of developing jumps and a certain agility to get inside and outside these spaces.

Progressively I became more and more familiar and confident with the use of *WeChat*. At the beginning, I hesitated in taking active engagement with the conversations since, as a foreigner and a researcher I did not feel legitimate to interfere.

As I have already advanced, *WeChat* as a digital platform is not only a space for communication and socialisation, but it is concurrently used and constructed as a virtual infrastructure for economic activities and *online* commerce. This being said, the object of my study inside the virtual spaces has progressively included commercial activities and material culture circulation among geographical and virtual, translocal places, that I will analyse later in this work.

Fascinated by the multiple and multiplying possibilities offered by *WeChat* and, I must admit, intrigued by its performance, for few times I decided, side by side with my informants, to actively take part in the virtual translocal economic activities generated through and inside this platform. Along the vein of tracking objects and apprehending the physical and virtual geographies of material artefacts, this active participation revealed to be incredibly helpful for the heuristic, since I made a direct experience of the *online* commerce practice. Hence, I have also bought Chinese chicken feet imported from China and sent few packages of pineapple cakes from Taipei to Xiamen, transferring money *online* and contacting a trading company by myself. I became myself part of one of the plural poles of the digital translocal economies my informants produced and were the actors of.

There is one last point I would like to discuss. It is related to the extent to which virtual ethnography contributes not only to the definition and framing of new boundaries and perimeters of these de-materialised field sites, which lead to the emergence of new temporalities of the ethnography. The smartphone, where the application *WeChat* is installed, has become a favourite tool to communicating on distance with my informants (Constable 2003), being on place but also from abroad. In Taiwan, in China, but also while being in Europe, I could follow women's *online* communications, exchanges, interactions and discourses by the simple action of turning my self-phone on, while sitting on the sofa, on a plane of from my bureau. The conversations on *WeChat* are relatively fixed and can easily be saved in the digital archives of the phone. I had access to all the messages. I did not need to be physically "there", but I could still be "there" virtually, within different moments and new, *sui generis*, accelerated and compressed (Chang 2010) temporalities.

The contemporary condition of time and space compression described by Giddens (1990) does not only frame the novel social worlds of actors' performances. Also, and importantly, it re-situates on a practical level ethnographic work and field research. New virtual, instantaneous possibilities of investigation and discovery emerge and do not constantly require the traditional body presence on field sites. Virtual fieldwork enables to constantly follow the connections, reflect on circumstances and experiences and apprehend the ways that actors use to bring such connections into being. Virtual

ethnography is hence a simultaneous, endless, connective, itinerant social, economic, emotional and affectional travel.

It is not surprising that some of the *WeChat* conversations I have reported and exploited for the analysis have actually occurred after several months I had ended my presence on Asian physical field sites. From Europe, I was -and I am- still part of the *WeChat* groups I had previously integrated. I could still "be there", following women's interactions, experiences and activities and participating to their daily conversations. Virtual ethnography permits to re-negotiate temporalities and reveals to be not only a powerful tool for data and information collection, but also a methodological instrument to constantly get in touch with the informants. Despite physical and material distance, in a *diachronic a*nd *diatopic* perspective, I was also transgressing geographical borders and transcending the rigid temporalities of fieldwork, which enclose the observation of situations inside a fixed temporality, from a precise starting to ending moment. On the contrary, digital platforms and virtual social networks are a decisive resource for continuous and permanent observations, which enrich the understanding of situations and contribute to a *diachronic* analysis of experiences (Roulleau-Berger 1999). This has proved to be incredibly useful during the data analysis process to eventually ask my informants for changes or ruptures in their biographical patterns and activities development. It enabled apprehending the mutations of some instable situations I had been previously confronted to on the physical field sites.

3. Navigating through Biographies and Geographies

The articulation between physical and virtual ethnographies on a multi-sited level has represented the major technique to investigate the malleable, liable and changeable social words objects and subjects produce and navigate through. The observation of different spaces, places and locations crossed by the actors suggested how these new figures of *glocal* worlds are engaged into plural, diverse and variable translations of their social, economic and moral positionings and re-positions which are not always visible through *in situ* observation.

At the very same time, the biographical approach to life trajectories has also revealed helpful to situate the mobility careers of women in a diachronic perspective (Becker 1963; Roulleau-Berger 2004). I have collected in China and in Taiwan 141 life narratives of women, through which I have reconstructed their biographical, migratory and professional trajectories. Migration strictly, and mobility at large can be historicised and understood in terms of unrigid and unfixed steps, highly bifurcated and reversible (Roulleau-Berger 2017) where processes of transition, of transformation and

of becoming occur. The biographical dimension, apprehended through narration, has the advantage, as suggested by Passeron (1990) to elucidate the relationship, constructed through practice, between the individual and the social, through the perception and the point of view of the actors (Bertaux 2005). When individuals tell their stories and narrate their lives, the temporal dimension of sequences emerge, together with the sense and the meaning they attribute to the experiences and the social positionings by themselves. By the means of interviews and conversations, I could reconstruct women's "biographies, flux, itineraries and trajectories" (Passeron 1990) among places, spaces, temporalities and identities (Tarrius 2000).

The narratives I co-produced with migrant women have been declined both an *individual* and a *collective* level. During face-to-face interaction, women were asked to narrate their life stories, subjectively apprehended and individually narrated. Following a *career*-based approach, the "life-story" collection technique supported an understanding of the seriality of mobilities (Ossman 2013). As suggested by

However, data and information collected through individual or collective story telling interactions can be problematic and “accused” of being artefacts (Briggs 1986). They hence require to be properly framed through clear “politics of fieldwork” (

which sustained an understanding of situations perhaps more dissociated from discourses, at least to some extent.

A second recurrent dilemma came from the effects of context which might influence, twist or distort a word and a discourse, together with the presence of the researcher who can be a vector of turbulence and distortion (Schwartz 1993: 278; De Sardan 2008) of the tales produced during interviews, and of changes in terms of behaviour and conducts (Becker 1963: 46). This may render the biographical approach a rather fragile and precarious tool to collect and interpret data.

The words of a woman interviewed at home, with her husband or mother-in-law potentially listening to the conversation may be different from the ones she could generate sitting in a garden or in a coffeeshop, where she could freely express her ordeals of suffering and discontent. Discussing with an apparently disciplined and obedient worker around the assembly line with her superior walking around diverges from a conversation carried out in the discrete heterotopian space of her dormitory, where her "idioms of rebellion" (Lutz 1990) are safe from the risk of severe punishment. The mysteries and intimacies revealed from an informant with whom I could develop a long-lasting relationship of mutual trust and amity, by living with her and babysitting her children, are not the same of a woman that, despite the trust bond, I "simply" knew through the English class I have been teaching. The formality and rigidity of a recorded, face-to-face interview largely interplay with the production of discourse. Words and narrations vary according to the kind of interaction, which generates conversation my informants and I were engaged in. A situation of "daily banal conversation" (

constructed and interactive dimension of data is crucial for the analysis. It is by acquiring the awareness of tacit words, unspoken experiences, secrets and unsolved enigmas that the researcher gets to a wider understanding of the social life and social reality she aims at describing and apprehending (Roulleau-Berger 2004, 2016).

These points are important and need to be reckoned with the general economy of the research. However, despite their authority, they have to be translated and actualised into the singularity and uniqueness of each ethnographic situation. If, on the one hand, it is important to consider the meta-communicational context of interactions and discourses (De Sardan 2008: 57), on another, its critical emphasis should also be relativized (Schwartz 1993: 276).

There is not "one right way" of doing (Becker 2002), a magic wand to solve these difficulties. The challenge and a partial solution are to re-frame and adapt the "narrative contract" (Roulleau-Berger 2004) according to the diversity, the plurality and the variability of the social and emotional circumstances I was being confronted to. In this regard, the pragmatist approach has taught us to conceive and analyse the individual always in situation (Quéré 1997) and starting from the circumstances she is inscribed in. Hence, the bias and the effects of context need to be perceived as integral part of the interview as an interaction itself. They are integral parts of the process of scientific knowledge-making: "scientific work is always situated, carried on inside specific spaces, times and places […] the sociologist develops an ecology of the conditions according to which the activity, the practice, the scientific knowledge is produced" (Roulleau-Berger 2004: 263).

In this sense, knowledge production processes become a matter of "knowing how to be with" (Roulleau-Berger 2016) the actors. It is crucial to alternate "on" and "off" frames of interaction while conducting fieldwork (Goffman 1989). Everyday informal dialogues and interactions, especially if repeated all over time and within different spaces and contexts, have revealed to be extremely useful not only to gather new information, but also, and especially, to apprehend the variations in terms of meaning construction and sense making by the informants on a diachronic and diatopic line. Undeniably, on the field, while being "off", the degree of constraints was lessened, as well as the rigidity of the frame of interaction. As a result, the collection of these rather fragmented and messy pieces of discourse has not only strengthened my awareness of the effects of contexts and the necessity to continually contextualize and re-contextualise the discourses I was listening to. It has also enabled me to penetrate more intimate sequences of discourses and emotional narrations, which are crucial for the heuristic.

All in all, the challenge for the researcher is to develop appropriate strategies of interpretation: information and data collected through interviews enrich the ethnographic work, furnishing new lines of research and analytical equipment to decipher and decode what the ethnographer has under her nose. In this regard, biographical narrations cannot be separated from participant, *in situ* and multi-sited observations, since the two co-produce and co-sustain each other. Goffman has taught us the importance of observation as an indispensable tool of data gather to be associated to biographical narratives and life stories collection (1989). According to him, it is a specific tool which follows its own rules of functioning: "a technique of getting data by subjecting yourself, your own body, your own personality and your own social situation to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to that situation" (

women in their mobility paths from the rural village of origin to the Chinese coastal cities they had been working in and, eventually, the circulatory careers of some of them who, after divorced, re-migrated to China. This has been for instance the case of Xiao Mei: a woman I met in Taiwan in 2016, I re-met in China in 2018 and I accompanied back to Taiwan. Associating to the interviews this mobile ethnographic strategy allowed to produce mobile biographical narratives, oscillating and shifting through and among diverse sites, following my informants.

Thereupon, at each step of the biographical trajectory and at each stop of the travels, I have coupled formal and informal conversations with women to *participant*, *in situ,* as well as *focused* observations (Roulleau-Berger 2016) of the diverse practices and situations occurring in multiple-sites. Sometimes, according to the context, observations have been *focused*. It was the case, for instance, of the observations I carried on inside the factories and around the assembly lines, where I was punctually, temporarily, and distantly observing, within a precise sequence of time, the working situation. In every situation, the contextualisation of the narrations largely enriched my understanding of experiences, since women, through the sites, were providing me with explanations of not only present, but especially past situations and experiences. I had under my eyes what I had been previously told in a rather artificial and sometimes abstract way.

Moving with the informants inside and outside, up and down, through and across the sites of their mobilities has hence revealed to be crucial to "imagine the whole" (Marcus 1989), to visualise and pursue multiple connections within a "spatialising globalisation" (Massey 2005).

These in motion "walkings[34]" along translocal trails I co-produced with my informants did not strictly take place in the city (De Certeau 1980), but, broadly, through and around the locations that women have crossed during their plural migratory paths. Indeed, I could not attain exhaustiveness, but that was not my objective. I wanted to go beyond an abstract and remoted narration through simple interviews to understand how those diverse social worlds had been previously experienced by women and how they had been and were socially and emotionally meaningful to them. The aim was to put together, by navigating through time and space, what appeared to me as fragmented, distant and disordered pieces of biographical patterns.

However, and I would like to stress this point, I was not looking for a holistic recomposition of a cultural order transcending situation and situated circumstances. On the very contrary, through these navigations and observations *in motion* I intended to seize the pluralisation of the *selves* and identities and the multiplication and differentiation of experiences, of practices, of meanings and of emotions to deconstruct social and cultural taxonomies. I wanted to seize and visualise situational "strips" of reality (Goffman 1974) within a multiplicity of spaces and scales.

Taking advantage of the strong connections that women had maintained with the sites and people crossed during migrations and of their frequent trips there, I asked to travel with them and, even, sometimes I was spontaneously suggested to do so. I was hence physically brought to see the rural villages some women came from, where I could meet their families, relatives and co-villagers, observing *in situ* rural life. Walking in the middle of rice paddies, I listened to women's tales about childhood and adolescence. They brought me to see the houses they grew up in, the schools they abandoned to move away from a "damned" countryside, or the bus and train stations from which their adventures had started. I also spent time in the cities where some migrants had been living and working in before marriage-migration to Taiwan. I saw the factories and the dormitories where they had been working before. I developed focused observations of the working conditions around the assembly lines or of the living conditions inside the dormitories. There, I could also meet their previous colleagues, friends and "sisters" in the urban villages they settled in; I went dancing with some informants in the nightclubs of their "youth transgression", as Jia Lin told me.

[34] See Laurier et al. (2006) ethnomethodological approach to dog-walking or Morris' (2004) "walking with" strategy with Peruvian farmers amongst others.

Concomitantly, this *mobile* approach to biographical narrative and observation techniques was not solely sustaining an understanding of the past steps of the careers. It was also helping a comprehension of present and perhaps even future experiences and practices of navigation and circulation. The sites I was accompanied to were socially and emotionally situated in relation with women's present activities and future project-making processes. This became even more evident when I followed some returnees back both to their rural village in Chinese inner provinces and to the new city of post-return settlement, drawing a more complete cartography of the circulatory career on multiple scales.

In this sense, by "bringing me there", women progressively became co-authors of the research, through the re-appropriation of their own biographies and geographies that they could translate not only into narration, but also into a *mobile* praxis and living experience shared with me. Every space called back on their social and emotional memory of the site and the "meaning of the place" (

situations, especially the links among diverse objects and the relations which occur among them. Formally, a graph is an ordered couple of two ensembles: G= (V, E), where V is the ensemble of networks (*nodes*) and E is the ensemble of the curvatures (*edges*).

The software GEPHI has revealed useful to map movement, drawing cartographies and graphs of networks. GEPHI is an interactive visualiser and a platform of exploration for networks and complex systems of connection and interconnection. In the study of mobilities, it turned to be crucial to simultaneously map networks but also movement in its diverse forms and patterns. The idea was to translate social networks, business-generated connections, physical and virtual movements as well as economic activities patterns into images, maps and cartographies. I have hence gathered qualitative material together on a database and synthetized it in terms of *nodes* and *edges*. GEPHI proposes numerous algorithms to discover and manipulate new mobility and interconnection patterns. Nodes represent individuals, groups of people or objects and their imbrications and interconnections, from point A to point B, or point B to point C, D, E, etc., but also point E to point A, B, C, etc. Moreover, the tool *GeoLayout* has permitted the geographical positioning of nodes through decimal coordinates. By indicating the longitude and the latitude of the geographical location of each node, mobilities, movements, economic circuits, but also geographies could be spatialised and geo-localised on a map.

When combined to the study of biographical, professional and migratory careers, GEPHI is also a helpful tool to draw these patterns, together with social and economic positionings. Aiming at visualising simultaneity, instantaneity and interconnection, it has been particularly fruitful to draw the *orbital* shape of cosmopolitan mobility careers, accounting of oscillations, anchorages, attachments and moorings among sites, locations and spaces. At the same time, the graphs supported the representation of *WeChat* social networks as a constellation of points all at once interconnected. It permitted hence to take a virtual picture of conversations occurring inside a *WeChat* group among individuals located in multiple places, at a precise moment *t* and to translate it into a graphical, spatialised language. It helped to complete traditional statistics, through the simplification, schematisation and graphical translation of data through images. It was not a simply accessory modality to visualise data, but an instrument to quickly understand the complexity, variability and fluidity of movement, mobility and displacement through time and space.

To this process of graphical visualisation of activities, practices, movements and interconnections, I have associated a limited statistical treatment of data, using two instruments *Excel* and *R*, which enable to analyse and describe qualitative material in quantitative terms. These two softwares provide both a

language and an environment for statistical computing and graphic-making. They both furnish a huge variety of calculator, statistical and graphical techniques.

Given my pragmatist approach to situations and the interactionist analysis of actions, practices and experiences, my translation of qualitative material into quantitative data and its analysis may sound contradictory. Nevertheless, a growing tradition in social sciences has advocated the use of multiple methods in the analysis (Cresswell 2010). Glaser and Strauss (1967) had already strongly affirmed that "there is no fundamental clash between the purposes and the capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods and data […] what clash there is concerns the primacy of emphasis on verification or generation of theory" (1967: 17). These two approaches have different biographies and may also respond to different theoretical necessities, but also, political economies of the research, but their crossed-use can enrich the understanding of the situations observed, with an easier, completer and faster visualisation of sometimes long and complex analysis.

It is hence not only a matter of combining different qualitative strategies, as I have suggested before, but also to associate them to quantitative techniques, transcending the quantitative-qualitative divide. As suggested by Webb et al. (1981) in their argument about "triangulation", qualitative and quantitative methods should be seen as complementary, rather than as rival camps. At the same time, Bazeley (2004) pointed out that the purpose of combining methods must be clearly stated to avoid confusion or misinterpretation. The translation of my qualitative data into numbers has been mainly descriptive, since I had not predictive purpose. Indeed, in the approach I have developed, I mainly focus of qualitative data and qualitative analysis since I consider it as the most "adequate way to contend with the difficulties of empirical situations" (

characteristics, some themes or some correlations among the phenomena I had observed in the field sites. Trained in qualitative research techniques, the quantitative analysis process has been challenging for me. I wanted to overstep this methodological prejudice (Patton 1988), by "mixing methods in a qualitative driven way" (Mason 2006) and I am aware of the limits of the quantitative treatment I have produced.

The coding process has resulted to be problematic since it has been made *a posteriori*, a technique that statisticians would probably find unacceptable. At the same time, with qualitative data supporting quantitative codes, I could always shift back to the original material for review. Rather than a single dimensionality, qualitative coding enables to attribute several characteristics to a same experience, situation or practice, regardless the way it is expressed. When the qualitative situation/experience/practice is quantitated, its significance turns into a fixity, and single-dimensionality, which sustains, once more, the cruciality of associating it to the uniqueness of individuals' representations and meaning attribution.

The statistical data I used comes from the ensemble of the individuals and their practices I have observed during ethnographic work and interviewed, from which I selected the variables for each context examined. A variable, or a code, is an attribute for description (Le Bras 2000). I have presented data on tables, identifying two different types of statistic variables, which can be represented through different types of graphics:

- the discrete quantitative variable X, for instance the age of first migration or of marriage, the number of migratory or professional experiences, etc, translated into bar charts.

- the qualitative variables, which does not correspond to numbers, but to "modalities", for instance the repartition of the sample according to professional activity, of the place of origin, the types of professional discrimination experienced, etc. The representation was made through sector or bar diagrams.

In some cases, I have identified correlations among two variables, X and Y on the same sample, and used a bidimensional variable analysis. These two variables have been both discrete quantitative and qualitative. However, where I could make a bidimensional generalisation of the variable, it was -and I stress this point again- with an intrinsically descriptive purpose, which takes distance from rapid generalisation or arbitrary cause-effect links attribution. A correlation does not imply a cause-effect relation between the two variables. In this case, the type of graphic mobilised were histograms and scatter plots. For instance, these graphics were helpful to visualise a situational-emerging link between,

for example, divorce and re-migration to China, the time spent in Taiwan and re-migration, between two experiences of commercial activities, between the number of migratory and professional experiences and the production of entrepreneurship, between the obtention of Taiwanese citizenship and re-migration, etc.

Broadly, and to conclude my rationale on crossed-method approach, I would like to insist of the fact that the use of *GEPHI*, of *Excel* and of *R* for graphical representations have played the role of mapping the dynamic, fluid, contingent and liable reality I have been observing, experiencing and understanding in the field sites. These representations of situations and the translation of individual experiences and practices into numbers and quantitative codes aspired to a clearer visualisation, synthesis and summary of the research results.

Chapter 2: The Policy of an Emotional Fieldwork

1. Affected by Affections

Moving between physical and virtual spaces to carry on ethnographic work meant to constantly "be there", side by side with the objects, the subjects but also with a plurality of emotional ordeals and engagements. Following actors' mobilities and immobilities implied understanding their experiences, their practices but also their emotions. "Being there" has not only been a matter of embodied experience, of physical or virtual location. Also, and crucially, it has been a question of emotional and affectional involvement in the co-construction of situations. This means a form of precise engagement in the production of knowledge: an intersubjective process of exchange and construction of *the common* (Hardt and Negri 2011) between the researcher and the actors.

Field sites became for me a space of mutual and, I hope, egalitarian resource sharing, especially within social worlds characterised by situations of vulnerability, precarity and violence as daily experienced by migrant women. If, as I will explain later, I often negotiated my field sites through a *do ut des* attitude, always trying to give something in exchange for the efforts the actors gave to me in terms of time, the energy, this exchange was often organised through an economy of symbolic goods (Roulleau-Berger 2004), in terms of mutual cognition, recognition and emotional investment. It is hence on and through emotions and affections that I could negotiate the social contracts with the people I interacted with.

The ethnography of emotions I developed in my work was based on the hypothesis that emotions, socially and situationally constructed, can fuel and support inter-actions and practices among actors. Along the same lines, during ethnographic work I progressively became more and more aware of the crucial role emotions play on the field sites, in a diverse, mutable and even contradictory way that is not without impact on the co-construction of ethnographic situations. Not only emotions mattered, but my emotional investment within a plurality of contexts has strongly affected the situations I was co-constructing and co-performing with the actors. Despite the strong intensity of emotional ordeals, which have been also translated into sentiments of suffering, of frustration, of sadness and fear, emotions and affections have been a crucial resource for the ethnography and for the progression of my research.

Perhaps, this may be even stronger when being far from familiar, cultural, social or even linguistic daily life certainties. I left Europe alone to adventure myself on far-away field sites. I take my distance from a culturalist vision of remote field sites as seducing place for adventure, but I must admit that every time I left, I oscillated between excitement and anxiety. The emotional register hence played on a double level. It concerned me, as a "positioned subject" (Rosaldo 1989) who has feelings and experiences emotions, sentiments and affections on the field. Concurrently, it was related to my affectional implication and emotional engagement in the relationship I developed with the actors. I left my sentiments constructing the situations of interactions and so did them. Therefore, I consider that the engagement of emotions, feelings and affections in ethnographic research is critical to the process of construction of sociological knowledge. It has thus been a matter of *translating emotions and affections* through negotiations, adjustments and shared, as well as relational practices which progressively transgressed the rigid dichotomy informer/informant.

Emotions, affections and the translation of feelings into situations and practices could hence help to dismantle social, cultural and moral walls on the field sites. The "affectional proximity" with women helped not only "to figure out what the devil informants think they are up to", to quote

and affections can contribute dismantle barriers, culturalist roles, social hierarchies and arbitrary positionings.

In 2016 I celebrated the Chinese New Year in a little village, close the city of Fuyang, in Anhui province in inner China, following some women who temporary returned to the village to visit their family. After several weeks spent together, under the same roof, cooking, eating, smoking cigarettes and drinking rice alcohol together, the father of one "informant", Li Jin told me "Little Bei, you are the third daughter of the family". On that day, I felt that the traditionally employed dichotomies of engaged/analytical; friends/informants; living/thinking; personal/professional were being broken.

It was not, however, a matter of empathy. I was not "trying to imagine myself someone else" (

maintaining my identity, which could not be masked. I was a young, Italian, unmarried woman who was conducting research. I was a foreigner and I remained a foreigner -a *laowai* 老外 as I was called there- who was systematically sick because of food and precarious hygienic conditions, who was complaining because of the cold weather without a heat, or who did not understand I was obliged to put my feet into hot water every evening before going to bed.

Withal, it is in the difference, in the hesitation, sometimes in the in the incomprehension that interactions occur as an intersubjective process of mutual understanding, and production of *the common* (Hardt and Negri 2011) emerge. Co-produced situations imbued with emotions, which vary from excitement, enthusiasm, or joy to desperation, from fear and contempt to consideration, respect and mutual appreciation, sustain the fact that a mutual recognition of alterity can generate spaces of social, cultural and emotional resources sharing, making the ethnographic insights more vivid, colourful and dynamic.

In Chinese rural villages, I was a “bizarre” alien coming from an undefined Western country which alternated among America, Australia and Italy[35]. Progressively, as soon as my stay became longer, I turned into a special guest, a visiting friend who did not know much China, and who needed to be taught everything about daily life or who required assistance. After long-stay, I became part of the family I stayed with. Clifford’s writings on route-based research has taught us that time “transforms and makes” in ethnography (Falzon 2009: 8). When curiosity and acceptance revealed to be stronger than contempt, I switched from a position of *outsider* into a newly negotiated position of what I figurately call here a “insited outsider”, whose alterity persists, since it is visible through physical characteristics, but which, all in all, does not disturb or interrupt anymore ongoing social life (Pollak 1986).

As argued by Laurence Roulleau-Berger (1991, 2016) while reflecting on her positionings inside low-legitimated social worlds, on “disqualified field sites”, the implication and engagement of the sociologist need to be reconstructed according to peculiar adjustments in line with a negotiation of reality (Roulleau-Berger 2016). The intersubjective processes of mutual knowledge and reciprocal social and cultural understanding are co-shaped by the strong emotional dimension of the situations, but also of the discourses. An implicit (tacit) contract between the co-actors of the research needs to be designed and identified through a definition of roles.

Howbeit, a variety of sentiments, of feelings and of affections often modify these rules and positionings. Interacting with migrant women whose biographies and daily experiences were often characterised by ordeals of suffering, of vulnerability and of misrecognition, my role and subjectivity were often altered.

shared a bed with three young migrant girls, in the coldness of Chinese winter, with no heat, hot water, no shower to take, and I cried even stronger. I found recomfort in the emails and skype conversations with my supportive supervisor in France. I remember asking her how to behave, how to cope with such impulses and consuming emotional ordeals, how to “manage my feelings” (

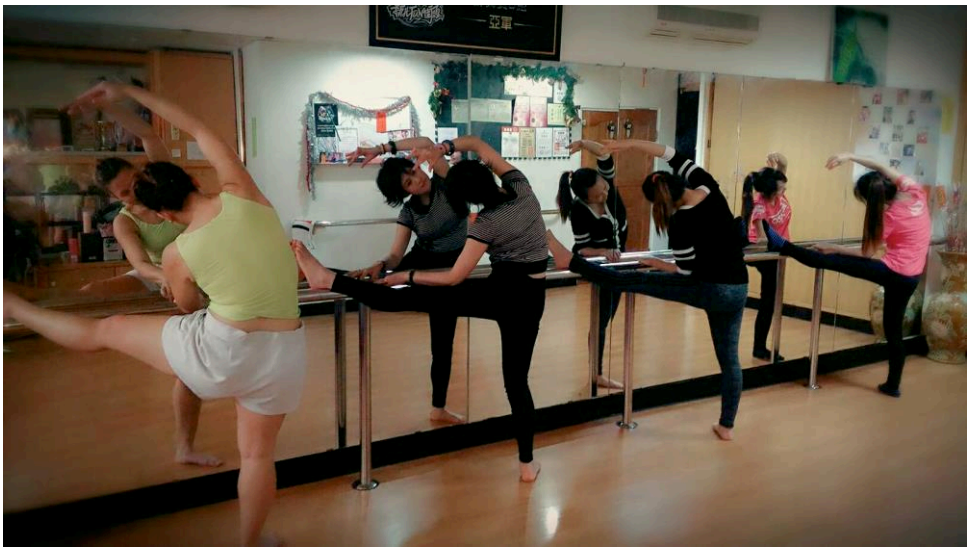

Figure 1 Jin Jin's dance classes that I weekly attended, together with several Chinese migrant women. Banqiao. February 2017.

Figure 2 The make-up final exam for the obtention of the vocational certificate for new immigrants. I performed as a model for Chunchun, Juan and Lilly. Taoyuan. December 24th 2016.

Emotions and affections jumbled, merged and overlapped. They dissolved distances and generated new ties of intimacy and bonds of closeness, contributing to the production of new, creative communicative events (Brenneis 1990: 113) between *us*. I employ the word *us* here to refer to the actors, where I do include myself: *us* are the co-authors (Geertz 1973) and co-performers of the social and emotional situations and practices on the field sites. The following snapshot extracted from my fieldwork notes illustrates this conundrum. It shows that when emotions overflow any social or statutory walls, the researcher becomes a friend, a "sister" to ask advice to, or, to some extent, even a

psychologist. This is what, after a long night of affectional engagement in a highly emotional situation I wrote down:

December 14th 2016. Hsinchu. Haizheng's lodgings.

I was almost falling asleep on a little mattress near her two children, when Haizheng [Guangxi native, Chinese migrant living in Zhudong,

Undeniably, these affectional practices could only be apprehended in situation, where concurrent registers of meaning were merging and overlapping. The mobilisation of emotions and affections as a tool for investigation remains hence strongly anchored in the co-performance of situations. It sustains a slow, progressive cumulation of knowledge and understandings, which follows the rhythm of the affectional rapprochement and, from the inside, from the inner dimension of feelings and sensations, elucidates the complexity, malleability and liability of the ordeals and of the social worlds inside which this emerges.

2. Narrating Feelings, Translating Emotions

As it appears from the considerations I have developed so far, my ethnographic work and practices have been forged by and constructed through a multiplicity of situational, emotional communicative events, characterised by highly affective registers. If emotions, feelings and affections have been a crucial resource for reciprocal situational and practical engagements, I have been later confronted to a crucial methodological and epistemological puzzle of interpretation and translation of such emotional discourses, communications and practices. The problem is rather complex since it concerned different -sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflictual- levels of translation (Abu-Lughod 1992). The conundrum involved the question of "translatability" (Callon 2002). The challenge turns around how to turn emotional discourses, situations and practices into a linguistic vivid and colourful narration, using scientific language. How to narrate sentiments of fear, of anxiety, of suffering, of excitement, of joy? How to transliterate sentiments of attachment, of belonging, of friendship, of mutuality, of affection?

Even though ethnography is unimaginable without translation processes (De Sardan 2008), this was for me a difficult exercise. It first meant accepted that "to transfer is to transform" (

(Candea 2009: 174-183) is a “self-critical methodological decisions”, explained Candea, through which the ethnographer “reflects upon and takes the responsibility for” (2007: 174) the significances she is attributing, partially arbitrarily, partially responsibly, to the translation, transformation and reproduction of the materials.

I could not “faithfully reproduce reality” (Abu-Lughod 1992). Yet, I could at least interrogate and examine “the risks of surplus and default” in the process of restitution (Roulleau-Berger 2004: 279). This concretely meant that for every interaction, every situation and every practice I had to question the way emotions and affections were constructed, where expressed and performed, individually or collectively and according to which understanding and perceptions I was going to make claims about them. It is hence, to follow

> "The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy […]"

What emerges from Bhabha's lesson is that translation and performativity are inseparable. It is not a "hermeneutic" (Steiner 1975), but rather an *in-between* "motion". The "I" and "

which considers social life as a permanent process of exchanges, interpretations and mutual adaptations" (Roulleau-Berger 2016). The result has been an emotional open space for sociological translation in a reciprocal, communicative context of mutuality: a rhizomatic, polyhedral and mutable space for co-constructing knowledge and interpretations.

3. Stakes and Mistakes: Situated Obstacles and Grounded Resistances

When emotions and affections mix and merge on multi-sited, "mined" (Albera 2001) and "disqualified" (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2016) field sites, problems of access and, especially of permanence of the terrains emerge as well. The highly emotional description of the ethnographic work I have carried out in China and in Taiwan does not have to be misread. If the experiences and the practices I have been presenting so far may look fascinating, the fragile architecture and the precarity of the situations have multiplied the ordeals. The obstacles and the difficulties of a multi-sited, translocal, physical and virtual ethnography have proliferated.

The access to and the permanence in the field sites (Goffman 1989) can be apprehended in the frame of opportunity and constraints structure, which helps to conceive both the resources – *stakes* (Glaser and Strauss 1967)- I could acquire and mobilise, the structural constraints related to the specificities of social, political, institutional contexts, moral orders and administrative regimes, together with the errors and *mistakes* I could make. It has been hence a constant, contradictory, bifurcated process of adjustment and re-adjustment of frames (Goffman 1989; Roulleau-Berger 2001, 2016), of improvisation and bricolage (

Long-lasting fieldwork in Chinese rural areas or in the urban villages where migrant workers live has been demanding for me in terms of both physical and emotional investment. Living in rural areas of inner China, without the heat or unable to take a shower for almost a month put me in uncomfortable situations, feeling cold, alone, and sometimes, even depressed. I have been sick several times, and I made the unhappy experience of a sixteen hour perfusion hanged on a tree branch in the middle of a paddy. I remember lying on a four Chinese-girl shared bed in Anhui countryside in 2016, under five blankets to fight against the cold winter weather, wearing literally all the clothes I disposed of, and strongly desiring some Western food, a shower, and some privacy.

In 2018, I have been living with a Sino-Taiwanese family for two months in Dongguan, Southern China. The huge size of the city, the traffic jams, my daily displacements along very long distances made fieldwork an exhausting moment. In the evening, once back home, I desired finding my own "refuge", with some space for myself, but that was not possible since Xiaohui, the Chinese wife, had some gossips to share with me, or desired to go out for dinner, or needed help to cook dinner. Her Taiwanese husband, Kinge, often invited his Taiwanese fellows living in Dongguan to his place and was very pleased to have me playing cards and drinking alcohol with them until late. Even the simple act of closing the door of the room I was sleeping in could have been very impolite and I had to compose with this.

I had defined strategies to co-design social and emotional contracts with the actors. Nevertheless, when social worlds were particularly sensitive and unstable, the architecture of the inquiry became more and more fragile, precarious and changeable.

Terrains have also been glided and sloped and it happened to me to slip on them. Uncertainty, unpredictability and accidents have also been at the core of my research agenda. The delicacy of circumstances and instability of some interactional frames have sometimes, and randomly overturned situations. The social pact could be suddenly broken by unexpected ruptures: a wrong word, a comment, a misbehaviour or the expression of an opinion changed the frame and modified the tacit contract of experience-sharing that I had difficultly negotiated (Roulleau-Berger 2016). Let's take an example which suggests how access to field is neither straight-forward nor guaranteed, but rather an on-going process, abrupt and bifurcated. Concurrently it shows how, inside a precarious social world, intersubjective pacts of trust, respect and recognition and their consequent and interactional frames can be suddenly broken.

After several months of fieldwork in Taipei, with the precious help of Heqin, a migrant woman from Chongqing, who played the role of key informant, I negotiated the access to a massage salon in the "red light district" of Taipei (*lin sen bei lu* 林森北路), where there were few Chinese migrant women employed as sexual workers. I needed to get the consent of the Taiwanese boss. I must admit that I felt excited to explore that world. I was introduced to the Taiwanese boss (*laoban* 老闆) by his wife, a Chinese fellow-villager of Heqin, who acted there as a *mamasang* 媽媽桑 -the responsible for the girls employed. She guaranteed for me and for my identity of researcher, hence not of journalist nor of police officer.

Meetings and discussions with Sange, the owner, took place in his office, during the evening and the night. I had to attend dinners for few weeks. I offered whisky to Sange, playing a precise role while drinking with him and his male employees. I had to disguise my emotions, which oscillated between excitement, fear, awkwardness and sometimes even disgust, if I may use this word, because of the discourses I was listening to. After several weeks, the field was negotiated, and I was attributed a Pilipino-Taiwanese *gatekeeper* who enabled my entrance to the place, often in the middle of the night.

Every time the scenario was similar. I was texted on my phone by this man in the late afternoon if my venue was possible in the night. So, I used to arrive late in the night in front of the door and sent a text message to this man, who came downstairs and, after verifying that I was alone, opened the door and accompanied me upstairs to the seventeenth floor. But, suddenly, one evening a rupture occurred. I found myself alone with this man -who had visibly drunk too much- in the office of the boss and I had apparently no way to get out of the room. I felt scared and worried. I had lost the control over the situation. The rules and norms had unpredictably changed. I had to leave that place, aware of the fact that leaving would have probably jeopardized my future access, and that is exactly what happened. The pact was broken my future presence refused.

Social contracts with actors on field sites are fragile. Abrupt turning points can reverse the frames, blocking, or jeopardizing the access to the site, that I had, sadly and frustratingly, to abandon. In January 2018 I was conducting fieldwork in Ningbo, China living in the district of Beilun in an urban village of migrant workers to conduct observation of migrants' daily lives, together with ethnographic work and interviews in some local factories. The political and institutional frame inside which foreign researches are positioned in China produces obstacles, administrative walls, and moral frontiers. I needed to register at the local police station, declaring my identity and my place of residence. When strict immigration rules and visa policies merge with the low-legitimized social worlds inside which

the research is carried out – for instance an urban village where migrants deprived of the residence permit live- the situation reveals to be even more complex and requires more caution, agility, adaptability and capacity to negotiate.

Field sites are built by coping with resistances (Roulleau-Berger 2016). As a foreigner, I was inscribed into a rigid juridical regime: I had to provide local administration with precise documents – such as the bill of a hotel or a rental contract of the place I was supposed to stay- to certify my identity and my activities. Yet, I was living with migrant workers, who not only had no rental contracts, but, deprived of the residence permit, were invisible in front of the city administration. I did not have the right to live there. But, once again, my enthusiasm for the material I was collecting there, summed to a good dose of stubbornness and unconsciousness, lead me to make one mistake after another. I did not want to renounce to that terrain: living with migrant workers was for me an incredible opportunity I was not ready to give up with. I was asked to register at the police station under 24 hours after my first entrance in China, but I did not, since I was not sure about how to proceed. After a couple of weeks of invisible stay *in loco*, I decided to naively "give a try"-an expression which may shock every experienced scholar- and I went to the police office. As expected, I was asked to pay a huge fine and to leave the urban village immediately. Not only I corrupted the policeman with some food and money, but I also did not leave the place.

Research time passed smoothly, and my feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment increased accordingly to the richness of the material I could collect, to the quality of time I could spend with the actors and to. However, one morning I was suddenly woken up by an informant, who, with no explanation, told me to dress up since someone was looking for me out of the house. I went outside and there was a police car waiting for me. I suddenly got very worried and scared. Not only I was putting in trouble and danger myself, but also the people I was living with. This made me feel even more uncomfortable.

I was interrogated. The policemen took pictures of my passport and checked the content of my laptop. In few seconds I had to figure out a strategy to deal with the situation, limiting risks for myself and for the others. I was in a position of domination and my mistakes could have turned into serious legal problems, both for me and for the migrant workers I was living with. Therefore, I played a role to "cool the mark out" (

felt embarrassed and awkward in front of a young foreign woman in tears and changed their attitude: I could get out of the car and I was not asked to follow them to the police station anymore. However, I was ordered to leave Ningbo and I acted accordingly.

The resistances, the moments of conflict, of friction and of ruptures have provided me with a progressive awareness that situations, negotiations and the processes of construction of field sites cannot be taken for granted. (In)experiences, trials and errors, slips and morasses, together with intuition, imagination and a bit of improvisation reinforce an approach in terms of *motion* and experimentation (Marcus and Fischer 1986) of ethnographic work and of field research. Each ethnographic experience is, all in all, a unique, subjectively co-constructed, born of situation device (Marcus 1995; Candea 2009; Falzon 2009).

Complicity, as Marcus pointed, means *responsibility* (Marcus 1998). The “approximative rigor” (

Chapter 3: Floating, Translocal and Co-constructed Field Sites

“Follow your nose wherever it brings you” (

by academic institutions or associations, but also by the means of social and affectional networks of friends, of migrant women -“sisters”- who supported the negotiation of my status and my presence. Perhaps, in the following presentation, I should have separated here these two -or even multiple- plateaus, but I have not. Field sites and fieldwork have represented for me endless processes of multiple, overlapping and jumbling negotiations, arbitrations and interrelations between such channels. Because of this original, *sui generis* and creative bricolage, I have decided to describe the different entrances and “maintaining on the field” (

to the help of local institutions, associations and NGOs. Introduced by the responsible of the *Taiwan Labour Front* (*Taiwan laogong shenxian* 台湾劳工阵线), I started attending weekly make-up and hairdressing vocational training at the *Chinese Association for Beauty Promotion* (*zhonghua meirong jiyi cujin xiehui* 中華美容技藝促進協會), in the district of Sanchong, suburbs of Taipei. In the meanwhile, my gatherings and encounters with Haizheng multiplied. During that short period of time, my stays at her place became longer and longer. I spent entire days with Haizheng and her children, following her during her daily activities, hence interacting with her little everyday microcosmos, where the meetings and gatherings with her "sisters", local Chinese migrants were constant. Li

Taipei. I kept on attending the professional make-up and cosmetics classes in Sanchong, and following the flower decoration course in Hsinchu, as I used to do in summer 2015. My proximity with women who attended classes grew and we started gathering together out of the courses.

On the Christmas Eve 2016 I was performing in Taoyuan as a model for few women who took the final exam to get the certificate of professional make-up artist. My physical characteristics, my foreign identity and my linguistic competences attracted women's curiosity: they often spontaneously came to talk to me, and exchanges proliferated. On December 26th 2016, I was invited to a lunch by an Anhui native migrant, Juan. I had not understood much about the event, but I decided to attend. I presented myself at the metro station of the peripheric district of Luzhou, in Taipei and when I entered Juan's lodgings, I realised that the event was bigger than expected. At Juan's house there were probably thirty Chinese women invited for lunch. I met many. I spent all day with them, listening to their conversations, chatting with them, smoothly revealing who I was and what I was doing in Taiwan. Women gathered to have lunch, to spend time together but what I progressively realised is that that sort of meeting was also an opportunity for them to develop professional socialisations, to negotiate job's opportunities, developing economic partnership.

Figure 3 Hot-pot lunch with Chinese migrant women at Juan's lodgings. Luzhou (Taipei). December 26th 2016.

It is there that I met Fujin, the owner of the lingerie shop in Nanshijiao, in the suburbs of Taipei. After chatting with her all afternoon long, she invited me to visit her shop. Few days later, I was there, listening to her story, navigating among underclothes. Spending time in the lingerie shop, I could meet Fujin's helpers and business partners, who were all Chinese migrant women, who sold lingerie through

the platform *WeChat* and who were physically present in the shop to collect the goods for redistribution. Fujin offered me the orange, fluorescent bra I narrate the life of. She asked me to be her model to make advertisement of lingerie and I accepted, but I also asked her for some help: *tianxia meiyou mianfei de wucan* 天下沒有免費的午餐 ("under the sky, there is no lunch for free"), they say in Chinese.

I asked Fujin to introduce her friends to me, but I needed to give her and the other women something in exchange. Their narrated to me their lives, their ordeals of suffering, of vulnerability and of violence, which asked them strong emotional engagement and probably even new sufferings during the narrations. I did not want to accentuate their pains and agony, I did not want to reproduce violence, as Laurence Roulleau-Berger had taught us (2004, 2016). I decided to give them something back and I reflected on my own resources. Wht could I give "back" to them? Thereby, I got an idea, which was warmly welcomed by Fujin.

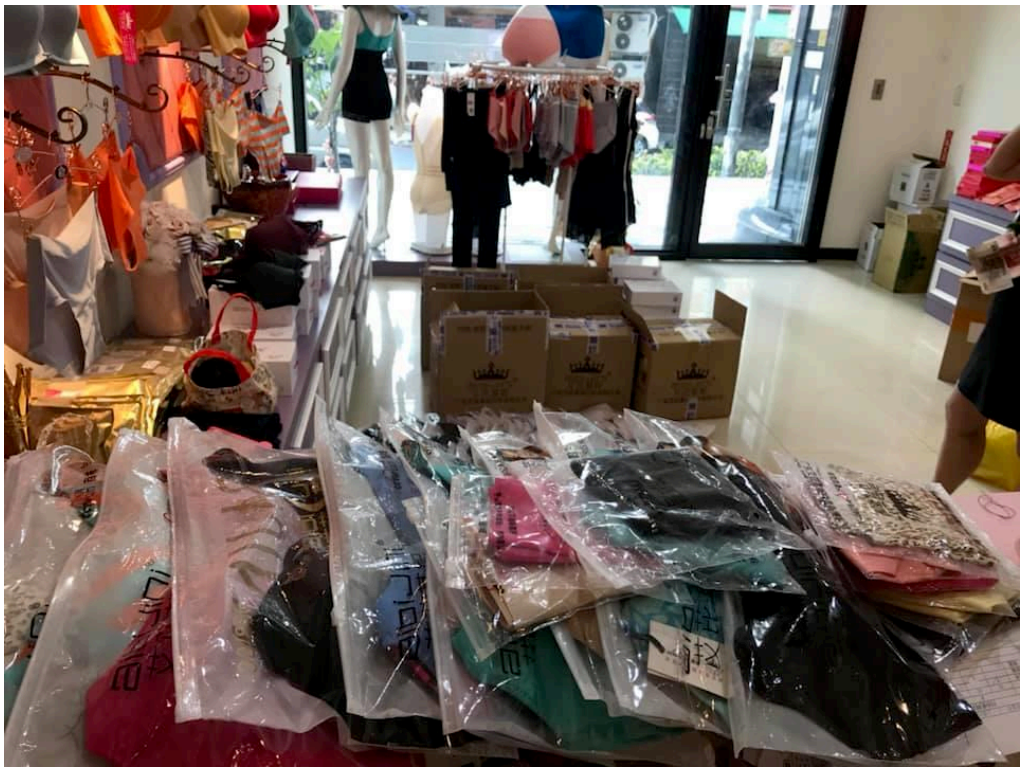

Figure 4 The interior of Fujin lingerie shop (1st floor) in Nanshijiao, Taipei.

Her lingerie shop was organised on two floors, of which the second one was empty. We decided to put in place free English classes for herself and her friends every Tuesday evening from 7 to 9 pm. We opened a *WeChat* group and we started adding her friends. Through a virtual *snowballing method*, her Chinese "sisters" were adding to the group other Chinese "sisters". Inside this digital platform, women

gradually proliferated. The result was a full class every Tuesday evening, with about thirty to forty women physically present to study English. I taught to women few English words, some songs and some easy every day conversation sentences, but I progressively realised that their presence to the class was not aimed at learning the language. My subjectivity played a crucial role within interactions. Fueled by the curiosity to see a foreigner who spoke Chinese, women multiplied.

Figure 5 Tuesday evening English classes at Fujin's lingerie shop (2nd floor). Nanshijiao (Taipei). March 2017.

That Tuesday evening gathering was way more than an English course. Inside that room they generated, we generated an intimate space for new socialisations, for affections and for strong emotional investments. Progressively, women, according to their working schedule and familiar obligations, started arriving earlier to the class, and so did I. They cooked food and we had dinner together before

class. Some women took advantage of this gathering opportunity to make business, to sell some artefacts they made at home, or the products they commercialised through *WeChat* between China and Taiwan. Others arrived in tears, showing vulnerability and desperation and sharing with all of us their daily ordeals of mortification and misrecognition. From the lingerie shop, I started navigating through the diverse universes of women.

At the English coursw I also met Jin Jin, who organised classes of Chinese traditional ethnic minority dance for her Chinese "sisters" in the district of Banqiao, inside her lodging. She invited me to join and I went dancing, with very bad results, with women every Monday morning and Thursday afternoon. Some women were not from Taipei, but they came from close cities and villages such as Hsinchu, Zhubei, Zhudong, Taoyuan, Linkou or Hukou. They could not attend English classes regularly because of the spatial distance, but, appreciating my efforts in teaching English for free, they often invited me to join them at their home places. I was hence moving through diverse sites in Taipei and the closer cities, to meet my informants, observe their daily routines, helping them, when I could, in economic activities. I regularly stayed at their places overnight. I woke up with them in the morning and accompanied their children to school, helped them with business and e commerce, washing the dishes in their restaurants, selling hamburgers at the street stands or ironing clothes in the laundry in Hukou.

In February 2017, thanks to the help of Professor Hsiao, I was introduced to a new association in Taipei in charge of services for new immigrants: the Chinese Association for Relief and Ensuring Services-CARES (*zhonghua jiuzhu zonghui* 中華救助總會). I negotiated some hours of voluntary work as an English teacher every Wednesday afternoon, between January and March 2017. If the Association turned to be a useful site to collect documentary and archives materials related to immigration and social policies for new immigrants, the English course there was a flop. The interactive frame was rigid, since Taiwanese members of the Association were also present during classes. This generated barriers in the establishment of emotional proximity with women, who saw me as a rather "cold" and distant English teacher. Differently from the class in the lingerie shop, I did not have the feeling there of having contributed to the co-creation of an intimate space for mutuality, trust and emotional sharing.

At that moment, I realised the cruciality of the emotional space which had progressively and rhizomatously emerged in Fujin's lingerie shop. Proximity and closeness, emotions and affections reinforced my dialogues, conversations and interactions with women: we often became friends. Indeed, the degree of affectional proximity was not the same with all the actors, and that was something I had to question, but also to accept. I could rely on some *key informants*, such as Heqin, Haizheng, Fujin,

Huan Jing, Jin Jin, Ai Hua, Wenfeng, Zhang Jing, etc. whose role has been decisive. These individuals were not simply “extreme cases of the social group” (

multiple and constant mobilities between China and Taiwan. When I could, I followed them to Jinmen, or to China for economic activities purposes. We took the plane together for the coastal cities in Southern China where they regularly went to develop business opportunities. I also followed two of them to Jinmen island in April 2017 during a business trip, I will narrate about in the following pages. In other cases, we moved back to their home villages in China to visit their family and their relatives, and then we came back to Taiwan together.

All in all, the result has been a vivid, mobile, on the road ethnographic work, during which I did not stop moving around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions or juxtaposition of locations. I oscillated, following women and women's networks among multiple sites of social action, operating across multiple spatial scales and levels of social structures. These multiple, floating and progressively constructed field sites have been negotiated and re-negotiated all along the research. They did not exist before the inquiry, but they have been progressively co-constructed and co-performed by women and by me. Field sites have hence been socially and emotionally constructed processes, constituted from multiple, mutual engagements and dynamic sequences of reciprocal affiliations and adjustments.

To synthetize, fieldwork in Taiwan has been conducted in:

a. Taipei:

- Fujin's lingerie shop in the district of

-Shops, restaurants, street stands, and women's lodgings in the districts of Zhubei and Zhudong
-The *Hsinchu Family Service for New Immigrants* where I attended flower decoration classes and collective activities organised for the new immigrants
-Shops, restaurants, street stands, hairdressing and nail saloons where women worked, as well as inside their lodgings

c. Hukou:

-

Figure 6 Washing clothes, shoes, vegetables and dishes in the urban village of Beilun (suburbs of Ningbo). February 2016.

Figure 7 Cooking dinner with Meng meng and Miao Miao. Urban village of Beilun (Ningbo). January 2016.

On that same year, I moved later, following a group of migrant women to their rural village of origin in Anhui province, close to the city of Fuyang, where I immerged myself into rural village daily life for almost a month. From Anhui, I later re took the road few thousand kilometers South, to Guangdong province, to the Pearl River Delta. I stayed in the cities of Zhongshan where I could negotiate the entrance a Taiwanese electronic factory, VESTA (*weisida zhizao youxian gongsi* 威斯達製造有限公司) with the help of a key informant, Aya, a Chinese migrant from Chongqing who owned a surf

boards factory in Zhongshan together with her Italian partner, and who introduced me to the Taiwanese factory owner.

In 2017, while being officially affiliated to the Institute of sociology of Academia Sinica, I took advantage of my stay in Taiwan to move with women across spaces, following some informants during their plural trips and displacement from Taiwan to China. I followed Huang Jing to Guangzhou where stayed for few days since she needed to negotiate new business opportunities, hosted in the district of Longgang by a friend of Huang Jing, a migrant woman from Henan who lived and worked there. I also accompanied Zhang Jing to Fuzhou city, in Zhejiang province, where we spent a long week at the stock market to collect some products she wanted to import to Taiwan. In July 2017, I accompanied Haizheng and her children to visit her family to Guangxi province to her rural village of origin close to the city of Guilin.

In November 2017, after I had returned to France, I attended a cycle of workshops at Shanghai University for two weeks, organised in the frame of the International Associated Labouratory "Post Western Sociologies in Europe and in China", and I took advantage of my travel to China to move to Shandong province to the city of Rizhao to re-meet with Lily I had previously interviewed in Taiwan, who divorced and re-settled in there, who hosted me at her new home for a week and who introduced another returnee to me.

The third three-month campaign took place in winter 2018, when I was affiliated to Shanghai University, beneficiating, once again, of the partnership established in the frame of the International Associate Labouratory "Post-Western sociology in Europe and in China", provided with a second fellowship by the French School of East-Asian Studies (EFEO, Taipei Centre). I was mainly located in Guangdong province, where I circulated among different cities and rural areas, since I was visiting and following some Chinese migrant women who, after divorce, re-migrated to China. Investigating women's in-between biographies and geographies, I firstly spent a month between the city of Zhongshan and the city of Dongguan, living with a Sino-Taiwanese family, composed of Xiao Hui, Sichuanese native and Kinge, a Taiwanese owner of an electronic factory in Guangdong, whose lives oscillated between the two countries. I had met Kingge in Taoyuan city in Taiwan the year before (March 2017), hence I re-contacted him once back to China and he suggested that I stayed at their place in the peripheric district of Liaobu, where most of Taiwanese factories are located and cross-border families live. There, I could carry out *in situ* observations of the labour regime of his electronic factory, the enterprise MARCS. Broadly, in Dongguan, I moved around diverse districts to meet with

women who had re-migrated and returned to Dongguan. A sociologist from the Institute of Sociology of Academia Sinica, Professor Jay Chen, provided me with the fundamental contact of Aju, a Hubei native living in Dongguan, married to a Taiwanese, who became a key informant *in loco*.

I later moved to Shenzhen, following Xiao Mei, a woman, a friend I met in Taiwan in 2017 and I had helped to divorce. Xiao Mei had re-migrated to China in February 2017. After few months at her parent's place in the countryside, she had re-settled in Shenzhen, in the pauperized district of Baoan, where most of migrant workers live. There, she shared a little apartment with Jia Lin, Hainan native who had also re-migrated to Shenzhen after divorce in Taiwan. I lived with these two women for almost two months. However, I did not remain in Shenzhen all the time. Xiao Mei was moving around diverse cities, Huizhou or Foshan for example, looking for money, and I often followed her, meeting and gathering with new returnees.

On that same period, I also I followed Xiao Mei to her rural village of origin of Xingning, close to the city of Meizhou in Guangdong province, where I remained for three weeks. There I could also meet Betty, a woman living in Hsinchu I had previously interviewed while staying in Taiwan, who was temporary back for New Year celebration. I could also re-meet Vicky, who had been living in Taipei before, and who re-migrated after divorce to Canton, but who were both from a village close to Xingning. I remained in the countryside of Xingning for almost a month, staying both at Xiao Mei, at Betty and

To synthetize, fieldwork in China has been conducted in:

a. Rural areas:

-The rural village of Zaozuang (Fuyang city, Anhui province)

-The rural village of Xingning (Meizhou city, Guangdong province)

-The rural village of Saozhe (Chongqing city, Chongqing province)

-The rural village of Funan (Guilin city, Guangxi province)

b. Global cities:

-The urban village (*chengzhong cun* 城中村) of the district of Beilun in Ningbo city (Zhejiang province) where I lived with migrant workers; the Sino-Taiwanese textile factory Shenzhou (申州公司) in the city of Ningbo

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opened multi-scalar and multi-sited virtual field sites. I could conduct ethnography inside the various forms of space that had emerged *online*. It supported links and interconnections and facilitated communication.

The complexity and polyvalence of this application imposed to me to learn its functioning and mode of use. If at the beginning the construction of these field sites through interactive media and digital platforms resulted to be a constraint to me, in the end it turned to be easier than I had expected. The strongest effort I had to make was to keep in mind that cyberspace and the virtual worlds as field sites cannot be solely understood as spaces detached from any connection to the real life of experience and *praxis*, as well as face-to-face interaction. Digital platforms have vivid, dynamic and strong connections with the situations and circumstances in which they are used. I had to create dialogues, contexts and connections between what I was observing and experiencing *online* and the related *offline* interactions and practices.

Like the physical and "bounded" field sites (Candea 2009), virtual sites also need to be opened and to be negotiated. My presence inside could not be taken for granted and I had to develop strategies to remain inside the groups. These have their own norms and rules. There are roles, as well as *gatekeepers* (Schwartz and Jacobs 1979: 55). Groups are not, as it may appear, "given", pre-existing the ethnographer. Indeed, in most cases -except probably for the group created when we started the English course in Nanshijiao- they had been created and performed by women before I had access to them. The very concept of field site has hence constantly been brought into question. In the virtual worlds, I had also to map the field. Mapping virtual sites imposed to investigate the making of new boundaries which exceed space and time in a new, creative and especially constantly mutable way. The perimeters of the site had to be continually reframed, together with the fluid and porous connections between the physical and the virtual. It was certainly a matter of spatial and temporal dislocation, but also of re-location: temporalities and spatialities became disordered. Multiple overlapping and juxtaposing times and spaces emerged.

I have hence proceeded by order, progressing by essays inside these new and unfamiliar field sites. I created an account, with a picture of myself and I adopted my Chinese name *Bei Ai Qi* 貝愛琪. Things appeared to be less complicated than expected. In some cases, after a physical meeting or an interview, an informant suggested to have me joining the group, in other cases, I had to ask if it could have been possible to enter. Sometimes, the access was immediate: I was added by a woman and I could directly take part to the conversations, read the previous communications, download the images or listen to the

vocal records. In few cases, I had not only to be introduced by someone, but also to negotiate with the *gatekeeper*, the "responsible" of the group: I introduced myself, who I was, where I came from. However, I was not only often asked to provide complete information about my research purposes. Once, I was refused an entrance since the *gatekeeper* did not accept me. This has probably been the trickiest part of an ethnographic work mediated by the screen of a smartphone. If I had had a previous physical, corporeal meeting or encounter with the actors of the groups, my shifting and re-positioning from the physical field site to the virtual one tended to develop smoothly. To some extent, I had the impression that written text messages, audio recordings and pictures could even reinforce the previously generated closeness.

On the contrary, when I was a newcomer to a group, when most of the participants had never "seen" me physically, I have sometimes regretted that embodied experience of interaction. If the communicative ties, socialisation processes or emotional bonds inside the virtual did not seem to me to be less real or vivid than in the physical world, howbeit it I could not use my body as a vector of recognition (Roulleau-Berger 2016) or at least acceptance, as I made use of it in the physical reality. All in all, despite its relevance, the smartphone as a mediator did not represent a wall, a barrier. The perplexities it generated to me derived probably by the new agility this virtual approach to ethnographic work demanded to me. It was an unfamiliar method, hence even more demanding in terms of reflexivity, caution and patience.

What should be highlighted is a certain spontaneity in the interactions. It happened that after I joined the groups, some unknown women, fuelled by curiosity when seeing my picture, added me on *WeChat*. We could hence start private conversations, which in some cases generated further physical meetings and gatherings. For example, I got to know Bing, a Chinese migrant who works in a massage salon in Zhubei, since she spontaneously added me on *WeChat*. On that very case, she had not paid attention to my profile picture. She had asked me to become her "virtual friend" on *WeChat* since she wanted to advertise some cosmetics and hope that I would have been interested in buying some. It was only after several written exchanges that she realised that my written Chinese expression was quite bizarre. However, from this misunderstanding her curiosity grew, and she suggested that we physically met to have lunch together.

I can divide the groups I conducted virtual ethnography in into two categories: general "chatting" groups, with a huge number of participants, generally up to 450/500 individuals, where women had conversations about their daily lives, exchanged messages, pictures, emoticons; and smaller groups

created a*d hoc* for a specific purpose, such as a collective gathering, the English course, business and economic activity, crowdfunding practices, etc. Even if I have been (and I am still) accepted and integrated within a multiplicity of groups, there are 7 inside which I have carried out consistent virtual observations of communications, emotional dialogues, socialisation processes or economic exchanges. Sometimes, I actively took part to the conversation as a virtual participant observer; sometimes, I remained discrete, distant and I simply read the messages that were exchanged by the actors. This double attitude varied according to the conversation topic, to my degree of implication in the scene which was being performed or to my familiarity or confidence with the actors who were at that were precise moment inter-acting. The main groups are thus the following:

-The “

each other, since they were co-created and co-performed. It was at their crossroad that the complexity, porosity and mutability of social worlds could be understood.

Moving between the digital and the material, the physical and the virtual turned to be crucial to trace networks, ties and movements, identifying connections and interlinks among a plurality of social worlds, physically and virtually located in different and multiple places. Lastly, within the multi-sited frame, since I virtually kept in touch with my informants, I had no difficulties in re-contacting them during diverse and disparate moments of fieldwork. For instance, it is through and thanks to *WeChat* that part of the circulatory ethnographic work could be conducted. By keeping in touch on *WeChat*, I met and re-met Chinese women several times, in diverse places and spaces, at different moments of their life trajectories.

4. On Migrant Women: Selection of the Population, Limits and Discussion

The situations and experiences lived and performed *by* and *with* migrant women, by tracking their paths and mobilities prove the singularity and unicity of each individual biographical pattern, whose movements oscillate through and across her own, individual and subjective spaces of pluri-migration. At the same time, their common rural origin, the experiences of internal labour migration in China, as well as of marriage-migration to Taiwan enabled to identify some common characteristics and specific traits of the population I studied.

Official data from the Taiwanese Ministry of Interior[37] furnishes important information as for the number of cross-strait marriages between Taiwanese men and Chinese women, as well as for the ratio of foreign spouses in Taiwan, from China and from South East Asia. During the time of fieldwork, in 2016 the MOI has counted 8 673 spouses from China, and 7 111 from South East-Asian Countries[38], while in 2017 this number decreased to 7 634 Chinese immigrants, and augmented in favour of women from South-East Asia, whose number attended 8 569. If these numbers tend to show the importance of the phenomenon of marriage-migration from China to Taiwan, in a diachronic perspective, if compared to the statistics of the beginning of 2000, this number seems to have decreased. For instance, in 2001, the same Taiwanese Ministry of Interior (MOI) had counted 26 516 female marriage migrants from China, and 19 405 from South East Asia.

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[37] See data from the Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior, available online: www.immigration.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=1333115&ctNode=29699&mp=1

[38] Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand.

Be that as it may, these numbers must be treated with caution. Mapping movement and mobility requires to renounce to rigid statistic demographic data which are based on fixity. Migrants constantly move and circulate: even if women contract marriages with Taiwanese nationals, they do not permanently reside in Taiwan, but they tend to move across the two sides of the Strait, alternating periods of stay in China to sequences of life in Taiwan. When their husbands maintain, after marriage, their profession in China, women's *in-betweeness* results to be even stronger. At the same time, as I observed, after divorce, their migratory displacements also pluralise. These point out the limits of a statistical representativity of demographic data.

The relationship and the link of the population to the places and the spaces of inquiry is hence rather complex. I can formally, for a better heuristic, divide the population into two sub-categories related simultaneously to their main location of residence and their marital status: 111/141 interviewees lived in Taiwan, while 30/141 resided in China, where they had re-moved after divorce in Taiwan. However, since mobility, movement and motion are intrinsic to women's daily lives and experiences, a strict separation between individuals and spaces revealed to be not only difficult to delineate, but also weakly pertinent.

If Chinese migrant are at the core of my ethnography, I have been interacting in a plurality of contexts with other set of actors: in the rural village in the countryside I had discussions with their parents, relatives and co-villages. In the Chinese city I interacted with their colleagues and co-workers, as well as the Chinese but especially Taiwanese owners of the factories they had been working in. I have also, both in China and in Taiwan, often interacted with women's grooms, albeit I have not carried out formal interviews with them.

Aiming at studying the contemporaneity of migratory processes, I have focused on a young population, born in rural China after 1980s (80 *hou* 后). I have interviewed 141 migrant women, whose age variated from 22 to 36 years. The common characteristics identified among my informants are the following: women had all a common rural origin, since they were all born in Chinese rural areas of inner provinces, mainly Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Yunnan, Sichuan and Guangdong provinces. The graphic representation which follows synthetizes the rural inner provinces of origin of Chinese migrant women.

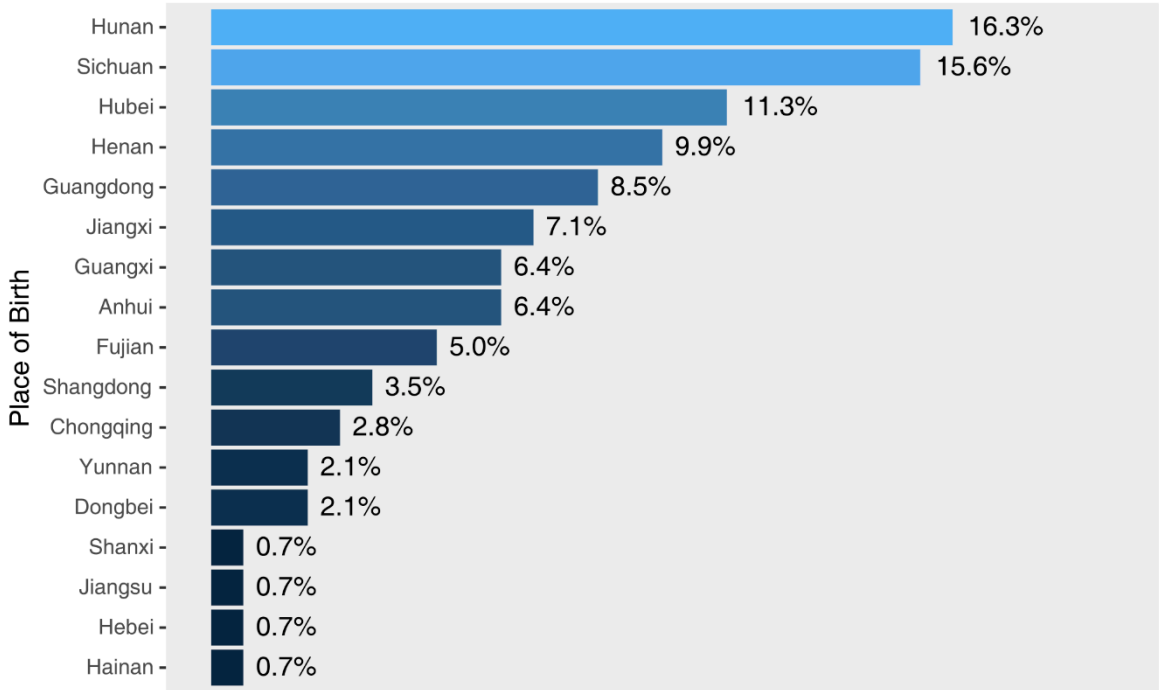

Figure 8 Graph illustrating the different provinces in China from which the 141 women I interviewed come from.

Their rural origin impacted their level of education: they were all low-qualified in terms of educational degree, which vary from primary school to middle school diploma. Some women had started high school, but they did not conclude the formations since they left the countryside earlier to work in the city. All the informants have experienced labour migration in China, moving from the rural areas to the large coastal cities, mainly of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces, where employment opportunities, especially in the industrial sector, were numerous. However, the number of migratory and professional experiences in internal China is heterogeneous: some women made the experience of multiple cities, pluralising their professional careers, while others migrated less and remained longer in the same city, performing a more limited number of jobs. Women had all migrated to Taiwan through marriage which is, according to the Taiwanese Immigration Law the *conditio sine qua non* to legally enter the territory. The way women met their husbands also need to be elucidated. Most of the informants (136/141) encountered their husband in their working place in the Chinese "global city", their husbands being, as I will discuss in the next chapters, Taiwanese qualified foreign workers, managers of company owners. For a heuristic and purpose of synthesis, I have resumed the three main migratory patterns in which women are engaged: from inner provinces to coastal cities in China, from coastal cities to Taiwan and, then, from Taiwan, back to China.

Figure 9 Rural-to-urban migrations: from rural villages in inner provinces to large coastal cities in China.

Figure 10 Cross-border marriage-migration: from Chinese large coastal cities to Taiwan.

Figure 11 Post-divorce re-migration from Taiwan to China.

The numbers I exploit here derive from the formal in depth interviews I have conducted, even if, within the multi-sited, translocal sites I met and interacted with even more migrant women. I have previously explained the different strategies I adopted to identify the population, and I would like to stress here the fact that the tracking lives and biographies method I have chosen for multi-sited ethnography enabled to burden the borders of exclusively formalised in depth interviews. Hence, it permitted to multiplicate the occasions of dialogues, communications and conversations, which have been collected as "fragmented pieces of experiences" (James 2007) on women's roads.

The selection of informants has been constructed all along the inquiry, according to the opportunities negotiated through the social and emotional networks of women, during the socialisation processes in the interactive and interactional frames we had constructed together. The dynamics of inquiry generated their own progression, which has been quite unpredictable not only at the beginning, as De Sardan noticed (2008: 83), but until its very end. The individuals identified do not, and cannot, transcend their very concrete conditions of existence and of subjectivities' production.

Their choice and selection could hence but anything but linear, hence rather adaptative and malleable. Thus, the construction of my sample has been progressive and dynamic. It came mainly from a

"snowballing effect" and its perimeter lies in the search for a saturation effect[39] (Glaser and Strauss 1967), which revealed for me to be, in the end, sometimes a contradictory principle while studying mobility**.** On the one hand, the huge number of biographical, professional, migratory and marital paths I could collect led to the identification of common and rather repetitive patterns. However, fascinated by some anecdotes or details which emerged during every woman's biographical narrations, I kept on collecting material even after I had started feeling a partial saturation of the sample. I kept on digging into this vivid and rough material whose fluidity, liability and changeability represented its very fecundity.

Against a holistic reductionism, I had considered finding a "black swan" to be possible, especially inside mutable and malleable field sites. In the frame of an inductive approach, conceiving the "improbable" (Taleb 2007), or the possibility of a "negative case[40]" (Becker 2002) protected me from rapid and hazardous generalisations and holistic temptations. The saturation effect has been abundantly reached through the collection of this important number of biographical trajectories, perhaps even "too important". Analysis has been therefore extremely long and, in some cases, even redundant.

For these reasons, in the analysis, I have distinguished and selected a limited number of individuals whose paths and trajectories seemed particularly significant to me. "Significant" involves here two elements. It means illustrative of a huge number of similar patterns and/or particularly rich and insightful trajectories in terms of experiences, practices and mobilities. In this regard, the opportunities and possibilities I could negotiate on the field sites have influenced the copiousness and the quality of the material collected. In some cases, the opportunity and constraint structure enabled me to develop a particularly close relationship with some informants, with whom I had the chance to spend long periods of time.

For instance, this is the case of Xiao Mei, a woman I have helped to divorce in Taiwan and who re-migrated to China. Part 5 of this work about re-migration from Taiwan to China is thus constructed by following

practices between China and Taiwan. I have met and interviewed thirty returnees during my field campaign in China in 2018.

5. Graphical Synthesis of Field-sites

Methodological Synthesis					
Method **Site**	Physical Ethnography	Interviews	Virtual Ethnography	Documentation and Archives	Statistical Treatment of data and graphical mappings
Rural China	- 1 month 2016: ethnography in village in Anhui -2 weeks in 2017 ethnography in a village in Guangxi -3 months in 2018: ethnography in villages in Guangdong and Chongqing provinces	Daily dialogues and conversations formalized recorded interviews with 7/141 previously interviewed informants	2015-2019: Social networks on *WeChat*; individual conversations on *WeChat*		
Urban China	-2 months in 2016 (Ningbo, Zhongshan): ethnography of the factories -1 week in November 2017 (Rizhao): in situ observation of Lily's post return career -1 week in March 2017 (Fuzhou), tracking Zhang Jing's business trip -1 week in June 2017 (Canton), tracking Huan Jin's business trip -2 months in 2018 (Shenzhen, Zhongshan, Dongguan), tracking returnees' careers	30 interviews with divorced re-migrant women (12/30 with women already met in Taiwan)			Statistical treatment of data through R Orbital careers traced on GEPHI

Methodological Synthesis					
Method **Site**	Physical Ethnography	Interviews	Virtual Ethnography	Documentation and Archives	Statistical Treatment of data and graphical mappings
Taiwan	-3 months in 2015 (Taipei, Hsinchu): in situ observations of women's daily lives, networks' activities and ethnography of Associations -9 months in 2016/2017, Taipei, Hsinchu, Taoyuan, Linkou, Hukou: ethnography of economic practices and daily routines; networks' gatherings, associative activities, and English courses -1 week in Jinmen island in April 2017, tracking Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao's business trip -2 weeks in March 2018 (Taipei), to re-meet my previous informants, following Xiao Mei's travel back to Taiwan	111 interviews with migrant women		Documentation by CARES and by the Taiwanese Association for Research on Labor and Social Policies -Immigration policies and data collection about cross-strait marriage-migration at Academia Sinica Library -Data statistics on marriage migration by the MOI	-Women's biographical, migratory careers represented through GEPHI -Economic translocal circuits though GEPHI -Statistical treatment of data through R

Part 3: On the Move

Migratory routes and paths are both real and virtual "tanks for imagination" (Lago 2007), which shape and forge, align and redirect movements, displacements and circulations. The navigational spaces connect different and mutable places where the adventures and the experiences of migrants take form. The imaginative geography of migration materialises into real, physical sites of mobility and immobility, but it is forged by and through social, emotional and affectional practices which define spaces and experiences.

Mobile situations and situations of mobility are produced and appropriated by the actors. They undergo constant processes of emotional and affectional territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation generated by and, at their turn, sustaining objects and subjects' movements. Navigations and roaming become in migrants' imaginaries new metaphors for existence. They enable passages, continuities and discontinuities in the life trajectories, oriented towards new lands for adventure and new *Ithacas* to discover. Ordeals, uncertainties and sufferings represent tempests in the navigation. However, metaphorical shipwrecks are also opportunities for innovative adaptations, creative negotiations, reinterpretations and success.

Women's migrations are manifold, mutable and polyform. The roads they take and the spaces they cross are not "smooth" but often significantly "striated" (

encounter, new disorders, contestations and transgressive practices are produced by creative subjectivities seeking to "take their place" within the social worlds they are *in motion* positioned in. Geographical, social, moral and emotional spaces are connected, discussed, contested and produced by the experiences and the situated practices of the people who traverse them. Situations can vary, and so do the repertories of resources and knowledge migrants can mobilise. The symbolic alphabets deeply depend on actors' practices and perceptions, intentions, aspirations and hopes, which are at the core of this analysis. But let's start from the very beginning of the narration.

Chapter 1: The Paradigm of Rural to Urban Migration

Imagination, as the capacity to make present that which is absent (Feagin and Maynard 1997; Illouz 2009) is the socially and emotionally constructed frame inside which the life of the orange, fluorescent bra begins. This object was socially and emotionally born even before its material fabric around the assembly line of a factory in Southern China. Its biography began before industrial production. It emerged far from urban factories, in the rural areas of inner Chinese provinces from which its producers come from. It is in the Chinese countryside that the story of the bra begins. Therefore, it is in rural areas that, before migration, objects and subjects' biographies and geographies encounter, mingle and progressively juxtapose. Tracking the roads, the routes and the paths that the orange, fluorescent bra crosses requires, at this stage, to make few steps back from the East Coast of China where multinational textile companies are implanted. We need to move West, towards the inner provinces where the producers of the bra – rural migrant women- have spent their childhood and their time before migration.

Women come from rural villages in inner China, and it is from there that they will take the road to urban areas. Individually and collectively, from the countryside to the city, women *move* and are *put on the move*. A precise mobility regime (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) frames their displacements. The technologies of the State, the institution of the Market and precise administrative devices all at once interplay to facilitate, condition and orient movement. Despite its distance from the global cities where transational enterprises are located, the tentacles of the governmentality devices reach rural villages to "capture, orient, determine, intercept and control the gestures, the behaviours, the opinions of individuals" (Agamben 1995), what Foucault (1975) has defined as a *device*. Rural migrants' paths are thus directed towards the coastal cities, where they can sell their labour in the industrial apparatus of the global labour market (Solinger 1999; Pun 2005; Roulleau-Berger 2015).

Nevertheless, as Bruno Latour has metaphorically argued, it is imprecise to affirm that a pilot or a plane flies: "flying is a property of the whole association of entities that include airports and airplanes, launch pads and ticket counters" (2004: 13). Migrating and migrations are generated from and, at their turn, produce constellations of inter-actions, and negotiations, or even collisions, among different actors, norms and orientations. Individuals are put on move, but they also do move by themselves.

Analysing migration and biographical career-making only under the prism of *device* could be inappropriate to apprehend and seize the heterogeneity of motivations, the diversity of individuals'

decisions, as well as the plurality of creative responses to the structural constraints that women face *on the road*. As claimed by King (2000), the tendency to reify a system, or a device – thus a mechanical functioning within the opportunities and constraints structure- impedes correct understanding of the diverse and sometimes unstable, floating and variable patterns of migration. Shaped and re-shaped, they are fluid and flexible. An *aspirational infrastructure*[42] (Shrestha 2018) emerges and supports individuals' projections. There, they can constantly negotiate positions and statuses, according to the social, economic and emotional resources they can capitalise on the road.

In this sense, the *mobility regime*[43] (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) inside which rural-to-urban migrations are inscribed reveals to be rather complex and multiform. Migratory paths, their directions and their orientations are certainly shaped by a precise *device* forged by the alliance between the logics of the state, the market and a discourse of modernity. However, such an influence is only partial. Women's aspirations, imaginaries and ambitions interplay within these logics, supporting new configurations and creative translations of the imposed orientations and a constellation of possibilities. Aspirations represent "the capacity to imagine futures" (Sellar and

Strategically allying with the State, in search of offshore production relocation in the new age of the expansion of global capitalism (Harvey 2007), the logics of the Market and of global production have penetrated the country and produced a precise *discourse on modernity*. The encounter between the State and the Market has generated a redefinition of the *mobility regime*, where labour relations and labour allocation intensify the scale and scope of migration, influencing the directions and shape of rural-to-urban migrations. Globalisation and the transnationalisation of the local market have largely contributed to frame migrations and movements within Chinese society and economics. These have undergone a sudden, unexpected and incredibly rapid metamorphosis in a global, globalised and globalising direction.

1.1. Extraction, reforms and new labouring subjects

"Setting China on the track of globalisation" (*yu quanqiu jiegui* 與全球接軌) has been the slogan implemented by Chinese government, allied to the translocal market since the late 1970s. Reforms were perceived as necessary to break the socialist tradition of collectivism (Oi 1999). It was imperative to support the penetration of the increasingly visible hands of translocal markets, which, at the crossroad between global trade and local migrations could draw new *geographies of extraction* (Sassen 2014).

Reforms began in the countryside, where the Maoist commune system of collective economy was progressively dismantled and replaced by the policy of "contracting production to households" (Oi 1999), namely the "Household responsibility system" (*hukou zhidu* 戶口制度). This rapidly led to the revival of a petty peasant economy made up of individual families in which the household was the basic economic unit (Pun 1999, 2005). It was a major departure from the socialist collective economy, aimed at promoting growth in rural trade and increasing the commodification of the means of production, agricultural produce and overall marketisation (Li 2013). In the 1980s the State introduced a series of policy measures that consolidated the household contracted production responsibility system and stabilized land contract relationships in the countryside (Sollinger 1999).

However, this reform was in essence a re-creation of the small peasant economy production model in the Chinese countryside (Oi 1999; Gallagher 2005). Despite an initial, rapid improvement in rural production forces, the fundamental weakness of the small peasant economy soon became apparent as the pattern if the market economy guided by the penetration of global capitals took shape, proving to be unproductive and uncompetitive in the market (Gallagher 2005). The small peasant production

mode of individual household farming led to low levels of agricultural industrialization (Lee 1998; Pun 1999): peasants could only supply the market with primary rural products with little added value (Pun 2005). As the reforms advanced, the countryside was drawn deeper into the great tide of marketization, and peasants' livelihoods became severely dependent on the market and cash incomes (Li and Tian 2010). Moreover, having lost their collective economy as their foundation, it was no longer possible to provide for the welfare and social security previously enjoyed under the collective system (Li 2013).

Under such circumstances, it became hard to continue living in the petty peasant economy. Reforms have thus been implemented in the contradictory frame of Chinese compressed modernity (Chang 1999; Roulleau-Berger 2018): a "telescoping" where "pre-modern, modern and post-modern regimes" (Roulleau-Berger 2018) mix and merge, oscillating between socialism and sui generis capitalism (Roulleau-Berger and Yan 2017: 4). Thereby, rural people were forced to abandon their land and move to the cities to seek other means of survival and living. This was the origin of the emergence of the "migrant worker tide" (Lee 1998; Pun 2005), and the creation of "new labouring subjects" (Pun 1999, 2007) who enabled China's rise to "the factory of the world". This vast rural population represented a crucial, strategic resource for China's industrialisation and urbanisation.

Meanwhile, reforms were carried out in the urban spaces. In the 1980s, the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) signified the opening of China's urban economy to export-industrial development: a departure from socialist economy that had been the bedrock of Maoism (Yang 2006). SEZs were developed in coastal China as a window to attract foreign investment via Hong Kong and, later, Taiwan, but also Korea and Japan. Southern provinces, *in primis* Guangdong province, the Pearl River Delta area (*Zhu san jiao* 珠三角[44]) and the city of Shenzhen, were the major centres of industrial zones, factory compounds, and workers' dormitories. In 2001, China's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) represented a complete incorporation of the Chinese economy into the arena of global markets. Without the support of the State, township enterprises could hardly compete with the foreign joint-ventures (Pun 2005). Thereby, labour in small and medium state-owned enterprises declined rapidly in the 1990s, which lead to restructuring and privatizations (Shen 2006). The State was investing in infrastructural projects (airports, roads, highways, new means of communication...) and promoting preferential policies and measures for foreign investors – such as exemption from taxes,

[44] The area where most of local and transnational factories, joint ventures and industrial compounds are located in: the cities of Shenzhen, Canton, Dongguan, Huizhou, Zhongshan, Foshan, etc.

free provision of industrial lands, and investment benefits (Li 2000; Pun 2005). Simultaneously, this rapid and targeted development of coastal areas (*yanhai chengshi* 沿海城市) economies – Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces- was accompanied by a massive harnessing of young rural workers, in particular unmarried women (Lee 1998; Pun 1999, 2005; Yan 2008).

The government actively coordinated the transfer of rural surplus labour (*nongcun shengyu laodong zhuangli* 農村剩余勞動專利) to the booming cities, to support local and global extraction logics. Sun Liping's (2005) insightful expression "the factory mirrors contemporary society[45]" reflects this historical paradox. It elucidates the societal magnitude and the impact of the transformation of the socialist redistribution system to a flexible market system. This led to an increased segmentation of the labour market (Roulleau-Berger 2013b), together with the multiplication of *floating* labour experiences (Roulleau-Berger 2003, 2009), especially for low-qualified rural workers.

The Chinese state has thereby played a crucial role in promoting rural to urban migration and creating a new labour market to serve the export-oriented industrialization. From the 1990s, a close cooperation between local authorities of the inner provinces and coastal cities municipalities and enterprises was developed (Lee 1998; Shen 2006; Shen and Wen 2014). As demonstrated by

integration of individuals' aspirations to achieve personal wellbeing. Following this line of thought, the National New-type Urbanisation Plan (2014-2020) has been put into effect (Taylor 2015), together with the measures promoted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development[46] (MOHURD) to facilitate modernisation and urbanisation in rural China, implementing a depreciating, negative and devaluating image of the inner provinces, countryside and, implicitly, peasants and their rural lifestyle. In this social, political and institutional context, a crystal ball is not necessary to predict that rural migrants' movements, migrations and circulations are not nearly over.

It is in this frame that the rural world from which rural women come from is socially, economically, morally and emotionally constructed. The strategically negative image of rural villages and countryside spread by modernity, global capitalism and State's discourse strengthens the desire of migrating, of abandoning the village to move towards global cities. The discourse of modernity sustains an interiorization of a depreciating image of rural areas and strengthens women's desire to move. Migrations are socially and emotionally constructed as long and tortuous patterns towards modern-subjectivity making processes, through which young girls are convinced of the chance to achieve an urban, independent and autonomous status, unobtainable in rural areas. To concurrently understand this complex articulation between the practices and the discourses which socially and emotionally support a disqualified image of rural women, let's look to the ways women describe their social and moral positioning inside their rural villages of origin.

1.2. Water spilt on the ground

"I grew up in a rural village in

brother’s education.

Women are told since their childhood to “stay at their place”. They are supposed to follow pre-established codes of conduct and perform roles: a duty of taking care or the parents, of the house, and an injunction to future marriage in the village. At the very same time,

When compared to Shenzhen, the village looked like a place from a bygone age. In the middle of rice fields, it was mainly composed of a few brick houses, in front of which people were gathering to talk, play cards and majiang, eating sunflower seeds. There were not many crops. Farming did not seem to be the main activity of people, but most of the households were breeding chicken and ducks. The celebrations for the New Year hadn't started yet and the place still looked quite empty: rural migrant workers hadn't come back home yet, and the population of the village was mainly composed of children, elderly people and some young pregnant women. However, the atmosphere looked joyful: local people knew that their relatives, family members and co-villagers return home soon for the holidays, bringing presents, food and money back home. Despite the State's injunctions to modernisation of agriculture, infrastructures relocation and reconstruction, and rural development[51], the buildings in the village were old and crumbling. Also, hygienical conditions were quite insalubrious, the lodgings lacking most of the facilities (toilets, showers, running water) which are readily available in the urban environment.

Figure 12 The interior of Betty parents' house in Xingning (Meizhou, Guangdong province). February 2018.

[51] For details about the policies of *Xing nongcun* 新農村 , See Oi, Rural China Takes Off: Institutional Foundations of Economic Reform (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999; Deng Zhenglai (Ed.), 2009: *China's Economy. Rural Reform and Agricultural Development,* World Scientific.

Figure 13 Betty's rural village of Xingning (Meizhou, Guangdong province). February 2018.

Betty's family included her parents, working in local factories in Shenzhen, two brothers, also residing in Shenzhen but working on the construction sites (gongdi 工地), and their wives, who moved back and forth between the rural village, where their children lived, and Shenzhen, where their husbands worked. That evening, Betty's relatives gathered for dinner at her place. Around the table, there were thus her two uncles, her father, her grandfather and two neighbours. Women were cooking traditional tofu in pork sauce, and so did Betty. Being a guest, I meanwhile had to sit down and drink traditional rice alcohol (mijiu 米酒) with the male members of the family.

Figure 14 Some women cook dinner in the kitchen, while others clean vegetables in front of the house. Betty's sisters-in-law prepare the vegetables cultivated in the garden in front of the lodgings for dinner. Xingning. February 2018.

Dinner was served, but the women did not join us. They would have eaten in the kitchen, as they still needed to prepare the food for the following day. Suddenly, a young girl opened the door and furtively squeezed into the kitchen.

> […] Try to behave well these days, do not disappoint your father, you will go to Shenzhen very soon."

Xiao Lin answered:

> "I am so bored of this place, I am looking forward to Shenzhen. Sister, you know that they want to arrange a marriage for me? I feel so unhappy and frustrated, I want to earn my money and buy what I want […] I do not want anybody to check on what I do […] I am too young to get married […] Look! (she takes a pair of sunglasses out of her pocket) Look at what Wangbo (her cousin) brought me back from Shenzhen, I love these glasses […] I want to be like you, you are free, you live in Taiwan and nobody can control you. Oh, I envy you! Did you bring me presents from Taiwan? Did you bring me clothes? Mom said that you brought many things back".

This snapshot of rural ordinary life helps us to better position young girls within their community in the countryside. It might support an understanding of their choices of migrating. In the design and definition of the migratory project, the moral duty to support the family, as well as social norms which draw a pre-established, incontestable life pattern for women are not the only factors framing individuals' choices.

women are “trapped in” (Zani 2018b). Mobility and movement turn to be for women an act of progressive contestation, transgression and rupture within situated and localised hierarchies and fixed social and moral positionings. It is within this frame that the design and the construction of women’s career must be situated.

2.2. Fancy Glasses and the Rhetoric of Modernity

Women's rural-to-urban migrations must be inscribed within the broader frame of an unprecedent, rapid, and uncontrolled change of Chinese society during the Reform era, from 1980s onward. The passage from a rigid planned economy to a market economy has been simultaneously produced and promoted by the state and the global market. The market economy was thus socially and politically constructed (Grannovetter 1994). It was accompanied by, and implemented through, a specific (new) cultural discourse about modernity and modernisation. In the quest for modernity in post socialist-China, it urged to open Chinese society and economics to private enterprises and global markets.

The abrupt advent of capitalist apparatus in regulating not only economic, but also social and cultural life generated and supported a doubled-edged biopolitical modern project, which indirectly invested individuals' lives and existences (Pun 2005). Juan's description of her community of origin and of local people suggest the extent to which a precise discourse of modernity on modernity had penetrated rural areas, promoting a disqualified representation of the countryside ad of peasants. Individuals' understanding of their social, economic and moral positioning inside their rural communities of origin are influenced by this retrograde and backyard representation, aimed at sustaining their movements towards the city:

> "I had three wishes when I went working to Shanghai: buying a nice mobile phone, buying some new clothes, and buying a computer. I wanted to learn how to use it […] I wanted to leave my village, there was nothing there. The city was my future. It was modern and developed. I wanted to live there, I wanted to leave Fuyang, get a job and become rich."
>
> **Juan**, Thirty-four years old, Anhui native, Taipei, 27.12.2016

Juan's words suggest the progressive construction by rural women of a precise, idyllic and idealised image of the city: a place where upward social mobility can be possible, a place "to become rich in", as Juan said. Such a socially and emotionally produced representation support the desire by women of performing urbanity and modernity, as subjectivity-making processes and life practices. Xiao Lin or Juan's words are hence imbued with emotions of excitement and enthusiasm as for mobility and labour migration.

Also, and not less importantly, the fancy, fluorescent glasses bought by

(Harvey 1989: 143). Fancy glasses, as well as the bags Betty brought back to the village from the city generate and, at their turn, sustain, emotions of impatience and fervour as for migration and urban employment experiences. Consumption objects which circulate from the urban to the rural areas sustain a social and emotional construction by rural people of an ideal of middle-class modern, consumerist living (Yan 2008).

New subjective models appear in contradiction or even opposition to the previous ones. The conception of the present *self* is founded on an idealisation of potential *selves* (Strauss 1957), related to personal aspirations and oriented towards a project of *becoming*. Through this work of imagination, the orange, fluorescent bra comes to life. It is generated from and, at its turn, sustains new emotions of aspiration and ambition, oriented towards status transformation and moral re-positioning. As an emblem of modernity and of status transformation, the orange bra does not exist as an actuality yet, but as a potentiality. It is a project of imaginative becoming.

Along these lines, the fancy glasses Xiao Lin was offered and the emotions she constructed around it suggest the extent to which material culture and emotions are co-produced: they can mix and merge. These glasses turn into an "operational combination" (

contribute to forge such imaginary.

Fascinated by the modern possibilities of urban consumption and metropolitan lifestyle, Wen Lin co-constructed a double discourse about her present, which needs transformation, and her future, which requires biographical, spatial and social transitions. It is at the crossroad between this imaginary and the certainty she developed of the possibility to mobilise social resources that she designed her project. In the city, she claimed, she could benefit of the help, social and economic support of her family members and fellow villages who also reside in urban Cantonese cities, and who, according to her, have already turned into city dwellers, and improved their *suzhi*, becoming modern, urban and independent subjects.

Whereas Maoism had cast the peasants as "revolutionary" (Jacka 2018: 1344), post-Maoist discourse increasingly pictured peasants and rural population as an obstacle to modernisation (Zavoretti 2017). Aimed at raising the "quality" of the national population, as well as reducing its quantity, this core element in the state's efforts to improve economic growth and achieve modernisation was apparently impeded by an enormous "low-quality" peasantry (Sollinger 1999). Through the idea of *suzhi*, modernity set a "pedagogical project" (Pun 2005). It spread an idyllic image of the city: urban work experience is a good opportunity to improve oneself, to ameliorate one's own *suzhi*. Mei Rong, Xiao Lin or Juan have all clearly expressed their desire of subjectivity transformation and their ambition to become a modern, urban subject.

At the crossroad between local and global political economics, rural-to urban migration is a key outcome of the strategies of flexible accumulation and logics of extraction of both domestic and global markets. Individuals *move* and are, concurrently, *put on move*, through technologies of power (Foucault 1975; Pun 2005). They mobilise migrant workers' bodies, through a transformation of their subjectivities, a normalisation of their conducts and a precise orientation of their migratory paths. The manipulation operates at the level of the needs, the lacks and the desires of young rural women who do not only desire to become proletarians, but also modern consumers (Pun 2005, 2007), buying "a computer, a self-phone and a fancy bag", as Juan explained.

To the consumerist image of modern, urban subject, Mei Rong opposed the representation of uneducated and miserable rural people: figures drawn in the negation of their *suzhi*: those who missed, and who currently lack the qualities of modern, consumerist, self-made subjects. It is thus up to the city to allow rural migrants to become civilized citizens and proper consumers (Thireau 1988; Yan 2008; Zavoretti 2017):

“I remember that I left the countryside with my sister, she brought me to

In this sense, the paradigm of China's rural to urban migration is thus simultaneously endorsed by the State, the Market institutions and a discourse of Modernity as self-evident, taken for granted in both urban citizens discourses and practices, but also, paradoxically, on the self-perception (Scott 2015) of the rural people themselves. It is therefore a matter of political, economic, social and, definitely cultural construction of a *reality*: "a product of institutional imposition and preservation of a hegemonic relation to the world" (Boltanski 2009: 97), a collective frame of interpretation, a screen which separates the individuals, or -in this case certain individuals- from the world, imbued with a specific significance.

3. Becoming *Dagong Mei*

3.1. The *mei* who becomes *dagong*

This relationship of necessary co-determination of the individual, as a subject, to the social is questionable and requires further discussion. Globalisation and "modernity at large" indeed contribute to the fabrics of new working subjects, which are positioned under the constraint of new social and economic norms (Butler 2004). It cannot be denied that at the crossroad between a labour surplus, global economy and national political economy, new *dagong* 打工 subjects have been strategically constructed by the state and the market to increase productivity and rural labour exploitation. The meaning of the word *dagong* elucidates this critical process and embodies the logics of extraction of the labour on which current economics are built. *Dagong* signifies "working for a boss", "selling labour", connoting the marketization and commodification of the labour exchange. It embodies a de-skilled work (Pun 1999) exchanged in any informal environment based on temporary contracts (Harvey 2007: 285). In contrast to the term *gongren* 工人 (worker), largely employed during Maoism (Pun 2005), this new word *dagong* means a lesser status in a context shaped by the rise of market factors in labour relations and hierarchy (Shen 2006; Shen and Wei 2014). Young peasant-workers are usually called *dagong* 打工 *mei* 妹/ *zai* 仔, labouring girls/ boys, which is a new gendered labour subject (Pun 1999), produced at the socio-historical moment when the private global market penetrated China.

Nevertheless, the design and construction of the mobility project oriented towards the urban space of life and work cannot be reduced to a mere effect of labour extraction and of global market profit-making logics. The situation seems to be more complex, malleable and mutable. Becoming *dagong*

mei as a mobility path and subjectivity-making process is situated and situationally constructed. It is a processual, *mobile* project of transition and of transformation, sustained by reflexive competences and by the progressive capitalisation of social and emotional resources to transform the present through motion. Let's take

wanted a different life, I did not want to remain a *cungu* 村姑 (rural, uneducated girl) like my mother or my grandmother".

Ding Ding, Taipei, 28.12.2016

If the discourse of modernity about urban development and opportunities in the city is omnipresent in

making. When Ding Ding formulated her migratory project, she did not only highlight her desire to live in a modern urban environment – associated with colourful buildings, trendy sunglasses, shopping malls, cinemas and nightclubs- but also to improve her status, for example by taking professional classes in the evening. The reflexive understanding of situations and the capacity of projection interact with the discourse of modernity[53], enabling its subjective interpretation, and translation into practice. Taking the road, and making a mobility career turn into dynamic, malleable and contingent processes of appropriation of subjectivities. Ding Ding, Xiao Hong, or Juan's project of becoming *dagong mei* was not simply oriented in becoming labouring subjects. The opportunities offered by the urban social world could, at their eyes, open for new multiple positionings. This means that individuals can be subjects, objects, but also actors. They can be authors of their future existence, shaped in motility, transition, transformation and projection towards new *horizons*, new lands to discover and new seas to navigate.

3.2. Taking the road, entering a career

Entering a migratory career takes place firstly on the level of social, economic and emotional projection towards the future. It is primarily a matter of *motility* (Kaufmann et al. 2004), hence of imagination, than a process of mobility itself. Women need to identify the road they can take and the social and economic resources they can mobilise to achieve the project. The work of *imagination* operates at the stage of the discovery of the unknown: it is generated from and, at its turn, is supported by a "tank of imaginaries" (Lago 2007), representations and emotions. From this level, when taking the road, imagination turns into a practice, aimed at transformation, to mark a breaking point, a disjuncture, thus a rupture with the present. It opens for possibilities of transition, of change, of reorientation of biographical paths. To put it with Lukacs' words, it is an *adventure*, "the history of a soul who goes into the world to learn to know itself, looking for adventures to challenge itself, and through these challenges can discover its real essence" (2001:85).

Navigation and adventure characterise

finished high school at the age of fourteen and her family had no means of supporting further education for her. Her brother had already left the village to work *dagong* in Southern China. Her feelings and sentiments were, as she states, confused and ambivalent:

> "I did not know what to do: I wanted to keep on studying, but we had no money [she cries], each semester cost 500 *kuai* 塊 RMB[54] and I was living with 5 *kuai* per week! 5 *kuai* per week, can you imagine? Today with 5 *kuai* you can't even buy a meal […] That's why I did not know what to do: I also wanted to become independent soon and earn my own money […] My father said that it was not worthy to invest money on my education, he would not have borrowed money for my school. He had this very conservative mentality and thought that girls do not deserve education […] I wanted to leave that place […] I earn money for my family, but I did not want to give the money to my dad because I was upset with him: he did not allow me to keep on studying, and even though it was not his mistake, I remember that we had a fight about that. I did not like his *zhongnan qingnü* mentality. Today I regret so much not having gone to school […] I decided to go to

A cartography of the emotional discourses produced by women when making their decision to leave can help to seize and apprehend the uniqueness of individuals' motivations, and the sense they attribute to their actions inside the very microcosms they are situated in. Sentiments, feelings and emotions are the cornerstone of such analysis, since they reveal an intimate dimension, intrinsically subjective, which largely supports decision-making and configures the field of future possibilities. Emotions are a form of social action, and they contribute to the performance of action(s), by creating effects in the world (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990: 12).

gap between the urban and the rural, between adolescence and adulthood. The transition allows the young migrant to project herself towards future possibilities, of geographical and social mobility and new status attainment. Simultaneously, it is a matter of transgressing social order, gender hierarchies and rural regimes of normativity by challenging a subaltern condition no longer desired.

At the very beginning of the new biographical configuration, the tension between past and future constitutes the point of coagulation of the new meanings attributed to the present, which is perceived as an opaque, immobile horizon. Mobility and immobility emerge in dialogue: they jumble together, following the rhythm of the biographical steps and of mobility paths.

The rural past is opposed to the future: the articulation becomes mobile and implies a reconfiguration *in motion* of the further biographical and professional steps. Women's expression of feelings shows the contradictory, ambivalent dimension of this biographical transition: excitement and curiosity, but also a sense of duty, fear, uncertainty and anxiety for the unknown define the contours of the new temporalities and spatialities of biographical and migratory positionings.

Rites of passage are crucial in establishing a new positional definition of the *mei* who becomes *dagong*, and enable the preparation of migration which, on an emotional level, temper and defuse the frightening impact of the unknown (Law 2014).

Chapter 2: Internal Pluri-migrations, Globalised Labour Regimes, and Subalternity

The *rite of passage*, represented by the trip, the physical and moral abandonment of the community of origin projects young rural women into the new present of the *cityscape*. As demonstrated by anthropologists, *in primis* Van Gennep (1981), rites of passage are "patterns which involve separation, liminality, alterity and incorporation". These give rhythm to the migratory career and to individuals' life patterns, shaped in motion.

The tempo of migrations is fluctuating. Movements are erratic and variable. They produce a plurality of configurations among the different spaces, places, temporalities and emotions. Routes and roads are "striated" (

factory labour regime and urban life. The making of the bra generates ambivalent emotions, which are concurrently positive and negative (Zembylas 2010). In this sense, on the one hand, it is a matter of individual and collective suffering, of frustration, of desolation and of tiredness. On another hand, when emotions enter the intersubjective sphere of social interaction and affectional ties, they vary, mutate and can be progressively re-framed towards the making of new imaginative and creative projects.

Based on and co-producing emotional dynamics, this artefact generates and, at its turn, supports, new socialisation processes amongst rural migrants who progressively gather together around the assembly line of the factory they work in together. Social resources represented by migrant networks meet heterogeneous repertories of emotions during the mobility and labour paths. To some extent, this encounter contributes to the transition and transformation of individuals' practices, experiences, subjectivities and projects. The social life of this object, intuitively associable to experiences of labour exploitation and sufferings at work, progressively and interactively is built through individual and collective social practices and emotional performances. The bra is individually and collectively, materially and emotionally transformed into a project of negotiation, of contestation, and of transgression.

1. Geographies of Migrations, Smooth Circulations, and Striated Displacements

1.1. Orienting and controlling migratory paths

We had left Xiao Hui at the train station, carrying her little luggage full of ambivalent emotions of expectation and excitement, fear and doubt, desire and perplexity. Her path is constructed through the mobilisation of social resources: she travelled with a fellow-villager and, at the train station in Dongguang, an uncle was waiting for her. In the frame of motility, Xiao Hui had reflexively designed the path she needed to take, to lessen risk and limit the feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Hence, she took the train, leaving behind rural Sichuan to adventure herself into the "promised land" of Guangdong province:

"When I arrived in

animals. Everything looked messy (*luan* 亂) and dangerous[…] The train was so crowded that people jumped out of the window […] I remember that I was hungry and a woman gave me some bread […] As soon as I went out from the station, I saw the police checking on people […] I asked my co-villager what was happening, and she said that it was normal, it happened all the time: the police was verifying the residency permits (*zan zhuzheng* 暫住證) […] I had none, and I had no I

urban location. Since the implementation of this policy, household registration was inherited from one's mother (Solinger 1999) and could be changed only by fulfilling several overlapping conditions, which have varied over time, such as a high education diploma, urban-based employment, a certain level of salary and the property of a house in the city. As a result, people registered as rural dwellers could legally only resettle in those areas defined as "urban" only by state-sanctioned relocation -what

36-38).

project for their future. Opening new spaces for imagination and self-projection, globalisation and modernity contributed to the transformation of migratory paths and orientations. As previously shown, since 1980s, rural-to-urban migrations progressively imposed as a *praxis* in the rural areas. Progressively, entire households and families abandoned the villages to temporarily work in the cities.

February 2018. Liaobu (Dongguan).

While living at Xiao

This explanation elucidates the intergenerational variation of migratory ambitions and projects, which shape, re-define and re-orient mobility paths and biographical trajectories. This generational gap reveals new processes of construction of the *self* among what has been qualified by Li and Li (2013) as the "new generation of migrant workers" (*xin shengdai nonmingong* 新生代農民工), *i.e.* young rural people born after 1980 (80 后). The desire of long-term urban integration, modernity, autonomy and consumerism digs a trench which is synchronic -generational- and diachronic -temporal. Xiao

不離鄉), “entering the factory without entering the city” (*jinchang bu jincheng* 進廠不進城). To restate Sayad’s expression (1999), while migration was characterised by “a sentiment of provisional” (Sayad 1999: 111) for the first generation, for the contemporary generation of migrant workers it is a matter of “a sentiment of durable provisional, which leads to a new repertory of practices, influencing the perception of the social world” (1999: 112).

1.3. “I bring you here, you bring me there”

The youngest generation of migrant workers has complexified and diversified according to the paths and the circulations of previous generations, which opened and led the way. They represented the initiators of a family or village migrant lineages, transmitting migratory and, progressively, circulatory knowledge to the youngest. Xiao Hui did not leave the village alone: she followed a co-villager, that she called an “older sister” (*jiejie* 姐姐), who was already living and working in Dongguan. When they arrived at the train station, after hiding from police controls, an older co-villager, friend of

Networks are crucial in facilitating migration (Massey et al. 1993; Peraldi 2002; Portes 2003) and in sustaining the achievement of the migratory project. Individuals, both in their rural community and in the city, engage in interactions and networking with pre-established contacts to survive, to negotiate employment and living opportunities and to gain access to new social resources (Lin 1982). Xiao Hui followed her "older sister" (*jiejie*) and relied on her uncle's support as soon as she arrived in

> "When I arrived in Shenzhen, I was with a couple of fellow villagers, and that gave me a sense of security. I was young and naïve, and Shenzhen was a big city. I did not understand much at that time […] If I look back, I think I was very silly (*sha* 傻) when I first moved to Shenzhen […] My co-villagers immediately brought me to the electronic factory they were working in. One of the people responsible for their sector (*bufen* 部分) was also from our village (*laoxiang*) and he helped me to enter the factory and to get the job without asking too many questions".
>
> **Qiu Qiu**, Thirty-three years old, Hubei native, Taipei, 06.06.2017
>
> "I was young and excited but I did not know what to expect in Canton […] It was the first time I left my parents and my village, so I was also a bit scared […] I went to Canton as there were people there (*you ren* 有人), some friends of my sister who could have helped me. Before leaving, I checked some pictures of Canton on my phone, it looked great, so developed and rich! I knew I did not have to worry as people would have found a job for me".
>
> **Rui Qi**, Thirty-two years old, Henan native, Hukou, 25.04.2017

Women's tales indicate the importance of social networks as both social and emotional resources. They provide women with information, knowledge and opportunities, but also with affections and moral support. The fact of "knowing someone" (*you ren, you guanxi* 有人有關系) here and there, of having social connections, is a useful tool to lessen sentiments of fear, anxiety and uprooting which characterise the first migratory ordeal: "where there are people, there is a family", as clearly stated by Xiao Hui.

In his *From the Soil* (1947,1968), Chinese sociologist Fei Xiao Tong has depicted the principles of Chinese social organisation and developed an important analysis of the crucial role interpersonal relations and networks -*shehui guanxi* 社會關系- can play in the making and shaping of migratory paths.

attachment, crucial for women when facing the condition of precarity, vulnerability and uncertainty which often characterise the making of their urban careers in the city.

The feelings of attachment and affections spread by and through migrants' networks indirectly make the link with the communitarian, rural and familiar past, source of protection and certainties. *Guanxi* not only play an "inordinate" role in the redistribution of goods and resources. Also, they serve as an important means for ordinary people to "subvert the state power as exercised through the state redistributive economy" (

of justification" (Boltanski 2009): an imperative of productivity, development and modernisation. The previous labour regime based on a normative order inherited by socialism met the contemporary forms of capitalism, producing new inequalities, stratifications and forms of violence (Roulleau-Berger 2014b: 25). The political and economic fabrics of mobilities follows a precise strategy of *labour extraction* (Sassen 2014) and exploitation. The new "spirit" of global capitalism (Boltanski and Chiappello 1999) proves its capacity to order and arrange rural migrants' labour into a new urban, industrial labour market, characterised by flexibility, precarity and a strong segmentation (Shen and Wen 2014:144). Labour becomes more and more precarious and unstable. It generates new inequalities, hierarchies and situations of violence that migrant workers need to cope with (Roulleau-Berger 2013b, 2015).

The *hukou* system produced a *de jure* separation between rural and urban areas and a *de facto* separation between workers endowed with and deprived of the *hukou*. Implicitly, this contributed to an increasing segmented structure of the labour market (Li 2013; Roulleau-Berger 2014a, 2015), which specifically targets migrants' labour. New segments of the market were created when the translocal, globalised market entered Chinese society and economics (Roulleau-Berger 2013b). It is precisely into these new disqualifying, hierarchical segments – principally industrial- that the hands of female migrants are employed. The capitalistic apparatus operates cleverly: migrants move and are put on move. Their migratory patterns are oriented where their labour is required.

Thereby,

another, from a factory to another multiply the economic inscriptions of young and disqualified migrant girls, which are characterised by growing social and economic insecurity, as well as strong forms of social contempt (Roulleau-Berger 2015). Following the logics of the market and of Chinese "compressed modernity" (Roulleau-Berger 2018), young women's labour converges towards precise locations and urban districts since networks of co-villagers are already installed there:

"I went to

Xiang, Twenty-nine years old, Hunan native, Sanchong (Taipei), 21.02.2017

here, but they are just lazy, and they do not work hard. They like to live a comfortable (*shufu* 舒服) life. Only we, we can work hard".

Meng Meng, Eighteen years old, Anhui native, Ningbo, 16.01.2016

The expression *fanshu mei* incarnates the rural prejudice which had been socially and emotionally constructed before migration and which follows rural women during their urban mobilities. Literally, the *fanshu* is the "sweet potato", while *mei* refers to a young girl. This expression makes a clear reference to the rural origin of Meng Meng, associated with the grass, synonym of dirtiness, insalubrity and misery. In the social imaginaries of local population, the *bendi ren*, the strangers -*waidi ren*- the migrant workers are pictured as "dirty" -like Meng Meng's hands- and represent a form of danger[59] (Thireau and2001: 36). Since I was a foreigner, both Meng Meng and I had the impression that I had been associated by that local woman to a respectable, educated and perhaps even wealthy subject. When she advised me not to eat her bread, the local woman indirectly related Meng Meng to an "abject body" (Butler 1993: 16), carrying the rural prejudice. Following Butler's analysis (1993), it becomes clear that "the materialization of the norm of bodily formation produces a domain of abjected bodies, *i.e.* a field of deformation, which in failing the quality as the full human, fortifies those regulatory norms" (Butler 1993: 16) and strengthen social hierarchies.

The "norm of bodily formation" (Butler 1993) incarnates a person who is expected to keep his hands clean, someone who does not cultivate fields or works in the factory. Social contempt, social and moral exclusion in the urban space follow semantic and verbal paths, producer of misrecognition and humiliations. Individual *selves* are "mortified", "spoiled" (

Juan is thirty-four years old and comes from rural Anhui. After her family decided not to invest in her education, she enthusiastically migrated to Shanghai, a city she thought that could change her life. She had entered an electronic factory through the intermediation of a fellow-village, who played an important role in the employment channel (Ambrosini 2018). However, after a few months, Juan felt exhausted by the industrial work and wished to change her job, but, as she claimed:

> "when you come from Anhui, Sichuan, Jiangxi provinces, this kind of places… it is not easy to find a job other than the factory. Shanghai people think that these places are messy and poor and that we have no *suzhi*".

Hence, she was re-employed at a textile factory. However, after a short time a co-villager gave her position to Juan as she had to move back to the village to get married. Juan initially had not fully understood what the job consisted of: she had apparently to be a cleaner at a public shower. Young and naïve, as she narrated, one day she asked to her boss why showers were so particularly expensive -500 *kuai* per shower- while she used to pay only 2/3 *kuai:*

> "The boss laughed at her and said: "'you are really a *cungu* 村姑 (rural, naïve girl), you really do not know how city life works, inside the showers people make love with prostitutes. If you want, we can have a shower together' […] I was shocked, and I felt humiliated by his words […] After he maltreated and made fun of me I decided to leave that job and to go back to the factory, the only place I could work at […]".
>
> **Juan**, Thirty-four years old, Anhui native, Taipei, 27.12.2016

Verbal maltreatments and moral violence threaten women's dignity, positioning their "spoiled" (Goffman 158) *selves* into a condition of strong vulnerability. Professional experiences and mobilities are fragmented by the emotional experiences of humiliation, misrecognition and violence women endure. Juan's ambitions and expectations towards the city of Shanghai and the possibilities she thought she could negotiate were progressively resized at each professional step, at each situation of social, professional or moral disrespect. Migratory paths and professional experiences reveal to be the stages for a plurality of moral injuries (Pollack 1995), which spread and split the initial significance attributed to migration, as well as the social, economic and emotional investments and engagements women have made.

Aju is thirty-five years old, Hubei native. She grew up in a rural village with five brothers and sisters and she acknowledged a "very strong *zhongnan qingnü* mentality" by her family. At the age of sixteen, she left home and moved to Guangdong province, since her parents did not have money to invest in her education:

> "We cannot choose where we come from, we cannot choose where we are born, but through our efforts we can improve our lives […]"

When she arrived in Dongguan, she carried with her a little luggage with a couple of underwear and t-shirts and, thanks to a network of migrant workers from Hubei province, she found a job at a fuel station.

Concurrently, feelings of determination, of ambition and of aspiration sustain the permanent work of imagination produced by women who, facing hierarchies and inequalities, keep pushing the perimeter of their experiences and existences towards the future. Social, economic and emotional positioning and re-positioning sustain and are simultaneously sustained by mobilities. In this sense, if it is true that migrant women *are put on the move* by the Chinese state and global market logics of profit-making, what might also be considered is that women *can move.* The choice of the city, or of the factory to integrate also derives from individuals' ambitions and emotions of determination and desire to improve oneself and to acquire new competences and capacities.

Undoubtedly, the segmented and stratified structure of the Chinese industrial labour market makes professional career opportunities mainly horizontal for migrant workers (Roulleau-Berger 2013b, 2015). However, moving from a province to another, from a city to another or to a company from another does not only correspond to the presence of social networks of migrant workers or of professional opportunities. Professional and working opportunities in the industrial sector of Southern Chinese labour market are omnipresent for lowly-qualified rural migrant workers. Translocal enterprises and multinational companies are constantly at the search of cheap labour to exploit. Therefore, movements and professional mobilities might be driven by other motivations too.

Aju's words are illustrative of the way labour regimes and the situations of employment (for instance hiring and firing processes) are socially and emotionally constructed. Entering and exiting an industrial site, acceding or abandoning a factory also correspond for women to the chance to realise their ambitions and their project of subjectivity and modern status making. Lowly-qualified, deprived of education and formalised skills, women do not have access to a huge the great majority of segments of the labour market. The market of employment is selective and hierarchical. They can basically integrate only the industrial sector. However, movement, through professional bifurcations and job's changes is not anodyne. Women try to "contest" localised and situational sectors of the market (Steiner 2005) and labour sites and regimes of employment. They contest and oppose market's inequalities, its disqualifying structure and the alienating working conditions which go with. Young and determined, women, like Aju or Meng Meng, seek for novel and better professional perspectives.

Such form of limited and lowly-visible contestation emerges through spatial and professional movement, as well as through the production of negative emotions of unfulfillment and anger and positive emotions of ambition and aspiration. Undeniably, it is not hard for women, as Meng Meng or Aju explained to find an employment. Their labour is necessary everywhere. However, to some extent,

women choose to move and to circulate. Thus, the election of a workplace varies mainly accordingly to the levels of wages, to the working hours, the working conditions around the assembly line and to the living conditions in the dormitories.

As Aju put it, it is a matter of "standing up" (*zhan qilai* 站起來), *i.e.* of developing the social, emotional and reflexive competences to overcome disqualifications and to negotiate with the situations of injustices which beat the tempos of women's migratory and professional paths. Aju wants to improve herself. She aims at acquiring new competences and professional experiences which might, in the future, sustain social and moral re-positioning. Aju desires to become a modern and independent subject, who can buy expensive clothes and bags, showing off her urban status. Aju wants to delate the rural stigma (Goffman 1958) through status achievement and professional mobility.

3. The Factory Regime: Discipline, Panoptical Control and Exploitation

Women's tales suggest how spatial, social and professional displacements, wanderings and mobilities are influenced by and co-produced through the plurality of situations of disqualification and maltreatment migrants face on their roads. Women's tales I have narrated so far suggest that such experiences of humiliation and of misrecognition women face in the city and in the urban public space are co-sustained and co-produced by concurrent and overlapping situations of disrespect and mortification at the workplace. To understand the complexification and multiplication of women's movements and circulations in China, a scrutiny of the labour regime and of the working and living conditions inside Chinese factories might be helpful. It is at the workplace that jumbling experiences of spatial segregation and social misrecognition merge. Disqualifications multiply and juxtapose within the specific labour regime women are positioned in, which combines work and residency (Pun 2007) inside the same biopolitical industrial space.
At the same time, it is inside this living and working space that the orange, fluorescent bra was born: designed and manufactured in a Cantonese textile factory. Its existence begins around the assembly line, even if its social and emotional life had started before its birth, constructed through a work of imagination and aspirational projection by its very producers. Therefore, the shape and the aspect and colour of the bra are imbued with the experiences of suffering and exploitation of the little, malleable hands which wove it.

However, its fancy colours and patterns embody women's capacity of aspiration and of imagination, together with the competences they acquire and the resources they mobilise, and with the individual

and collective tactics they deploy to daily survive and resist to vulnerability. The beginning of the biographical trajectory of the bra is generated from and, at its turn, supports a double process of subjectivation and subjection (Foucault 1984). Its social and emotional life is embedded with techniques of control, of orientation and of management of female bodies and their conducts inside the panoptical industrial apparatus (Foucault 1984; Hardt and Negri 2000). At the same time, its manufacturing generates and, at its turn sustains, modern, autonomous and subjectivity-making processes, social and economic re-positioning and status transformation. Let's enter the atelier where the bra was born.

3.1. Entering a panopticon space

17th January 2018. Zhongshan.

Behind the colourful lights of the shopping malls and the high skyscrapers, at 6h45 in the morning, workers (yuangong 員工) were diligently queuing in front of the huge gates of the Taiwanese textile factory VESTA, located in the industrial suburbs of the city. They held steamed bread and corncobs, together with their identification card to pass the security controls. The factory compound was three-gated. Inside the compound four working buildings were situated in the northern part, while in the Southern there were three dormitory buildings.

Figure 15 Meng Meng and her colleagues are queuing to enter the factory from its back door. Workers need to scan their badge and their tumb. Zhongshan. January 2018.

Meng Meng's colleagues came from villages of the inner provinces of Anhui, Jiangxi,

factory for collective motivational training. The industrial device[60] (Agamben 1995) enacts through a precise technology (Foucault 1975) aimed at the interiorization of precise codes of conduct and behavior by the workers. Two managers walked in the middle of the hall and shouted:

"

Time and space are compressed (Harvey 1989, 2007; Burawoy 2001) inside the gates of the factory, which mark physical as well as symbolic, moral (Agier 1999) and emotional barriers between the city –where women aspire to settle down- and the factory -where they are segregated. At the same time, the gates and fences represent a frontier between aspirations, ambitions and the order of reality, which is hierarchical and disqualifying. To keep the workers productive seemed to be the priority of management. The confinement of the labour in relatively good living conditions, under stricter management control, was paradoxically deemed a company strategy to retain workers who were often mobile. This contradiction was solved by the factory management through the implementation of rigid and severe codes of conduct. The *disciplinary device* (Agamben 1995) is incarnated into the inscription displayed in the middle of the hall:

1. Respect of working schedule
2. Respect of managers and superiors
3. Forbidden to take pictures
4. Forbidden to use the self-phone
5. Forbidden to talk while working
6. Forbidden to take breaks without permission
7. Forbidden to smoke
8. Forbidden to spit
9. Forbidden to eat, to sleep
10. Be happy and work with joy

As observed by Thireau and Hua (2007: 74-75), these rules are posted in the hall, hence a location in the factory where workers are likely to read them. Such codes of conduct represent modern, globalised biopolitical techniques (Hardt and Negri 2000) to discipline, control and manage workers' docile bodies and behaviours. These are suitably designed to limit workers' mobility inside and outside the industrial compound, prescribing rules of domestication. This complex set of labour *biopolitics* (Foucault 1975, 2001), aimed at "ensuring, sustaining, and multiplying life, putting lives in order" (Foucault 2001: 67) generates individuals' interiorization of the norms and a precise, rhythmical, repetitive role performance (Butler 2002).

The factory expected these regulations to cultivate a better-quality workforce (Pun 2005) and a good neoliberal work ethic (Gallagher 2005), crucial for the extraction (Sassen 2014) of labour. A *panoptica*l eye (Foucault 1975) constantly verified the conformity to the rules by rationalising control and punishment. Meng Meng's metaphor of the "Buddhist nun" elucidates how labour biopolitics penetrate and infiltrate the intimate spaces of women's life, imposing strict codes of labour, but also moral conduct. It also points out the moral conflicts occurring between the labour regime and the

repertories of emotions. Meng Meng's daily working life around the assembly line is thereby characterised by an injunction to silence, to docility, and to compliance. Howbeit, her words and narration suggest the co-presence of emotions of dissatisfaction, disapproval and discontent:

> "We worked from 7 in the morning until 9, 10 in the evening […] If there was not much work, we could rest on Sunday, otherwise we had to keep on working and working […] I do not feel free here (*yidian doubuziyou* 一點都不自由), there are many rules to respect, too many. In little factories, I could talk to my co-workers, while here we must shut up, not a noise, no phone, no messages, nothing […] I feel like a Buddhist nun (*nigu* 尼姑), we cannot have long hair: my superior threatened to cut it. We need to bind our hair and put on a headdress. We have to wear the working suit, change our shoes before entering and exiting […] I cannot bring my phone, I cannot bring tissues or food here, nothing is allowed. They control everything we do, they say it is for the security of everybody, rules are important to live together in harmony (*wei dajia hexie* 為大家的和諧) […]".
>
> **Meng Meng**, Zhongshan, 17.01.2018

The labour regimes reveal to be highly emotional: they produce heterogeneous repertories of emotions, which, however, as Meng Meng explained, cannot always be freely expressed (Hochschild 1983) by the workers.

Women are afraid of punishment, of maltreatment of insults and, even, of losing their job if they complain. Such tension between the labour regime and the negative emotions it produces tend to even strengthen their reproduction and their escalation. In this sense, conforming to the project of modernity and the global market, the entire ethic of work was not just to impose severe labour discipline but also to create a discourse on self-discipline, which was often emphasized at the workplace – as elucidated by the motivational training. Self-management and auto-control were expected so that the workers could learn how to behave themselves as proper or, in the management's language, ''modern'' workers. The factory regime exemplified what Michel Foucault (1975) described as "internalised surveillance", deploying a series of disciplinary rules as well as subtle surveillance and meticulous self-supervision of everyday lives. In short, the goal was to create a well-trained, disciplined female workforce directed toward the maximization of output.

3.2. The dormitory regime: a local translation of global biopolitics

VESTA is, as I described above, a Taiwanese enterprise implanted in China. The globalisation of the Chinese market, together with the transnationalisation of production, and the penetration of neoliberal

economic models have largely affected and influenced the local regimes of production (Hard and Negri 2000; Sassen 2006b). China's ascension to "workshop of the world", however, is not a consequence of an invisible, free hand of the global market and globalisation. On the contrary, it has been appropriately state-driven and achieved with the collusion of interests of the transnational market in its search for offshore production relocation in the "new age" (Hardt and Negri 2000) of neoliberal expansion of global capitalism.

In this sense, the design of the factory shaped through global social and spatial "politics of production" (Burawoy 2000) is supported by a specific regime which associates work and life (Pun 2007). "Life" is here intended in its biopolitical (Foucault 1975; Hardt and Negri 2000; Negri 2008) dimension: the grip, the stranglehold, the sway of power on the *bios*, on life, through biological control. Inside the industrial compound, adjacent to the working building, there were three dormitories for the workers, emblematic of the growing and jumbling link between production and reproduction of labour (Lee 1998; Solinger 1999; Pun 2005, 2007).

The factory regime is locally and globally strategically constructed by combining the social and the spatial aspects of production[61]. Its structure and functioning suggest, as pointed by Sassen (2006b) the spatialisation of transnational political economies within the localities, through new hyperlocal processes of production. It is hence by focusing on the localities – the neighbourhoods where the factories are implanted- and the hyperlocal microcosmos of daily production – the factory where women work and the dormitories where they live—that the global face of market's exploitation becomes visible. Local and hyperlocal factories and dormitories mirror transnational imperatives of productivity, flexibility and marketisation, which generate *glocal* exploitative *regimes of extraction* (Sassen 2014), through dehumanizing working conditions.

It is it at the crossroad between local and global, between the hyperlocal microcosmos of life and work and the global production chain that labour extraction can be operated. This political economy works by providing accommodation close to the factory to workers. As I have claimed before, migrants are deprived of basic social rights in the city. Due to state control, through migratory policies and the *hukou* system, they do not have access and cannot afford the increasing housing costs in the urban areas. Thus, the dormitory represents a solution for them to solve housing difficulties, and, simultaneously, a means for the market to have their labour constantly at its disposal. The result is a

[61] The "social production of space and the spatial production of the social" (Lefebvre 1968)

dormitory labour regime which, to put it with

Figure 18 Basketball terrain and the recreational space in front of VESTA's dormitories. Zhongshan. January 2018.

Fujin, the owner of the lingerie shop in Nanshijiao had been working in this same factor before migrating to Taiwan and she resided in the dorms. She remembers very well the working and living conditions she endured there during her youth. By comparing her previous labour experiences in Dongguan and Shenzhen factories -which were smaller in terms of size and under local Chinese management- she described these ambivalent and opposed dimensions of the dormitory regime:

"

hegemonic and hierarchical: a vector of controlled and disciplined socialisations, inside a neutral, austere architecture. Surveillance is aimed at generating material and emotional immobility. It limits workers physical displacements and movements, but also tries to inhibit their work of imagination and of aspiration to a universe existing outside the walls of the factory.

3.3. The assembly line: the material, social and emotional fabrics of the orange bra

The labour regime is organised around a severe rhythm. Such temporalities draw continuities between life and work, since spaces are contiguous inside the factory. The tempo of daily life alternated the working time around the assembly line (*liushui xian* 流水線) to the moments of rest in the dormitories. Inside VESTA, managers defined a strict division of labour (*fengong* 分工) and made sure that every worker took her place. Work started at 7h am in the morning and ended at 6 pm in the evening, with one hour for lunch break at the canteen at noon. From 6h30 pm it was possible to do supplementary hours (*jia ban* 加班), which should be complementary, but which often turned to be compulsory, especially during high production periods, obliging women to work until late at night. What women often explained were situations of strong stress and pressure at work (Roulleau-Berger 2015), produced by the captivity of the "total institution" (

women's biographies, social practices, emotional experiences and imaginaries. It does not only reify the *devices of power* which support -through injunctions to productivity, performance and rapidity- its manufacturing. It is also shaped by and, at its turn, supports subjectivity-making processes of subjects seeking for recognition (Honneth 2000).

It is around that very assembly line that Fujin had been working during her youth. Inexperienced and naïve, she left her rural village in Chongqing province, and moved first to Shenzhen, where she remained for one year, working in an electronic factory. Working conditions being arduous and exhausting, and salary extremely poor, Fujin mobilised her networks that enabled migration first to Canton and later to Zhongshan. In Canton, she was employed in a Japanese textile factory, but she acknowledged strong pressure and strain at work, which even made her loose her hair. Working time was between 14 and 16 hours per day, with one day of rest per month. After a few months, Fujin felt sick and decided to leave again. She arrived in Zhongshan, where she was employed in VESTA thanks to a fellow-villager, who was responsible for the lingerie sector of the factory. She enabled Fujin to enter without verifying her temporary residence permit -she was deprived of:

> "It was thanks to my *laoxiang* that I got that job. VESTA was a huge factory and normally, this is what I learnt before, in huge factories living and working conditions are better. I still felt exhausted working there but at least the dormitories were quite clean. But working hours were insane, very long. I spent, I do not know… maybe 16 hours working? Can you imagine? In the evening I was so tired that I could not even eat or speak. I just moved from work to bed, as in the morning we used to start very early […] My hands were hurting, sometimes I put the needle in my fingers and got some blood. But I had no money to buy blenders. The salary was poor; at that time we got 800/900 *kuai* per month, and I sent most of the money back home to have my sister going to school. It was a strenuous life. I wanted to go out and have fun with my co-workers, but I was too tired […] Sometimes, during free time, they used to go to the cinema, but I was scared of the police controls as I did not have the *zanzhu zheng*, so I remained at the dorm […] We made lingerie in the factory and I liked that, I am a girl! This is normal! All the girls like clothes, all the girls like trendy lingerie, it is normal, lingerie is feminine and beautiful, all the actresses and important women wear nice lingerie […] But I had no money to buy it, I wished I could have a better salary to go shopping but I could not […] That is why I decided to leave the factory after a couple of years, that place did not allow me to improve and to do what I came to the city for".
>
> **Fujin**, Taipei, 29.12.2016

The bras and the underwears that Fujin was assembling seem hence to be imbued with a social and emotional meaning. Such meaning is multiple, ambivalent and even contradictory. It elucidates the extent to which the labour regime and the working situations women are confronted to produce strong moral conflicts. On the one hand, it is remarkable how the strong stress at work, the long working

hours, the alienating rhythms as well as the maltreatments women are subjected to generate, and at their turn, reinforce, negative emotions of suffering, of depression, of unfulfillment, of discontent. On the other hand, employment is socially and emotionally associated to a channel towards the making of an independent, autonomous subjectivity. It produces and it is supported by emotions of ambition and aspiration. Thereby, the bra and its process of production incarnate such clash between the labour regime and these heterogeneous emotions.

Nevertheless, Fujin liked the bras she was manufacturing. They looked fancy and modern to her. These artefacts were produced by and also generated ambivalent emotions of humiliation, of frustration, of tiredness, but also of determination, desire and hope. The social and emotional significance attributed to objects by subjects has an active, experimental dimension (Douglas and Isherwood 1981). An object, an artefact is not neutral. Rather, it is socialised (Appadurai 1986) and emotionalised (Illouz 2018). It is an *artifice* (Miller 2005), possessing specific social, economic and emotional attributes, which do not exceed its life, but which are constructed during its very production process. Objects are imbued with subjects' experiences and practices. They can be, as suggested by Fujin's case, ambiguous, asymmetric, paradoxical, but they can open for new experiments of reality and novel social and emotional practices. Around the assembly line, objects and subjects' biographies progressively mix and jumble, being socially and emotionally co-produced.

Figure 19 Dagong mei at work around VESTA's assembly line. Zhongshan. January 2018.

The making of handcrafts, like the orange bra is concurrently a social, economic and emotional process. Behind the production stage are hidden the microcosms of the individuals' lives who fabricated them.

Their ordeals of exploitation, of stress at work and of disqualification may not be immediately visible by looking at the object. Yet, they do exist. The orange bra manufactured around the assembly line has a social life (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986), a peculiar biography and a career (Gell 2011: 115). It will move from the assembly line of a Cantonese factory to the global chain of transnational distribution. The very process of production is generated from, but it also sustains Fujin's, -like the other *dagong mei*- career-making. The bra is not a neutral piece of plastic and silicon, but a lived and performed object, immersed with the labour experiences of its producers. It is not only a matter of material, but also of *social and emotional fabrics*.

But this is not all. The socially and emotionally constructed life of the bra may generate a creative and transformative potential. When Fujin described the bra as a modern and fancy object, she was indirectly producing and performing this objects' social and emotional identity. She was "transforming" a piece of plastic and silicon into a social and emotional artefact, by invoking an imagined, "aesthetic" (Harold 2009), modern social world she wished to be part of. The material fabrics of the bra generated emotions, which, at their turn, may engender a new capacity of aspire, sustaining a seek for recognition (Honneth 2000), emancipation and access to the government of the *self* (Roulleau-Berger 2010, 2015). Emotions of fulfilment, of determination, of ambition, of esteem and of desire generated by the process of manufacturing sustain, at their turn, the making of subjectivities.

The bra is made of plastic, silicon, cotton, but also of women's emotions, feelings and affects. Imagination, ambitions, and motivations represent important emotional resources which come into play when women endure situations of daily vulnerability, precarity and inequality at work. Emotions, projected into and performed through an appropriation and actualisation of the social meaning of the bra, make the future translation of the migratory project possible. The bra is an object in which "fantasies are performed and explored" (Moore 2004). It reveals that "reality", or the possibility for "reality", always materialises through the work of fantasy with which it is inextricably intertwined (Ferreday 2012).

When Fujin claimed that "lingerie is feminine and beautiful" and that "all the actresses and important women wear nice lingerie", she unmasked the aesthetic form (Feagin and Mayard 1997; Miller 2005) and the emotional shape of the bra.

seeking for affirmation and recognition. This seems to happen at the first time at the stage of imagination and fantasy. It appears to be a matter of what Bruno Latour has called the "exploration of being" (2002): an exploration of identity and subjectivation, where women "aspire to become" (Miller 2008).

Crucially, fantasy is a mode of reality which encompasses desires that are obscured in the daily life of labour exploitation, stress at work, and inegalitarian, hierarchical treatment around the assembly line. Hodder (1982) suggests that objects, through their production and their consumption, enable the creation of individuals' *selves* (1982: 66). They contribute, thanks to the social significance attributed by the actors to the transition and transformation of individuals' future existences.

Chapter 3: Social, Emotional and Affectional Fabrics

The ethnography of the factory labour regime, together with the specific "social politics of space" (Lefebvre 1968; Raulin 2000) of the dormitory system shows how women's daily activities of labour and life are captured inside "compressedly modern" (Roulleau-Berger 2016, 2018) panoptical devices (Foucault 1975; Agamben 1995; Agier 2008), which produce a plurality of experiences of suffering, of humiliation and of disqualification. Individuals' *selves* entered the factory to gain autonomy and independence, but, paradoxically endured situations of clear limitation and control of their actions, of their practices and of their experiences. However, discipline and control of bodies and conducts are not smoothly and easily imposed. They do not transcend individuals' existences and practices (Negri 2008). Being immanent, they are part of liable, malleable and mutable social words, hence potentially contestable, "undoable" and dismantlable.

The hard and strict labour regime migrant working women are subjected to produces negative emotions of distress, of desperation, and of affliction. At first glance, such negative emotions are intertwined with the organisation and the division of labour, thus unchangeable and unsurmountable. Emotions and a subaltern position seem to be strictly correlated, the two co-supporting each other in the frame of a biopolitical colonisation of women's lives and working practices inside the factory (

frame of the fluidity of a rhizomatic affectional multitude (Hardt and Negri 2006) that the potential for the re-affirmation -or attempts to- re-affirmation of individuals' injured *selves* (Pollack 1995) emerges.

Through the diverse experiences of vulnerability and of precarity endured inside the factory and in the city, migrants can capitalise knowledge and competences, apt to transform the factory labour experience of alienation into a parenthesis which can be closed. Social resources, affectional ties and reflective creative competences (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2007) sustain individuals' re-positioning, which are constructed and re-constructed through processes of contestation of the subaltern position. Thus, to put it with

Positive emotions of motivation, of desire, of aspiration clash with negative emotions of disillusionment, of tiredness, of depression and of acceptance produced at work and through work. In the frame of this dialectics, of this moral conflict between social situations, labour regimes, and the heterogeneous repertories of emotions, questionings about contestation, transformation and change are necessary.

So far, I have attempted to show that when emotions encounter social and economic resources, as well as effects of contexts which produce opportunities, they turn into a resource for action. In this regard, it urges to question if negative emotions of discontent, dissatisfaction can turn into resources for action and transformation of situations. From what seems to be an immobile frame, social and emotional resources can be mobilised. The conflict between compound and opposite emotions might bring about mobile processes of interpretation and re-negotiation of subjectivity, both at an individual and at a collective level. From immobilisation, women develop moving counter-tactics and plural practices to face control and discipline. Supported by their capacity to aspire and to imagine alternative futures, they exploit the situated innovative social and emotional resources to forge new norms and social re-positionings.

1. The Fabrics of Solidarity: Affects in Action

1.1. Affections, reciprocity and mutual help

"I was very young, maybe sixteen when I entered the factory. It was in

It is in the interstices of the dormitories, where the panoptical eye of control does not penetrate (Pun 2007) that Xiao Lan and her co-workers put into practice novel and creative practices to resist to the colonisation of the experiences (Hardt and Negri 2000) by the daily and systematic pressions they are subjected to at the workplace. Bringing hot water or medicines to colleagues in need, lending and borrowing money for daily survival or remittances, chatting together or sharing an intimate space for complaints are few examples of every day practices which contribute to lessen the rigidity of the industrial social and moral positioning experienced by women. Situated, temporary and contingent, subalternity is not ubiquitous and all-pervading.

Subalternity and vulnerability certainly impregnate women's life and labour conditions, producing negative emotions of discomfort, of sadness, and of desperation, together with feelings of hopeless and inadequacy. Nevertheless, such sentiments and emotions are constructed in situation, hence de-constructible, when they enter the intersubjective sphere of inter-action and co-performance. The labour regimes contribute to inhibit the making of creative subjectivities by imposing strict working hours and rhythms, precise codes of conducts through rules and regulations. At the very same time, the industrial apparatus which operates through technologies of control and of biopolitical regulation of workers' lives (Foucault 1984;

Based on and sustaining collective practices of mutual support, negative emotions of dissatisfaction and frustration as well as individual sufferings can be collectively appropriated, re-framed and re-formulated into new positive emotions of self-esteem, recognition and ambition, which, at their turn, sustain new socialisation processes**.** Social and affectional resources represented by the networks of co-workers favour the production of new forms of imagination and of projection towards the future: a future which is conceived outside the factory. The understanding of situations produces novel emotional processes, which concurrently support the development of knowledge of the situations and reflexivity.

As suggested by

the labour market. Its inegalitarian structure and its segmentation make-upward, vertical mobility particularly difficult for disqualified rural migrants (Roulleau-Berger 2009, 2015).

Nonetheless, through emotional and affectional practices, they can lessen sufferings and situations of violence and of disrespect, at least to a certain degree. Moreover, positive emotions emerge through and sustain new processes of imagination, of aspiration and of projection towards transition and *becoming*. Women discuss together about their desires and ambitions. They confront their objectives for future transformation and change. Collective talks, shared emotions and affectional practices strengthen women's capacity of projection towards the *horizon of aspiration* (Appadurai 2000, 2004). Instead of passively accepting a condition of subalternity and of humiliation in the city and at the workplace, women collectively frame an autonomous, modern and independent social re-positioning.

The anthropogenesis of the emotional and affectional practices derives from intersubjective processes. Emotions represent here a mirror for collective identification of experiences and existences, which unfolds, to paraphrase

> night, exhausted after work, we used to eat little snacks together and to make fun of our superiors […] I remember that there was a Cantonese little boss (*zhuguan* 主管) very powerful (*xiong* 雄) who had a big ass, and we laughed a lot together about that […] My co-workers became my family; we helped each other when we needed something, I knew I could rely on them. I liked to make new friends and to socialize (*da zhaohu* 打招呼); if you have good colleagues, time passes faster, and you can easily forget how tired you are, how you hate your job, how awful the assembly line is […]".
>
> **Wenfeng**, Thirty-three years old, Chongqing native, Taipei, 23.01.2017

Individual and collective emotions, affective ties and professional socialisations are co-produced and co-performed: they mix and merge among women who share a similar condition of subalternity in the city and in the factory. Distinctly, from the moral conflicts between the *aspirational infrastructure* and the labour regime emerge negative emotions of dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Notwithstanding, the progressive capitalisation and performance of social networks of "sisters" represent the te possibility to capitalise new repertories of social and affectional resources**.**

By sharing their sadness, loneliness, fear, frustration or tiredness, women make their emotions to move[63], to circulate among the others they communicate with. Negative emotions associated to painful experiences are appropriated, transformed and even neutralized by those who experienced the same situation, and who can thus share a similar understanding. Emotional inter-action and affectional practices are constructed in motion: from the intimate relationship between what Butler has called "materialisation" (1993: 9) -the effect of boundary, fixity and surface- to what Ahmed (2004: 14) has interpreted as "intensification" -the shifting of feelings from one body to another, from one subject to another. It is through a communicating and sharing that emotions circulate in the frame of a commonly lived experience; they can hence materialise and be collectively appropriated, re-framed, re-formulated and performed. New affections are produced:

> "We were all young girls, and that was fun because there were not old grannies like my mother […] We all stayed there for the same reason: earning money to have a better life in the city. Even if work was hard, we did not want to give up, it was our only chance. From co-workers we became friends, as we all worked in the same sector and shared the same room; during week-end we used to go out shopping or eating together […] We stayed together all the time: if we had no money to go out, we stayed in the room chatting or looking at the phone together […] I knew I could rely on some of them, who helped me a lot; when I needed money to buy a train ticket to go back home, one of my colleagues bought it for me; if I were sick, there was always someone who took care of me. That was important […] When you feel exhausted by work and you

[63] I refer to the etymology of the word, emotions, from Latin e*movere*, means to move out, to move among, to circulate between.

> cry because you do not like your life, when your life is too hard, too difficult, there was always one *jiemei* to comfort you […]".
>
> **Bing Bing**, Thirty-one years old, Dongbei native, Taipei, 28.03.2017

As simple as it seems, affections are translated into practices of mutual help and reciprocity, which contribute to lessen feelings of loneliness, nostalgia, deracination and home-sickness. They can reduce risks and insecurity, providing social moral reciprocal support. Emotions and affections represent resources which are translated into social practices to face the ordeals of daily life, to endure the long working time and the poor working conditions in the factory. They are generated according to the rhythms and tempos of life and work. Paradoxically, they follow the schedule of the labour regime itself. When translated into practice, emotions and affections become, to some extent, to "competences to resist" (Roulleau-Berger 2001, 2016) which can be learned and performed, through the capitalisation and the appropriate mobilisation of social resources represented by networks of co-workers, friends, "sisters".

Hence, such resistant practices are based on the newly capitalised social and affectional resources. Such practices are performed within the new collective emotional fields (Illouz 2007) which emerged in the interstices of labour regimes. Such interstices represent alternative, creative social and moral spaces hidden inside the rigid and disciplinary walls of the factory and of the dormitories. Social and emotional resources mix and translate action from the individual to the collective frame of performance. Women share together positive and negative emotions. Sufferings, depression, tiredness, lack of motivation, nostalgia are translated into night chats, gossips around the assembly line or hidden cries in the rooms of the dormitories. At the very same time, when such individual negative emotions enter the intersubjective sphere of sharing and interacting with colleagues and co-workers, while queuing at the canteen, or waiting for a hot shower in the evening, they can be re-framed and transformed into new positive emotions of determination, ambition, imagination and desire of change.

Whether positive or negative, emotions progressively reveal to be resources which can be simultaneously learnt and capitalised, as well as performed, re-framed and re-actualised within a plurality of contexts. From a city to another, from a factory to another, from a dormitory to another, such emotions are situationally and socially re-constructed and re-deployed by the actors to face the different conditions of disqualification and subalternity. Emotions are constructed during and, at their turn, sustain the production of movements, displacements, urban and labour experiences.

1.2. The changing nature of *guanxi*: from co-villagers to *jiemei*

Social, emotional and affectional resources seem to be highly entwined: they co-produce and co-support each other. Looking at women's migrations and circulations, at the ways they plan and concretise their migratory projects, social networks (*guanxi*) of migrant workers have proved to be crucial social resources for young rural migrants to "take their place" inside the unfamiliar, unknown urban space. Networks are a substantial support for migration, a resource to reduce risks and insecurity, as well as a vector of production and sharing of migratory knowledge, a channel to job's information and immediate social, economic and moral support.

Networks of co-villagers enable migration, especially during the very first steps when women, disposing of weak social and economic resources, can mainly rely on pre-established networks of co-villagers. Facing solitude, nostalgia and home-sickness in the city, they make a strong emotional investment on such networks, which constitute for them not only social and economic, but also emotional and affectional resources. However, as far as they progress in their career, they capitalise professional experiences. Mobility and circulation multiply employment opportunities, experiences and situations. The different jobs and employments performed enable women to improve their skills and savoir-faire. Also, and crucially, from a factory to another, from a dormitory to another, they multiply their nodes of relationships, amplifying their social resources, which progressively change substance and form. Let's look at Mei Lin's case:

> "I left my village with a couple of co-villagers, my parents told them to take care of me as they were older, and they already knew what city life looked like. They brought me to Shenzhen, and I stayed at my co-villager's place for few weeks while looking for a job. Another co-villager found a job for me in an electronic factory and I stayed there for about six months […] Work was very hard, and the working environment was very hot, I sweated a lot and felt like fainting […]

networks are created, developed and performed appear different to those composed of co-villagers and family members. The new working temporalities and spatialities, together with life and labour practices and the new professional socialisations and emotions seem to take an active part into the processes of re-definition by actors of their social networks, embedded in affections.

Before and during the first stages of her migratory career, Mei Lin could rely on dense spiderwebs of social networks mainly composed of fellow villagers or friends, with whom the tie had been built before mobility to the city. Such social resources played a crucial role when she first arrived in the city, in terms of social and economic support. However, progressively, Mei Lin gained in autonomy and independence. Her words show how she took distance from those rural social networks to negotiate new ones by herself. Networks progressively change their nature. They shift from ties intertwined with previous co-villagers and relatives to new relationships with co-workers, called "sisters" (*jiemei*). Networks of rural villagers represented a resource for the achievement of the first migratory ordeal, opening for the capitalisation of migratory knowledge, the capacity to take different roads. However, now while looking for new opportunities, women cumulate new circulatory knowledge (Tarrius 2002), which derives from their new social networks of "sisters", which are highly gendered.

Situationally produced, new social and affectional networks of "sisters" are forged, re-produced and constantly re-kindled at the workplace and in the dormitories, where women have the opportunity to improve their social relationships and ties amongst what they call "sisters" (*jiemei*). The ways women talk about "sisters", in terms of amity, attachment, affinities and proximity, suggest the strong emotional and affectional investment in such novel networks. Practices of trust, of mutuality and of reciprocity to face daily obstacles of life and work, progressively jumble together towards the awareness of sharing a similar condition.

This process of transition and transformation of *guanxi* from networks of co-villagers and family members, to networks of co-workers and "sisters" follows the times, spaces and identities (Tarrius 2000, 2001) and emotions of women's migrations. Let's go back to

> "When I arrived, my uncle picked me up and brought me to his place until I found a job. I felt grateful to him as I felt lonely and lost in that unfamiliar place. My *jiujiu* ("uncle", her father's friend) helped me as a favour to my dad".
>
> **Xiao Hui**, Dongguan, 19.01.2018

The person Xiao Hui calls *jiujiu*, a word which may be translated by "uncle", refers to a close friend of her father, who entangled the tie before his daughter's migration.

in their community of origin -the practice of extending kinship designations to non-kinship bonds of friends and co-villagers- to the new affects and affections developed in the urban space of life and work. Ambivalent emotions are generated by and, at their turn, supporting the formation and the nourishment of affectional social ties: individual feelings of sadness, dissatisfaction, frustration, tiredness, disillusionment are collectively appropriated, shared and, eventually transformed. Negative feelings enter the social sphere of inter-actions and are communally translated into new **positive emotions** of mutual recognition, justice, esteem and ambitions, embedded into affectional practices and performances.

1.3. Heterotopias and spaces of passage

This transformation and changing nature of *guanxi* is situated, situational and circumstantiated. It is produced in inter-action, at the crossroad between the times, the spaces, the identities, and the emotions of urban labour and migratory experiences. It is within the factory that this shift occurs, at the crossroad between the migratory roads, the structure of the labour market (Roulleau-Berger 2013b), its gendered, hierarchical segmentation and the peculiarities of the labour regime of the factory-dormitory. By condensing young rural women inside highly surveilled spaces, the biopolitical devices of the global market hoped to control and manage labour towards the achievement of high productivity standards. The little hands of *dagong mei* were canalised into the industrial sector, to be easily exploited.

However, paradoxically, through this manoeuvre, the industrial biopolitical device produces its internal, intrinsic contradiction (Negri 2008). Based on precise modalities of control, aimed at controlling workers' movements, reducing their interactions, limiting the accumulation of social capital, the factory *device* adopts a strict regime to construct migrant women as *bare lives* (Agamben 1995): cheap, malleable and docile economic, social and biopolitical resources.

Nonetheless, by immobilising the workers' around the assembly line and segregating them inside highly monitored dormitories, the industrial management opens new spaces for socialisation, reciprocity and solidarity. Being socially, economically and politically designed, the factory represents a topological state of exception. It is a temporary and liable condition of the existence. Its contradictory structure, functioning and topology demonstrate its pluri-dimensionality. Beyond its productive function, it is a lived and performed space: "a place situated out of places, even if it can be physically localised, where several places are overlapped" (Foucault 1985: 56).

reality and imagination, it enables its own contestation and subversion. Thusly, the emotional and affectional practices produced by women transgress and transcend the controlling and disciplining nature of this space. They open *counter-spaces* inside the dormitories or around the assembly line, which are performatively represented, contested and overthrown (Foucault 1985: 33).

Women's social and professional interactions, emotional, intersubjective practices of mutual help and novel performances of affections reveal the intrinsic paradox of the dormitory-labour regime. As observed by Ngai Pun (2005, 2007) in her important analysis of female workers' dormitories in Southern China, this model where daily production and reproduction are combined responds to the imperatives of rationalization and productivity, aimed at orienting and normalizing bodies and conducts. At the same time, it is inside the same spaces of discipline and control that intimacies and solidarities are reinforced**.**

The factory and its dormitories reveal to be *heterotopian spaces* [65] (Foucault 2001), where subjectivities undergo processes of transformation through social and emotional experiences and practices. Is it not only a lived and socialised space, but also an *experience* of subjectivity-making, thus of creative transformation of the *selves.*

The industrial *heterotopia* juxtaposes inside a real space of labour a plurality of new spaces for social practices and performances of emotions and affections which would normally be incompatible with its structure and functioning. In fact, as advanced by Foucault (2001), heterotopias are *in primis* spaces of discourse. The emotional discourses developed by women around the assembly line or during their night chats in the dormitories sustain the possibility of new transitions and transformations. The walls of the factory and of its dormitories are socially and emotionally transformed by the actors into lowly-visible spaces of *becoming*. The collective translation (Callon 1984, 2002) of individuals' social and moral experiences of misrecognition, of maltreatment, of disrespect enables contestation, transgression and transformation. Emotions and affections are generated inside and, at their turn, support the affirmation of this heterotopian space where transformation becomes possible. Creative tactics, emotional sharing, resistant practices and affectional performances draw the contours of the possibility for women's social, economic and emotional re-positioning. They open the door of the factory, from which, metaphorically, women can get out, can escape from.

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[65] According to Foucault's definition, the heterotopia corresponds to the realization of a utopia. It is "another place" (2001: 6), a counter-space physically located inside the areas of our experience, which take a specific material reality, but which dig into the evidence of lived spaces until its contestation.

The factory, its walls and barriers, is transformed into a space of passage and transit. It is turned into a space for individual formation, education, inside which the relation to the social world is renegotiated and reconstructed under a different meaning (Lago 2007: 11). Emotions as resources and practices contribute to such process of social transformation of the space. A work of imagination, of aspiration and of projection towards future alternatives frames the rhizomatic fluidity and malleability of the collective practices of a multitude (Hardt and Negri 2006) who seeks for recognition. The walls of the factory and of the dormitories are fluid, plastic, breakable: they are "made in porcelain" (

broader, longer and wider pattern, of which course may change over time and space, through the identification of new opportunities and the negotiations of alternatives in the city:

> "After a few years in Dongguan, I got sick of factory work. I wanted to change, to improve myself, to do something different. I wanted to learn new things, maybe to follow some classes of make-up or hairdressing to find another job as I did not want to remain a worker forever. At that time, I had not yet planned to come to Taiwan. I wanted to remain in Guangdong province, but I needed to find a different job […] during the different industrial jobs I could meet people, some of them left the factory to do something else, some of them opened restaurants and shops […] I started contacting the people I knew to see if I could do something different and that's how I started working in a little

bifurcation. From the factory, she desired working as a waitress in luxury restaurants or as a seller in shopping malls.

Visibly, migrations and circulations are progressively oriented towards an inversion of the rural prejudice women carry with them. The work on the *selves* is aimed at changing, re-configurating subjectivities in the direction of modernity, urbanity and independence. At each social, economic and biographical reorientation (Roulleau-Berger 2003, 2009), women make and re-make the experience of disqualification, which, despite their efforts in terms of knowledge and resources mobilisations, seem to be hard to dismantle. In motion, mobile and creative subjectivities roam and circulate inside the aspirational infrastructure, aimed at "crossing the mirror" (Wieworka 1997: 131). They seek recognition, through an improved social positioning and the achievement of an urban status. The recognition of the status and the processes of modern-subjectivity making are engendered by and, at their turn, support emotions of pride, of determination, of self-esteem, of ambition and of aspiration.

2.2. From the iron rice bowl to Starbucks coffee

12th February 2016. Zhongshan. VESTA. 8 pm.

Inside the recreational room, I was playing ping pong with Meng Meng and three other young workers. Suddenly Meng Meng exclaimed: "it's 8 pm, time for 'I'm looking forward to being loved' (hao xiang hao xiang tan lian ai 好想好想談戀愛)".

Women immediately turned the television on to watch this popular Chinese television series. The four main female characters incarnate the image of modern, independent urban women, associated with different consumption characters. They all hold well-paid jobs, related to a cityscape of consumption and modernity: beauty, entertainment, design, and media. Perhaps these women were also wearing fancy, fluorescent bras. This was the Chinese version of the American TV series Sex and the City, where the heroines' lives are portrayed as a continuous sequence of expensive dinners, evening drinks, vernissages, shopping trips, and coffee breaks which will eventually lead each of them to the love of their life. Meng Meng and her colleagues were fascinated by the plot and explained to me that the four characters of the TV series represented what they desired to become: high suzhi, modern, independent, metropolitan consumers.

For many young *dagong mei,* urban experiences of life and work represent a search for modernity. Women design, frame and orient their paths according to the opportunities of upward social, economic and moral mobility they can negotiate. Consumption, incarnated by the above described TV series or by their passion for shopping during spare time, corresponds to a means to reduce the material and emotional gap between them and the urban citizens. Metaphorically, this gap is drawn around the assembly line of the factory, where women manufacture the orange, fluorescent bra, without disposing of the resources to buy it.

Inside the *cityscape,* consumption and fashion are the sites to negotiate the socially, politically and culturally constructed distinction between rural and urban, as well as the material culture which could sustain the making of modern and independent subjectivities. The discourse of modernity, as Yan

Aiming at conforming to the image of the modern urban women (*bai fu mei* 白富美[66]) seen in the television soap operas, one must be light-and-white-skinned to be a city dweller. One must wear fancy shoes or carry a colourful leather bag. To understand such practices, it is necessary to stress that this project of cleansing themselves of the mark of the rural must be placed into the context of how the rural world has come to be imagined as a deficient reality[67], which cannot function as a *locus* for modernity. As pointed out by Lisal Rofel (1999: 3): "shopping in the street is a means to feel, touch, and consume a sense of modernity […] modernity persists as an imaginary and is continuously shifting site of global/local claims, commitments, and knowledge, forged within uneven dialogues about the place of those who move in and out of categories of otherness".

In this respect, Meng Meng's narration elucidates how shopping and consuming represent a way to reduce the disparity she feels with city dwellers for her. By comparing her ambitions of upward social mobility to the ones of her mother -who is also a migrant worker in Ningbo, Zhejiang province- Meng Meng's emotional discourse about her future embodies her daily struggle between an imposed disqualifying image of rural migrants and the new modern subject she is aspiring to become:

> "I like to go shopping and I spend a lot of money on buying clothes, even if I should not. But I am a girl, and girls like to go shopping. I want to be pretty, I do not want other people to think I come from the countryside. I do my best to improve my human quality (*suzhi*) […]

subjective thoughts and existences to gain greater autonomy" (Lipovetsky 1994: 10). At the same time, Meng Meng's words point towards her awareness of the difficulties to achieve upward social mobility and to attain an urban status for a migrant worker, who "eats bitterness every day", as she claimed. Modernity is embodied by fashion, which "is simultaneously a prescriptive and re-emptive world: it offers impossible dreams and warns of possible realities, it shows, and it judges alternatives" (Mittler 2007: 17).

Fancy clothes, fluorescent bras, whitening creams and nail polish certainly do not dissolve the social hierarchy between rural and urban, between city dwellers and migrant workers, between *bendi* and *waidi ren*. However, the individual and collective imaginaries and aspirations generated from, and at their turn, sustained by objects (Illouz 2018) open and enlarge the mobile horizon of projection. They "transmit the 'creative juice' that will be transformative for its users, bringing a not-yet lived future into the present".

The multiplication of the biographical careers, of the professional experiences, together with the capitalisation of new economic, social and emotional resources contribute to forge new creative subjectivities amongst the *mei* who have become *dagong*. Oscillating between mobility and immobility, between aspiration and captivity, between subjectivation and subjection, women constantly seek for recognition and respect. The aspiration for social, economic and moral re-positioning orients their urban and professional circulations. Following the tempo of the opportunities they can negotiate as well as of the constraints to mobility, women re-route their roads, re-orient their paths, roam inside the spatial, social and emotional spaces of the city and of factories.

Experiences are constructed and re-constructed moving around the enterprises and the different cities, where migrants need to constantly cope with social and professional disqualifications at the workplace. Individual and collective social practices and affectional performances lessen the sentiments of captivity to a certain degree. However, situations of misrecognition, of vulnerability and of violence do not disappear. This opens the progressive awareness amongst young girls of the difficulties of succeeding in the migratory project, in terms of long-term urban integration, a decent place in the labour market and upward social mobility.

In this sense, the dialectics between hierarchies and negotiations, between inequalities and expectations are socially and emotionally constructed *in motion* inside the global city (Sassen 1995). The overlapping mobilisation of individual and collective social, emotional and affectional resources generated, as I claimed above, new creative practices of mutual help and reciprocity inside the walls of the factories, of the dormitories, as well as in the city. From such social and emotional practices, hierarchies, inequalities and situations of vulnerability are re-negotiated to some extent. From negative emotions of unfulfillment, of sadness, of desperation, of regret, collective social practices were sustained from and were, at their turn, reinforcing new positive emotions of ambition, of projection and of determination.

Thereby, large coastal cities represent ambivalent spaces of social disqualification and labour suffering, but also of endless processes of formulation of expectations and creative projects of movement. It is inside the very same global factories where women's practices are surveilled, controlled and oriented that new opportunities can be negotiated. Global factories become sites for *glocal* encounters, where

local and global workers can meet. Metaphorically, the assembly line turns into a virtual platform for movement, transition and transformation. It is a space for new project-making processes. Situated and localised ambitions and aspirations can be projected towards new lands for adventure, and a new *Ithaca* to explore: Taiwan.

1. Local and Global Ambitions and Constraints

1.1. "When you are born *dagong mei*, you remain *a dagong mei*"

We have previously met Aju, thirty-five years old, Hubei native, who currently lives in Dongguan. She has been moving round and around Guangdong province for more than ten years. At the age of fourteen, she left her home village and migrated. Initially deprived of the temporary residence permit (*zanzhu zheng* 暫住證), her social and professional status was invisible, and she had been subjected to even stronger forms of social contempt and disqualification inside the city and at the workplace. She arrived in Dongguan with a little bag, containing a couple of t-shirts and underwears. She started working at a fuel station, worried of being arrested as she was deprived of the residence permit.

Progressively, as soon as she improved her social resources through the multiplication of networks of co-workers and "sisters", she could perform a plurality of industrial jobs in the region, working especially in Taiwanese and Hongkonguese electronic joint ventures, numerous in Southern China at that time. Exhausted by the factory regime and by the long, dehumanising working schedule, Aju invested some money to study make-up, following classes in the evening after-work:

> "*dagong* work is so incredibly useless and uninteresting, everyday spent around the assembly line is really unexciting (*dagong tai meiyou yisi, meitian zai liushuixian tai meiyou yiyi* 打工太沒有意思，每天在流水線太沒有意義)".

After completing the course and obtaining a certificate, Aju started looking for a job in the field of cosmetics and beauty care. Excited and enthusiastic, she spent several weeks looking for a job. However, she did not succeed:

> "I had studied hard. I put so much effort in going to class in the evening when I was exhausted after work. But I could not find a job […] they preferred to hire local people, Cantonese, they thought that we, the *waidi ren*, had to stay in the factory […] in China it is like this: when you want a job and you come from the countryside, you need *guanxi*, you need to know someone, or you to pay. But I did not know many people in that field […] I was finally employed in a beauty salon… as a cleaner. I cleaned the floors, the

> toilet and the kitchen, basically. It was extremely frustrating […] And, you know, I did not earn much money; the problem was that when I worked in the factory, I was provided with a bed in the dormitory, while here I had to pay the rent, which was insanely expensive, even for a bed in a six people shared room in Humen 虎门[68][…] I had no chance to save money to buy a house, and if you do not buy a house and you do not have a decent job, you will never get a urban *hukou*".

Aju's experience is characterised by feelings of strong frustration, dissatisfaction and disappointment against the unfairness which characterises the urban labour market in China. The first jobs she performed supported the emergence of new ambitions and aspirations, which lead Aju not to give up. She capitalised reflexive resources which sustained her project of upward social mobility, so that she enrolled in make-up classes, persuaded that she could improve her status through education and professional knowledge capitalisation. Lowly-skilled and qualified, Aju invested in the "exploration of being" (Latour 1994) to change her status and to forge a modern, creative subjectivity.

The vocational classes followed by Aju reveal an important dimension of the migratory project, which is often neglected in the analyses (Thireau and Hua 2001). The diverse urban and professional experiences sustained the obtention of a "specialised qualification, of a technical savoir-faire" (Thireau and Hua 2001: 37), supporting future social re-positioning. It was for Aju not only a matter of gaining a monthly income, but also of re-formulating and re-framing her migratory project according to her concrete social and professional experiences (Thireau and Hua 2001: 38), as well as projections towards the future.

Therefore, during the day, she worked in the factory, in the evening she followed make-up classes, and she could even work overtime (*jia ban* 加班) during the night to earn more money to pay for her classes, to buy new clothes and send remittances to her family. Nevertheless, despite social and professional re-positionings, Aju was progressively gaining the awareness of the persistence of inequalities and hierarchies on her road. Despite the capitalisation and mobilisation of new repertories of professional and circulatory knowledge, as well as of social and economic resources, for rural migrant workers social mobility is a challenge and remains obstructed (Roulleau-Berger 2013a, 2015). In the disqualifying segments of the labour market women have access to, jobs are unstable, lowly-payed and do not offer any form of career mobility. The low wages cannot support the high cost of

[68] Pauperized, industrial district in Southern Dongguan, where most of global factories are located.

urban living, negating the possibility to save money to invest in a future urban life, increasingly perceived as an unachievable horizon:

> "After I left my home village, I did not want to go back, I wanted to remain in the city. But gradually I was realizing that I had no chance. I wanted to change my destiny (*gai ziji de mingyun* 改自己的命運), but I had nothing (*yiwu suoyou* 一無所有). I could only count on myself (*wo zhi neng kao ziji* 我隻能靠自己), but often relying on oneself is not enough (*dan kao ziji ye bugoule* 但靠自己也不够了). Opportunities and money were for local people. Guangdong province did not want us, the *waidi ren*… we are not recognized, we are just invisible labour […] We were excluded (排外), people looked down on us (*kan buqi* 看不起) […] Life in the village was not what I dreamed of, but I did not want to spend the rest of my life around the assembly line either […] When you are born *dagong mei,* you remain a *dagong mei* forever (*dagong chushengde na jiu yizhi yongyuande shi ge dagong de dagongmei* 打工出生的那就一直永遠的是個在打工的打工妹)".
>
> **Aju**, Dongguan, 23.01.2018

1.2. Injunction to marriage

Aju's statement "when you are born d*agong mei,* you remain a *dagong mei*" elucidates her reflexive understanding of urban hierarchies and social inequalities. Aju was aware of the difficulties in terms of long-term integration in the city and social mobility perspectives. At the very same time, her words illustrate that she was not willing to move back to her rural community of origin. Aju wanted to remain in the city, to settle-down. She refused to return to the countryside, aware, and scared, of the marriage perspective set by her family:

> "

supported, the making of modern subjectivities. Urban life and work experiences contributed to strengthen women's aspirations to independence and autonomy. The perspective of a rural marriage could, in this sense, jeopardize the making of their project, framed inside a modern and urban horizon. The more complex, numerous and pluralised are circulations and professional experiences, the more undesirable is for women to return to the village to marry a local rural man:

> "I had been working in Shenzhen for almost three years and I enjoyed the city a lot. You cannot imagine how many jobs I had performed at that time, that was crazy, I kept on changing! I worked in several factories, in restaurants, in some shops, but later I found a job in a hairdressing salon owned by a co-villager, a friend of my dad. It was better than the factory even if my co-villager was controlling me a lot, and reporting my attitude to my father […] At that time, I was dating a poor *dagong zai* from Anhui: he was very nice to me, but he had no money […]

project-making, but they gradually acknowledge that such new expectations are almost impossible to realise: their low-paid and low-status work and harsh working conditions make it difficult for all but a few to achieve real economic independence and upward social mobility.

Simultaneously, migration, labour and the modern, urban experience have raised their expectancies for a future partner. Their refusal of the rural identity through migratory and labour practices provoked a shift in terms of expectations for a desirable man. Marrying a city dweller would appear to be preferable.

posited in the marriage market model (Becker 1991).

In rural China, a daughter is subordinated to her father before marriage (*zaijia congfu* 在家從服). Families still arrange transactional marriages (Fan 2004), based on the principle of "matching doors and households" (*mendang hudui* 門當戶對), as Jacka explained (2006, 2012: 7-12, 2018) Alike Madame Yang, introducers (*jieshao ren* 介紹人) or matchmakers (*meipo* 媒婆) have the role to bring together prospective spouses (*xiang qin* 相親) who are suitable for one another. They are also in charge of negotiating the dowry (*jiazhuang* 嫁妝) and the bride price (*pinjin* 聘金) as well as making the wedding arrangements (Wang 2015).

Madame Yang is a professional matchmaker, although she did not define herself as a professional, but rather as "someone who helps, a goodhearted woman who wants to help young people to find their soul mate", as she said.

brain" (*tutou tunao* 土頭土腦[69]), backward and uncivilised. She wanted to get married, but she aspired to an urban, wealthy and educated partner. *Dagong mei*'s new subjectivities forged in the city constructed a representation of the countryside as a backward space, which reinforced their refusal of rural marriage. The semantic use of the word *tu* 土 ("soil", "soiled") was employed to qualify their rural male counterparts.

Despite a fluid, rootless, precarious life perspective in the city, women are not ready to renounce to urban life and to the perspective -still unachieved- of economic autonomy and independence. Escaping from the narrowness of rural life, the hardship of rural women's work, and the threat of an early marriage and childbirth were important elements composing the kaleidoscope of motivations of mobility. Pluri-migrating, living in the city, earning their own salary, autonomously spending time and money, gaining a sense of independence reinforced such ambitions and expectations. Consonantly to Ling Ling or Chunchun, the more complex and pluralised were women's urban and professional experiences, the less they seemed to be willing to settle for a rural marriage back home:

> "After so many years spent in Shenzhen, I grew up, I was not a *cungu* anymore and I did not feel ready to go back to the village. Life is boring there, people are boring and uncultivated (*meiyou suzhi* 沒有素質). My parents wanted me to marry a weird co-villager, but I did not want to. I wanted to get married sooner or later, I had to. I could not be a left-behind woman, a spinster (*shengnü* 剩女). But I refused to marry in the village. Men there are lazy (*lan* 懶) and dirty (*zang* 脏), they smoke and spend their days playing cards […] The man they wanted me to marry was backward (*tu* 土) and like many others in the village, he was thick (*gen xiangxiaren yiyang, fanying chidun de yige* 跟鄉下人一樣，反應遲鈍的一個[70])[…]".
>
> **Chunchun**, Taipei, 16.03.2017

2. Global Hypergamy and Transgressive Mobility

As pointed out by Chunchun, women are positioned into an ambivalent condition. They are supposed to marry in the countryside, but they refuse to move back there. They seek long term urban integration in the city, but they are aware of the multiple social and economic hierarchies and obstacles on the

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[69] *Tu* (土) *tou* (頭) *tu* (土) *nao* (腦). Fei Xiao Tong in 1968 had already pointed the use of the word "soil" (*tu* 土) in reference to the countryside and rural people: "We often say that countryside people are figurately as well as literally "soiled" (*tuqi*). Although this label may seem disrespectful, the character meaning "soil" (*tu*) is appropriately used here" (Fei 1968: 37).

[70] In reference with my previous considerations, this expression can also be translated as "being slow in reacting, reacting slowly", in opposition to the speed of urban development and city life.

road to upward social mobility and urban status achievement. It is hence at the carrefour between the making of modern subjectivities who aspire to urbanity, the inegalitarian structure of the Chinese city, its labour market as well as the global factory regimes that *dagong* mei's marriage-migration to Taiwan can be framed and understood.

2.1. The identikit of the *taishang*

February 2018. 6 pm. Industrial district of Liabu, Dongguan. At Kinge and Xiao

After dinner, I was invited to join the four men for a drink, while Xiao hui remained at home. We took a cab and moved to Changan, the bastion of Taiwanese entrepreneurs and businessmen in the city to have a drink in a karaoke place. Behind the factories, the district of Changan pullulated with bars, expensive restaurants and nightclubs, where the huge community of taishang 台商, Taiwanese investors settled in China, hung out. We arrived at the bar, where we met a few more Taiwanese friends of Kinge, and the night went on until late, singing, smoking and spending money to buy drinks to young girls.

The opening of the Chinese economy to transnational investments and global market, since the beginning of 1990s, has not only multiplied and intensified internal rural-to-urban migrations, but also transnational capitals' movement and foreign entrepreneurs and managerial class' mobility (Sassen 1998; Tseng 2008). As remarked by Castles and Miller (2003), high-skilled mobilities are a direct consequence of globalisation. To control their overseas investments, and to facilitate technology transfers, transnational firms often send managers or technical workers to their overseas sites. If this migration tends to be on a relatively short-term assignment (Tseng 2014), it can also become long term for "transnational business owners" -foreign personnel, managers and businessmen- when they must migrate to execute the transnational operations themselves (Hsiao and Wang 2002; Tseng 2008; Chen 2015). During the past thirty years, this capital-link migration included the huge movement of Taiwanese[71] (Sellami 2013), Hongkonguese and Korean capital-owners (Hsiao 2018), professionals and technical workers to the economically strategic Chinese provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong[72], where the economic opportunities for investment were particularly abundant (Shu and Schubert 2010; Tseng and Wu 2011).

The attractiveness of China's enormous market, together with the implementation of states' business programs to encourage foreign investments (Lee 1998; Solinger 1999; Sellami 2013) and cheap labour available, has thus facilitated capitals accumulation and the creation of employment opportunities for foreign entrepreneurs and professionals, who massively migrated to China. Concurrently, since the beginning of 1990s, Taiwan has turned into an important sending-capital country (Hsiao and Wang

[71] According to the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, between 1990 and 1996, the number of Taiwanese out-migrants increased more than fourfold, from 25.5 thousand to 119.1 thousand, the majority of which were middle class business persons, investors and professionals (Wang and Hsiao 2009).
[72] Sellami's study has noticed a massive presence of Taiwanese foreign enterprises in the Pearl River

2002; Chen 2006), especially to the mainland China[73] (Yang and Liao 2009), where a growing number of Taiwanese entrepreneurs -*taishang*- nourished diaspora communities, benefitting from local profitable business programs, foreign direct investment economic incentives (Hsiao 2014), and advantages in terms of social protection and welfare (Hsiao 2018). The word *taishang*, literally "Taiwanese merchants", describes those who migrate to open and operate their overseas business.

In this respect, as observed by Tseng Yen-fen (2008, 2014) in her important researches on Taiwanese migrants in China, emigration from Taiwan has been dominated by the middle and upper-middle classes (Tseng 2008). It emerged in the frame of a political uncertainty (Hsiao 2018) and of social dislocations caused by rapid industrialization and urbanisation (Chen 2006). Concurrently, it was pulled by the global economy (Tseng 2014), which encouraged the dislocation of Taiwanese companies in Southern China, where labour was cheaper.

The previous snapshot of the city of Dongguan and the districts of *Liaobu* and *Changan* elucidates the huge presence of Taiwanese entrepreneurs and businessmen in the city of Dongguan[74], where they have transplanted from Taiwan mainly electronics and computer manufacturing activities (Sellami 2013), setting huge industrial agglomerations where cheap migrant labour is massively employed. Concomitantly, it scratches the contours of spaces for new social, emotional and affective contacts, meetings, encounters and interactions between Taiwanese citizens and local Chinese people. In the new global cities (Sassen 1995), the Taiwanese factories in Southern China, like the ones implanted in Dongguan and owned by Kinge and his friends, become the sites for new global interactions between transnational entrepreneurs and local workers, of which Kinge and Xiao Hui's case is illustrative.

The social space of the factory reveals to be a double-edge site: this Weberian iron cage of emotional ordeals of suffering, mortification and labour exploitation is turned into a multiple-exit room (Bloch 1959), opening for new moral possibilities, social re-positionings and spatial mobilities.

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[73] The major sources of foreign investments in Southern China are the two nearby overseas economies Hong Kong and Taiwan, which contributed 51 % of the actualised foreign investments in China between 1979 and 2003 (Yang 2006), mostly located in the Pearl River Delta region (Chen 2015).

[74] In 2005, the number of Taiwanese and Hong-konguese industrial enterprises in Dongguan ranked the first among the 21 cities in Guangdong (Guangdong Statistical Bureau 2006).

2.2. Global imaginaries, transnational encounters

Mi Xian, Shandong native, is thirty-one years old, and she currently resides in Taipei. She grew up in Sanyang, a rural village with her parents and a younger brother. At the age of fourteen, she decided to abandon school to gain autonomy and economic independence and she followed some co-villagers to the closer city of Qingdao, where she was employed in a local fish industry, where working conditions were strenuous, and wages were low:

> "The fish industry was a horrible place to work in. Inside, it was very cold, my hands were frozen and often in the evening I could not move my fingers anymore […] Colleagues were unfriendly; they thought that I was good for nothing and looked down on me; often I was asked to accomplish the hardest tasks, even though I was a young and inexperienced worker […] The salary was very poor and after few months I decided that it was not worth to work there anymore, so I moved to Xiamen, where a friend had found a job for me as a waitress in the restaurant of a huge hotel […]"

Mi Xian moved to Xiamen, where she worked in the hotel with some co-villagers. Later, she followed some *jiemei* to Kunshan, in Jiangsu province, where she was employed in a Taiwanese electronic company. Despite the long working time around the assembly line, Mi Xian acknowledged having been satisfied with that position, as wages were decent, and the managers had a certain paternalistic attitude towards workers:

> "In

淨淨), very charming and charismatic (*hen you meili* 很有魅力); he spent a lot of money for me […]

This positive encounter with the Taiwanese businessman supported the construction of a social and emotional representation of Taiwanese entrepreneurs, Taiwanese men and of Taiwan. Emotions of self-esteem, pride, respect, together with feelings of security, of protection, of recognition and appreciation were generated from this encounter. Such sentiments sustained, later, her choice of life and marriage. After few weeks, Xiao Hui found a new employment in a Taiwanese enterprise, owned by Kinge, with whom she started a love affair:

“

At the same time, the contradictory situation women experience in the city, in terms of denied access to social recognition of their status and a decent, stable and fair job places them in a precarious, insecure and fragile position. Urban marriage market being obstructed for rural women, marriage-migration with a Taiwanese native becomes an option that women can contemplate.

Apprehending the morphologies and the complex geographies of social, spatial and emotional mobilities leads us to consider the overlapping and even ambivalent dimension of social practices and emotions. Movement, mobilities, and cross-border migration are generated at the carrefour between the opportunity and constraint structure, which takes a scale, negotiated between local and global social worlds. At the same time, the situationally constructed emotions of ambition, effervescence, hope, expectation, but also frustration, disillusionment and anxiety of women sustain the choice of cross-border marriage migration. To position her choice of cross-border marriage, it may be helpful to call back

Figure 21 Xiao Hui's spatial, social, professional and biographical career. The waltz of precarious, unstable, floating and flexible employment during her plural experiences of labour migration in China, Guangdong province becomes visible.

Crossing the Strait means for women crossing social, economic and moral barriers characterising Chinese urban society. It may represent a form of stability in the future shape of biographical trajectories. Also, and importantly, it signifies a chance to affirm their modern, creative subjectivities, to negotiate an urban and moral status, achieving upward social mobility. Imaginaries, emotions and aspirations are generated from the new encounters with Taiwanese partners and sustain a constant work of projection towards the Taiwanese future. Hence, Xiao Hui explained:

> "I knew I had to get married sooner or later; simply I did not want a matchmaker, my parents or whoever else to decide for me, forcing me to marry I do not know whom. I wanted to live in Dongguan, but I had no money and no *hukou*. I could not work in the factory forever; it was too hard and too strenuous. I could not make good money and the living expenses in Dongguan were growing everyday […] At the same time, I really, really!

of movement" (Faist 2000), thus *why* people migrate constitutes the main body of migration theories (Castles and Miller 2003: 12).

In the most recent edition of *The Age of Migration* (2014), Castles, de Haas and Miller have re-considered and re-actualised their previous conceptualisations of migration as a *process* (Castles and Miller 2003). They suggested to apprehend migration and movement as a broader process of "development, social transformation and globalisation" (2014: 36). Reflecting on continuities and parallels in terms of rural-to-urban and international movements, *transition theories* (Zelinsky 1971; Massey 2005; Castles and Delgado Wise 2008) enable to theoretically and empirically apprehend the link and the interconnection between internal and international migratory processes. Considering factors such as the structure of labour markets, the inequalities and the restrictive migratory policies, they conceptualise how the migration patterns are an intrinsic -despite *nonlinear* (Zelinsky 1971)- part of broader processes of development[76]: development processes, urbanisation and modernisation can lead to an increment of migration. The structure of development and economic improvement links internal and international mobilities (Castels and Delgado Wise 2008). When goals of development are unachievable, migration can therefore shift from internal movements inside a country to international or translational mobilities outside of it by the very same actors (Massey 2005).

However, the danger of such understanding is considering the binary correlation between migration and development as being inevitable (Smith and King 2012). On the contrary, it seems not to be necessary, but rather *contingent* to spatial contexts, social worlds and emotional situations. Transition theories argue that development *drives* migration and that developed societies generally experience higher levels of internal and international mobility (Castles et al. 2014: 53). Nevertheless, transition theories do not explain why individual people would migrate more with increasing development. In order to reach a better comprehension of how development processes affect people's propensity to migrate, it may be useful to conceptualise individual migration as a function of *capabilities* and *aspirations* to move (King 2000; de Haas 2010; Roulleau-Berger 2003, 2010). Motivations derive from individuals' perceptions of the situations, social practices and emotional performances, which are contingent and fluid. They involve socially constructed emotional and affectional investments which influence the meanings and significances attributed to the action. Movement is spatial, social, but also

[76] Zelinsky (1971) argued that all forms of internal and international mobility increase in early transitional societies due to population growth, a decline in rural employment and rapid economic and technological development. This was the case in early nineteenth-century Britain, just as it was in late nineteenth-century Japan, Korea in the 1970s and China in the 1980s and the 1990s (See Castles et al. 2014: 46-47).

emotional: it is a projection towards the future and towards "what might be possible" (Illouz 2009, 2018). Movement is oriented towards a horizon of aspiration (Appadurai 2000, 2004), of transformation and of *becoming*.

Aspirations, expectations, fantasies, as well as feelings of frustration, of unfulfillment, of dissatisfaction generated from the present social and spatial experiences contribute to sketch the frame of decision-making, actions and re-positioning within the biographical trajectory. Thus, the sense attributed to marriage and migration reveals to be indissociable from the combination of the social and economic structural constraints to upward urban social mobility, the labour regimes, the global social relations women could negotiate in the factory with Taiwanese businessmen. Also, and crucially, the socialisation processes among "sisters" (*jiemei*) who collectively draw the contours of alternative destinies; the affectional performances individually and collectively produced around the assembly line and in the dormitories of the factory, together with emotions of aspirations and of ambition contribute all at once to framing the vocabulary of motives.

2.4. On the same road: from internal to international migration

Globalisation and its translation inside social, economic and emotional performances of the urban space open new sites for *glocal* encounters. The heterotopian space of the factory represents a site of labour exploitation and life precarity, but also a place where women can negotiate new opportunities and where new possibilities can emerge. It is thus in the frame of this globalised, cosmopolitan context (Beck 2003), at the crossroad between internal and transnational migrations and movements that cross-border-marriage migration must be situated and conceived.

The analysis of cross-border marriages in Taiwan are abundantly associated with brokered (*xiangqin* 相亲) or commercially arranged (*maimai hunyin* 買賣婚姻) practices (Tsai and Hsiao 2006). However, young *dagong mei*'s labour and migratory experiences in the global city where new encounters can occur, challenges this understanding. From the countryside to the Chinese city, and from the Chinese city to Taiwan, women's movements, social and spatial mobilities suggest the presence of continuities in the mobility patterns. Undoubtedly, the times, spaces and identities (Tarrius 2000, 2001) of migrations vary. They are fluid and mutable. They follow the tempos of women's biographical re-positionings and bifurcations, as well as the structure of the opportunities and the constraints they find on their roads (Roulleau-Berger 2010).

However, the *aspirational infrastructure* (Shrestha 2018) inside which mobilities were inscribed since the first displacement from the rural to urban areas, enables to identify a *continuum* in terms of experiences, of practices and of expectations. Women move and migrate seeking for recognition (Honneth 2006), for upward social mobility. They aspire to the achievement of a modern, urban, independent status. Such expectations, intentions and norms are part of the same *horizon of hope and transformation,* whether in China or from China to Taiwan. Urban, social and professional experiences have generated strong dissatisfaction, malaise, and exasperation as for the present condition. Hence, the *glocal* encounter with Taiwanese men and the perspective of a transnational marriage might be seen by rural migrant women as a resource for future spatial, social and moral re-positioning, to navigate new seas, taking new global roads. It might be a chance for a desired urban marriage.

Far and wide, scholarship on cross-border marriages between Taiwanese men and foreign women - who are mainly from China[77] (Tsai and Hsiao 2006) and South-east-Asian countries- has, over the last thirty years, adopted the expressions of "mail-order bride" or "commodified marriage[78]" (Lu 2005; Hsia 2015) to describe the mediation of marriages through brokerage practices (*xiangqin*) or agencies (*zhongjie* 中介) acting as intermediaries and constituting a marriage-migration industry (Lan 2008; Xiang 2012; Hsia 2015; Yeoh 2016).

More recently, Shrestha and Yeoh[79] (2018) in their analysis of brokerage practices in Asia, have defined brokerage and broker-related activities as "a set of indeterminate and emergent practices unfolding through unpredictable encounters among diverse and transregionally located actors, bureaucratic objects, and impractical procedures contingent on institutional cultures and constant (mis)interpretation of varying degrees" (2018: 664-665). As shown by Melody Chia-Wen Lu[80] (2005; 2008), and, more recently, by Lara Momesso (2016), when cross-border marriages in Taiwan gained demographic significance in the mid-1980s, the earlier bridegrooms were from socially disadvantaged, lowly-educated backgrounds[81]. Those looked for brides abroad mainly because they had difficulties to

[77] According to Ying-Tshui Tsai and Michael

marry local women (Momesso 2016). Most of the earlier brides were Chinese, with fewer numbers of Filipino and Thai women (Lu 2005). The proximity in terms of language, culture and ethnic background influenced the propensity of Taiwanese men for Chinese women (Lu 2008). Since the late 1980s, the number of Chinese brides has gradually been increasing. As the demand for foreign spouses was not high at the early stage, Taiwanese men and their families looked for wives abroad via their contacts in Southeast Asia and China. These connections mainly relied on their own relatives, Taiwanese businessmen overseas or transnational brokerage agencies (Hsia 2015).

Given the restrictive immigration policies in Taiwan[82], Taiwanese nationals often needed to travel to meet women. They joined them in their rural villages of origin, as migration was not an established *praxis* yet. The travelling, the introduction, the ensuing arrangements of marriage registration and the wedding, as well as the negotiation of bride price and dowry needed to be facilitated: the mediators were therefore fundamental. Nonetheless, the design and form of contemporary encounters rather different from the past. The globalised context of global labour regimes, internal migration of rural workers and transnational mobilities of businessmen and entrepreneurs forge different paths and frame new sites for contacts and meetings.

January 31st 2017. Taoyuan (Taiwan).

Excited and curious, I go to Taoyuan to meet thirty-four years old, Anhui native Zi Yu, who works for a local brokerage agency (zhongjie 中介). While working dagong in Jiangsu province, Zi Yu met her husband in a Taiwanese electronic factory in Kunshan, a city where many Taiwanese owned industrial compounds were present. Once in Taiwan, facing obstacles in entering the Taiwanese labour market, Zi Yu was mobilised by the owner of the brokerage agency to help in mediating marriages between Taiwanese men and Chinese women. In the agency, one Vietnamese, one Cambodian and one Indonesian woman were also employed. Zi Yu's migratory experiences in China have been numerous and her social capital is important: it constituted a resource for the agency to find and communicate with Chinese local partners in arranging marriages.

[82] I discuss restrictive migratory policies for Chinese migrant women in Taiwan in part 4 "Towards an Emotional Modernity", chapter 1.1 "

Brokerage being forbidden by law[83] since 2008, the agency is hidden in an old building and located at the third floor.

At the main entrance, there is no ring bell: to open the door, I had to ring at number "999". Zi Yun came downstairs to meet me, and to make sure that I was alone and that nobody had followed me. We went upstairs. The interior of the agency looked rather austere: few sofas, two little tables and some posters with wedding pictures. Zi Yu patiently showed me the catalogues of Chinese brides, illustrated with pictures and listing the bride price and the dowry, the sum of money to be included in the hong bao -the red envelope- as a gift to the family, together with the agency's fees. The potential bridegroom contacts the agency and explains his preferences in terms of country and ethnic origin.

[83] According to article 58 of the revised Immigration Act of the Republic of China (2008): "Transnational marriage match shall not be an operating item. Transnational marriage agencies shall not demand remunerations or contractual remunerations. No person shall disseminate, broadcast or publish advertisements of transnational marriage agencies through advertising, publication, broadcast, television, electronic signaling, internet or other means that can make the advertisements publicly known."

大陸結婚代辦委託書

甲　方（委託人）：許瀚紳

乙方（受委託人）：大陸-福建　心心相印婚姻介紹所

一、甲方委託乙方協助辦理與中國籍配偶之結婚申請相關事宜並服務至配偶入境台灣。
二、乙方提供甲方下列服務項目及各項費用如下，由甲方依自身需求選擇並委託代辦服務。

收費項目	收費內容說明	勾選	新台幣
大陸食宿	大陸一趟行程(最少12天)住宿及早、中、晚餐 超過天數不另收費(最長可住30天)	☑	20,000
大陸行程費	福州地區交通費、福州民政局、公證處交通費 (福州地區以外民政局另計)	☑	10,000
交友聯誼	婚姻媒合聯誼、場地、活動費用	☑	50,000
探訪親家費	伴手禮、車資(福州地區，其他地區另外收費)等	☑	5,000
結婚辦證	大陸結婚登記費用、文件公證費用+快件費	☑	5,000
結婚新房	新婚新房三星級酒店安排及費用(3天為限超過自付)	☑	6,000
結婚喜宴	喜酒2桌-宴請男女雙方親朋好友之酒水、香菸喜糖	☑	20,000
拍照攝影	結婚過程照片50張X2、VCD二片(男女雙方各一)	☑	10,000
父母紅包	給岳父岳母紅包禮	☑	10,000
聘金金飾	1.結婚聘金人民幣2萬元、特殊情況另議。 2.結婚金飾(金項鍊一條、金戒指一只)	☑	自理
配偶入台	配偶團聚入台機票。(大陸配偶至機場費用自付)	☑	10,000
媒合工作費	相關媒合工作費(含交通費)	☑	30,000
其　他	金門辦理三代無血緣證明書、女方購買喜宴新衣服	☑	15,000
文件認證	大陸文件驗證及翻譯	☑	1,000

合計金額台幣 192,000 元　簽收人 [illegible]　日期 2016/11/12

自付金額相關簽收　　簽收人　簽收日期

1.結婚紅包：給女方父母親結婚紅包禮金人民幣 2000 元.... 商咪 ...2016/11/19

2.給大陸配偶接婚金飾 ☑項鍊 ☑戒指 □手鍊 □耳環一對..... 商咪 ...2016/11/19

3.給大陸配偶結婚聘金人民幣 30000 元..... 商咪 ...2016/11/19

※ 甲方同意台灣境外自行支付之費用，以此表格為依據，不另外開立收據。

受媒合當事人簽名同意：許瀚紳

第一頁

Figure 22 Part of the bill for an arranged marriage in 2016, illustrating the different fees charged to the Taiwanese bridegroom, including his travek and accomodation fees in China, the legal documentation for cross-strait marriage-migration, the marriage legal papers, the organisation of the wedding, the photographer for the wedding, the red envelope for the family, the bride price and dowry, and the agency fees. Taoyuan. January 31st 2017.

However, Zi Yun explained that since 2012 when she had started collaborating with the agency, she observed a progressive decrease of the number of brokered marriages between Chinese women and Taiwanese men. With a sarcastic but realistic tone, she explained:

“Chinese girls look for their husband by themselves and I am losing my job! Less and less girls accept their families matching them with men, and I succeed arranging less and less marriages during the last years […] The fact is,

workers, 8/23 were local taxi drivers and 1/23 was a seller in a shop. Among those who employed internet as a site for encounters, 1/3 was a seller in a shop and 2/3 were local taxi drivers. The table which follows helps to visualise this data. Not only it suggests that brokerage practices, through physical agencies or *online* websites have not been used by most women I interviewed as a channel to negotiate marriage. It also shows the link between men and women's professional position. Taiwanese men were employed as translocal entrepreneurs (*taishang*) or high-skilled workers (*taigan*) in the same factories were women were working. This enabled future couples to negotiate encounters and design marriage perspective by themselves, without the intermediation of brokers or matchmakers.

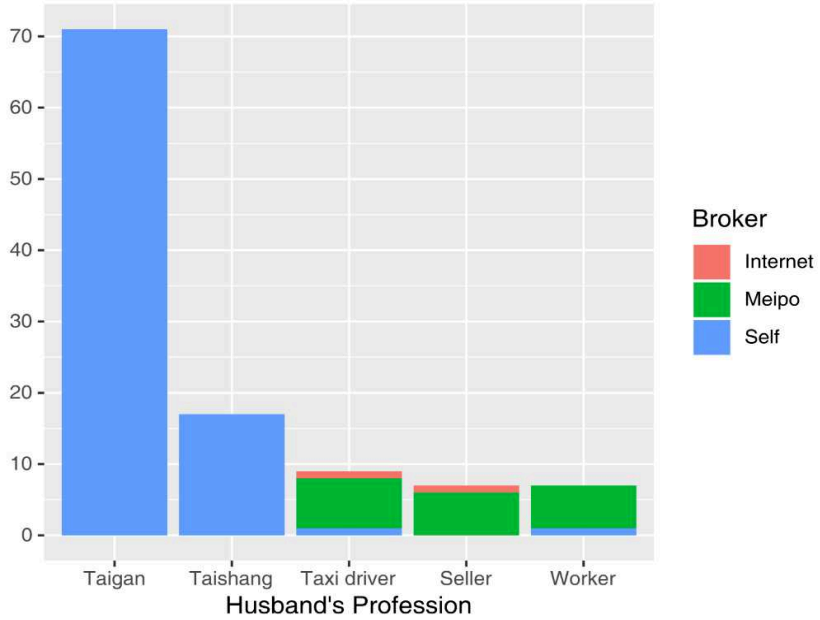

Figure 23 The main professions performed in China by women's husbands at the moment of their encounter, crossed to the means through which the encounter occurred.

Lines of continuity between internal and international mobilities emerge. The making of rural-to-urban migratory paths, as well as marriage-migration to Taiwan are framed inside the same *aspirational infrastructure* and supported by a modern subjectivity-making project. Emotions, as resources and practices, represent important cornerstones of such parallels and symmetries in terms of action and capacity of projection towards the *horizon of aspiration* (Appadurai 2004). Negative emotions of home-sickness, of nostalgia, of regret, of sadness, of exasperation and of disillusionment are constantly produced and re-produced along women's mobility paths. At the same time, when they mix and merge with a creative use of social and affectional resources – the "networks of "sisters"- they are individually and collectively transformed into new positive emotions of determination, ambition and desire, which enable the continuation of migratory trajectories in the present and in the future.

Therefore, these two migratory experiences are only apparently separated. The achievement of social, economic and emotional re-positionings are inscribed within similar motivations and need to be considered as a continuous experience. Global modernity remains the a*spirational infrastructure of mobility*. The urban living experience and the alienating labour regime in the factory might have lessen women's ambitions and aspirations because of the multiplication of moral conflicts among the labour regimes, the lack of opportunities of social and professional mobility, the inegalitarian structure of urban marriage market and individuals' desires and ambitions. However, this is true only to a certain degree. What emerges is that "modernity at large" (Appadurai 1999) as a *horizon of becoming* has not disappeared under the weight of structural social, economic and moral constraints. It persists as a project of transformation and of *becoming* standing in front women's present existences.

commands of her family. Thrilled and excited at the idea of moving to modern Shenzhen, one night, she escaped with two co-villagers. Deprived of the identity card, she borrowed the documents of a friend in order to be employed in an electronic factory. Working conditions were strenuous and working hours very long; she was subjected to the insults of her superiors and to insalubrious living conditions in the dormitory. After one year, she came to regret this first migratory ordeal, which did not correspond to her expectations. Thus, she moved to Shanghai, a place she considered elegant and classy (*gao da shang* 高大上), but which quickly disenchanted her:

> "I had nothing before going to Shanghai (*yiwu suoyou* 一無所有), but I was sure I would be lucky there, I was sure it was a great place to live and work […] After few days, I realised that beyond the factory, it is impossible to find a job in Shanghai. If you have low-education, you are from an inner province (*waishen mei* 外省妹) and you do not have *guanxi*, there is nothing for you. If you are lucky, you will clean the floor of a restaurant or a shopping mall. Otherwise, your place is at the assembly line […]".

After few months, she moved to Suzhou, in Jiangsu province, where she found a job in a Taiwanese electronic factory. There, working conditions were better than in Shenzhen or Shanghai, but labour was still arduous. In this factory, she came in touch with some Taiwanese technical workers (*taigan*), she considered civilized (*you suzhi*), refined (*wenya* 文雅) and wealthy (*you qian* 有錢). Later, following some *jiemei,* she returned to Guangdong province, Dongguan city, where she was employed in a Taiwanese leather factory. However, she refused to live in the dormitory, and she rented a small and insalubrious place (*mimi mama de fangzi* 密密麻麻的房子) in the suburbs of the city, which progressively became unaffordable for her.

When she informed her parents of her affair with the Taiwanese man, they strongly opposed. She was insulted by her dad and she was asked to put an end to their relationship. Xiao Bing suffered; she had been deeply emotionally impacted by the words of her parents. She contested the legitimacy of traditional and conservative norms of the rural community, which produced a prejudicial and almost deviant representation of her life and conduct:

> "They were so conservative, and they did not understand me. I wanted to be autonomous and to do what I wanted. My boyfriend wanted to see my home village, but I did not want to bring him there. It is too poor there, I felt ashamed (*diu mianzi* 丢面子) it does not fit Taiwanese standards. People are rude and uncivilized, they do not speak Mandarin […] But he insisted, and I had to concede. When I informed my parents, they got mad, they said that if he came over, he had to enter our house in the evening after sunset and leave before sunrise […] When people saw me with a Taiwanese man, they started gossiping. They said I was his mistress (*xiao san* 小三), they said that he wanted to buy me, that I was with him only for his money […] I cried […] When he proposed to me, I did not say anything to my parents […] I waited for the Chinese

Shenzhen,

Part 4: Towards an Emotional Modernity

Figures of Navigation and Creative Contestations

We left women collecting their goods, packing their clothes and preparing their luggage, full of ambitions, of expectations and of projects, aimed at "bringing into present a possible future" (Barbalet 1998; Ingold 2000). Imagination generates and, at its turn, co-sustains the making of cross-border marriage-mobility from China to Taiwan. Taiwan is a new *Ithaca* to explore and to navigate through, where the realisation of modern, autonomous subjectivities can take place. Women traverse the global sea, inside and outside which their career-making processes take place. Chinese migrants move through different social, economic, legal, familiar and moral orders. Globalisation opens new opportunities, possibilities and lands to discover and to explore. But it also positions migrants inside new and composite social, economic and moral worlds which demand the production and the mobilisation of specific *navigational skills* to face the new obstacles emerging on the road.

Globalisation creates opportunities but also constraints, which take old and new forms according to the malleability and fluidity of the social worlds women are positioned in. Globalisation hence shapes and frames the geographies of cross-border marriage-migration (Hsia 2015). New barriers, physical and virtual, material and moral walls emerge on women's roads. They require migrants to develop new strategies and tactics to adapt, to negotiate and to cope with inequalities. Women experience a transnational production of subalternity and need to develop transnational practices to cope with it. Through and across the Taiwan Strait, local and global hierarchies meet, cross and juxtapose. Their encounter shows the complexity and the interpenetration of local and global social structures and constraints in shaping, framing and orienting migrants' journeys, displacements, and movements. The market, the states and "modernity at large" (Appadurai 1999) interplay within processes of mobilisation and immobilisation of migrants (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) in a multiplicity of ways and place the experiences on a multi-scalar level (Sassen 2006a).

Thereby, women's biographies and geographies oscillate between local and global orders, which are increasingly convergent and overlocking, mutually shaping each other. Geometries of continuity between past and present experiences of migration and mobility emerge, as well as new projections towards the future horizon of possibility, of transition and of transformation. Time and space (Tarrius 2001) become crucial in framing and re-framing mobilities, together with emotions and affections. They are constantly articulated and re-articulated. They co-support the movements, the rhythms, the sequences of a pluriform variety of social and moral, economic and emotional displacements all along mobilities and the marking of mobility careers. They generate attachments and senses of belonging. But they also produce des-affiliations, shaped by the multiple configurations of the social, economic and emotional re-positionings all the physical and virtual, corporeal or emotional mobilities.

Global disqualifications and inequalities take new situated and localised (Roulleau-Berger 2016) forms. This shows the complexity of the articulation between the local and global, global and local hierarchies that women *on the move* are subjected to. The ordeals of misrecognition, of vulnerability and social contempt which had characterised women's career-making processes in China are reformulated in Taiwan. This enables to draw parallels and symmetries between local and global orders. Subalternity as a situated and situational condition proves its increasingly transnational and transnationalising dimension. Crossing a plurality of spaces means for objects and subjects in motion to experience the multiplication of social hierarchies (Tarrius 2001) as well as the multiplicity, heterogeneity and arbitrariness of social orders.

Progressively, it becomes for women -and for the objects which follow their movements- a matter of negotiating with old and new local and global obstacles to the realization of their mobility project. Previous social, economic and moral walls re-merge within the new society of arrival, taking a different shape, which however, still require women to set practices to bypass and overstep them.

the local becomes oppressive, the global, as a space and a practice, opens new seas to navigate and draws the contours of new horizons of possibilities. It becomes a chance for objects and subjects who navigate across these seas to "take their place" in new, *physical and virtual, material or emotional glocal spaces*. It is there that discrete, vaporous, creative social and emotional practices are produced.

"Take their place" hence signifies processes of adaptation, of negotiation, of rebellion and of transgression. Those challenge national borders. They transcend walls and fixed social and economic orders. They call into question the rigidity of local and global social structures, producing new, *sui generis* and continuous transgressive mobilities. Cross-border marriage-migration represents the site where local and global forms of domination can merge, overlap and juxtapose, re-producing inequalities and subalternity. Undoubtedly, cross border mobility can lead to processes of immobilisation, and stasis (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). Notwithstanding, it also reveals a fertile terrain for creative subjectivities to re-define their *selves* (Roulleau-Berger 2002), proving a capacity to aspire (Appadurai 1999) and their ability of projection inside the global field of possibilities.

To visualise the overlocking, embedded and indissociable link between biographies and geographies, between, temporality, spatiality and emotivity during the making of women's tortuous mobility paths, I employ the metaphor of *navigation.* This elucidates the complexity, malleability and fluidity of their movements, which go through local and global seas, where continuous social, economic and emotional positionings and re-positionings occur. *Navigation* through the seas is generally tortuous, made of continuities, of ruptures and of re-orientations, similarly to objects and subjects' mobility careers. Thus, from now on, I will progressively identify three *figures of navigation*[85]*:* the *yuangong* 員工- "trapped-in-migration lives", the *paodanbang* 跑單幫 – "suitcase carriers"- and the *laobanniang* 老闆娘 – "*glocal* bosses". These "figures" of *navigation* emerge progressively, incrementally along my narration, through the description of the social worlds they are produced and act in. They elucidate the variety of processes of subjectivation, subjection, re-subjectivation and re-subjection they go through[86], during spatial, temporal and identity changes, shifts and displacements[87]. They are *mobile*, mutable

[85] See the Theoretical Frame, chapter 3.2 "Multiscale Experiences,

and malleable, and help to show the passages and shifts which can occur along the trajectories. They elucidate how global social, economic and emotional resources and competences are locally translated to generate physical and virtual translocal experiences of (upward) social mobility and (tentative) self-achievement, which sometimes occurs, and sometimes does not. They are constructed and re-constructed along women's social, economic and emotional re-positioning, therefore they change over time. Concurrently, they make continuities in terms of inequalities and hierarchies in local and global societies (Roulleau-Berger 2017) visible.

Objects and subjects move through and around a plurality of *online* and *offline* seas. They moor at a variety of social, economic and emotional places, following the rhythm of diverse temporalities. Through local and global inegalitarian regimes and hierarchies, actors collect and capitalise resources and *navigational skills* that they can translate, or not translate or translate partially into visible or invisible strategies of negotiation and transgression to achieve their modern project. The part of emotions, of feelings and of affections takes a crucial role in the construction of situations, of circumstances and of experiences which are, at their turn, the starting point for emotional performances.

In this sense, navigation produces status positioning and re-positioning. Inside local and global seas, statuses are floating, liable and temporary. It can vary, it can change, fluctuate, push towards social mobility (Becker 1963) or new forms of disqualification. These figures elucidate the extent to which individual *selves* -identity and subjectivity- vary according to circumstances, to negotiations, to opportunities and to aspirations. They can fight against a multiplicity of obstacles. Barriers can sometimes become tempests, re-orienting the course, changing the track to avoid the shipwreck. Sometimes, they are simply passing winds, which impose short and temporary stops or moorings, before taking off again and again.

While constantly circulating and moving, precarious, vulnerable and subaltern lives and conditions can be challenged, negotiated, transgressed and transformed by playing creative roles within the sea of possibilities. Yet, subalternity can be constantly, progressively and creatively negotiated, "done" and "undone" by -and let's keep this in mind- lowly-qualified and poorly-educated proletarians, who creatively crossed the borders and set sails between physical places, virtual spaces and emotional temporalities. Local and global hierarchies and inequalities prove *in fine* to be porous, malleable and enable rhizomatic infiltrations.

It is in the interstices of local and global labour markets, within innovative physical and virtual spaces for affectional socialisation processes and emotional practices of mutuality that such infiltrations take place. Discretely, women show their capacity to overstep and overturn social and economic structural constraints, transgressive orders and negotiating subaltern positionings, mobilizing a plurality of resources, which are turned into original practices of status transition and social transformation. It is within new virtual and emotional *glocal spaces* of *navigation* that objects and subjects considered as "subaltern" prove their capacity to re-negotiate their status, positioning and identity, "resetting" modernity (Latour and Leclercq 2016) at their own terms.

Chapter 1: Trapped in Migration

From Local to Global Hierarchies

From China to Taiwan, through marriage, women cross the Strait. On the plane, they carry with them a luggage of aspirations, desires and imaginaries. Fujin crossed the Strait. The orange, fluorescent bra she fabricated in the textile factory in Shenzhen traversed the border with her. Correctly fold and appositely stowed inside her luggage on the plane, it was directed to Taiwan. On the bra, Fujin projected her ambitions of autonomous, independent and modern subjectivity-making. The bra moved with her. It followed the rhythm and the tempo of her movement from the Chinese city to Taiwan. It had engendered as much as encouraged her migratory pattern and the modern imaginary which underpinned her movement.

Doubtlessly, migratory processes and projects of cross-border mobility are formulated according to a variety of subjective understanding of social worlds, in the frame of the uniqueness of individuals' experiences. At the very same time, a common *aspirational infrastructure*[88] (Shrestha 2018) frames and sustains these diverse projects of cross-border migration and its very concretization amongst the actors. The contours and perimeters of this infrastructure are porous and highly subjective, but commonly inscribed in the frame of modernity at large (Appadurai 1999). This is characterised by the unfair and discriminating structure of the marital regimes and the familiar order integrated by Chinese "spouses", together with the inegalitarian and hierarchical structure of Taiwanese local labour market.

In the articulation among obstacles to social mobility, moral barriers to recognition and economic fences to decent employment, creative subjectivities seek for respect, autonomy and independence and orient their mobility projects towards a horizon of possibility of *becoming*. Crossing diverse social, economic and moral worlds, it seems that ambition, aspiration and the project of modern subjectivity-making represent the lines of continuity in women's biographical and mobility career-making processes from China to Taiwan.

Concurrently, and not less importantly, this *aspirational infrastructure* which underpins the projects of *becoming* through migration and mobility must be apprehended in the context of the *mobility regime* (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), which includes the role of the state and of its governmentality

[88] See the definition in the Theoretical Frame (Part 1, Chapter 4.3 "Imagination, Projection and Aspirational Infrastructure").

devices and surveillance administration that affect individuals' displacements (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013: 188-189). Emotions of excitement, of enthusiasm, of curiosity and of projection emerge and co-sustain women's movements, perceived as opportunities for navigation, for adventure and for the realization of the subjectivity-making project that had revealed to be unachievable during the previous roads they took in China. However, these sentiments and feelings are challenged by the *order of things* that women are situated in once they enter the new Taiwanese social world.

Women's ambitions and projects clash with national migratory policies and immobilisation processes, which generate new confinements and forms of *stasis* (Salazar and Smart 2011), due to the building and re-building of different hierarchical walls (Shamir 2005: 199) within the different spaces of individuals' existences. An emotional line of continuity in terms of deception and disillusionment is drawn on women's' routes. When movement is controlled and normalised, individuals' project-making and the consequent biographical, social and moral trajectories encounter obstacles on the road. The ordeal of marriage-migration perceived as an opportunity of spatial transit, social transition and identity transformation towards a modern horizon reveals to be a "trap" (Zani 2018b), and re-places women in a condition of disqualification: the same disqualification they were escaping from.

Migration and stasis (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013), mobility and immobility co-construct each other. The ready equation between movement and freedom is highly challenged: cross-border mobility as a reaction and a response to local injustice in China can generate new precarity. New social, economic and moral constraints happen on women's roads.

immobilisation and capture inside the urban industrial apparatus. In Taiwan, when women enter new social, economic and moral orders, their movements, positionings and re-positionings encounter, again, barriers, hierarchies and inegalitarian structures. It urges to apprehend this dialectic within a global frame, where hierarchies, inequalities and injustices take a global shape, despite their diverse, heterogeneous and polyhedral situated and localised practices. Subalternity, as a constructed and situated condition takes a transnational dimension, through local and global performances within the different spaces of migrants' movements.

The local *mobility regimes* which exist both in China and in Taiwan show that "national-states *do* participate in the formation and legitimation of globe-spanning regimes of mobility by imposing barriers on the emigration and immigration of some individuals" (

By re-migrating to Taiwan, like the other women, Fujin had left the factory. She abandoned her industrial job. She escaped from an exhausting labour regime, fuelled by the desire of reconfiguring her life pattern according to a modern subjectivity-making project imbued of ambitions, of aspirations of independence, of autonomy and of upward social mobility. The orange, fluorescent bra moved with her, symbolising and co-producing the modern and metropolitan identity building process. On the plane, Fujin made use of her *imagination*, as a creative capacity to make aspirations possible (Darling-Wolf 2014). She produced a socially and emotionally situated image of the Taiwanese world according to her understanding of the opportunities she could find there. This process of imagination, as suggested by Illouz (2009) not only evokes and conjures emotions, but also generates them (2009: 399): the seek for moral esteem, social respect, economic recognition was translated into sensations, feelings and emotions by women, of which Fujin's narration is illustrative of.

These strong emotional engagements which emerged from and sustained mobilities are upset and reversed since the very moment women land to the island. Metaphorically, while stepping down the plane stairs and touching the Taiwanese soil, women encountered the first material and moral walls. Deception and disillusionment emerged as soon as they traversed the immigration border controls, where the first forms of social contempt, disrespect and misrecognition appeared. The gap between the order of imagination and the local *order of things* was being dug:

> "When I arrived at the airport gate I could not see my husband […] I felt puzzled since I expected him to be there and wait for me […] I was told that was normal, people could not entry and I had to go through the passport control before meeting my husband […] It was actually the first time I took the plane and I did not know how things worked […] But when I gave them my passport, they stopped me. They took the passport and told me not to move. I stood there few minutes […] than a policeman came and brought me to an office […] and he started asking questions […]."
>
> **Wang Xiao Lin**, Twenty-nine years old, Sichuanese native, Zhudong, 15.12.2016

During pluri-migrations in China and their diverse urban and labour experiences, women learned that movement is a complex and contradictory process, which can take different roads and plural configurations, but which can be also blocked and obstructed by a multiplicity of obstacles. Stopped at the immigration control, it is at the airport that women make the first experience of immobilisation in Taiwan.

Moving and re-moving reveal to be ambiguous experiences of adventure and discovery, of uncertainty and unpredictability. Spatial and geographical displacements concurrently represent the possibility to explore and navigate new lands, and to socially and morally reposition themselves within a new places and social orders. At the same time, migration opens the door of the unknown, of the unpredictable. Blocked at the airport, the sudden obstacle engendered by the administrative controls of the sovereign state generates ambivalent feelings of excitement and anxiety, as Lilli's words suggested:

> "When I was on the flight, before take-off I had a double feeling of excitement and anxiety. I did not know where I was going, and I told myself *whether I go further, or I go back,* but stepping into the plane I realised I had nothing to lose […] But then, I started feeling confused […] I was asked many questions by the police, and the same happened to my husband, but we were separated […] they asked many documents to me […] Suddenly I had the impression that they did not want me to stay in Taiwan […] Police was unfriendly".
>
> **Lilli**, Thirty years old, Hunan native, Sanchong (Taipei), 07.02.2017

While waiting for her flight in Shenzhen airport, she thought once more about her migratory project to Taiwan and her life cycle transition. For a young woman the field of possibilities was open: excitement, adrenaline, curiosity, fantasy characterised the sequence of her departure. Facing material and symbolic frontiers at her arrival, these emotions were turned into new sentiments of uncertainty and anxiety, of fear and misunderstanding of the situation experienced.

Fujin and Lilli's aspirations and ambitions were strong: they wanted to re-shape their biographical path in a modern, independent and autonomous direction. Taiwan was both a socially and an emotionally constructed space for achieving a project that had revealed to be unmakeable in urban China. Movement and mobility were conceived as a way to overstep and overturn the rigid borders of the factory women were working in and the moral walls deriving by their disqualifying status and rural identity: "nobody could know where I came from", explained Lilli, " I was given the chance to redefine myself in Taiwan; I was married to a rich man and I was going to live in a beautiful country".

This imaginary hidden behind mobility is broken since their very arrival to Taiwan. The unexpected comes to the stage. The Chinese passport and the marriage certificate attest women's origin and sustain the new identity they are attributed by the Taiwanese social and administrative order even before leaving the airport. Women's ambitions face the moral wall represented by the immigration control. Social contempt, misrecognition and disqualification are the grammars through which the new mobility regime (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) they are positioned in articulated:

> "When I arrived at Taoyuan airport, I was immediately brought at the immigration control. I was asked many questions and so was my husband. The interview (*miantan* 面談) was long and felt confused. They wanted to know how I met my husband, how long we had been together; they asked me details about the first time we made love, how often we make love, it was humiliating. They asked me about my family, his family, they wanted to know how much money I earned in China, what was my job, what I plan to do here in Taiwan […] Sometimes, I felt too embarrassed to answer as I did not know what to say […] They did not want me to enter the territory […] and I told them 'well, if you do not want me to enter, then pay me the ticket back! I will go back to the Mainland!' […] After almost six hours, I was given a paper, I could enter but under the condition of showing up at the immigration office every two months".
>
> **Nina**, Thirty-four years old, Helongjiang native, Banqiao (Taipei), 17.03.2017

The material, physical border between China and Taiwan reveals its highly symbolic and moral dimension (Agier 2008). There is an "inner frontier" built within the national border and the intimate sphere of marriage and domesticity. This had not been considered by women before. In front of Taiwanese administration,

status imposed by the Taiwanese legislation (Tsai and Hsiao 2006; Lan 2008; Cheng 2013). Women newly position themselves as "spouses" (*pei ou* 配偶) in the Taiwanese society and institutional system. Sexual control is a strategic site of state power (Foucault 1984). The sovereign state is able not only to discipline, normalise individual bodies, but also to achieve the equilibrium of the population. The *politics of (imposed) identity* (Ong 1999) Chinese women are subjected to are thus constructed by the Taiwanese state oscillating between sexualised bodies and moral suspects (Ong 2003). Not only national states, but also globalisation, modernity and the market contribute to forge this inegalitarian *mobility regime*. Situated and localised in Taiwan, the ethnography of the ways women experienced hierarchies and constraints help to identify parallels with the previous mobility regime in China.

Through boundaries, the state demonstrates to its citizens the firm exercise of power in defence of national security (Ambrosini 2018: 90). The borders' authorities described by

and citizenship as a status are obtained via the mediation of complex legal rules (Cheng 2013). Consequently, such immigration regulations render women legally dependent on their husbands and on their positioning within the familiar, gendered hierarchies of the society of arrival (Tsai and Hsiao 2006), as their ability to remain in the country depends on the continuation of marriage[89].

In this regard, following Aiwa

Citizenship attribution (*dingju* 定居) was possible after nine years of residence. Clearly, the gender bias is strengthened by the aforesaid political stand-off and objectified into a legislation which established severe regulations in terms to residency and citizenship for Chinese marriage migrants. The reforms of 2002 and of 2009 abolished these temporary stages, and Chinese spouses' ingress was given upon the permission of residing, hence of working. The citizenship wait was also reduced to six years [91], whereas the eligibility for citizenship required more documentations, including the cancellation of household registration in China.

2. The *Politics of Imposed Identity*

These inegalitarian and biopolitical migratory policies frame and shape women's career-making and daily lives in Taiwan. This occurs on diverse, overlapping and co-sustained orders. Similarly to what they had experienced in China before, governmentality and subjectivation processes constantly converge and contrast, generating strong conflicts among women's multiple *selves* (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2007), hence the different kinds, faces, personae or social roles (Goffman 1973) women are asked to switch among during their daily lives.

The achievement of "modernity at large" (Appadurai 1999), in terms of status and identity making, framing the aspirational infrastructure of mobility, is organised by a plurality of overlapping ordeals which emerge within the new social order inside which women are now re-positioned. Old and new feelings of surprise, astonishment, and deception mix and merge when women progressively realise the asymmetry existing between the imaginary they had socially and emotionally constructed of Taiwan and the material and moral *orders of things* they must face and to cope with. Memories of past life and migratory experiences in China contribute to and expand the sufferings that the very first contact with the Taiwanese social world produces. Some women compare themselves to the impressions they had the first time they left their rural village in China to migrate to the city, identifying lines of continuity within the experiences of vulnerability and alterity. This is the case of Ming Ming:

> "I felt like when I was a 'young naïve rural girl' (*cungu* 村姑) and I left my home village for the first time. When I arrived in Taiwan, I did not bring any clothes, I thought that fashion would have been different here and that I could not wear untrendy Chinese clothes! I thought I would have bought new clothes, bags and shows here […] and then,

[91] Ministry of Interior of the Republic of China (Taiwan). 2013. Statistical data of foreign spouses and mainland (Hong Kong and Macao included) spouses in each county and city according to the status [各縣市外籍配偶人數與大陸(含港澳)配偶人數按證件分]. Available at: www. oi.gov.tw/stat/index.aspx. (In Chinese).

> I realised that I could only buy very cheap clothes at the night market as my husband did not give me any money, I was so miserable (*kelian* 可憐)".
>
> **Ming Ming**, Thirty-years old, Henan native, Taipei, 28.12.2016

Other women, for instance Lin Ting, apprehend their disqualifying social re-positioning by associating, to some extent spatially and aesthetically, Taiwan to their rural village of origin: the backward place they had left, seeking for modernity and urbanity:

> "When exited Taoyuan airport and entered Taiwan for the first time I almost got a heart-attack: such a rural place! It looked as rural (*tu* 土) as my home village and the tears came to my eyes: where the hell was I? I had been living in Dongguan, Shenzhen and Guangzhou before, modern, colourful and lively places, with high buildings, great underground system and many shopping malls […] Look at where I live now: Zhubei, which is in the countryside. There is nothing here, a desolated land with very low buildings, no lights at night and no places to go shopping. I feel depressed since the first day I came here".
>
> **Lin Ting,** Thirty-one years old, Hunan native Zhubei, 14.12.2016

The *politics of imposed identity* require women specific role performances. Arbitrarily, women are imposed codes of conduct and of behaviour which canton women within spaces of immobility, of social and moral captivity. Ordeals towards the access to self-realization and self-esteem produce negative emotions of suffering, of frustration, of sorrow, of deception amongst Chinese migrants.

The cartography of women's mobilities and re-mobilities from the Chinese countryside to the Chinese city and from the Chinese city to Taiwan suggests the extent to which normative orders can be concurrently *situated* and *globalised* (Roulleau-Berger 2016, 2018). From the local to the global scales, and in-between the two, "migration is by and large a continuous process where women negotiate several roles or swap the priorities of roles" (Piper and Rocers 2003: 7). If a role is an arrangement between an individual and a positioning (Goffman 1973), it urges to stress that such positioning concurrently exists within the overlapping scales of the globalised order.

Within their daily microcosmos of life, and drawing on women's' situational and situated experiences, I will discuss in the following paragraphs the ways the *politics of imposed identity*, and the social and moral re-positionings they generate produce new forms of disqualification, of vulnerability and of misrecognition. This enables to elucidate the extent to which women's subjectivity-making processes oscillate between subjectivation and subjection, shaped within continuities and ruptures in the biographical and social careers (Roulleau-Berger 2001). At the very same time, emotions cannot be

neglected in the understanding of the dialectics between what Roulleau-Berger (2007, 2015) has understood in terms of "the dissociation of the *selves*, which alter self-esteem and the competences of the individual related to her own knowledge of social worlds and her understanding of what she does" (Roulleau-Berger 2007: 137).

2.1. *Yuangong*: from paid productive labour, to unpaid reproductive labour

"I did not leave the assembly line of the electronic factory I worked in in Shenzhen to come here and take care of my husband and of my children", told me Loffy, a twenty-nine Hubei native who currently lives and works in Taipei. "I refused to go back to the countryside to escape an arranged marriage and look at me, now, here, with the clothes of my husband to iron and the dirty dishes of my father in law to clean", she added with a frustrated, sad, but also rioted tone. Loffy left her rural village in Hubei and worked in several textile and electronic enterprises I Guangdong province. Taiwan was a promised land for her. She struggled to negotiate the permission to marry a Taiwanese and to re-migrate to Taipei, since, as she said, she aspired to "find a good job, earn my ow money, buy what I wanted and going to luxurious restaurants, wearing expensive clothes".

When she arrived in Taiwan, deprived of the right to work, she was, more or less directly, assigned several duties by her husband and parents-in-law, she lived with: from cooking lunch, to washing the dishes, from ironing shirts to bringing children to school. Sarcastically, Loffy added:

> "my life has not improved that much in Taiwan […] perhaps it even got worst since, at least, in the factory I was paid for my work".
>
> **Loffy**, Twenty-nine years old, Hubei native, Taipei, 21.03.2017

Loffy's irony about the "unpaid reproductive labour" (Parreñas 2011; Cheng 2013; Hsia 2015) she was asked to provide is helpful to socially and economically position Chinese women within the familiar order they daily perform in. If, in China, she used to achieve production through manufacturing practices of metallic pieces assemblages, in Taiwan these labour activities are conducted to achieve reproduction: biological reproduction as well as the work necessary for the reproduction of families (Wang and Hsiao 2009; Parreñas 2011). As Huang et al. suggested (2012), reproductive labour contributes to the maintaining of the family on a double level: on the level of substance (cleaning home, preparing food, etc.) and on an emotional and social level (caring for children and elders, emotionally supporting adults, etc).

At that moment of her life Loffy's was a *yuangong* 員工 – literarily the "simple factory worker", the shape of her biographical trajectory and corresponds to "trapped-in-migration-life" This is the first *figure of navigation* I identify. *Yuangong's* experiences –"trapped-in-migration lives"- are characterised by emotional ordeals of dissatisfaction, discouragement and unfulfillment, as Loffy's words suggest. Their biographies are constructed through the reproduction of social and moral disqualification from the society of departure, China, and to the society of arrival, Taiwan. For these characters, the emotionally modern *horizon of hope* (Appadurai 2004) remains a utopia, since the structure of opportunities and constraints is unbalanced and leans towards a heavier weight of structural constraints. Order tends to prevail on attempts to disorder. Factory workers – *dagong mei*- in China, their ambitions of social and moral re-positioning through marriage and migration to Taiwan have been progressively disenchanted by a plurality of material and immaterial obstacles. The biographies and geographies of these women are characterised by a reproduction of subalternity in China and in Taiwan, and from China to Taiwan.

In like manner with Loffy, Heqin, thirty-five years old, Chongqing native, also identifies lines of continuity in terms of disqualification from her social and moral positionings and re-positionings from China to Taiwan.

February 19th 2017. Taipei.

like. If my dream was to take care of children, old people and cultivate vegetables, I simply had to go back to my village and get married there".

Heqin, Taipei, 14.01.2019

The translocal production of subalternity and of new labour hierarchies generates a translocal re-production of emotions. Emotions of suffering, of frustration, of tiredness, of unfulfillment re-emerge and are re-formulated in women's experiences from China to Taiwan. Local and global orders of necessity and need mix and jumble, taking different shapes, according to the multi-scalar opportunity and constraint structure (Kloosterman and Rath 2001), which derives from the social and moral worlds women are positioned and re-positioned in during migration. Around the assembly line in the Chinese factory, production supported daily survival, a monthly-paid salary and an accommodation in the dormitory of the enterprise. It was part of the *dagong* life and strictly related to the status of rural migrant worker that women were attributed. In Taiwan, governmentality operates on different registers of performativity, which also lead to a disqualification of status: reproductive labour is considered as part of women's duties, a necessary, undiscussable activity which frames the rhythm of their routine.

At the very same time, like in China before, it is through the performance of such roles that social and moral identity is constructed and that rights are allocated. If rural migrant workers' right to stay in the city was in China strictly embedded in their working status (*dagong*), linked to their temporary residence permit inside the factory, in Taiwan Chinese spouses' right of entrance and settlement is rooted in their precise marital status.

Leaving Taipei and moving to Zhudong, in the suburbs of Hsinchu, we find Liang Liang, twenty-eight years old, Guangxi native. At the age of twenty-two, she arrived in Taiwan. Her words reveal her desolation, unhappiness and sorrow while describing her current life experience. If the condition she daily faces within the familiar sphere does not seem to be much different compared to Ming Ming's situation, Liang Liang oscillates between two opposite spaces of alterity, since she also works as a cleaner in a school canteen. Liang Liang explained how curious and excited she was at the arrival. She had been persuaded that working and living opportunities in Taiwan would be better than in Zhongshan's factories where she had been employed before. Nevertheless, as soon as she arrived, she was forced by her husband and her husband's family to perform "unpaid reproductive labour", as a "natural part of women's duties and identity" (

expressed the feeling of being “trapped”. She rapidly realised that her new life in Zhudong did not correspond to her expectancies:

“

world is framed within the pluralisation of hierarchies and injustices. All along their biographical trajectory, Heqin or Loffy's *selves* became more fragmented and complexified. The plurality of realities experienced makes women crossing and traversing labyrinthic ordeals of misrecognition. They can take the shape of strong source of stress, of humiliation and loss of self-esteem, as it is the case of young Feng Mei, twenty-seven years old, Hunan native.

Her migratory and professional career started at the age of fourteen, when she left her home village for Dongguan city in Guangdong province to sell her labour in local factories. At the age of twenty, while working in a Taiwanese electronic factory, she met a Taiwanese manager who will become her husband. When she got pregnant, marriage became imperative and she arrived in Taiwan to give birth to her child, while her husband remained in Dongguan. She described her new life cycle in the suburbs of Taipei as characterised by what she called "segregation "(*geli* 隔離), as she lived at her parents-in-law's lodgings with her child:

> "My husband told me that I needed something to take care of me in Taiwan, so I could stay with his mother. What I did not know is that, in reality, it was me who had to take care of his parents […] I spent four years, four years, four long years segregated at home, cooking and cleaning for his family. My husband provided me with 5000 TND per month, do you know what that means? I had no money and I could not work […] My mother in law was incredibly narrow-minded and stingy (*xiao qi* 小氣): she did not allow me to use the washing machine to do laundry and I had to hand-wash clothes. Can you imagine? Even in the factory in China we had a washing machine. I felt like I went back to my parents' house in the countryside, where we had nothing. But that was Taiwan, come on!

admit her current disqualified status. Feng Mei felt ashamed by the weak social recognition she won in Taiwan, but she was not ready to reveal this to the others.

What emerges from Ming Ming, Liang Liang or Feng Mei's narrations are the difficulties women face to orchestrate and arbitrate among their different *selves*: the identity they are imposed, the discourse they produce about this identity that they transfer to the others, and their imaginary and aspirations. It becomes a constant, permanent motion among status assignment, identity formation and subjectivation processes, whose rhythm varies according to the degrees of symbolic domination and injustice, interactively constructed. The specificity and the singularity of situations of misrecognition and humiliation accentuates or lessen emotions of shame, devaluation of the self, or self-contempt. Women's understandings of the hierarchical and inegalitarian social and familiar order they perform in emerge in a diachronic and diatopic sense.

Women's knowledge and comprehension of the present is socially and emotionally constructed through retrospection and reflexivity over the past biographical and professional experiences. In this sense, individual reflective resources and emotions mix. Emotions of frustration and dissatisfaction get stronger as soon as women acknowledge a reproduction of a subaltern condition from the society of departure to the society of arrival. During mobility experiences from rural to urban China, and from China to Taiwan, women go through diverse, localised and situated forms of misrecognition, vulnerability and humiliation, which progressively sum up and "injure", (Pollack 1995), "spoil" (

The weather was already warm, the room we were staying in was crowded and we had no air conditioned. Dan, thirty-three Guangxi native, was wearing a huge, long sleeves cardigan. I progressively got to learn this woman: I knew her enthusiastic attitude during English classes and her desire to speak few words in English. That evening, Dan was particularly silent. When the class was over, Dan stopped in front of the lingerie shop to answer her phone. In the meanwhile, Heqin approached me and she quickly said that something was wrong with Dan: she suspected her to have been beat. We stopped Dan. We asked her why she was wearing so many clothes since the temperature was high. She started crying and progressively, in tears, raised the sleeves on: we could see the blue signs of violence on her arms. Heqin suggested to go immediately to the police station, to report the brutality Dan had been subjected to from her husband. Dan initially refused. She said that was a shame, that she felt ashamed, "stupid" and "helpless".

career-making processes during migration. Constraints are reproduced through the that spaces women go through and require them to develop specific abilities to constantly reconfiguration situations, through adaptation, negotiation and resistance.

2.2. Captivity and dependence

“

> They told him to come here soon to have is wife getting pregnant. They said that otherwise I had to go back to the Mainland as I was useless there".
>
> **Wenfeng**, twenty-three years old, Sichuan native, Taipei, 07.01.2017

What Wenfeng explained to me is that she was not only suffering because she was asked to do -and to be- something which did not correspond to her willing. She was also undergoing frustration and sadness related to the tension between an imposed injunction and her individual insufficiency (Goffman 1978). This hierarchical and illegitimate familiar disciplinisation of her body generated a painful situation of *double bind* (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2015), experienced by Wenfeng through feelings of guiltiness and contempt. Her daily experiences and biographical sequences are framed in emotions of fear, of contempt and of anxiety.

In this sense, the reproduction of hierarchies during migration (Nyíri 2010), together with the repetition of old and new ordeals of subalternity and misrecognition characterised *yuangong*'s paths, engendering downward social, economic and moral mobility. In China first and in Taiwan later, *yuangong*'s career-making are rather rectilinear, since the access to knowledge and savoir-faire are limited. Dan, Chen Li or Wenfeng's cases show the very high level of social and moral captivity within the familiar sphere, which "trap" women at home, confining them to precise roles.

In a context of strong constraints, it becomes for women a matter of developing capabilities to adapt and to negotiate with the order they are imposed. In this regard, Wenfeng's experience and discourse must be contextualized in a precise spatial and temporal frame. Her experience of *double bind* occurred during the first stages of her stay in Taiwan, where she was alone at home with her husband's family, subjected to a stronger degree of social and moral constraints. At that time, she had just arrived in Taiwan, which represented an unknown world for her. She was not aware of the local norms and habits. Her limited knowledge weakened her resource mobilisation possibilities, as well as her capacity to react. Therefore, ordeals became even stronger. Later, Wenfeng moved to Taipei, where she currently lives. The geographical and spatial separation from her husband's family alleviated her sufferings and her condition of vulnerability. Social, spatial and moral distancing turns to be a resource to protect herself and not to cede to arbitrary injunctions and imposed role performance. Wenfeng today has no children.

Women provided with weak resources or poor knowledge need to adapt or to negotiate with constraints. For some, "playing the role" becomes a way to negotiate spaces for, at least partial, recognition. The

phenomenology of subalternity and of recognition go together. "Playing the role", conforming to the norms and expectations leads, in some cases, to a positive identification to the heteronomous constraint (Goffman 1952, 1978), aimed at gaining moral retribution in terms of social and symbolic recognition (Fraser 2005). "Playing a role" implies for women pretending that the conflicts and the contradictions among the multiple repertories of positive and negative emotions do not exist. It is, for instance, the case of Yumi who, after a long series of maltreatments and experiences of verbal violence, accepted to play the overlapping roles[93] of the "chaste wife", "capable mother" and "obedient daughter-in-law", since she considered that fulfilling such duties was the only way to achieve acceptance at home:

> "My husband did not want me to go out alone, and my mother-in-law thought that my only goal was to take care of the house, of my husband and have children, indeed, she wanted a male. I felt like a cleaning machine (*dasao jie* 打扫姐), I did not feel like being part of their family, for example, I had to wait for them to finish eating before eating my meal alone […] When I finally got pregnant, my mother-in-law threatened me saying that if it was not a male I would have better going back to the Mainland […] The day I gave birth to my child, she was nearby, reciting mantras to have the baby being a male! […] After I gave birth to my child, things improved a little bit: I gave them what they wanted […]"
>
> **Yumi**, Thirty-one years old, Hunan native, Taipei, 30.04.2017

Lack of knowledge, summed to the strong dependence on families and marital status generate for many women situations of strong uncertainty, isolation and captivity within the walls of the house they live in. Also, the absence of confidence of women *vis-à-vis* their husband and their husband families produces, and is, at its turn, sustained by emotions of discomfort, of abandonment, of disaffiliation, and of loneliness. However, these negative emotions can be reflexively performed by the actors, who transform them into reflexive resources for a better comprehension of situations, aimed at adaptation. Negative emotions of anger, of exhaustion, of vexation can strengthen the desire of contestation and of overturning a situation.

According to their understanding of situations, their ability to negotiate, women go through diverse processes of disciplinisation and subjection (Foucault 1975) which, to some extent, build bridges between the forms of subalternity experienced in Taiwan, the urban disqualification as well as situations of exploitation women had previously endured within the Chinese industrial apparatus. The processes of *mortification of the self* (Goffman 1968), ordeals of suffering and subaltern positionings

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[93] See Lan (2008); Huang et al. (2012); Cheng (2013); Hsia (2015) or Yeoh (2016) about foreign spouses' daily life within the family sphere in Taiwan.

are declined on a translational scale, which, during and through global mobilities, links together the situated and localised mobility regimes, but which also enables to draw symmetries and similarities in the geographies of global power.

Meantime, social orders and normative regimes are different because of the disparities of the historical, legal, social and cultural conditions for the occurrence of subalternity (Fraser 2005). Also, the level of influence, of constraint, of injunction and of control is gradual and irregular (Boltanski 2009). The situations of domination I have presented so far do not have to be apprehended as static or "totalizing" (Goffman 1968). Rather, they have to be thought in their processual and multiform dimension, which makes their intensity and degree of exercise changeable (Martuccelli 2004).

2.3. Public social contempt

Visibly, subalternity as a condition and a practice occurs on multi-scalar, fluid and malleable levels, which shift from the society of departure to the society of arrival, from local to global scales. In Taiwan, the situated and localised reduction and arbitrary assignment of Chinese migrants to their roles of mother, wife or daughter-in-law is constructed as a distributed, relational, interactive and interpreted *praxis*. Governmentality mix and merge within the articulated complex of migratory policies and familiar social economies and exceeds the walls of the house, entering the public space of discourses and practices (Honneth 2006: 12-13). The economies of the scale hence shift from the familiar sphere of domesticity and intimacy to the public space of social daily interactions and practices, these two are strictly embedded and co-produced.

The construction of alterity and identities (Agier 2014) operates on a double and only apparently contradictory level. Legal, institutional and moral borders are built to control women's migrations to Taiwan. At the very same time, women's bodies and the reproductive labour they can provide sustain Taiwanese familiar economies and the marriage market's demand[94]. Migrations and mobilities of Chinese women in Taiwan are thus doubly generated through practices of control and benefit-making. In consequence, it becomes a matter of drawing a demarcation line between the local population and Chinese migrants, limiting by law their potential integration within the society, through politics of immobilisation within the domestic sphere, of which the ban from the right to work is illustrative of.

[94]A practice that I. Cheng (2013) has ironically but outstandingly described through the slogan "Making foreign spouses the mothers of our nation".

The construction of difference, of alterity and the production of segregation go through biopolitical interventions (Hardt and Negri 2000; Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2017) which operate through the order of public discourse (Honneth 2006) too. A socially and politically constructed image of "Chinese foreign spouses" circulates within different social public spaces and is appropriated by local actors in different situated ways. It is diffused through the production of a stereotyped image of the Chinese spouse, where social and sexual prejudices mix and merge (Lu 2005). Local orders, norms and practices interpret and translate this figure through a multiplicity of different practices of cultural domination, misrecognition and social contempt, all at once interconnected (Honneth 2006:13).

The expression *dalu mei* 大陸妹 emerges both in private and public discourses to qualify marriage-migrants from China. Literally "the girl from the Mainland", but also homophone for a type of vegetable in Taiwanese dialect, this idiom targets women as "prostitute" or "mistress". Women's migratory and marriage patterns are often pictured as "tantalising tales of sex and money" (Lu 2005), where young girls are accused of having seduced Taiwanese men for money and prosperity, of having stolen Taiwanese nation's men (Hsiao and Wang 2002). The social narratives and the national imaginaries (Anderson 1994) are imbued with stereotypes related to the Chinese rural origin, combined with the gender bias (Cheng 2013), suggesting questionable moral integrity of women (Lu 2005; Lan 2008; Hsia 2015). From the familiar sphere to the neighbourhood they live in, from the airport where they landed to the market where they go shopping, women are socially and morally targeted. For instance, Linda, thirty-one years old, Henan native, once went to the local street market to buy food. Her Chinese accent (*kou yin* 口音), stronger in land-locked provinces, revealed their social identity (Goffman 1968) and made her rural Chinese origin immediately identifiable:

> "Taiwanese people do not like us. They think we are poor and we came to Taiwan only for wealth and money. They say I have no education, no culture and that I am not polite (*sushi hen di* 素質很低). Once, I was at the market to buy food and the seller threw some vegetables in my direction, saying this '*dalumei* is for you, *dalumei*!' 'I provide you with some food as in China you do not even have money to buy chicken!' I felt very uncomfortable and I ran away from the stand".
>
> **Linda**, Thirty-one years old, Henan native, Sanchong (Taipei), 01.06.2017

From *dagong mei* in urban China to *dalumei* in Taiwan, during local and global mobilities women are subjected to social prejudices and to different, multiscale processes of stereotyping of their *selves* and identity, which draw the perimeters of the subaltern condition they are positioned and re-positioned in. In China, the prejudice was related to the rural origin, to a low-educational level and the floating status of migrant proletarian in the urban space. The expression *dagong mei*, as I have previously explained,

“the sister who works” drew the contours of a disqualified image and identity of rural migrant women whose identity and status were strongly embedded in their working activity (*dagong*). In Taiwan, to the rural origin and the migrant positioning, in the construction of the prejudice the marital status interplays.

The persistence of the word *mei* 妹– younger sister, young girl- may be elucidative of the extent to which the “gendered order of globalisation” (Sassen 2006b), from local to global scales, from the Chinese factory to the Taiwanese street market operates through a *transnationalisation* of social contempt, of which women are the very first target. Chen Li, thirty years old, Hainan native, who currently lives and works in Zhubei, described the way the prejudice was constructed and performed by some colleagues at work. In her case too, parallels and symmetries between the prejudices she experienced in the Chinese factory by local Cantonese co-workers and at by her current Taiwanese colleagues emerge, drawing geometries of continuity within disqualification during mobilities:

> “In the factory where I work there are many Taiwanese gossip women (*sangu liupo* 三姑六婆), they look down on me as I come from the Mainland and they rarely talk to me […] I was used to people who looked down on me […] In Shenzhen, older local workers (*bendiren* 本地人) looked down on me because I was young, and I came from the countryside […]

obtaining the Taiwanese identity card, are you going to divorce my brother? I felt very embarrassed […]

unpaid reproductive labour. The inner walls which immobilised women at home, through control and punishment, also obstruct women from the access to the domain of paid productive occupations.

The domain of labour seems to be for Chinese migrants inegalitarian and hierarchical in Taiwan as well. In China before and in Taiwan now, women have faced to the unfair, segmented and stratified structure of both Chinese and Taiwanese labour market. In urban China before and in Taiwan after marriage-migration, Chinese migrants are confronted with the growing segmentation of the markets, which position them inside precise segments and working sectors. In Taiwan, professional discrimination and economic disqualification in the labour market are simultaneously socially, legally and morally constructed.

Disqualification and injustice produce forms of immobilisation, exploitation and violence (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2014b). These support the emergence of strong moral conflicts between the labour regimes and the repertories of emotions. This situation does not correspond to a novelty, since it has been, to some extent, already experienced by women during rural-to-urban migration. If, on the one hand, labour, employment and the working experiences might generate emotions of satisfaction, of ambition, of desire and of fulfilment amongst women, in many cases it is not the case. Employment is associated to a practice aimed at achieving recognition, social mobility, independence and autonomy. However, it can also generate situations of strong contempt, of disqualification and of violence. These sustain the emerge of emotions of depression, of disillusionment, of frustration and of sadness.

Juridically speaking, the immobilisation inside disqualifying segments of the labour market was strengthened by a long-lasting legal ban from work. Until 2009, access to the labour market had been legally regulated and restricted: the right to work could be obtained after two years of residency on the Taiwanese territory. This strict correlation between residence permit and right to work generated forms of social discrimination in the labour market, embodied into a hierarchy between the local and foreign workers. However, it did not inhibit Chinese women from working**.** Such ban increased the segmentation of the labour market and opened spaces of hidden and undeclared employment. Consequently, it wired a tendency to the informalisation and casualisation of precarious jobs (Ambrosini 2018), where women, deprived of legal working contracts and social protection, fell into a condition of stronger vulnerability and exploitation.

This ban has been abandoned through the 2009 above mentioned Amendment to the law. However, the social contempt women broadly experience in the public space, and the diverse forms of

misrecognition and discrimination they face during their interactions with local population, still contribute to relegate them into disqualifying segments of the labour market, sustaining precarity and vulnerability. In their collective work *Wife or Worker?* Which provides an analysis of marriage-migration in East Asia, Piper and Roces (2003) criticise and challenge the reductionist tendency to "pay little attention to the women's subsequent entry into the labour market, and yet the studies about women as migrant workers often ignore other roles of mother or wife" (2003: 2).

The overlapping roles women are asked to perform and the consequent disqualifying social identity sustained by such roles co-support and co-produce each other. In this regard, the ethnography of Chinese women's professional careers in the Taiwanese labour market helps to identify paths of continuity with the previous labour experiences in internal China. The strong instability and precarity of their positions in the local Chinese and Taiwanese labour markets suggest a growing overlapping between local and global social and economic orders, where material inequalities and lack of symbolic and cultural respect (Fraser 2005) converge and jumble on multiple scales.

3.1. Overstepping the ban: finding a place in the local labour market

In China, labour was the pivot around which women's migratory paths were constructed and oriented. Local political economies allied to a globalised labour market (Hardt and Negri 2000) set a precise design and management of migrants' mobilities and professional experiences. Despite its stratification, segmentation and hierarchisation, Chinese labour market, and, specifically, the industrial sector, was not only easily accessible but even facilitated by the biopolitical migratory and labour industry (Pun 2005, 2016). Migrant workers' status and identity were embedded in their working performances since their labour was necessary for the functioning of the urban, globalised industrial apparatus.

On the contrary, in Taiwan the employment situation is quite different. The restrictive working policies formally in force until 2009, which denied Chinese women with the right to work, implicitly pushed women to identify new arrangements to work and to "take their place" -often hidden and invisible- in the labour market. The formal ban from work not only did not impede women from working, but rather opened new forms of undeclared employment and professional positions, which required women to constantly "negotiate with illegality" (Ambrosini 2008, 2018).

regardless the injunctions to perform reproductive labour at home, the familiar political economies often required women to find an employment to earn money.

This discrepancy between a legal banning from the access to the labour market and the *praxis* dictated by economic necessities opened to further and novel economic hierarchies and social inequalities. On hidden, vaporous and clandestine working places, women faced disqualifying situations of maltreatments, of humiliation and of social contempt. Let's look at the way

The necessities and the needs of the local labour market, abundantly in search of a cheap, invisible labour enabled women to find ways through the legal ban, integrating the "grey" and "black" zones of economies (Ambrosini 2013) or the informal sector through what often revealed to be disqualifying professions. These metaphors of "grey" and "black" refer to the porous, borderless, low-legitimate zones of the economies, where the low-visible character of the employment often generates precarity and insecurity through inegalitarian treatments, harassment or even exploitation. If in China, the orientation of migrants' labour towards disqualifying and precarious industrial employments is consolidated and institutionalised by the state, in Taiwan it is a matter of informal "casualisation" (Ambrosini 2018) of migrants' labour, made in the shadow through tacit agreements between the employer and the Chinese worker.

Despite the situated and situational differences of contexts, of institutional frame and social regimes, what seems to emerge is a *translocalisation* of hierarchical and inegalitarian labour regimes which, through different local translations, canalise migrants' labour towards disqualified, precarious or low-legitimate employments (Roulleau-Berger 2016). In both cases, the wall built to split local population and migrants is high and robust. In China, it was a matter of separating rural from local, urban workers. In Taiwan, the demarcation line splits locals from foreigners: the citizens, provided with full rights and the others, whose rights are restrained. From Chinese urban factories to the most disqualifying segments of Taiwanese labour market, these *yuangong*, "trapped-in-migration lives" are part of a global and transnationalised "underclass" (Mingione 1991: 445; Roulleau-Berger 2017), whose traits and characteristics respond to the localised and situated demands of local labour markets.

Curiously, but not surprisingly, in Taiwan the contradiction between a *de jure* forbiddance- the working ban- and a *de facto* opening to economic practices (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2011; Reyneri 2013) is functional to the needs of the local economy, of the market and of the society. These micro and macro social structures favour flexibility and the "casualisation of work" (Sassen 2006b; Ambrosini 2018) and dig new interstices where unauthorised migrants can find employment. This situation provokes new forms of labour exploitation inside the lowly-visible segments -for instance the care sector- of the labour market.

More and again, as it had happened in the frame of the Chinese industrial work, moral conflicts between the labour regime and the repertories of emotions emerge. Women identify in the employment opportunity a chance to acquire social and economic resources, as well as a re-negotiated social status. This produces positive emotions of ambition and of aspiration. At the same time, inside these porous

segments of the labour market, situations of vulnerability and of misrecognition occur and they generate negative emotions of suffering, of depression, of sadness and of dissatisfaction. Women conceive work as a channel towards social mobility and modern, independent and autonomous subjectivity-making.

However, this clash between the labour regime and the repertories of emotions can also lead to the acquisition of new reflexive resources by women, who become progressively more and more aware of the structure and the functioning of the labour market and who identify strategies to cope with inequalities. Thereby, they can dig interstices for contestation and transgression (Roulleau-Berger 2002). Fuelled by economic necessity and moral determination, Xiang Bei provided with poor resources, in terms of savoir-faire, skills and knowledge of the local social world, developed new competences to adapt and negotiate with legal restrictions and hierarchies, identifying the interstices of the local labour market she could penetrate to work and obtain a little income to survive. Thirty-five years old, Jiangxi native, Xiang Bei arrived in Taiwan in 2007 and she was initially deprived of the working permission.

Similarly to Heqin's case,

> You will work at noon and in the evening behind the kitchen to wash the dishes and you have to come here in the morning to open the shop and clean the floor, then you have to take care of cleaning when we close at night'. I accepted […]"
>
> **Xiang Bei**, Thirty-five years old, Jiangxi native, Taipei, 26.07.2015

At the beginning of her stay in Taiwan, Xiang Bei had very poor knowledge of the labour market structure and Taiwanese social order. However, by making phone calls to a multiplicity of employers or spending hours in several shops, restaurants or hairdressing salons seeking for a job, the obstacles and barriers she found on the road progressively turned into reflexive resources. These have been helpful for a better understanding of the social and economic world she was navigating through. From such an understanding, solutions and adaptative tactics can be therefore identified and put into practice.

Concomitantly, Heqin or

spent her first months in Taiwan at home. She suffered loneliness and nostalgia, that she shared with her mother-in-law who did not seem to care much about her condition and emotional situation. Su Ling initially felt scared in Taipei. She was not familiar with the new environment. Her mother-in-law warned her about discrimination towards Chinese women, so she did not leave her lodgings often. Once, she was walking down the stairs and she was suddenly stopped by her neighbour, who approached her. He immediately recognised her Chinese origin through her accent and made inquiries about her life in Taiwan. Su Ling answered politely, expressing feelings of boredom and isolation. Thus, her neighbour told her that he knew someone who was looking for a caregiver for his relatives:

> "he told me that he had a friend whose parents were old and sick, but who could not take care of them […] At that time, I did not have much money, I did not work and I was at home all day long […] I told myself that it was perhaps a good idea to get a little job, so I went to meet this man […]

and economic knowledge, these women succeeded in negotiating a flexible and poorly payed position. But this is not the case of everyone.

When *yuangong*'s –"trapped-in-migration lives"- lack of social and cultural resources meets with a condition of urgency and immediate necessity of money, in the frame of a restrictive labour regime, women's professional careers can be oriented towards the invisible and "contested" (Steiner 2005) market of prostitution. This seemed to be a common option for Chinese migrant women. The contestation of the formal market becomes an option for women who concurrently need to improve economic capitals and who are not provided with the social and cultural resources to negotiate a "decent" employment in the formal sectors of the labour market. Let me elucidate my argument through a vivid example of how social and economic opportunities and constraints jumble and entangle to provide Chinese undocumented migrant with an employment in this field.

Xun Ziqi is thirty-three years old and she comes from rural Sichuan. By the time I met her, she had already been living in Taiwan for eleven years. She had married twice and divorced twice. She is currently the girlfriend of Sange, fifty-three years old, Taiwanese, engaged in the underworld of the "red-light district", where he owns a massage centre. Xun Ziqi does not work with her boyfriend anymore; when she can, she helps him to recruit some Chinese sex workers, acting as a *mamasang* 媽媽桑. However, she had been previously working for Sange for several years, alternating time working in the massage salon as a sexual worker to periods of unemployment or occasional work as a seller at a night market:

> "When I arrived in Taiwan, I was young and stupid. I had been fooled, and my husband had no money […] I arrived here thinking that I could finally send money to my family and get a decent life, but that was not the case […] I thought to go and get a job, but I could not […] I looked for some jobs and I was refused since I had no documents […] Sometimes, I was also told that they did not want to hire Chinese people […] I needed money desperately and I heart from a Chinese friend that Sange was paying a good salary […] I came here and I was employed […] Timing was quite free but I must say that I did not feel comfortable with this job […] Progressively things changed […] I was not always working here; sometimes I did something else […] When I had money enough, I stayed at home or I worked when I could […]

China. At her turn, she was brought there by a Chinese friend and she later provided jobs to other Chinese women who could not integrate the formal sector because of legal restrictions to work. Some, such as Rong Rong, thirty-two years old, Guangdong native or Mei Xiang, thirty-three years old, Fujian native "contested" (Steiner 2005) the local inegalitarian formal labour market. Thereby, they entered the underground world of prostitution since they knew that they would have found obstacles in the formal labour market. Others, like, Hong Jie, thirty-five years old Anhui native, or Xiao Yun, thirty-four years old, Chongqing native, had previously performed undeclared jobs in the catering or cleaning sectors, considering wages too low and working time too long. That is why they turned to Sange's massage salon, where institutional and legal restrictions do not lead to a "negotiation of illegality" (Ambrosini 2018), since hiring procedures occur in a frame which is illegal itself. It becomes hence more a practice of bypassing, stepping over legal walls than negotiating interstices of action.

Sange, the boss of the massage salon, had been employing during the last ten years many women, of which most were from China. However, even if during the last five years, many were also from South-East Asian country. During our discussions late at night, where alcohol flew freely, he narrated the tales of some of the women who had been working for him. Many, as he said, entered this market as a strategy overstep or overturn the working ban, in a context of strong economic necessity for themselves and for the families they left in China. They could not rely on the very low and unstable salaries characterising the undeclared professions performable in other sectors. Also, the flexibility in terms of working time makes it easier for them to concurrently fulfil their roles of mother and wife, since the two become compatible. As Rong Rong, who occasionally works for Sange explained:

> "work takes place late at night and does not take much time […] I came here around nine in the evening, and at four or five I am gone, ready to go back home and cook breakfast for my family".
>
> **Rong Rong**, Thirty-two years old, Henan native, Taipei, 09.03.2017

Sange's massage salon represented a direct channel to a job and to an income, where women did not need to negotiate with legal restrictions, or to arbitrate, to ably orchestrate between the order of work and the order of the family. Ziqi does not work anymore as a prostitute, since her social and economic status has improved. She exited the state of urgency and economic necessity which characterised the first stages of her stay in Taiwan and she is now Sange's girlfriend.

Nowadays, she plays a new, nebulous role of *mamasang*, of intermediary, in charge of the recruitment of Chinese women, through the mobilisation of her social networks, which had before represented a vector for her very same recruitment.

When in specific segments of the market shortages are particularly high or the economic demand remains very strong, the "intermediation of migration" can also become a resource. Ambrosini (2018: 36) qualifies an intermediary as "someone who supplies a bridge to the receiving society or to informal providers of certain benefits that immigrants need, such as jobs or accommodation".

作證) […] A woman from Hunan brought me to work in a restaurant with her: the Taiwanese boss hired us to clean the floor, the toilet and to wash the dishes […] the funny thing is that if the police came, we had to disappear (*xiaoshi* 消失) […]

> What was hilarious is that everybody knew I was a Chinese worker: the nurses, the doctors, the patients and even the relatives of the patients, but nobody said anything about that".
>
> **Xiao Lan**, Thirty-seven years old, Yunnan native, Taipei, 25.02.2017

In the formal or informal segments of Taiwanese labour market, women deprived of the working right succeeded performing a plurality of low-legitimate or invisible jobs, subjected to a high degree of flexibility, precarity and insecurity. The working place can be dangerous and risky. Women need to remain hidden, invisible to the eyes of the police. Xiao Lan kept on moving inside and outside diverse sectors of the labour market: her professional mobility was compelled by the need of avoiding surveillance and punishment (Salazar and Smart 2011).

Thereupon, professional careers are fragile and fragmented. They oscillate between exclusion and inclusion in the labour market. Job positions are porous and unstable, since they emerge from individual and collective bricolages[95] to overstep and overturn legal restrictions and constraints. The labour market, its logics, its interests and offer/demand structure are a fertile terrain for negotiation. These assembled and fluid strategies show how individuals and institutions can orchestrate inside rigid structures, economic barriers and juridical walls, producing new invisible, unobservable or indeterminable practices. Political and institutional boundaries can be bypassed. The governmental biopolitical device reveals its porosity. Actors' countertactics enable the transgression of formal legal rules. The market itself shows to be an active, dynamic actor in migration and immigration governance (Pugliese 2009).

3.2. Geometries of disqualification

The policy revision of 2009 provided women with immediate access to the right to work since their arrival in Taiwan. Nevertheless, despite this formal changing in the juridical landscape, the forms of misrecognition and of humiliation Chinese women are subjected to in the public space seem still to have repercussions on the sphere of employment, despite the fall of the legal barriers. The ethnography of labour experiences in Taiwan shows that generally the segments of the labour market women are employed in or, at least, ty to access are low-qualifying. Previous factory girls in China, women are provided with poor education level and weak qualification since their previous working experiences,

[95] See Roulleau-Berger (1999, 2001); Tarrius (2000); Van der Leun and Kloosterman (2006); Ambrosini (2008; 2018), amongst others.

despite their multiplicity, are reduced to industrial production activities. In Taiwan, they are hence newly relegated to disqualifying and disqualified employments in economic segments where precarity, flexibility and instability are stronger.

Meanwhile, the growing dynamics of disqualification through employment are co-produced and co-supported by the interlocking processes of social and moral stereotyping experienced outside the labour market, which tend to colonise the economic worlds of experience. The impact of the long-lasting working ban exceeds its formal end through the reform. The previous governmental policies had polarized the economic space, and generated inequalities, hierarchies and practices of marginalisation, which seem to be difficultly changeable despite the policy revision.

For an easy, quick and synthetic understanding, I propose here a photography, through a resumed graphical visualisation, of the sectors where Chinese women were employed at the time of my ethnographic work, after the policy reform of 2009, that I resume through a synthetic graphical visualisation for a quicker understanding.

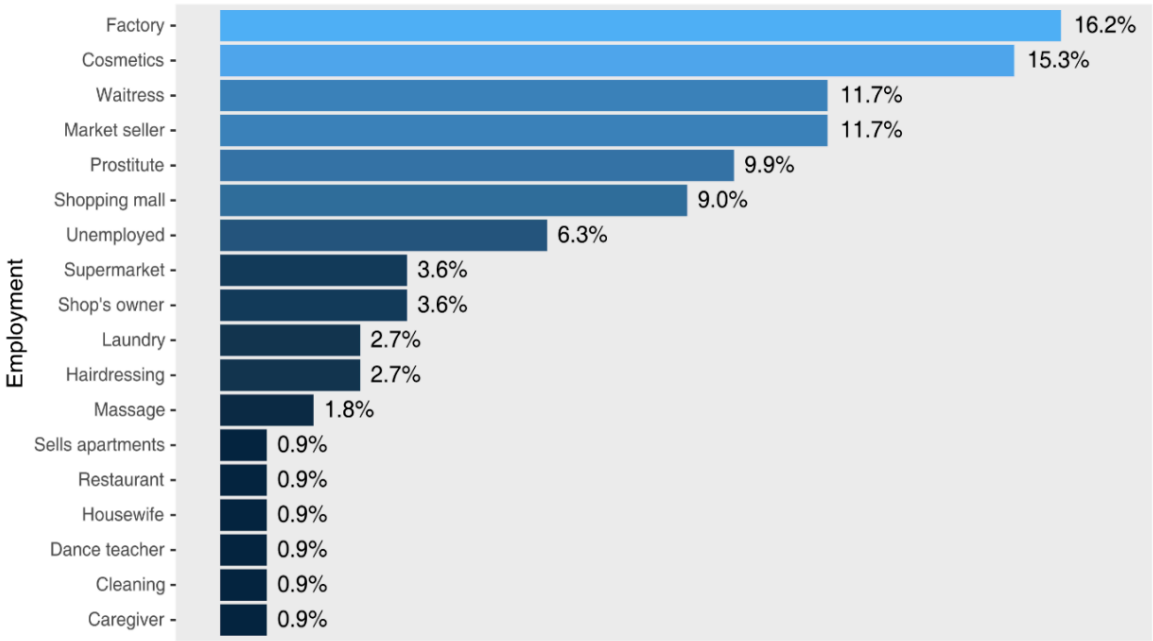


Figure 24 Summary of the main jobs (and sectors of employment) performed by Chinese women in Taiwan.

Drawing on the case studies I collected, this table illustrates the main sectors where Chinese migrant women are employed in Taiwan. It shows the level of segmentation of Taiwanese labour market and points out a high level of employment of Chinese migrants in disqualifying segments. Women are

mainly employed in local factories, in the field of cosmetics, of catering and of hairdressing. Their professional status has not substantially changed after migration to Taiwan: lines of continuity between the previous working experiences in China during rural-to-urban migration and in Taiwan emerge. Moreover, this graph of the sectors where Chinese women seem to be commonly employed shows the high segmentation of Taiwanese labour market, and the continuity in terms of floating labour experiences (Roulleau-Berger 2009), disqualifying and disqualified jobs position and hierarchies from China to Taiwan.

Furthermore, the reform of 2009 is emblematic of the shift *from juridical discrimination*, promoted by the state through juridical regulations and restrictive legislation (Ambrosini 2014), to *implicit or indirect forms of discrimination*, when social dispositions or practices which are apparently neutral or legitimate penalize certain individuals or certain groups (Waldinger 2008). Formally, from 2009 on, Chinese migrants and local population beneficiated of the same rights. However, symbolic and cultural injustice (Fraser 2005) and new forms of economic injustice jumble and co-sustain each other: the prejudice and the stereotype experienced at home and spread throughout the discourses of the public space are extended to the labour market, whose segments are inflected by these rhetorics of cultural misrecognition (Fraser 2005) and social contempt (Honneth 2006). Lan Xin twenty-nine years old, Henan native, arrived in Taipei in 2015, where she currently lives and works, employed as a factory worker in the northern industrial area of the city. Since her arrival, she had immediately looked for a job:

> "I arrived in Taiwan in 2015 […] My husband told me that we needed money and that I needed to find a job […]

Despite the reform, discrepancies between what the law establishes, and the *praxis* of lived situations appeared. The socially and culturally stereotyped image of Chinese migrants is summed to a diffused ignorance of the policy revision by the employers, who remained sceptical and unconvinced when hiring Chinese migrants. The result are diverse geometries of economic disqualification and discrimination in the labour market, which reinforce and co-produce hierarchies and inequalities in the workplace. Analogously to Lan Xin, 102 out of 111 women acknowledged plural experiences of denied access to work, most of the times justified by a no more legitimate claim of illegality and associated to their Chinese origin.

In other cases, the market's structure of the offer and demand sustains the employment of foreign workers, whose labour was considered cheaper and more docile.

Xiao Ping, thirty-two years old, Hubei native, has been working in the field of cosmetics and make-up for several years. While narrating her professional experiences, she often mentioned differences in terms of remuneration, of tasks she was asked to perform or even of working time, compared to her Taiwanese colleagues. It happened to her to be asked to buy lunch for her boss and colleagues every day, or to go shopping for her boss, who was too busy working. I met her in February 2017 and re-met her in April 2018. In a year, she had changed seven employments, always looking for a better working environment, but often facing similar obstacles:

> "I am now working near the train station, I arrived here a couple of months ago […] since you were gone, I had changed many times because I was upset […] Today, same problems as usual, I am so sick of this country! We are five women working there and I am the only Chinese. The shop is small, we are not numerous, so we are very busy […] This new boss looked nice to me at the beginning, that is why I decided to work there […] But she keeps me working overtime, she says that I am lazy, and it is because I am lazy during the day that I have to work more. I think I will leave again, but, you know, this keep on changing job process is exhausting […] and this place is quite far from my children's school [..] I told the boss that this is unfair, but she said that it was not true […] Taiwanese employees get 30 000 NTD per month, but I get only 20 000 […] she says it is because they work more and that if I am not happy with this job, I can leave and look for another one".
>
> **Xiao Ping**, Thirty-two years old, Hubei native, Taipei, 03.05.2018

Employers can take advantage of Chinese women's lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity with the social and economic world they were living and working in. Employers are persuaded that the statutory fragility of migrant women -provided with weak social resources supped to their fear of expulsion and repatriation- would not lead to complaints or forms of protest. Thus, they often impose longer working

hours or lower wages to them. At their turn, during their job search, women, aware of the obstacles in the entrance to the labour market, frequently express feelings of gratitude when they are accepted.

Indeed, this provokes moral clashes between positive emotions of aspiration and ambition constructed through the labour experience and the inegalitarian order of things which characterise the labour market and the labour practices. Moreover, such an ambivalent expression of feelings of gratitude and happiness for the chance to work octroyed might be perceived as a source of fragility or of desperation by their bosses, who take advantage of this vulnerability to set stronger forms of exploitation. Xiao Ping's experiences of unfair treatment at work, as for wages, working time or tasks are common to 94 of the 111 women I interviewed.

Women, who faced forms of violence and humiliation at home, considered the fact of working as a resource to gain autonomy and recognition, which are co-generated by an independent income and by the spatial distance their daily routine could take from their home. The access to a labour market was conceived as a response to familiar vulnerability but, paradoxically, generated new forms of precarity.

Women identify in the labour opportunities and the working experiences a chance to "negotiate the effects of biographical discontinuities" (Roulleau-Berger 2003), generated from the marital and familiar regimes in Taiwan, but also by the social and emotional experiences of dislocation and distancing from home and their society of origin. However, such negotiation is far from being self-evident. On the contrary, in some cases, the working environment can become a space for violence and conflict. These are supported by the very same social contempt women hoped to escape from by getting out of their houses. Xiao Lin, by describing her previous job in a Bakery of Zhudong, explained:

> "It was very hard for me to work in the bakery: the worst were my colleagues. I felt very nervous as I did not want to be fired, so I worked very hard, harder than them. Sometimes I did extra work for free and they became jealous. They looked down on me, refused to eat lunch with me, sometimes even did not talk to me. They said I wanted to steal their job and that I was licking the boss boots (*pai mapi* 拍馬屁) and that I slept with him […] Every morning before entering the bakery I cried, because I was scared of being insulted. I the evening, when I left the bakery, I cried again because I feared going back home […]"
>
> **Xiao Lin**, Thirty-four years old, Sichuan native, Zhudong, 10.02.2017

emotions of dissatisfaction, disappointment, discouragement and mortification. Initially excited by the perspective of working, of earning of her own income and of achieving independence from the familiar constraints, Xiao Lin, as she claimed, progressively started crying before entering the door of her working place, since she knew she would probably have faced disrespect and attempts to her dignity. 85 out of the 111 women have described similar ordeals of conflictual relations at work, both with their colleagues and with their bosses.

In some cases, daily practices of misrecognition culminated into strong ordeals of humiliation and of harassment. Normalized stereotypes are turned into violent and degrading attacks to the image of the self. Women's sufferings at the workplace multiply. Mortifications produce isolation. Symbolic and cultural forms of injustice meet and merge with economic unfairness and hierarchies.

When the situations of humiliation and marginalisation women experience at home, in the public sphere or in the workplace overlock, subjectivities are fragilised. Emotions of fear, of shame, of impotence emerge and limit migrant women's creativity and capacity of action and reaction. The positive emotions which sustained the desire of working are progressively turned into negative emotions by the structure of social, economic and moral constraints. Discontinuities in terms of professional patterns (Roulleau-Berger 2002), the precarious dimension of the labour experience, together with the multiple situations of misrecognition coagulate into negative sentiments of being powerlessness and of weakness of individual *selves.* Women's biographies and professional paths are thus designed through social, economic and emotional experiences of suffering and distress, which co-emerge, co-exist and co-support each other. The creative subjectivities, fuelled by ambitions and aspirations, meet the order of hierarchical labour market and floating labour regimes. The result is a tendency to uncertainty, existential anxiety, and strong stress.

I met Xiang twenty-nine years old, Hunan native, at the English course in the lingerie shop. Since the first time, Xiang presented herself as timid and fragile. She did not often attend the class as her working schedule was unpredictable and flexible. Every time I met her, through her attitude, her voice, her gestures, I could feel the fragility of this young woman. Xiang was divorcing when I met her. She had been victim of domestic violence.

as “stupid” since she felt unable to react. She used this word many times while talking to me, as she had to justify her attitude or choices:

> “When I arrived here, my husband helped me to find a job: he had a friend who needed someone to clean the offices of his enterprise, to bring fruit, to take the garbage outside, this sort of things. I went there and I was happy to work. But one girl there was very aggressive to me, she kept on calling *dalu mei*, she did not even pronounce my name; she said that I was stupid and that my mandarin was poor […] I did not like that job: one day, of the managers came to talk to me, and he touched my bottom. I felt embarrassed but at the beginning I did not say anything as I did not want to be fired […] Then, you know… he tried to go further and I stopped him, so he said *come on, you are a Chinese prostitute, aren’t you?* I escaped to the toilets and cried […] I feel so ashamed […] I still work there, you know. Probably you think that I am stupid. But I cannot deal with too many things at the same time. I have to understand how to stay here if I divorce, I do not want to abandon my child. I should leave this job, but I cannot because I have no time to find another one and I need money for the lawyer, to pay for my rent and to make my child happy […]”
>
> **Xiang**, Twenty-nine years old, Hunan native, Sanchong (Taipei), 21.02.2017

Figure 25 Experienced discrimination (or not) in the labor market, crossed to the kind of discrimination women declared having coped with.

3.3. The waltz of employments

To elucidate my argument, I take Tina's subjective reflections as an ethnographic starting point to analyse the complex articulation and complexification of her professional paths and tortuous, bifurcated and fragmented labour experiences. Drawing the trajectory her progressive and pluralised social and economic positionings and re-positionings in the Taiwanese labour market helps to understand the overlocking junction between processes of subjectivation and labour experiences, and the extent to which her different *selves* can collide at each step and at each stop of the professional career-making process, where new forms of insecurity, hierarchies and oppression co-exist. But this is not all. Her multiple positionings in diversified sectors of the labour market, together with the different working activities generate and are in turn supported by continuing emotional ordeals, where a variety of feelings of disappointment, of inadequacy, of sadness, of desperation, of vulnerability, of anger, of frustration or of determination and ambition help organise, negotiate and increase professional experiences (Jeantet 2018).

Tina is a twenty-seven years old rural Shanxi native. After labour pluri-migrations in China, mainly between Fujian and Guangdong province, she married to a Taiwanese company manager and arrived in Taipei in 2010. As soon as she arrived, she experienced a strong injunction to motherhood by her mother-in-law and her husband. The strenuous industrial work she had performed in China made her sick and fragile. Thus, pregnancy revealed to be difficult. Thanks to long treatments, she finally got pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. This event was considered a shame by her husband's family, whose mentality was described by Tina as "very much conservative: they wanted a male heir". In the meanwhile, her husband's economic situation deteriorated, and Tina needed to find an employment. From this moment on, her waltz of precarious, poorly payed, unstable jobs began in a shopping mall of Taipei:

> "I was committed and devoted […] I tried my best to work hard and to learn, but every time the boss or my colleagues found a mistake […] they said I was good for nothing, that I was stupid and I did not even understand how to accomplish easy tasks […] I cried alone in the toilets, I felt so lonely during the lunch break since nobody wanted to eat lunch with me […] they looked down on me and I felt inferior to them […] My mandarin was poor, people here speak good Chinese, our accent is different and I could see the difference."

Tina's narration is embedded with strong emotions of fear, hate, and disappointment as she saw her skills and competences not being recognized in the Taiwanese labour market. Her words are coloured with the deception of being excluded by local workers at her the job's place. Her narration is

characterised by a strong sentiment of insufficiency and inadequacy, sustained by the humiliating situations she faced at the workplace. Frustrated and deceived, Tina hence decided to quit the shopping mall and she looked for another job by making phone calls. She checked the jobs' announcements on the newspapers and on the internet. But her accent constantly revealed her social identity and her Chinese origin, so refusals multiplied. She found a second employment in another shopping mall, where she sold cosmetics:

> "It was exhausting and humiliating as Chinese women in Taiwan do what Taiwanese people do not want to do […] I was working 10 to 16 hours per day; salary was correct, I earned 40 000 NTD per month, but every time I was criticized by my superiors or by the clients [..] If something was dirty, my superior asked me to clean, despite the fact that there was the *ayi* 阿姨 to clean […] I do not have problems with cleaning, I can clean, but why did they ask only to me to do that? I felt incredibly sad […] because of strong stress and pressure at work, I started losing my hair, that is when I decided to leave […] I did not want to be insulted anymore. Yes, I do not have much skills, but you do not need a university degree to sell stuff, right? I felt so upset every time I was told this is not good, that is bad… *pipipi, pi gan ma* 批批批幹嘛? *Piping piping, pipipi* 批批評批批評批批批, they kept on criticising me […] But I was not an idiot and I did not want to feel idiot because of those people […] I needed money for myself and for my family, so I left to find something better […]"

At that time, she had to give 10 000 NTD to her mother-in-law to have her taking care of her daughter, so she strongly needed to work. Her husband was often in China and she could not complain with him about the insults she daily had to listen to by her mother-in-law. Emotions generate and are sustained by innovative reflexive resources on her status, her aspirations and her identity, through which movement, motion and mobility are created and performed. Emotions are variable, ambivalent, mutating. They can be positive and negative according the situations and the contexts they are produced and performed in. According to the frame of action, they can support new resolutions in terms of practices. Also, especially when women lack of social and economic resources to change a situation, negative emotions can lead to the inhibition of action and to forms of suffered acceptances of unfair circumstances.

From sentiments of frustration and humiliation, Tina shifted to new feelings of determination, self-confidence and perseverance, which sustained movement towards a new positioning. Her initial determination, ambition and commitment had been fragilized by the processes of disqualification she went through. These generated frustration, disappointment, anger, rebellion, loss of self-esteem, contempt. The unity of her subject was threatened, but not broken. Tina's emotions revealed to be, to

quote Eva Illouz's expression (2009: 408) "a strange sociological centaur, half perpetually shifting, the other half reflecting the core and stable sense of the self".

The conflicts among the different and often injured (Pollack 1995) *selves* that Tina was experiencing during professional mobilities could be solved by her ambitions and aspirations, which drew the continuity in the fragile social and economic worlds she performed in. Indeed, her continuous professional shifts and changes strengthened the precarity of her status, but also enabled Tina to capitalise new repertories of social and emotional resources, which revealed to be fundamental channels to new employment opportunities. It is hence thanks to a Chinese fellow she was working with before that she found another job in a third shopping mall in Taipei, Banqiao, where she sold Korean cosmetics.

Even so, after three months, she was dismissed as her boss considered that she was not committed enough as she complained too much. Mobility occurs within the frame of a precarious and fragile status, where social, symbolic and economic forms of injustice juxtapose (Fraser 2005). Later, Tina was employed in a hairdressing salon, where salary was poor and working time did not fit with her familiar imperatives and commitment, especially since she was not allowed to ask for permissions or to take holidays. Tina needed to concurrently articulate her role of mother, of wife and of worker (Piper and Rocers 2003; Parreñas 2011) which was not always compatible and co-performable. The order of the family and the order of the market were sometimes parallel lines and could not cross. This opened for new sentiments of sorrow, of insufficiency and of anxiety:

> " I did not know how to deal with everything together: my working timing did not enable me to go and pick up children at school […] If it was the *wanban* 晚班 -work in the evening- I could not cook dinner for my family, while if it was the *zaoban* 早班, I could not bring children to school […] I felt headache (*touteng* 頭疼) […]"

Oscillating between social and economic constraints, on her road, Tina kept on improving her social resources, through different socialisation processes with other Chinese women she could meet at the workplace. Local knowledge of the labour market, of its structure and its entanglements is part of a mobility strategy (Portes 2003) and sustains new capacity to ably mobilise social resources to achieve economic re-positioning. For instance, a Chinese previous colleague informed her that she had just divorced and re-migrating back to China, she suggested that Tina replaced her as clothes' seller in a shopping mall in the city centre. Nevertheless, it is there, she claimed, that she was subjected to the strongest situations of discrimination and social contempt:

> "There was this group of Taiwanese colleagues who used to say: 'you are an idiot, you are so stupid, and you like all the other Chinese. You are only a Chinese, nothing else!' I was asked to do everything, I also had to clean the toilets and bring coffee to them, even though it did not correspond to the tasks I was supposed to perform; after four months, I decided, again, to leave this job too".
>
> **Tina**, Twenty-seven years old, Shanxi native, Banqiao (Taipei), 05.03.2017

To summarise, Tina's professional careers in Taiwan has been built oscillating between inequalities, hierarchies and unfairness within the different sectors of the labour market she could gain access to. At stage of her economic career, Tina continued moving. Movement, motion and re-positioning were responses to the precarity and subalternity she was experiencing, but they were concurrently, leading to new forms of inequal or disqualifying professional statuses (Roulleau-Berger 2015). Her status of Chinese migrant woman fragilized economic positionings, generating different barriers to employment and forms of misrecognition and social contempt experienced at the workplace. Her plural and multiple labour experiences, built in the frame of social, symbolic and cultural injustice, are illustrative of the situations of strong vulnerability Chinese migrants can go through in Taiwan, as well as of women's capacity to adapt and negotiate with such constraints, through the capitalisation and mobilisation of different repertories of reflexive or social resources (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2010).

Yuangong's self-awareness oscillates between seeks for recognition and multiple losses of self-respect, summed to sentiments of distress, disarray and helpless as for a translocal condition of subalternity, conceived as insoluble. "Trapped-in-migration-lives" point out the extent to which global hierarchies and geometries of power can be translated into social, economic and institutional local orders, and re-produce old and new disqualifications. Spatial, geographical and marital mobility were not for these women paths towards recognition and modern subjectivation processes. On the contrary, they contributed to the repetition of hyper structured experiences of immobility and immobilisation (Shamir 2005; Balibar 2011), both on the objective and subjective levels of the career-making process. However, despite the fragility of their diverse positionings and re-positionings in the different spaces crossed during migration, y*uangong*'s "wasted lives" (Bauman 2000; Roulleau-Berger 2017) are also susceptible of potential change and transformation, which derive for the virtuality of migration and of mobility themselves.

Chapter 2: Physical Geographies of Emotions, Virtual *Choreographies of Affections*

Oscillating between mobility and immobility, Chinese migrant women need to cope with a new position of subalternity they are inscribed in in Taiwan. In the familiar sphere or in the local labour market women are engaged into different situational and situated registers which multiply, and often fragilise, their social, economic and moral positionings. Concomitantly, during their multiple experiences of movement through and around the spaces of their daily life, women can negotiate new engagements, which are generated and co-sustained by new socialisation processes. Walking around their neighbourhood, shopping at the market or selling cosmetics in a shopping mall all represent little, hyperlocal and situated occasions for meetings and for the emergence of emotional and affectional ties, to connect with other women, generating new and creative social bonds. Meetings, encounters and socialisations occur in a multiplicity of ways, which are often discrete and lowly-visible.

When experiences are captured within the domestic walls, when movement is restricted and controlled, social and emotional fabrics emerge, through creativity, within different spaces, which exceed the daily order of things and transgress social and moral, but also material walls and boundaries. These new spaces for contestation, which implies individual and subjective statuses and subjectivities transformation are built according to the social, economic and emotional resources women can capitalise and inside new worlds they can "take their place in".

Women's mobilities and ordeals inside and outside the familiar sphere or the labour market are produced and, at their turn, supported by a variety of emotions, which emerge in situation and which contribute to action. Positionings and re-positionings, social and economic experiences are generated through and co-sustained by sentiments. Feelings and emotions are situationally and socially constructed, and they are embedded in the experiences. Vivid and dynamic, they can be ambivalent, overlapping and even conflictual: excitement and deception, joy and frustration, sufferings and consolation, regret and trepidation characterise women's mobilities and positionings within the Taiwanese social order. Women's ordeals of humiliation and of misrecognition within the familiar sphere and at the workplace open for and are sustained by a constant emotional process, where feelings interplay in the production, but also in the perception and the meaning attribution of the situation. When the malleability and fluidity of the social order encounter with emotions of suffering, of anger, of frustration, of ambition, of hope and of rebellion, new forms of contestation can be progressively produced.

Emotions accompany women's subjectivity-making processes and, as I have shown before, sustain and are co-generated by the reflective resources that women can mobilise during their daily lives. If experiences produce emotions and emotions at their turn produce experiences, feelings, sentiments and affections might be a helpful lens under which examine the different socialisation processes occurring and generated by Chinese women through their multiple interactions. In this regard, Eva Illouz (2007) has conceived emotions as an "energetic pole of action" (2007: 12). It is an energy which derives at once from cognition, recognition and desire of being recognized within a plurality of situations and circumstances.

Summed to social resources and reflexive competences, repertories of *positive* and *negative* emotions bring about to migrant women's positioning and re-positioning within the different segments of the Taiwanese local labour market. Disillusionment, frustration, sadness, exhaustion, discomptent are generated from and can, at their turn sustain, the choice of abandoning a position, of changing jobs, of leaving a working space. Concurrently, satisfaction, joy, fulfilment, enthousiasm also eerge in job mobility, sustaining choices of professional re-positioning. Such emotions mix with the understating of the specific situations of employment and on the structure of the labor market. As in Tina's case, social networks and ties of Chinese migrants contribute to open new professional opportunities. In this sense, they support professional mobility even if, as shown, it is often been horizontal (Roulleau-Berger 2003) for migrants who face inequalities and hierarchies in the market. All in all, emotions and the conflicts engender within the labour regimes produce re-positionings and movement**.**

That being said, and acknowledging the potential for action deriving from emotional resources, my questionings turn at present to the ways emotions, sentiments and feelings can, or cannot, be collectively produced and performed. Emotions can generate action and interaction (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). As it has happened in China before, during the urban and labour experiences in the factory, I investigate now the ways individual emotional resources can be collectively appropriated and translated into new, creative practices. When summed to repertories of collective resources, they can contribute to contesting, transforming and transgressing rigid and fixed orders, whose substance is plastic.

Meetings, encounters and affiliations open new socialisation processes amongst women placed in a subaltern condition. Emotions, as we have seen are spatially and temporarily located inside the situation and the experience (Bondi et al. 2007) and contribute to the definition of the contours of the worlds individuals inhabit and act inside. When individuals' emotions dialogue together, new

meanings, significances collectively emerge. Thereby, to what extent socialisation processes, interactions and affiliations amongst women are produced by and concurrently generate emotions? If emotions encourage the emergence of social knowledge amongst individuals, what are their impacts in the intersubjective sphere of new relationships and collective ties?

The encounters, the meetings and the new affiliative “weak” ties (

encounters, affectional ties and emotional socialisations are translated into practices of mutuality, of reciprocity, and of resistance.

1. Emotional Resources and Socialisations: Re-performing *Jiemei*

Women's *mobile* existences, through social and moral orders, spaces and places, are characterised by ordeals, obstacles on the road which generate ruptures, bifurcations and unpredictability (Becker 1963) in the career making. At the same time, continuities co-exist within individuals' life cycles and biographical shaping. As affirmed by Alain Tarrius (2001, 2002), "the relation between time and space suggests the emergence of combinations between spatial contiguities and temporal continuities which facilitate the understanding of the social in a dynamic perspective" (2001: 113). Thus, symmetries and parallels lie on individuals' capacity of reflexivity, as well as on resources, competences and knowledge re-mobilisation *on the move*, according to the opportunities. At the very same time, contiguity and continuity emerge and are co-supported by emotions, feelings and sentiments, which certainly vary over time, but which can evoke memories of the past and of previous experiences and practices. These turn to be resources for action in the present.

The ordeals women face on their polyhedral and mutating roads generate and are supported by emotions, which prove their cognitive dimension (Nussbaum 2004), which is declined on *diachronic* and *diatopic* levels. Through the production and mobilisation of emotions, women draw parallels, continuities and similarities with the past, which enable the understanding of the present not only in terms of situations and circumstances, but also of strategies, of tricks, of practices to re-produce to overstep constraints. The emotions they feel and that they associate to their daily experiences and positionings turn into a reflective resource for the re-actualisation of old repertories of social resources and affectional competences. Concurrently, alike a mirror, social resources and affectional ties are also re-mobilised through a collective emotional work, which sustains the emergence of a sense of transnational belonging and community.

Before migration to Taiwan, women had undergone a multiplicity of diverse migratory paths, which had already led them to face situations of disqualifications and humiliations, under different localised and situated forms. On their circulatory itineraries, inside the Chinese cities and the factories women had been employed in social networks had revealed to be a crucial resource for young and inexperienced migrants, confronted to the unknown of the urban world of life and work. As I have showed in part 3, social networks of "sisters" (*jiemei* 姐妹) largely interplayed in framing, shaping and

supporting internal migratory paths: from the countryside to the city, women mobilised *guanxi*, networks of family members, co-villagers and friends to move towards the urban landscapes. In the city, such networks progressively changed their substance: from networks of co-villagers or relatives, they were re-kindled and transformed into new social and affectional ties of "sisters", who worked in the same factory and shared the same room in the urban dormitories.

Therefore, in China, on their roads, during plural migratory paths and mobility experiences, social networks proved to be crucial in terms of "bounded solidarity" (Portes 2003). Social bonds or affectional ties provided women with social, economic and moral support. They represent important channels to employment (Peraldi 2002) and sustained the entrance in the city and to the labour market (Waldinger 2004; Van der Leun 2006; Ambrosini 2008).

Simultaneously, composed, at least initially of family members or co-villagers, they generated and supported emotions of security, of comfort, of consolation, and a sense of belonging which maintained affectional attachments to the rural community of origin. Individuals' biographical, social and economic careers had been constructed by and through a plurality of interactions and social relations. These concomitantly produce innovation and transformation in the biographical patterns, as well as continuities in terms of intersubjective practices. Around the assembly line or in the dormitories, *dagong mei* shared diverse repertories of feelings, emotions and sentiments, generated from and, at their turn sustaining a progressive collective share of time, space and identity (Tarrius 2000).

Individual emotions had proven their mobile dimension: from the "inner" (Beck 2003), individual subjective level of feelings, they could shift to the collective sphere of interactions, appropriated and translated into new practices by women who proved a collective capacity to aspire (Appadurai 1999). The work of imagination can be communally performed: when old practices of reciprocity learnt and capitalised during the previous migratory experiences are re-actualised and re-performed within new situations of necessity. Emotions of aspiration and of projection, of determination and fervour; sentiments of mutuality, of reciprocity, affections as well as ambivalent and contradictory feelings of dissatisfaction and of rebellion, of disillusionment and of staunchness, of disappointment and tenacity are situationally produced and highly circumstantiated. Their performed substance reveals to be performative too. Socially and situationally constructed, they can be re-constructed, re-modelled and re-actualised. They can take different, malleable and plural forms. Therefore, such emotions are mobile, and so are subjects.

Solidarity and the practices of emotions and of affections learnt and performed during rural-to-urban migration to the city and during the labour experiences in the factory undergo processes of translocal production and re-formulation. They reveal their multiscale nature. Therefore, lines of continuity and parallels between old feelings of suffering and dissatisfaction, and practices of mutual support and of reciprocity experienced and performed in the factories and in the dormitories emerge in Taiwan. Indeed, they vary. They are responsive to the specificities of social, economic and moral contexts, as well as to the situations existing in the new social world. However, the finality of their re-formulation and re-performance, in terms of alleviation of individual and collective sufferings and lessening of situations of injustice and of misrecognition has not radically changed.

Subjects, emotions and affections move, shift, rotate among spatialities and temporalities, co-producing diverse inter-actions and practices. The above mentioned dual ontological and situational dimension of emotions (Nussbaum 2004; Illouz 2009), summed to women's migrations, circulations and practices raise important questionings about the extent to which inter-actions, intersubjective activities and collective performances during translocal migrations and within different spaces and temporalities are, to use Alain Tarrius' outstanding expression (Tarrius 2001) are simultaneously "dependent on pre-established relational competences and sources of new social relationships" (2001: 112). This means investigating the continuities in terms of practices and resource capitalisation at each step and at each stop of women's career-making processes. Implicitly, this raises questions on the ways and the modalities through which emotional intersubjective practices of socialisation emerge and are constructed by the actors. Let me clarify my point.

Emotional practices and the capacity to collectively perform affections and imagination are highly situated, circumstantiated, malleable and pluriform. At the same time, the capacity to feel and to translate feelings and emotions into intersubjective practices does not emerge *ex nihilo*: it is constructed within situated social and perhaps even cultural *scapes* (Appadurai 1999), where old and new norms, symbolic goods, practices of mutuality and of reciprocity mix and merge, taking new creative configurations.

It is a matter of understanding how the declination of such intersubjective practices of mutuality and reciprocity relies concomitantly on previously migratory and circulatory knowledge. It urges to understand how old social and relational competences, mobility experiences and emotional performances mix with new ones, which can be observed in the immediacy of multiple scales of action, especially during daily life. But, also, and crucially, is important to frame such practices in the

mobilisation of imaginative resources (Appadurai 1999; Illouz 2009) and emotions. Individuals' capacity to aspire, sentiments and affections emerge from and are sustained by new socialisations and social relationships, which jumble and mix together, linking the past with the present and, perhaps even with the future. For instance, let's look at Jin Jin's dance classes, where migrant women interact, dancing, chatting or cooking together. Such a scrutiny may help to understand the extent to which their lives and existences are shaped by mobility and mobility experiences. These might bring together diverse temporalities, spatialities, identities (Tarrius 1989, 2000), as well as emotions and affections.

1.1. Belongings, continuities and affectional attachments

Inside a little apartment, in the district of Banqiao, suburbs of Taipei, lives Jin Jin. I had heard about Jin Jin from few Chinese migrant women who attended the English class I taught in Fujin's shop and one of them, Xiao Ping, accompanied me to meet this young woman. Jin Jin is twenty-nine years old, she comes from rural Hunan province, and her childhood was characterised by misery. She grew up with her mother and two sisters, since her father had moved away to work in the factories and building sector of Zhejiang and Guangdong province. After primary school, Jin Jin enrolled in a dance school which, due to the serious economic problems of her family, she soon abandoned. Hence, she migrated to Shenzhen and found several jobs in the local factories there. Young and inexperienced, it was with the help of a previous school mate that she succeeded in her first migratory ordeal to the city and that she found her first job in a textile factory:

> "My sister (*jiejie* 姐姐) helped me a lot. She said to go to Guangdong with her. I did not have money, so she paid my train ticket to Shenzhen and brought me to the factory where she was working with many people from my home village (*laoxiang* 老鄉)."

In loco, Jin Jin faced hard working conditions and exploitation inside the same textile factory of her friend. She used to call her Chinese fellow a "sister", because of strong trust-worthiness and the tie of reciprocity of their relationship. While being in Taiwan and describing that painful situations of labour exploitation, Jin Jin pointed out the crucial role played by her "sisters", who helped her, through little and rather simple practices of mutual help and reciprocity, to cope with the sufferings engendered by industrial work and urban life in the dormitories:

> "Work was horrible: from 7 in the morning until 10, 11 in the evening, we worked all the time. I felt weak and exhausted. My sister protected me; she felt she had the duty to take care of me. Later, I started to help the other younger sisters. We must help each

> other to survive. If I needed money, I could borrow some from my sisters. Sisters used to bring hot water, medicines if I was sick. They were my family […]".

After a few years of factory work in Shenzhen, Jin Jin felt frustrated: the salary was low and working conditions were poor. With the help of a co-villager from Hunan, she found a job as a dancer in a nightclub and abandoned the factory job. Time passed, so that her mother and aunts insisted she returned to the rural village to get married. Jin Jin refused to marry a co-villager as she was not ready to renounce to the new urban status she had acquired. While dancing in a nightclub, she met a Taiwanese man on a business trip. She married him, and moved to Taiwan, where she was sure she could dedicate herself to her passion: dancing.

Initially deprived of the right to work, Jin Jin despaired: she wanted to improve her career as a dancer, but she could not. In 2011, she started dancing alone in the park in front of her lodgings, bringing her child with her. The garden of her neighbourhood where she danced revealed to be a place for encounters, which often happened circumstantially and could not be predicted in advance. In this garden, the sphere of activity pluralised: Jin Jin was dancing, while watching out her child playing. Concurrently, she could informally chat with other women who used to bring their children there to play. Seeing Jin Jin dancing, women, curious, approached her: the situated construction of new relational competences emerged. The accent (*kouyin* 口音) which, as I have shown before, reveals the social identity (Goffman 1968) of women, often source of prejudices in the public sphere, became a resource for socialisation, affiliation and emotional communication amongst women who come from the same place and who share a similar condition in Taiwan, as Jin Jin explained:

> "There were many Chinese sisters in my district […] They came over and talked to me […] We could immediately understand that we were all from China […] We talked about our lives, our husbands and children […] We progressively became closer since we kept on meeting at the park […] Like me, most of them were working to survive. We are all homesick, Taiwanese people dislike us and it is hard for us to find a decent job […] I was twenty-five and I often thought about my future life. Why did I come here? I felt stupid. I thought that in Taiwan life would have been easier than in China, but it was not like that. At least, in the Shenzhen I had my family and my sisters. If I needed something, I could ask for help. In Taipei I was alone".
>
> **Jin Jin**, Twenty-nine years old, Hunan native, Banqiao (Taipei), 15.02.2017

Emotions of suffering, of disillusionment, of loneliness and of homesickness were progressively translated by women into the language of new affections and mutual understanding: an emotional language which does not represent a novelty for them. It is a matter of overlapping, jumbling and merging experiences of temporality of spatiality and of emotionality.

In this sense, emotions are translocally re-framed and re-formulated. The contexts, the circumstances and the situations of their performances have changed according to social, economic and moral structure of the order of things.

However, their substance and potential for inter-action have remained unaltered. Emotional discourses (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990) as well as emotional and affectional practices had been similarly constructed all along the ordeals of subalternity during rural-to-urban migrations in China and performed by and through the different networks of women around the assembly line or the factory or in the dormitories. The previously experienced labour regimes in the Chinese factories paradoxically supported the learning of emotional performances, which can be re-translated into individual and collective practices in Taiwan. Precedent migratory and mobility times and spaces mix with the present temporalities and spatialities: emotions sustain bridges and connections. They engender the reproduction, inside the difference, of practices.

Shared emotions which enter the intersubjective sphere of multiple interactions reveal to be repertories of knowledge (Nussbaum 2004) used not only by the individual to apprehend her situated positioning inside the social world, but also a collectively-shared positioning and condition by women who are part of the same *community of destiny* (Pollack 1995). Curiously, but not surprisingly, in her narration, Jin Jin used the expression of "sisters" (*jiemei* 姐妹) to qualify the Chinese migrants she could met in the park. The locution *jiemei* characterised the way migrant women, coming from different rural areas, addressed each other while gathering together in the urban factories they worked before. Emotional discourses, summed to new relationships open the field of new socialisations processes in Taiwan, where old performances of mutuality and reciprocity, in terms of capacity to help each other and practices of solidarity learnt during previous migrations are re-mobilised and re-actualised within the new social and emotional worlds women live in.

When previous performances of affections, affinities and practices of mutualities are re-actualised, they provide women with new a new sense of attachment and belonging new social ties and affectional bonds emerge.

As Fassin has observed (2001), like goods and products, norms, emotions, and sentiments can also circulate inside the social space(s). In this regard, the situated affiliations developed between Jin Jin and her sisters improved in a very short period of time. Women shared their difficulties in integrating local labour market, discussed together the condition of loneliness and of exclusion they faced at home, and the obstacles to integration they were collectively experiencing in Taiwan.

For instance, by that time, Jin Jin was performing undeclared jobs, especially handicraft work paid by unit (*shougong* 手工) at home to earn some money, facing difficulties in common recruitment practices. Informal discussions about daily situations and lived experiences were translated into collectively-shared emotional discourses characterised by feelings of stress, of anxiety, of disappointment, of sadness or frustration. However, the collectivisation of emotional understanding of a shared condition opened communal negotiations of situations and the development of new practices. Jin Jin realised similarities in terms of social exclusion and economic marginalisation in Taiwan with the other women.

Raising and growing socialisation processes are intertwined with ties of an emotional closeness which derive from both the experiential and situational proximity in Taiwan and from previous performances of mutuality and reciprocity in China. In interaction and inside the dimension of socialisation processes and interpersonal relations, emotions show their performative dimension (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990): from an individual to a collective discourse, they are appropriated and translated into practice. While being collectively performed, negative feelings related to experiences of sufferings are turned into resources and competences to re-formulate the frame of inter-action.

Individually experienced, and collectively shared, anger, disillusionment, sadness and loneliness are turned into a *collective capacity to aspire* (Appaurai 2004), to redesign the social, economic and emotional frame of action. From the embodied, inner sphere of individual perception, emotions are spoken, and projected to the level of discourse. Sentiments and feelings reveal to be mobile, as mobile as women's practices and experiences: from the individual to the collective, from one body to another, from one place to another, emotions move and circulate. They are appropriated and generate new possibilities for transition and transformation (Svašek 2014: 7).

Accordingly, three migrant women, sharing a condition of social contempt, economic exclusion and misrecognition, produced an emotional discourse about such positioning, which turned into a fuel for action (Lutz 1990). Jin Jin and her "sisters" -*jiemei*- responded to social constraints by mobilizing affections, shared social resources, mutual knowledge, in terms of savoir-faire but also imagination

and creativity. Thus, inside Jin Jin's messy lodgings, women organised a dance course, where Jin Jin could re-actualise her previous skills and knowledge in the field of dance, capitalised in China, dancing in Shenzhen's night clubs, and creatively and originally translate them into new practices in Taiwan.

As Jin Jin explained, the Chinese ethnic minority dance style classes she teaches represent simultaneously a trick, a strategy to face economic disqualification and marginalisation in Taiwanese labour market, ensuring herself an income. But also, and not less importantly, they are a way to cope with loneliness, with feelings of solitude, of nostalgia and homesickness. These two dimensions of practice seem to be not only highly entangled, but also co-producing and co-sustaining each other:

"

This creative strategy developed by women builds lines of continuity with a social and emotional past in China and with a new social, emotional and affectional present in Taiwan. Women learnt how to *practice affections* (*ganqing*), by developing and performing social networks during migrations and circulations in China. As they used to do in the factory before, they gradually succeed transforming communal emotions into practices of mutual help, which vary and mutate according to the new situations, obstacles and constraints, they need to cope with. The dance classes organised by Jin Jin and her sisters show how old and new repertories of emotional resources (Illouz 2007) can mix and merge, being situationally translated and re-translated in diverse ways.

Emotions, sentiments and feelings are situationally constructed, but prove to be at the same time a competence which can be learnt and re-produced through spaces, places and amongst different people. Sentiments and feelings produce memories of the past, new attachments to the present and maybe even projections to the future. As a resource, they can be capitalised, re-actualised and re-produced during mobilities: they reveal to be mobile as well. Old emotional and affectional practices are re-modelled and re-kindled from China to Taiwan, generating new *transnationalisation, i.e.* translocal production and re-formulation. This happens in the frame of novel circulations, transpositions, translations, negotiations and re-appropriations in the present. If the territory is memory, as suggested by Tarrius (2001) emotions, socially, temporarily and spatially produced, can be memories too. If the territory is memory since it corresponds to the spatial mark of the historical awareness of being together (Tarrius 2001: 120), emotions are memory since they call back, at the level of perceptions and feelings, previous experiences and practices of being together. Emotions attach, anchor and link women to previous past situations, anchor them within the present circumstances and sustain the negotiation of future possibilities. Shared memories of the past compose the grammars of the practice in the present and engender negotiations with the current order of things.

Jin Jin's narration shows the moral dimension of these dance classes, where old practices and conventions learnt in China and new norms, emotions and affections grown in Taiwan mix. Women reactivate the emotional resources capitalised during internal migration in China to cope with their new subaltern condition in Taiwan. Howbeit, emotional resources and social competences jumble and open for new performances of the practice of *guanxi a*mong "sisters"*:* solidarity together with moral obligations of reciprocity are reimagined and rekindled within the new Taiwanese context of disadvantage. Women interiorized a duty of mutual help and reciprocity within their subaltern condition in the factory, which is now re-modelled and re-performed during another condition of subalternity, this time in Taiwan. Once again, as in the urban space in internal China, far from their

home village and their families, women take advantage of the social and emotional resources they find and negotiate on the road, which reveal to be crucial to alleviate the position of social, economic and moral vulnerability they endure.

Social and affectional networks of "sisters" are hence performed through simple daily practices of mutual help and moral support: a two-edged sword. Indeed, social networks reveal for migrants in a subaltern position to be an important resource to cope with integration difficulties in diverse situations, especially as a tool to overstep economic constraints (Van der Leun 2006; Van der Leun and Kloosterman 2006) dictated by inegalitarian labour market structures. However, emotional practices of reciprocity bypass simple forms of migrants' "bounded solidarity" (Portes 2003). What is fascinating is the way emotions, feelings and affections interplay within networks' formation and reproduction. In the frame of social relationships and ties of mutuality and reciprocal trust, emotions sustain a shift, a transit from the individual to the collective dimension of practices. The intersubjective performance of emotions sustains the emergence of social networks, which nourish, at their turn, novel, emotions, producer of further inter-actions and affectional bonds.

The co-shaping and imbrication between social and emotional resources do not only occur within daily practices of mutual help and proximity but reveals to be extended to other dimensions of women's existences. The following vignette illustrates how circulatory knowledge (Tarrius 2002) learnt in China is re-kindled by women in Taiwan.

In March 2017, I went to Li Fu Jin's lingerie shop for the weekly English class on the second floor. Since few weeks, women adopted the habit to come earlier, to spend extra time together and eat dinner before the class started. It was for them -perhaps for us- an occasion to have informal talks, to share daily experiences together, seeking for but also providing advice.

The heterotopian lingerie shop, where we set the English classes, was progressively becoming an intimate space for women: a point of reference in case of help, where they could take refuge (Liebow 1967) and where there would always be a "sister" to talk with, sharing time, food, ideas, knowledge and emotional discourses. Oscillating between consumption and socialisations, women's new, translocal "enlarged families" were being produced and performed inside this space (Raulin 1996: 176).

That evening, Xiao Bing, twenty-eight years old, Sichuanese native, shared with her fellow "sisters" her feelings of strong stress and anxiety: after being dismissed by her Taiwanese boss in a restaurant,

she had been spending several weeks looking for a new employment. However, not only did she not succeed in finding a job, but she was also starting lacking money for daily survival. Her parents being sick at her rural village of origin, she also needed to monthly send remittances to China. Her social and economic pression were increasing, and her discourse was produced through emotions of desperation and of worry. Eating spicy chicken feet cooked by Wenfeng, Judy, thirty-five years old, Anhui native, interrupted Xiao Bing. She put the chicken bones on the table and exclaimed:

> "I understand you, it happened to me as well many times here, and when you are refused a job it is always a great frustration. Let me tell you something. When I worked at the post office, I cried almost every day. Colleagues used to call me *dalumei* 大陸妹, they did not even know my name and thought I was there to steal my husband money. It was painful to hear such words […] In order to show my commitment, I started cleaning the toilettes, even if it was not my task […] We do not have to give up! (*bu yao fangqi* 不要放棄) […] Later, when I found my first job in a shopping mall, the first day a colleague told me that she did not want to work with Chinese people, she said I was the ugliest Chinese she had ever seen. She said in Taiwanese dialect *fuck you Chinese girl* (*gan ni nian, dalu mei* 幹妳娘, 大陸妹)

the awareness of being part of a *similar destiny* (Pollack 1995) or, at least, a situated temporary condition shared with the others. As for Judy, emotions generated a response through action. It was for her a matter of mobilising reflexive resources and "ticks in the art of doing" (De Certeau 1980; Roulleau-Berger 1991) in the workplace to resist to disqualifications and humiliations. From these practices, new emotions emerged and sustained the affirmation of a creative subjectivity who vividly and dynamically re-positioned her status and condition in a context of vulnerability. Now, the same emotions of anger, of riot, and of determination are creatively performed within the collective dimension of discourse sharing practices, sustaining new ties of proximity and affections between Judy and Xiao Bing. Emotions are hence translated into a variety of individual and collective performances and practices, where an important work of aspiration and imagination draws the contours of action.

1.2. An *emotional algorithm:* virtual spaces for reciprocity

Both Jin Jin and Judy's cases elucidate the extent to which emotions are generated inside and co-sustained through interpersonal relationships and affectional ties. Concomitantly, the translation of emotions into inter-actions and practices prove that, despite their situational nature, their performance does also represent a competence that can be learnt, re-kindled and re-modelled in a variety of ways. In a genuine and simple way, as it is illustrated the *supra* cases, new and original routines of daily mutual help proliferate among women. Their ties of reciprocity and affectional proximity are progressively reinforced by the multiplication of socialisation processes and collective practices. Women's *guanxi,* their functioning and their internal structure are re-kindled and re-performed by women in Taiwan, within different spaces and places: the park where women bring children, the street market where they buy food, Jin Jin's lodgings where they dance together or Fujin's shop where they eat spicy food are few examples of this situation.

The material, physical spaces of everyday life performance constitute the first channels to meetings, encounters and the progressive development of socialisation and affectional ties of women. The first processes of socialisations and of development of affiliations (Dubar 1991) can therefore emerge within the spaces women can "take their place in", far from familiar duties, marital constraints or rigid control at work. Within these intersubjective spaces, women can affirm their creative subjectivities, designing individual and collective projects. However, this asks women a constant work of negotiation, and of flexible adaptation to the structural familiar, social and economic constraints that they daily face. I mentioned Xiang's case who could not often attend the English class because of her flexible and unpredictable working schedule, or

always fit with their ambitions and desires of autonomous and independent life, and which generated concrete obstacles to their entrance in the intersubjective sphere of social networks.

These types of material or moral obligations and constraints might obstruct the potential for socialisation and the emergence of proximities and affiliations (Dubar 1991). This is, for example, what I have been explained by Juan, thirty-three years old, Anhui native, that I met at a vocational make-up class organised by the Taiwanese government in the district of Sanchong (Taipei).

December 23rd 2016. Taipei.

I went to bed early since I had to wake up early the following morning. Women who attended the class had to take the final exam finalized at the obtention of a diploma of professional make-up artist. I was supposed to be Chunchun, Juan and Lilly's model on the following day. We had to go together to Taoyuan by train very early in the morning.

Suddenly, my phone rang. I was sleepy but I decided to answer anyway. It was a call by Juan, who was in tears. I was told that she had been forbidden to take the exam by her husband and mother in law, since her duty was to stay at home and take care of the children and of the housework. I could difficulty understand what Juan was telling me at the phone, so I decided to join her in front of her lodgings. It was late in the evening and her family was sleeping. Juan came downstairs secretly, and we set on the stairs. Juan lighted a cigarette and said:

> "I am sick of staying at home cleaning, laundering and cooking for the family every day, every day! This drives me crazy! […] My husband accepted having me attending the class only because I was given a little income by the government but, you see, now that the course is over, now that I can take the exam and get my diploma, he and his mother get worried… they worry about me staying out of home, far from their control. They are scared of the fact that I could potentially find a job, and I could not be their babysitter anymore. Aya, this makes me so sad and depressed […] my life is so repetitive and boring […] At the market in my neighbourhood, I met some Chinese women who were shopping or selling food and we sympathized […] But my husband and my mother-in-law did not want me to go out alone, especially in the evening […] I had to ask for the permission to go out and I was forbidden to see my friends […] I can only come and attend the class, you see, every time after the class is over I have to run back home, because they know at what time I finish and how long it takes to go back […] They control me […]".
>
> **Juan**, Zhonghe (Taipei), 23.12.2016

Our conversation went on until late at night. Juan smoked cigarette over cigarette, taking advantage of her husband absence since he did not want her to smoke. While talking to me, Juan was simultaneously engaged in an online conversation with the "sisters", Lilly and Chunchun, who were going to take the make-up exam the following day. They were virtually chatting inside the application WeChat, in a group created among few Chinese women who took together the make-up class. Inside the group, Juan shared her emotions of sorrow, depression and frustration. She explained to her sisters what she had just told me, associating to written texts some smileys showing crying faces and broken hearts.

Juan felt "trapped" in the physical world of her daily life, but she saw in that *WeChat* group, inside the virtual world, a space for freedom and for autonomy, where the subaltern position could be dismantled: an autonomy that could be achieved only virtually, since the material life and the physical world were characterised by different forms of walls.

Fascinatingly, when physical meetings and interactions are obstructed, gatherings, encounters and intersubjective practices are organised on the virtual level. The innovative resources women mobilise to meet and gather together exist virtually. In his analysis of the "new technological paradigm", Castells (2006) has observed the increasing use of information and communication technologies for different purposes and inside a plurality of contexts. In this respect, he has claimed that "technology does not determine society, it is society" (2006: 13).

important *support* for emotional discourses, interactions, and intersubjective practices, the three being highly embedded and co-producing each other. Based on shared interests and activities, but also on feelings and sentiments, they provide members with the ability to "keep in touch" (*lianluo* 聯絡), to network with others, breaking the material walls of familiar or professional obligations, which generate physical distance and isolation. Social networks and *online* conversations break such barriers and contribute to emotional and affectional mobilities. To some extent, they deconstruct a rather physical subaltern positioning, projecting the individual within new virtual interstices and intermediary spaces (Roulleau-Berger 1999) where misrecognition, social contempt and the panoptical eye (Foucault 1984; Negri 2008) of familiar surveillance cannot penetrate.

When social and moral physical barriers meet with individual and collective creativity, imagination and aspiration, spaces for contestation and rebellion emerge discretely, since they are visible only through the screen of a smartphone, whose noise can be, figuratively, put in the "vibration mode", but never reduced to silence. Emotions and affections also interplay within the *online* groups created by women. Emotions are shared through written texts, vocal messages or smileys. Affections sustain the integration within a group and its reproduction.

What could be read inside the groups could, at first look, seem to be a constellation of fragmented, unstructured and improvised feelings. But, if situated within the social context of their production, such disorganised and confused statements can be understood not only as "simple reactions to what happens in a punctual moment, but they do constitute interpretations of an event, judgments about situations" (Myers 1986: 106). In this respect, narratives and conversations produced within these *WeChat* groups of "sisters" are both social interactions (Abu-Lughod 1990) and social practices, which give rise to action. New affective and emotional practices of mutuality and collective help are thus developed based on *online* conversations.

Women's individual feelings and emotions progressively gather together inside the virtual space represented by the *WeChat* groups. Individual emotional performances encounter, converge and mix together inside the groups, which become spaces for old or new socialisations. Old socialisations are the physical, *offline* counterpart of what happens *online*. For instance, Juan talked to her "sisters" inside a group, but she knew them from physical encounters. They *online* discourses and socialisation processes had been previously created within the physical, "real" social world, and they found on *WeChat* a platform for a malleable re-production and creative re-performance.

Concurrently, socialisations can be also be new, since they first emerge inside the virtual world, without a previous *offline*, physical experience of meeting or of intersubjective practices. Sometimes, virtual encounters generate new physical interactions. In reverse, socialisations sometimes remain exclusively performed inside the *online* groups. These exclusively *online* socialisation processes are generated and co-sustained by emotions and emotional discourses too. These enable *sui generis* virtual interactions. Imagining the *online* counterpart of a formerly-occurred physical meeting or interaction is not a difficult task. We all use smartphones and *online* applications to keep in touch with a rich variety of people, transposing the codes and the social rules of "real" life into *online* written texts.

Contrarywise, identifying the way interactions occur and are created *in primis* or exclusively *online* might reveal to be trickier and more difficult. What do bring women together? How can they virtually meet each other? Drawing on the *online, in situ* observations I could conduct inside groups where a huge number of women were present, to solve this conundrum I borrow the expression of *algorithm* from mathematics and computer science[96].

In softwares, an *algorithm* is the key which enables to put together several, separated elements, thanks to a mathematic calculation: it represents the mechanism enabling codification. It generates a code, *i.e.* a rule to put ad assemble separated pieces. According to which criteria and following which paths are the pieces put together? Or, shifting to the phenomenological level, how can women who do not know each other, gather together inside a virtual group of an *online* application?

Groups can be created spontaneously by one individual, who, progressively "adds" (*jia* 加) the others inside, having the group growing.

Women who do not know each other engage in public *online* conversations, where they share experiences and ideas, of which content is often highly emotional. Conversations are usually started by the expression of a feeling: sadness, sorrow, deception, tiredness, frustration, but also joy, enthusiasm, aspiration are the commonly expresses and performed emotions inside these groups. Basing on this observation and understanding, I consider this *algorithm* which brings strangers to know each other and to gather in the virtual world to be *emotional*, since generated from and, at its turn, sustaining emotions, emotional discourses and emotional practices. The significance of the *emotional algorithm* hence goes beyond its pure definition: its substance is plastic, mutable and malleable, since emotions and emotional discourses are changeable and fluid at their turn.

I share here part of the observations I could conduct after I integrated the group *Xinzhu jiemei huxiang bang qun* 新竹姐妹互相幫群 ("The group of mutual help among the Chinese sisters living in Hsinchu"). When I took a picture of the situation that follows there where 442 participants (March 2017), but their number has probably changed since that time. When I entered this group, I probably knew only five or six of the women who are part of it. I was added by Haizheng, a thirty-five years old, Guangxi native living in Hsinchu. I had no difficulty in being accepted by the responsible of the group, the *gatekeeper*, since Haizheng introduced me. I asked

I was sitting sofa with Hai Zheng, looking at her children playing. Both her and my self-phones kept on vibrating, so I decided to take a look. My WeChat application was full of messages, mostly from the

communication with the others. If looking at the development of the conversation, that I could not report integrally, it becomes evident how emotional discourses are produced by women who do not know each other, who are physically strangers but who progressively become virtually close, by sharing emotions and experiences.

This kind of curious interactions, the ways they start and the ways they progress are not unusual inside the *WeChat* groups. Sometimes, this leads to new, creative links between the virtual and the physical worlds, where what happens *online* can be translated *offline*. In other cases, digital groups of "sisters" remain virtual "refuges" (Liebow 1967), *i.e.* spaces for a constant positioning which surpasses and transcends the walls of material, physical constraints but which does not move back to the physical reality.

2. Choreographies of Affections

In her ethnography of Bedouin women's tales and narrations, Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) has demonstrated how the "emotional discourse is a form of social action which creates effects in the world" (Abu-Lughod 1990: 12). If, by following her rationale, it emerges that emotions are firstly phenomenologically experienced as *objects* and *discourse* (Foucault 1984). Within the *online* groups of "sisters", being objects, emotions can be progressively transferred outside the virtual reality. As a discourse and a praxis, they can turn into vehicles for symbolizing and affecting social relations (Lau 2010; Illouz 2009; Svašek 2014), thus manufacturing social worlds and forging innovative forms of socialisations. Generated and performed *online*, new transits and movements towards *offline* social scenes of inter-action can also appear.

The shifts and the transition from the *online* to the *offline* worlds are generated through creative strategies, which open simultaneous, instantaneous co-production of social practices. These are generated through the interaction between these two temporal and spatial dimensions of individual and collective existences: the physical reality of practices and the virtual sphere of *online* conversations. The e*motional algorithm* which enables *online* meetings and encounters can later engender *offline* circulations, appropriations and translations of emotions and affections through corporeal, physical and rather "real" practices of mutuality, of reciprocity and of proximity.
This helps to understand the ways through and the extents to which emotions and affects generated through and sustaining *online* social relationships can shift from the *online* to the *offline* scenes of social life. Let me describe how *online* conversations translated into *offline* practices, inasmuch

emotions and sentiments sustain this virtual-to-physical mobility. Lets' go back to the above presented *online* conversation Haizheng and I were part of while sitting on the sofa.

For more than an hour, Haizheng and I kept on closely following the "sisters" discourses and commenting on them. Suddenly, Hai Zheng, who is also part of the same group, posted a message:

Hai Zheng: (she sends a little blue sun with the inscription "hello everybody") @

the ranked categories of social relations in rural Chine like the "ripples flowing out of from the splash of a rock thrown into a lake" (1968: 61), *i.e.* an organisation based on overlapping networks of people. Networks centre on the individual and have a different composition for each person; this association presupposes multiple linkages of the self with others, and the interpersonal ties, known as *guanxi*, are simultaneously both normatively defined and strictly personal[99]. Networks have no specific boundaries, each network is "a dense spiderweb" and the moral content of behaviour in a network society is situation specific.

Somehow, if carefully looking at it, the *WeChat* groups and at the Chinese sisters' networks functioning and structure seem to follow, to some extent, this "differential mode of association" dynamic (Fei 1968), projecting such "association" inside the virtual world. The "egocentric system of social networks" (Fei 1968) corresponds to the "nodes" mentioned by Castells (2006), which link people together in multiple ways. Also, they place different social and moral demands of each person inside a rather specific context. Women are concomitantly part of different *WeChat* groups, thus of interlocking social networks. They do create a new group for a specific, contextualised necessity or need. They enter and exit groups according to their individual needs and motivations and they make and unmake ties according to the situations.

2.2. Bodies, movements and *choreographies*

The dinner organised by Haizheng quickly turned into a bodily-experienced collective moment of sharing emotions and producing affections. In the shared, hot spicy pot, women were dipping not only vegetables, meat and tofu, but also feelings and sentiments. Their topics of conversation varied from their previous lives in China, their families, and their parents' difficulties to their Taiwanese experiences of marriage, familiar relationships and labour. Before the end of the dinner, Hai Zheng suggested to organise a crowdfunding within the *WeChat* group, to pay for

Considered that emotions are related to sociability -to social interactions- and that they can become *praxis,* the *supra* snapshot illustrates the salience of emotional language in settings where solidarity is being encouraged, challenged and/or negotiated. The passage from the virtual to the physical world corresponds to a specific emotional movement, thus a shift from an *online* performance of emotions and affections to the substance and performance of action. In terms of social relations, this implies a transition from virtual *familiar strangers* to "sisters" (*jiemei*). As Sarah Ahmed (2004:9-11) has suggested, emotions imply contrasting conditions, such as movement, attachment and connections. The relationship between movement and attachment is instructive to appreciate women's interactions. To put it with Ahmed's words (2004: 11):

> "what moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place.

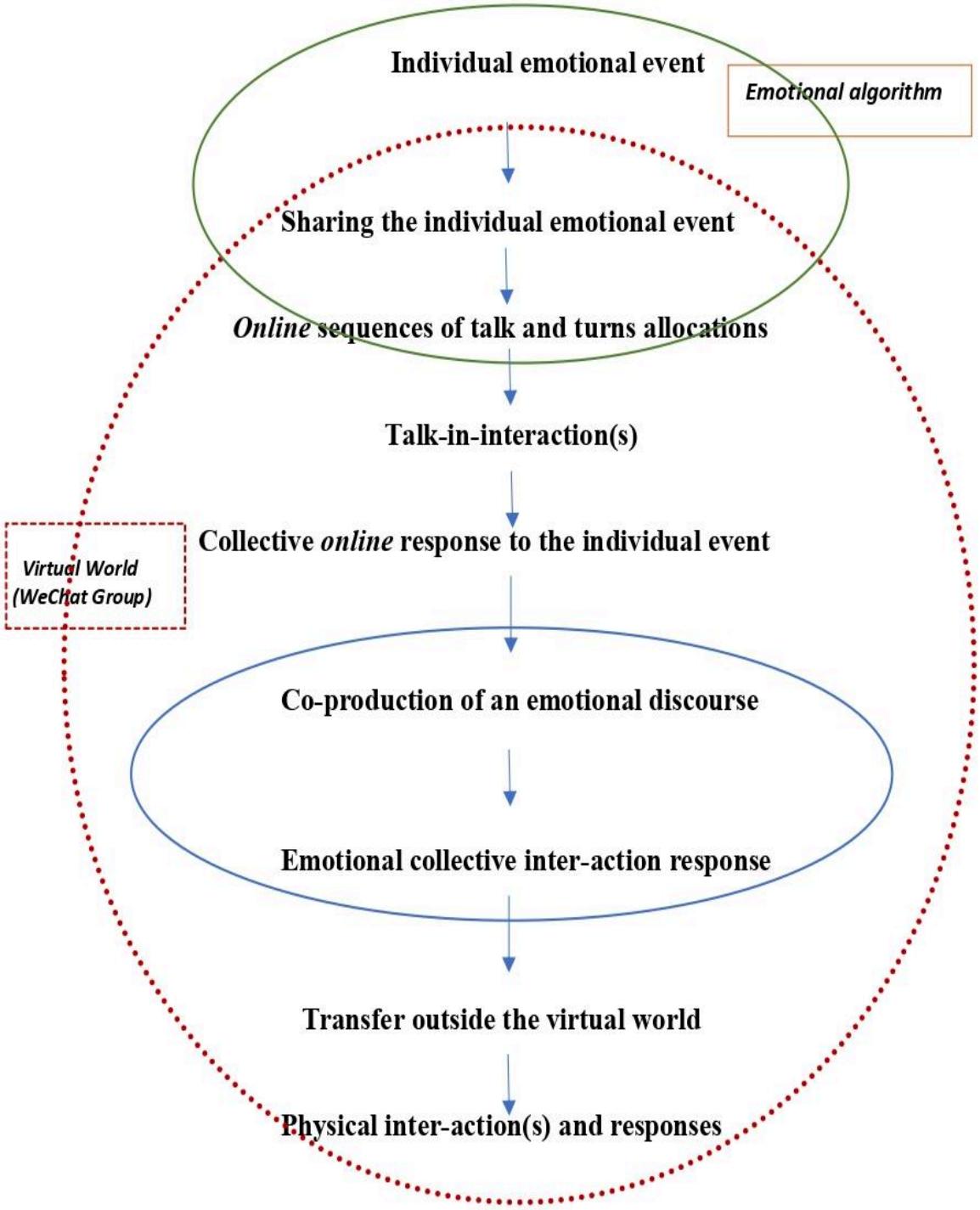
Affects and emotions are thus a fundamental dimension of human life (Roberts 2003). Using specific "affective registers" (Ticineto Clough and Halley 2007), composed of the expression of feelings such as anger, shame, misrecognition, sadness, reciprocal comprehension, fear, solitude, nostalgia, panic from the inside to the outside of the *WeChat* groups, women produce collective emotional understandings. Shifting from the *virtual* to the *physical* worlds, emotions, sentiments and feelings are translated into *mobile* practices, which follow the rhythms, the tempos of physical and virtual interactions, exchanges, communications and practices. I would like to qualify these specific social and emotional movements and practices between the physical and virtual social scenes in terms of *choreographies of affections,* to visualise the multiple and overlapping dimensions between corporeal and inner movements, physical and virtual mobilities, social and emotional performances.

The metaphor of the *choreography*[100] incarnates the above-advanced idea of movement within emotional and affectional performances. According to Cussins (1998) and, more recently, to Cox (2015), it can be intended as an ensemble of practices through which individuals, or actors, exercise their capacity of intersubjective inter-action, in order to deconstruct a situation. A *choreography* is hence highly performative and transformative.

Figuratively, it is the art and the practice of designing sequences of movements of bodies, in which motion and form are specified. The three metaphorical bodies I called on before, represented by human individual bodies, the social body and the virtual body of the emotional algorithm step together, jumble and dance on a physical and virtual floor and between the two. A choreography is collectively produced through the identification of social, emotional and affectional itineraries for individuals' bodies and individuals' *selves*. It follows a pattern, rules and generates assemblages among different mobile elements -individuals- who from single movement take a communal direction, by dancing, moving and performing together. The *choreography* is *affectional* since its beats and orientations are dictated by and, at their turn, sustain feelings of proximity and reciprocity, which are collectively designed and transferred to the stage of intersubjective practices and performances.

[100] See the definition of choreography in Part 1, the Theoretical Frame, chapter 4.1 "For a Sociological Approach of Emotions", where I present and discuss both Cussins (1998) and Cox's (2015) use of the concept of *choreography*.

The co-construction of *Choreographies of Affections*:
from virtual discourse to physical inter-action



3. *Online* and *Offline* Affinities, Collective Emotional Destinies

Within the *choreographies of affections* we can see the links and the connections among movements and mobilities of bodies, of emotions and of affections, performed on the collective stages of physical and virtual platforms. The convergence among these different elements and their original assemblages within a choreography is generated from and co-sustains social practice(s). Individual subjectivities mix, merge and jumble together within the choreographic performances of emotional inter-actions, affiliations and practices of reciprocity and proximity. Importantly, digital platforms largely interplay within these processes. In this regard, it appears crucial to highlight the extent to which technology and technological devices mediate and generate actions (Latour 1988; Callon 2002; Ferreday 2012; Lallement 2015, 2018). Amongst women placed in a subaltern position, virtual applications and digital communication practices open the possibility to contest the order of physical experiences, through new virtual positionings and re-positionings. Inside those, women can escape from daily constraints and negotiate autonomy, recognition and respect.

The virtual worlds and the hybrid, intermediate spaces which are appropriated by women in-between these two levels of social and emotional reality, generate the opportunity for individuals' subversion of the constraints dictated by the present conditions and situations (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2007). Also, being collectively performed, they may open for new moral fabrics of collectively re-negotiated social and moral re-positionings (Butler 2004). New counter-narratives emerge inside the *online* communications: norms and discourses can be contested inside the virtual arenas of *WeChat*. When they are transferred to the physical worlds, imposed, rigid and static orders can be, discretely but actively, contested, transcended and transformed into new, creative disorders. Inside the virtual groups, individual aspirations, ambitions and projects are collectively re-framed, re-appropriated through an emotional and affectional work of imagination.

When the shift from the *online* to the *offline* occurs, imagination reveals its performative power (Appadurai 2000, 2004; Darling-Wolf 2014). It can be translated into concrete, practical actions. Novel, co-created *social, emotional and affectional fabrics* emerge, oscillating between the spaces and temporalities of women's physical and virtual mobilities. It is at the carrefour among mobile temporalities, spatialities and identities (Tarrius 1989, 2001), emotions and affections, *online* and *offline* practices that the contours of collective social and emotional destinies (Pollack 1995; Tarrius 2000) among "sisters" can be sketched. It is exactly the commonly used expression of "sisters" among women which calls my attention. As explained before, the reference to kinship had been produced and

performed in rural communities and re-produced by women during pluri-mobility experiences in internal China, taking at each step of individual and collective trajectory a situated and situational significance, but always imbued with feelings of reciprocity, proximity and mutuality. Drawing on these considerations and on the observation of women's performances of creative ways of being, staying and acting together, I would like to investigate further the ways the locution *jiemei* is articulated through practices. The use of this expression to address to each other by women in China before and in Taiwan later seems to be produced by and at the same time sustaining a sense of collective belonging, which goes beyond situations and situated circumstances, supporting the affirmation of individuals' subjectivities, especially while places in a subaltern condition.

3.1. Collective destinies and emotional *scapes*

Before entering the core of my analysis, let me shed some light on an important point. In the frame of collective transitions and transformations occurring on multiple scales, I prefer to use here the expression of collective destiny and of emotional *scapes* instead of identity. As suggested by Tarrius (2001: 114), the notion of identity is too broad and too complex to describe and apprehend the multiple positionings, the fragmentation of individuals' *selves* inside and outside plural scales, jumping through multiple "knowing how to be" processes (Tarrius 2001; Roulleau-Berger 2007).

“

Later, thanks to the same WeChat group message dynamic, Heqin planned a meeting at the Sichuanese restaurant own by a "sister" to collect "red envelope[101]" (hong bao 紅包) containing the money donated by the women. Thirty Chinese women living in Taipei participated to

Figure 27 Heqin gives the ensemble of the hongbao collected among the "sisters from Chongqing" to her "older sister" whose leg is injured. Zhongli, March 1st 2017.

The internet, a broad and difficult space/dimension to be defined (Callon and Latour 1986), corresponds to a new location for *praxis* and collective action. It is a space where resources can circulate, where socialisations and intersubjective practices are constantly formed and reformed (Hine 2015). The *WeChat* groups created by and exclusively composed of Chinese "sisters" reveal to be a creative means to re-assemble and put together the pieces of "injured" (Pollack 1995) subjectivities, who oscillate between diverse ordeals of misrecognition and humiliation, forging and framing a collective sense of belonging and a mutually-shared destiny. The internet and the *online* applications are both a performative and performed space (Hine 2015: 116), shaped and sustained by the social practices through which people interpret and make use of it. Inside these spaces, individual biographies, life trajectories and social positionings mix and merge. Emotions generate the *continuum* in terms of sense of multiple belongings and in intersubjective affinities. They build bridges between the past, the present and the future, sustaining attachments to places, spaces and experiences, on which the awareness of sharing a common destiny is built on.

Within the groups, emotions, sentiments and affections exit the private sphere of an individual feeling to be exteriorised, shared, transposed, appropriated, co-performed by the others, *i.e.* the groups' members. Individual emotions are turned into words, pictures and little emoticons. They become both objects we can observe (Illouz 2007) and performative instruments, at the basis for ingenious and original collective practices. When the discourse becomes emotional and emotions become discourse, *WeChat* groups turn to be spaces made of and co-sustaining affections, and sentiments. Feelings, of

suffering, pains, joy, disillusionment, excitement, determination, sadness are therefore shaped and reshaped through the virtual language of the *online* conversations, the emoticons, the vocal messages as well as the images.

The cyberspace, the internet, the self-phone, and the *WeChat* groups take a double and co-constructed function. They are a social space to produce virtual socialisations and emotional discourses, as well as a digital, but still situated, place where emotions are transformed into discourse by practice(s) and viceversa. It is there that times, spaces, identities, emotions and affection meet and engender a re-actualisation of the performance of *jiemei*, of this "being sisters", as a discourse, a competence, a resource and practice.

The shift in terms of spaces and places where the tools of mass communication are deployed opened new possibilities and new fields where to construct *imagined selves* and *imagined* worlds (Appadurai 2004). The rapidity through which electronic media penetrate daily routines and everyday activities show how they enable individuals to constantly imagine and re-imagine themselves as a dynamic social project, as a project of *becoming*. These forms of transition and transformation are generated from and, at their turn, sustain emotions. These are vectors of belonging, of attachment within the fragmentation of mobility experiences, the complexity of the trajectories of movement and the multiplication of the scales of action.

Digital applications and platforms turn to be places for socialisation: for the transgression, the transformation, the negotiation and the production of the social. The exchange of digital messages produces new virtual spatial arrangements, where the (cyber)space can be socialized. The virtual world, concretely represented by digital applications, is not an "out there" site, existing prior to an independently of acting people (Robinson and Schultz 2009). On the contrary, it comes into being a "place" (Augé 1990) as it is validated by ongoing practices: a lived, co-performed space which can produce socialisations and affectional ties.

Social, moral and emotional relationships and networks can also, and crucially, be created on the virtual scale of *online* platforms. The physical display and transposition of intersubjective practices into the physical world can occur in a second time. *Online* performances can be firstly developed. In this sense, the levels of imagination and fantasy (Moore 2004) play a primary role. They constitute the

premise of and the *combustive for* the creation of groups, which are imagined *emotional scapes*[103]. Inside the groups, large and complex repertories of *mobile* images, narratives, experiences and emotions mingle and overlap. In a second time, they can be translated into *offline* practices. The translation is produced through technological devices. On this vein, Appadurai (1999) stated that when "the lines between 'realistic' and fictional landscapes are blurred", the actors experience technology as a "complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screes and billboards" (1999: 25). What I observed is a new relationship among imagination, subjectivities (Appadurai 1999) and emotions emerges within the *WeChat* groups. There, women negotiate sites for inter-action and define new fields for possibility. Vitality, feelings and imagination largely shape the fabric of social inter-actions and the co-production of new social worlds by communities which are firstly virtual, potential, or "imagined" (Anderson 1994; Appadurai 1999), but who share a similar destiny.

Therefore, it is at the carrefour between *online* and *offline* experiences that the sentiment of being "sisters" is actualised and, from an imaginary mode, it is translated into practices. "Processual ordering creativities" (Joas 1992) enable individuals who gather together and who mutually recognize each other to carve diverse, polyform and multi-situated possibilities of being with the social world. Sisterhood, performed corporeally or virtually projects subjectivities outside the parameters of a constraining and unfair, unequal reality. Within this syncretic, hybrid interstices, subjects can work for and towards a more "liveable" (Butler 2002, 2004) existence.

3.2. 3.2 What *jiemei* can be

December 19th 2016. Zhudong.

Sitting around the table of a Sichuanese restaurant, equipped with a karaoke's place with prostitutes on the second floor, I was cutting garlic and green beans with three Chinese migrants. During her spare time,

employed, mutually recognising their common Chinese origin from their accent, which made their social identity visible (Goffman 1968). Soon, they became friends.

Li Yue and Feifei decided to cooperate to develop a low-legitimized economic activity to earn quick money for themselves*, for their children and for the remittances they need to send to their parents. Cleaning her knife, Li Yue looked at Hai Zheng and said:*

> "thanks again for your help. Many people are coming for dinner tonight, and there is still so much food to cook".

Then, she looked at me and added:

> "they are my family. When I needed help with the restaurant, they did not hesitate. Hai Zheng comes here, she brings food to me and helps to cook and to clean for free".

Hai Zheng interrupted and answered:

> "you do not need to say this, we are sisters. I help you as I also feel comfortable here […] Look, I feel at home by sitting here, I feel more at home here at in my lodgings with my husband (she laughs). Here, I do what I want, nobody tells me what to do. If I am hungry, I eat; if I want to smoke, I smoke. When I cannot stand my life anymore, when I am sick of my husband and of my children, I come here and have a talk with them. They do understand me. As soon as we start talking, I feel better".

Few days after the above-pictured situation, Hai Zheng and I spent the evening together with Liyue at her lodgings, cooking traditional Sichuanese hotpot, drinking wine and eating dinner together. That evening, Li Yue cried. She was exhausted by the strong life pression and needed a good talk with her friend, she addressed to as a "sister" who could console and support her. As I consider ethnographic evidence and actor's perception as the sine qua non condition and the starting point for defining and qualifying their practices and actions, I asked for elucidations about the sense they attributed to this idiom. So, Hai Zheng explained:

> "I call them sisters because we all came here from the Mainland and we faced the same problems. We are all Chinese women who married Taiwanese men and we need to support each other like a family, we have to help each other because we come from a faraway place and we went through the same difficulties. These sisters are my new family here".
>
> **Hai Zheng**, Zhudong, 21.12.2016

By affirming that affinity and consanguinity are social constructions, Sahlins (2001) has reflected on the postnatal means of kinship formation. According to him, any relationship constituted in terms of procreation, filiation, or descent can also be made postnatally, thus socially constructed (2001: 2). On this vein, he conceived kinship as a "mutuality of being" (2001) of "people who are intrinsic to each other, to one another's existence" (2001: 7): "kinsmen are persons who belong to one another, who are parts of one another, who are co-present in each other, whose lives are joined and independent" (2001: 9). For him, kinship derives from a culturally appropriative action. It is a matter of intersubjective participation as people can[104] share "time, food, action, commitment, hardship, care, laugher" (2001 12). The *intrinsic* character of the relationship reflects the emotional dimension of partaking each other's sufferings and joys, sharing one another's experiences, thus of intersubjective belonging (Carsten 2000; Raulin 2012; Lazar 2018): what

transformation generate fluidity and make the practice of "being sisters" rather malleable. The meaning, or the meanings of "being sisters" are thus mobile, dynamic and mutable. Indeed, they are situated and situational, inseparable from the practice. But also, they are intrinsic to individual and collective trajectories of migrations, movements and mobilities, where the performative dimension *jiemei* is declined on and along different social, economic and emotional positionings and re-positionings, inside and outside plural and polyform worlds. Scales are diverse: they oscillate between the physical and the virtual. These are, at their turn, declined on different temporal and spatial scales: a restaurant, a dance class, a street market, a lingerie shop are few examples of such heterogeneity.

By adopting a responsibility of reciprocity and mutual help, Hai Zheng, Li Yue and Feifei forge and re-forge, coin and re-coin their own definition of sisterhood according to the situations they individually and collectively live. It is a re-formulation which emerges in their every day present and through their mobile multiple experiences of the past, which cut across spaces, times and emotions. The contours of a *collective destiny* (Tarrius 2001) are rather vast. They are generated from and sustain a sense of continuity, of attachment and of belonging with the past, in terms of space, but also of existential temporality, as well as of emotional and affectional experiences. Simultaneously, the commonly-shared present position of subalternity strengthens women's performance of *jiemei*, in accordance with the necessity to overstep and bypass structural constraints in Taiwan.

However, it is through past and present affective competences, based on social and economic experiences, mobility paths and memories of emotions that "being sisters" as a practice is creatively performed inside spaces where subalternity can be "undone" (Butler 2004). Bodies, practices, emotions and affections move around times and spaces. The pluralisation of movement and mobility generate new compressed spatialities and temporalities (Giddens 1990), which destroy any permanent or systematic hierarchy (Beck and Sznaider 2006; Chang 2010), normative rigidity and moral walls. Subalternity becomes plastic and porous: it generates its own intrinsic potential for contestation and for transgression, through fluid and mutable practices.

Emotions, "amity" (Liebow 1967; Weston 1997), solidarity and a rhetoric of family (Carsten 2000), but also the fact of sharing activities which are gendered (Lazar 2018) contribute to forging the connotation of the collective destiny, generated from and sustained by emotions and affections, performed inside physical and virtual social worlds. But this is not all. "Being sisters" is the transgression of order through disorder. It is a creative collective project of *becoming*, which is constructed within the immanence of a spatially, temporarily and emotionally alternative present and

future. The perception of being part of a collective destiny, as claimed by Haizheng in her narration, shows the extent to which practices are constructed and constantly framed and re-framed through *mobile*, intersubjective paths of connexion, where trajectories *in motion* oscillate between the temporality, the spatiality and the emotivity of the existences, continually re-formulated on diverse and mutating scales.

Sharing a *collective destiny* simultaneously constitutes for women an emotional *resource*, an affective *praxis* inside a physical and/or virtual present, as well as a *projection* towards the horizons of constant, endless and performative transformation, movement and re-positionings in the frame of a future more "liveable life" (Butler 2004). Consequently, it might be possible to envision within these pluralities of practices, of discourses and of experiences the emergence of malleable spaces for the transgression of present order. When the physical meets the virtual, where emotions and affections mix and merge sustained by and generating new socialisation processes, intersubjective affinities and affectional ties, the order of things which places women in a subaltern position can be contested, transgressed and transformed. Social, economic and moral regimes become discursive *heterotopias* (Foucault 2001) where a myriad of diverse practices emerge and produces change, establishing "the possible in excess of the real" (Foucault 2001); physically and virtually performed, social, emotional and affectional ties are produced and at their turn produce new spaces for individual and collective lives, "bringing the elsewhere home". (Butler 2002: 29).

3.3. New rhetorics of "home"

Few days before the celebration of Chinese New Year 2017, I received several phone calls and messages on

The laundry was a familiar place to me. I had already spent time there with the women who work inside and who weekly organise gatherings, sell cosmetics and set make-up class for Chinese migrant women living in

themselves and their children. Xiang Xiang and Xiao Lin started occasionally working in a massage salon as prostitutes. It was for them a desultory and hidden activity, which certainly constituted a means to earn money, but also a source of individual disqualification, producing an even lowered social position and emotional pain for women who felt ashamed, dirty and desperate. Xiu Lan, at her turn, found a job in a laundry owned by a foreign spouse from Thailand and she started washing and ironing clothes there.

Unexpectedly, the Thai woman had to leave Taiwan and she sold the laundry to Xiu Lan, who bought it with the help of her two Chinese "sisters", who immediately seized the opportunity to abandon the field of prostitution and re-negotiate an employment and, implicitly, a status.

> it […] but it was a dirty job, and I did not want to perform it longer than strictly necessary".
>
> **Xiang Xiang**, Thirty-eight years old, Hubei native, Hukou, 17.02.2017

Progressively, the laundry, as a business activity, enabled women to secure an income, so that they could stop running the brothel on the second floor. The three women thus re-oriented their profession. Furthermore, when she arrived in Taiwan, Xiu Lan first followed a make-up class organised by the Taiwanese government for immigrant spouses, where she could improve her knowledge and competences in the field of cosmetics. Progressively, she started transferring her savoir-faire to Xiang Xiang and Xiao Li who became interested by cosmetics and make-up and decided to share their new passion with the other sisters living nearby.

Oscillating between new ambitions, self-esteem and self-fulfilment generated during their collective gatherings in the laundry, mutually putting lip-gloss or nail polish on, sharing facial masks or colouring their hair, women created a *WeChat* group to invite their fellow Chinese to join. The *emotional algorithm* generated inside the *WeChat* group supported new collective meetings and socialisations. Progressively, fuelled by loneliness and boredom at home, frustration at the working place, depression because of conflictual relationships with their husbands, women answered to the messages in the *WeChat* group. There, they shared experiences and emotions. The new *choreographies of affections* were, here too, gradually re-performed from the digital, *online* world to the physical, *offline*, material space of the laundry.

The annual party organised for the Chinese New Year is a concrete, visible example of the ways shared feelings, emotions and affections are transposed from virtual discourses to physical activities. Women's feelings of solitude, of abandonment, of homesickness, of fear progressively became collective. Such negative emotions, once communally performed, turn into a strong desire to negotiate a new positionality in the society of arrival. Hence, they are transformed into resources to, at least partially, overstep the strong structural constraints characterising Taiwanese social and familiar orders, by women who collectively "take their place" in the social world, and define new significances for the spaces and places of migration.

The lunch the Chinese "sisters" take part to inside the laundry, transformed the place into a gendered intimate, emotional space to gather together. Migrant women, far from their home country and families, tend to become melancholic and nostalgic during the New Year festival. The *choreography of*

affections takes the shape of a shared meal, when women can wish each other prosperity and happiness for a collective future together in Taiwan. It is for them a concrete way of feeling less abandoned, less lonely, as Xiu Lan said:

“

of reciprocity, through complicities of language, of food, of celebration rituals (Carsten 2000), together with the tacit, unformulated rules of living know-how (Augé 1990).

Through more or less legitimate practices, in which deviant activities are included[105] (Becker 1963), women open the road to *new forms of recognition*. Such recognition was not achievable in other segments of the labour market and within the society of arrival. Socialisations and emotional dynamics merge. They generate new subjectivation processes and can lead to the re-construction of spoiled (Goffman 1968), injured (Pollack 1995) *selves,* thus to innovative forms of individual and collective *visibility* for women. Nostalgia, loneliness, humiliation, and melancholy, which were previously strengthening and implementing a subaltern condition, are substituted now by a new sense of community, shared everyday life practices, ambitions and projects.

Xiang Xiang came downstairs to greet me to the Chinese New Year party. Xiu Lan immediately joined us. She looked very pleased by my presence and said:

> "I remember that the first year I celebrated the

> Taste it, you will feel in Chongqing. Everytime I eat it, no matter in winter or in summer, I remember the smell of my grandmother's place where she used to hang dried meat before eating it".
>
> **Meng Han**, Thirty-four years old, Chongqing native, Hukou, 17.02.2017

La rou and its quite intrusive smell triggered many emotions. *La rou* eclipticed pride in Meng

Figure 29 The festive environment during the celebration of the New Year at the second floor of Xiao Lan's laundry. Hukou. February 2017.

In this festive environment, women talked about the celebration of the New Year in their respective villages, with a sort of hidden melancholy: "here it is not as light-hearted (*zhebian bu renao, meiyou yisi 這邊不熱鬧，沒有意思) as in my home village", explained Chun, from Fujian. Xiao Lan added:*

> "I came here to Taiwan as I was persuaded that my life would have improved; I do not want to lie to you, I came here to earn money and to provide a better future to myself, my parents and my children […]. I think that most of the women here today share such considerations with me. Unfortunately, we have progressively realised how miserable our new Taiwanese life is: the first year I felt lonely and sad during the Spring festival, and I had no money to go back home to see my mother and my family". Then, looking at her "sisters" eating *niangao* 年糕[106]and hotpot 火鍋 she exclaimed: "This year, I am so happy to have all of you gathering here, I feel at home and I do not feel abandoned anymore!".
>
> **Chun**, Thirty years old, Fujian native, and **Xiu Lan,** Hukou, 17.02.2017

This snapshot vividly illustrates the dynamics of women's social and moral re-positioning, as well as identity making processes. A novel social and moral life had been developed through different, porous, and moving configurations. On a similar vein, it appears that the ordeals of alterity and of humiliation have certainly plural. However, they releveled to be rather liable, situated and contingent: they can change over time. Beyond the diversity of individuals' situations, experiences and biographies, "it is a

[106] The New Year cake: a steamed, sweet cade made with glutinous rice flour.

matter of separating the similar, of establishing a site to root a gap to construct an alterity" – a subaltern condition- which can be later perceived as "unacceptable[107]" (Butler 2004).

inequalities (Boltanski 2009) are socially constructed. In this sense, it also proves how people react to these, by feeling them (Ahmed 2004) and de-constructing them.

The crucial piece of the puzzle is not the result -making a success of the ordeal- but, on the contrary, the process of individual and collective production of the awareness. Previous experiences reinforced women's understanding of the present. Therefore, they can now develop "critical competences" (Boltanski and Thévénot 1991) to make and remake novel projects by adapting to the new constraints on their road. These "critical competences" (Boltanski 2009) are co-produced through heterogeneous, moving and even contradictory emotions and sentiments women felt during the plurality of ordeals they went through during their biographical, migratory and professional careers. Their capacity to establish equivalences and symmetries with the past, to identify the presence of hierarchies, of inequalities and of risks in the present and to project themselves towards the future is important. This proves how these women, collectively can play within the spiderweb of dominations: they learn to identify which pieces of the yarn to cut, juggling inside to find the exit.

Oscillating between acceptance, negotiation and transgression of roles and positions, women progressively define and re-define new norms, rules and "knowing how to be".

Chapter 3: Back-road Globalisation

The juxtaposition, the jumbling and the overlap among women's migratory paths, biographical ordeals and professional patterns situates the reflection and the narration in a dynamic and mobile frame. Movement, physical or virtual, represents the keystone supporting the fluid and elastic morphology of women's career making processes. Biographical, migratory and professional trajectories are moving; social worlds are labile, interactions are multiple, interpersonal relations are virtual, emotions are floating, and action is changeable and creative.

In this porous, uncertain and changeable social world I re-situate the orange, fluorescent bra I was offered by Fujin. This object, imbued with emotions and affections, has plural and multiple meanings. It is emblematic not only of a migratory and biographical path, wore by a woman who crossed the Strait, but is also shows the diversity of the ordeals its owner, similarly to other Chinese migrants, went through during migrations and settlement in China before, and in Taiwan later. Moreover, and especially, its tortuous path and life trajectory embody the creativity and ambitions of a migrant woman, who fights against a plurality of inequalities and hierarchies. It proves the extent to which imagination and aspiration can contribute to social-repositioning and to potential upward social mobility.

In the sections which follow, I would like to discuss the innovative and creative strategies women develop to overstep the obstacles existing in Taiwanese local labour market by exploring and navigating other markets, which are concurrently virtual, emotional and translocal. By focusing on the specificities of the goods and commodities that women commercialise, together with the repertories of individual resources capitalised during pluri-migration, I analyse how exchange, business, commerce and economies are ingeniously arranged on digital platforms and enable women to transcend local markets and project their entrepreneurial activities towards global arenas. This transfer and transformation, embedded in multi-situated transnational social networks (Lin 2002), synthetise the overlocking connection between individual biographies and new transnational geographies inside physical and virtual, local and global worlds. Such imbrication becomes particularly visible through the creative economies developed by women, since through these economic circuits the multiple spaces, places and social relations of women's pluri-mobilities tend to be connected all at once.

At the same time, this link cannot be reduced its mere economic dimension. It is at the carrefour among strong social, economic and familiar constraints, biographical and professional sequences and

emotions that transnational physical and virtual business occurs. It generates different degrees of translation of the previously acquired resources and competences all along biographical experiences (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2004) which bring about diverse patterns of social, emotional and professional economic activities. Those are produced on a global scale and translated through local practices. They represent for women a chance to negotiate new *selves* and positions within the society they live in, oriented towards upward social, economic and moral mobility.

It is at the crossroad among anterior mobility paths, professional experiences and the capitalisation of translocal knowledge that such diverse, labyrinthic patterns of navigation emerge. From "trapped-in-migration lives", women's careers progress, mutate and change. The previous *yuanggong* positioning is challenged by and through different individual and collective social, economic and emotional practices, continually re-scaled in the *glocal* seas. New *figures of navigation* emerge, through multiple and overlapping local and global, physical and virtual, material and emotional re-positionings. Navigation is geographical, social, spatial, economic as well as emotional and affectional. These biographical itineraries go through, navigate, circumnavigate, roam around social structures and constraints; they cross new lands for discovery, for challenges and for ordeals.

1. Circumnavigating New Markets

When the access, the entrance or the permanence in the diverse segments of local labour market are obstructed, difficult or limited, women prove their capacity to navigate different seas. They identify alternative possibilities by exploring new and creative markets, which often overstep local and physical boundaries. Inner frontiers built to exclude migrants from employment can be challenged, contested and transgressed through the mobilisation of a plurality of resources and competences. Women trespass traditional local marketplace, looking for or even generating new ones. Navigation and exploration are produced on a double level. It is a simultaneous matter of "contestation" (Steiner 2005) of the local, physical market, and the creation of new virtual segments of *glocal* markets. Crucially, the labour produced on such virtual and/or contested markets is both material and de-materialised, *i.e.* virtual and emotional.

Therefore, women's biographical, migratory and professional careers are forged in the frame of insecurity and uncertainty as for the present and for the future. Economic precarity and unfair treatments at work concurrently represent a factor of anxiety, of stress and of preoccupation for

Chinese migrants, but they can also become the basis for inventing new, creative alternative employments, which exit the formal segments of the labour market.

Taiwanese disqualifying labour regimes attributed a weak social and economic status to Chinese migrants. The same had happened in China before during rural-to-urban migratory experiences. However, it is from the experience of discrimination in terms of working status and the long-lasting processes of lowering of their social position that women set various economic activities. Local segments of the Taiwanese labour market can be "contested" (Steiner 2005) through the production of original economic practices, at an individual and a collective level, by creative subjectivities who, socially, economically and emotionally, seek to "take their place". Concurrently, but not less importantly, new markets are opened and explored through simultaneous practices of contestation and the production of virtual segments, which exceed the order of physical reality, which is inegalitarian and unfair.

If gendered social and emotional networks constitute a resource during the search of employment, a channel to information and job's opportunities, the persistence of market hierarchies and inequalities in terms of underemployment, low entry or lack of recognition points out the limits of migrants' solidarity effectiveness in the local labour markets. Therefore, entrepreneurship and self-employment, under different forms and patterns, often reveal to be a forceful strategy to cope with market's disadvantages (Tarrius 2002; Ambrosini 2003, 2018; Portes 2003; Waldinger 2008). Showing imagination, creativity and commitment, while being excluded from the formal sector (Martinelli 2004), job seekers can avoid discrimination by sorting themselves into sectors of the labour market where discrimination is less likely to occur (Parker 2004) or by opening new markets. And this is the case of Chinese migrant women's *glocal* navigations. Let me proceed by order.

Chinese migrant women's fragile social and economic positioning within the local order opens *sui generis* patters of social and economic integration, which exceed the local market's obstacles and disqualifications. Based on the use of digital platforms and virtual social networks, from the creative intersubjective *online* gatherings, socialisations and interactions, new economic practices which exceed physical spaces and local order are produced. Let's enter Wenfeng virtual world.

1.1. E^3: electronic, extraordinary and emotional commerce

Inside her little kitchen in Luzhou, in the suburbs of Taipei, Wenfeng prepared all the ingredients to cook some juefen 厥粉 (spicy Sichuanese noodles). Wenfeng looked skilful. She cut carrots and peppers quickly, even if she was not a professional cook. Before migrating to Taiwan, she worked at a textile factory in the south of China (Guangdong province). Sick of the repetitive food in the canteen of the factory, she used to go eating at her uncle restaurant nearby: she observed the preparation of dishes, she tasted food and memorized the recipes. While washing soya beans, Wenfeng opened her smartphone and posted some pictures of the dishes she just prepared within the

In the meanwhile, food was ready and Wenfeng could add some spicy sauce, typical from her native province, Sichuan.

She explained to me that the spicy sauce was the key. It is the spicy sauce which generates a specific taste. When she migrated to Taiwan, Wenfeng brought with her previously capitalised knowledge and *savoir-faire:* the culinary traditions of her hometown, that she cleverly uses to survive, as she cannot find a job in Taipei. Hence, the food she was cooking was not intended for a dinner with friends. It was made to be sold to several Chinese "sisters".

argued how markets are socially and culturally[108] constructed. This proves the numerous forms and shapes that economic exchange and business activities can take. The socially constructed dimension of Wenfeng's markets becomes visible through the ways she mobilises social networks and calls on social and economic knowledge inside the virtual market she is opening and navigating through. This digital marketplace involves a plurality of actors: sellers/producers and a new clientele, which is, in Wenfeng's case, represented by her Chinese fellows who buy her products. Chinese migrants are concurrently Wenfeng's *jiemei* and clients, since the boundaries of her market are represented by the *WeChat* groups Wenfeng makes business in. In this case, the frontier between a *jiemei* and a client seems to be porous and malleable.

What may be interesting to notice is that the previously defined *emotional algorithm* proves again to be crucial. This time it is mobilised in the production of virtual and physical interactions, which are projected on the economic level of the market. The *emotional algorithm* makes interactions among the *WeChat* groups' members possible: it is imagined, situated and performed on the virtual level, by using the *online* application *WeChat*. Now, through the different *WeChat* groups Wenfeng was part of, she could transfer the social interactions occurring *online* to the physical plan of business and economic practices, in a way which appears to be at the same time simple and ingenious.

In the previous chapters, I have associated Wenfeng's life pattern to the figure of *yuangong* – "trapped-in-migration life". At the beginning of her biographical and social career in Taiwan, she was positioned within the "trap", facing strong social and moral constraints at home, as well as marginalisation in the local labour market. However, the *sui generis* strategies she developed to set her business challenged her previous positioning, which proved to be malleable. It changed over time according to the resources she could mobilise and the competences she could collect and actualise into practices all along her life path. In China, Wenfeng was a factory girl, employed in the industrial sector of the labour market. Nevertheless, through observation and curiosity she acquired skills in the catering field, thanks to the example of her uncle who worked in a restaurant. By that time, Wenfeng did not need to mobilise such knowledge. Though, that savoir-faire revealed now, in Taiwan, to be crucial for her survival. Throughout her business, Wenfeng proved her capacity to mix her previous knowledge and individual resources with the new social and emotional resources she could capitalise *via* her social and emotional

[108] Dimaggio (1994) looks at the origins of the agents' calculative competence. For him, this is not a matter of intrinsic, natural calculative property; on the contrary, he emphasizes the culturally or socially constructed dimension of this competence.

networks of sisters. This became fundamental for the success of her business, which shifted from the physical to the digital dimensions of not only social, but also economic worlds and new virtual markets.

Therefore, markets can be created on digital platforms and commerce can be performed inside the virtual worlds. So far, I have shown that the application *WeChat* enables women to mutually get in touch in the virtual worlds, by sending messages, pictures and emoticons. What emerges now is that it also allows economic transactions. Hence, Wenfeng's *electronic commerce* synthetises a juxtaposition between digitalisation and economic processes. It consists primarily in distributing, buying and selling goods and services, of which her food provisions are illustrative of, over electronic systems and applications. It is a matter of doing business in new, original, *sui generis* ways, exploiting technology and *online* applications as a crucial resource for its functioning.

In this regard, the socially constructed dimension of Wenfeng's market raises a new puzzle. If clients are "sisters" and "sisters" are clients, how do emotions and affections contribute to the production, or even co-production of economic activities? It appears more and more plausible to suppose that markets are not only socially and culturally (Grannovetter 1994, Steiner and Trespeuch 2014), but also emotionally (Illouz 2018) constructed. Wenfeng made good use of both social resources and repertories of knowledge. She opened a new virtual market of traditional Sichuanese food since she socially, culturally and emotionally knew her clients' preferences. Indirectly, Wenfeng was part of her clients themselves. She was part of that group of sisters. In such way, since she was part of her clients, who are sisters, she was precisely aware of their tastes, of their desires and of the ways to promote her business among then.

When summed to the repertories of social and economic resources, emotions can play a double role in market formation. Firstly, as Wenfeng's case suggested, the experience of feelings of nostalgia, of boredom, of dissatisfaction fuelled Wenfeng's decision to do business. At the very same time, the products she sells also have a vivid emotional and affectional connotation (Raulin 1990, 1999). As pointed before while describing the food cooked during the New Year celebration, the highly emotional attribution the foodstuff takes for migrants is evident. For instance, let's think back of Meng

Production -in this case cooking food- and consumption -buying traditional Sichuanese spicy sauce and cooked meals– are social (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Ingold 2000), emotional (Illouz 2018) and cultural (Douglas and Isherwood 1981; Miller 2005, 2008) processes. Concurrently, through processes of production and consumption emotional dynamics do also emerge. They derive from the very same social and economic situations and circumstances: the two are thus entangled, co-produced and co-performed. This might be true for markets as well, as it becomes visible from Wenfeng's virtual market on *WeChat.*

The social and emotional co-construction and co-performance of markets make their functioning, their structure and their orientation rather fluid, mutable and floating. Social circumstances and emotional discourses are temporary and mutable, and so are the markets they contribute to initiate, and they are performed inside. This leads to a potential multiplication of *sui generis,* innovative, emotional and virtual markets: the clients, the products, the actors and the emotions which contribute to markets' emergence are subjected to constant changes and transformations.

Thereupon, this commerce can be considered as *extraordinary.* It goes beyond ordinary entrepreneurial and business activities. It transgresses the physical labour markets' norms and constraints, their inegalitarian and disqualifying structure towards migrants, as well as traditional "rules of the exchange" (Fligstein 2001), which are replaced by emotions. Inside the emotional virtual worlds new markets can potentially always be invented and reproduced.

To express the innovative dimension of this commerce, performed between the physical and the virtual worlds, where emotions and affections largely influence its framing and shaping, I metaphorically decline it on a e^3: *electronic*, *extraordinary*, and *emotional*.

The electronic dimension of *e-commerce* does not exclude the possibility of a co-development within the physical reality. It can be simultaneously physically and virtually performed. When performed physically, emotions still represent a crucial axis on which exchange is generated and reproduced. When markets meet emotions and commerce merges with affections, new opportunities appear. But this is not all.

When acknowledging the role of emotions in sustaining business activity, I would like to stress how business, economic practices and entrepreneurship represent for women a means to gain autonomy and self-esteem. Not only business enables them to renegotiate a new positionality in Taiwanese labour

market. It is also a means to improve their financial, economic and moral autonomy with respect to the familiar sphere. Women's paths and biographies show how familiar order and marital regimes are not irrelevant in orienting women's professional choices and economic patterns.

The fact of oscillating between the physical and the virtual worlds allows women to manage their working schedule and to adapt them to their familiar duties. As Camille Schmoll has demonstrated with regard to women from Maghreb who set street business in Southern Italy (2006, 2011), women maintain their role of mother, of wife and of daughter-in-law within the familiar order and the reproductive sphere: this is the only way to have their Taiwanese family members accepting their activity. Women need to manage their family and professional temporalities, which are often difficulty compatible. This engenders moral conflicts between the different repertories of emotions. On the one hand, women want to work and to achieve social and economic independence. On the other hand, they are mother and wives, they do have familiar duties, from which emerge feelings of obligation, of devotions and of carefulness towards husbands and, especially children.

In this regard, *e-commerce* enables a coherent, congruent and non-conflictual synthesis between therse two apparently dissonant temporalities. *E-commerce* often allows women to freely manage their time and working schedule. For instance, *e-commerce* enables night work. Women can sell products during specific moments of the day, while managing their business from and through their phone during the evening or the night, when their husbands and children sleep. Thei can send messages while cooking dinner or make orders while washing the dishes. The phone and the digital platforms where business is set on do not require women a physical displacement to sell commodities, to buy products, to make advertisement and to get in touch with the clients. Everything can be done through the use of the phone, whose performance can occur everywhere and anytime. To elucidate my argument, let's move back to the physical world, to the district of Tamshui, in Northern Taipei.

February 17th 2017. Tamshui.

On a small street, parallel to the main touristic commercial road of the fish market and candy-floss shops, Ye Weilian, thirty-four years old, Guangdong native is frying eggs and vegetables to prepare some chang fen 腸粉[109]*, a Cantonese traditional dish. The little street-stand she works in looks messy, but clients make the queue to taste her food.*

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[109] Rice noodle roll: a roll made from sheets of rice flour dough, steamed and stuffed with meat, vegetables and eggs.

Weilian grew up in a Cantonese rural village and at the age of fourteen, thanks to fake documents, she migrated to

and to integrate the labour market, Weilian understood that several migrants needed help. For this reason, she decided to organise free cooking classes opened to all the sisters who wished to learn how to prepare *chang fen*, with the view of opening their own economic activity. If Weilian could not meet sisters at her stand, she could discuss with them on *WeChat* during the evening or the night, transferring business knowledge, culinary skills and *savoir-faire* through the *online* application. For instance, this is the message Weilian sent to a "sister" in Taizhong on March 4th 2017, at 2 am in the night:

> "I just read your words, sorry to answer so late, my child is sick and I had no time to answer before. Now, he is sleeping. If the pastry of your *changfen* is too liquid, just add some flour, it is going to improve […] try and let me know […] remember that the pastry does not have to cook more than four minutes, as soon as it gets crunchy, it means that it is ready and you can add the other ingredients […]

and went back to Taipei: Weilian could not be late to cook breakfast for her husband and bring children to school.

Visibly, it is through a properly orchestrated ensemble of adaptation, negotiation and transgression that Weilian succeeded in her entrepreneurial and professional re-conversion. She oscillated between multiple, contrasting *selves* but she proved her capacity to generate a coherent "co-habitation" (Roulleau-Berger 2007). The new-self-esteem and self-respect she gained did not emerge in open conflict with her family or with her husband. Rather than escaping normative ideas of femininity, of motherhood and of domesticity (Lan 2008; Huang et al. 2012), Weilian could re-negotiate them, inventing new strategies to fulfil her roles transgressing order without generating open disorder, and succeeded in "taking her place" within the familiar sphere and the society.

Figure 30 The inauguration of "sisters'" new business in Hsinchu that Weilian and I attended. "Sisters" wanted Weilian to be the first taster of their changfen. Hsinchu. March 17th 2017.

Wenfeng and Weilian's cases show how creative entrepreneurial practices, combined with new forms of mutuality and reciprocity, on physical and digital scales, enable women to negotiate the familiar order and marital regime, and to progressively "take their place" in the Taiwanese society of arrival and its labour markets. These women moved away from a position of "trapped-in-migration-lives", of *yuangong*, by negotiating new social, economic and emotional opportunities, all at once interconnected.

So far, I have investigated the ways *e-commerce* is performed. I have examined its functioning through the digital commercialisation of diverse products –Cantonese *changfeng*, chicken feet, spicy sauce, underclothes- among the community of sisters. Yet, an attentive scrutiny might reveal the peculiarity

of such goods and commodities. Their origin and substance are not anodyne. Also, and crucially, the ways these curious and peculiar objects are commercialised in Taiwan might have specific social, cultural and emotional meanings, which require further investigation.

The commercialisation of these products is crucial in shaping women's professional careers in Taiwan and contributes to a concrete or imagined social repositioning within the society. Products and food provisions are imbued with a strong emotional significance (Raulin 2000; Illouz 2008), which is progressively constructed by women following the tempo of their social and economic re-positioning and socialisation processes in Taiwan. By following

However, the broader landscape emerging from these new mobility practices imposes to push the reflection further. When observing closely women's economic activities, what catches the eye is not only the new virtual space where new marketplaces are located, but also their multiscale level (Kloosterman and Rath 2001). The translocal dimension of the markets derives from objects and subjects' mobilities. Spicy food, chicken feet, the orange bra, as well as milk powder, clothes, cosmetics have a double local and global life. If it is plausible to affirm that through economic practices material and social biographies merge, connect and juxtapose, it is also necessary to look at the social, economic, and emotional spaces in which these encounters occur.

For these reasons, the crossed analysis of individuals' biographies and objects' trajectories may be helpful for an understanding not only of the juxtaposition of economies on physical and virtual levels, but also the ways *e-commerce* generates new bridges between local and global spaces. The vitality and motility of individuals and commodities' mobile lives take place and shape inside and outside a plurality of local and global geographical spaces and social landscapes, which reveal to be increasingly connected, co-produced, and co-performed.

Their functioning, their shape and their creative substance point out the extent to which markets' *embedness* in social life and practices takes a complexifying, "reticular" (Steiner 2005), polyhedral form, through the symbiotic multiplication of social networks and affectional ties. The newly-negotiated, invisible segments of the novel market inside which Weilian or Wenfeng inscribed their business prove the multiple, creative ways capitalistic strategies can be negotiated by actors, who have heterogeneous desires, sentiments and objectives. Furthermore, this demonstrates how these actors produce economies that are complex relations of affections and profit, accumulation and distribution, as well as gift, solidarity and individual/ collective achievement. At the very same time, something else emerges. New markets and new economies do not only take place inside virtual spaces, but also on new global arenas.

1.2. From *dagong* to *laobanniang*, from being on the payroll to sending *hongbao*

Thirty-five years old,

and she was employed in an electronic factory. During the day, she worked around the production chain, while in the evening and in the week-ends she followed some computer courses. She worked around 10-12 hours per day for 600 *kuai* a month. When she obtained her first salary, she felt joyful and proud and she sent almost all the money back home. The factory was owned by a *taishang*, a Taiwanese businessman. She wanted to leave the production line to work in the office, but she could not as she needed the middle-school diploma, that she had not.

Working-time was long, and her bottom was hurting, sitting down all day long. Sometimes, some older "sisters" provided her with a pillow for her comfort. If she felt asleep as she spent the night studying computer science, "sisters" woke her up before the bosses saw her, to avoid her getting a fine. She felt grateful. They used to call her *xiao bu dian* 小不點 ("the little thing"), as she was young, little and thin. She lived in the dorms and she sent almost all the money she earnt to her family. She alternated "day and night work" (*baiban* 白班, *yeban* 夜班) ad she found the rhythm of work strenuous. Later, she went to Zhongshan to work in a leather factory.

From there, Au Hua decided then to move again, to Shenzhen, where salary ranks were particularly high, and the city was developing well. Her sister joined her later. She initially worked for Foxconn[111], where working conditions were particularly hard, working hours extremely long, but salary was decent. She worked for Foxconn for almost two years, living in the dorms and eating at the canteen to save money because she was determined to open a business and give up with the *dagong* life. This was her strongest dream at that time: not being a *dagong mei* anymore. She did not want to sell her labour to anybody else, she wanted to settle down in the city, and set her own economic activity, gaining her "security feeling" (*anquan gan* 安全感) as a modern woman. Thus, she gave up with the factory work and she invested in a little laundry in Baoan, the district where many migrant workers. Deprived of the *hukou*, police controls being very frequent, she had to pay a lot of off-the-books money to the police to remain *in loco*. She felt sad and disappointed because of the unfairness of this system:

> "I was very upset. I wanted to shout my anger out! Fuck! (*gan* 幹)! This is China! Even if you make efforts, you are committed, and you work hard, you cannot go anywhere without *guanxi* or without money. You must pay for everything, if you do not pay or you do not know people, or you do not have a good *hukou*, then, your future is condemned: you will remain a *gongren* 工人 [factory worker] forever. And then, you know how unfair this world is? Even if you have the luck to know people and not to

[111] Taiwanese electronic company producing mainly Apple brand products, such as self-phones, I pad, computers, etc. located in Southern China and in Northern Henan province.

> pay money to the police, and you succeed earning your money, well, you will still be a *waidiren* 外地人 (foreigner, alien), without a *hukou*. No hukou means no social protection, no social protection means no hospital, no possibility to buy a house and no schooling for children. So basically, if you are born *dagong mei*, you will remain a *dagong mei* and that's it".

Her parents started insisting to have her and her sister going back to the village to get married, but this did not really correspond to Ai

Also, they enabled her to identify clients' preferences. When living in Shenzhen, she consumed Taiwanese milk powder that her husband could bring back to Shenzhen in little quantities during his business trips to Taiwan. He used to buy few boxes that he carried in his luggage between Taoyuan (Taiwan) and Shenzhen (Guangdong province, China) airports.

Her friends with children started asking for the same milk powder for their personal use and, if her husband's trips were frequent, Ai Hua demanded him to bring as much milk powder as possible back to Shenzhen, carried in his luggage. A small group of mothers with young children living in the district of Baoan, in Shenzhen, progressively started to make orders to Ai Hua. Thus, she began to sell some boxes imported by her husband to Shenzhen, who acted as a *paodanbang* 跑單幫, a common expression used by women, that could be translated as "itinerant trader": a single person (*dan* 單) who helps (*bang* 幫) to move and carry (*pao* 跑) goods.

Thereby, Ai

Figure 31 Ai Hua's ingenious strategies to carry and transport of milk powder for cross-border selling. The boxes containing milk powder are placed inside her daughter's stroller. Taipei. February 6th 2017.

The translocal, virtual business that Ai Hua progressively developed shows how social fragility and economic vulnerability can be converted into imaginative resources (Appadurai 1999) which sustain aspirations, desires and ambitions. Once in Taipei, Ai Hua initially stayed at home taking care of her child. Later, supported both by feelings of boredom and dissatisfaction at home and by the desire to earn her own income, she started looking for an employment, that she was systematically refused because of her Chinese origin and her lack of formalised skills and competences. Ai

looked for a job, she has often been refused. Emotionally suffering from the denied access to employment both in local supermarkets, shopping malls and restaurants, Ai Hua abandoned the perspective of entering formal segments of Taiwanese local and physical labour market, to explore new, different markets.

Moreover, the *glocal* markets Ai Hua attempted to explore are socially co-constructed by a combined action of a cross-border social and emotional network of actors, together with the introduction of novel technologies of exchange (Mackenzie 2006). If technology is the *device*, hence the instrument to perform economic exchanges, the functioning of this *sui generis* commerce also proves that without a pre-established repertory of individual knowledge, social relations, networks of "sisters", based on mutual trust (Granovetter 1994; Lin 2002) and affective bonds, this practice could not take place. The application *WeChat* enables *online* transactions and virtual money transfer: payments and money sending are made in *renminbi* 人民幣 (RMB) through "red envelope" (*hong bao* 紅包) mechanism, which permits easy displacement of money *online*. The internet escapes from and bypasses conventional jurisdictions (Law 1987): all the transactions made through *WeChat* are invisible and tax-free (*mian shui* 免稅), because the platform is linked to a Chinese bank account, as opposed to a Taiwanese one.

Figure 32 An example of hongbao -virtual money- transfer to Xiao Hua on the digital application WeChat.

Simultaneously, the fact of working on the virtual plan helps to get and keep in touch across borders with people who are potentially located everywhere. Thus, Ai Hua progressively forged her new norms of functioning, setting what Fligstein (2001) defined "the rules of the exchange", *i.e.* "who can make a transaction with whom, and the conditions for the completion of the transaction" (2001: 34). She began by creating a *WeChat* group which included her previous colleagues and friends in Shenzhen, the ones she previously used to provide milk powder to. These social resources were going to become Ai

The knowledge, skills and savoir-faire capitalised during the different migratory paths were thus re-mobilised. While being a *dagong mei* in China, living in Shenzhen and working in the Taiwanese factory, Ai Hua used to see the big cargos with the containers full of the electronic products made in the factory. She knew that the little Mp3, lithium batteries or hear plugs she daily produced in the factory were aimed at global distribution all around the world. She knew that trading was possible, since she had been an "invisible" actor of the very same global trading process before while working in China, even if her role of productive labour provider around the assembly-line was not considered as being crucial within transnational, global economic trading processes. This low-qualified previous *dagong* worker in China, from the payroll progressively turned into a *laobanniang*, a "*glocal* boss", *i.e.* a cross-border entrepreneur who sets sails between previously navigated roads and new global seas.

Ai

> understood me and that she was ready to cooperate to have me getting some money from the business […] that is how I started […] Also, you know, they were also finding their counterpart in the business, since they could not find good milk powder in China, it was mutual help (*huxiang bangmang* 互相幫忙)".
>
> **Ai Hua**, Taipei, 21.01.2017

In the complex, mutable and liable decision-making process which leads to *e-commerce* formation and development, affects, affections and old feelings of reciprocity and mutuality are re-mobilised and re-actualised. When they are summed to a good use of social resources, they can importantly sustain business and economic activities. Firstly, they enable the emergence of the new markets, connecting the seller (Ai Hua in Taiwan, Taipei) and the buyers, *i.e.* the clients (the sisters in China, Shenzhen). Secondly, they represent a privileged channel to information sharing and to constant updates as for local consumers' preferences and wishes. By the same token, they are a vector of trust since social and emotional relationships have been pre-established during previously migratory paths. Thirdly, they provide moral support while exploring an unknown and unfamiliar novel economic activity, sustaining its success.

Through a renegotiation of labour, and a reformulation of labour relations, Ai Hua set an innovative form of translocal entrepreneurship. Crucially, such a re-negotiation occurs on and it is supported by the de-materialised level of digital platforms (Lallement 2018**).**

Cross-border entrepreneurship enabled Ai Hua to secure herself with a fix income, which was what she needed to face the precarity and vulnerability which characterised her situation in Taiwan. Not only, she overcame an initial "trapped-in-migration life" -*yuangong*- positioning. Also, she creatively proved her capacity to turn into a translocal, *glocal* boss, mobilising old commercial and trading knowledge with a newly-acquired understanding of Taiwanese market. For instance, a box of milk powder (*naifen*) in Taiwan costs about 1000 NTD[112] (200 RMB). To this price, 60 RMB must be added as for sending fees, so that the final price of a 2 kg milk powder box is of 260 RMB. Ai Hua resold it for 300 RMB, earning 40 RMB per box. Gradually, her market grew and this not only in terms of products she could sell –from milk powder to cosmetics, facial masks or food provisions- but also of clients, or of potential clients.

[112] *Xin Taibi* 新臺幣, New Taiwanese Dollars, the currency of Taiwan.

As Kloosterman and Rath (2001) have observed, the opportunity and constraint structure needs to be declined on a translocal, or transnational level. Ai

and institutional constraints. Their level of participation within transborder affectional virtual communities is exceptionally high and long-lasting, as their emotional bonds are particularly ramified.

1.3. Navigation skills, virtual circuits and collective *daigou*

Inside this new, creative, virtual, cross-border markets, a low-qualified, previous factory worker little by little developed metaphorical *navigation skills* and *logistic competences*. The former are composed of translocal markets' knowledge and the capacity to make good use of social, economic and emotional resources for navigation amongst different economic circuits, lands for business and cross-border commercial activities. The latter are a heterogeneous, compound but coherent ensemble of human-technical capacities, logistic knowledge, and relational abilities which sustain translocal economic activities' development.

Through creativity, inventiveness, and the different forms of negotiation and arrangements, step by step, Ai Hua learnt the functioning of the trading activity. Firstly, she realised how to make good use of the differentials between the country of origin and the country and the country of arrival (Portes 2003; Schmoll 2006), in terms of taxation gap, legal limitations of import, desired goods, preferred commodities, or lack of products in a specific place or market.

Secondly, thanks to transnational social resources who represented a crucial channel to information, she understood how to arbitrate with the different actors implicated in her business – trading companies, postal services, sellers and buyers, and multiplied her commercial opportunities. Not only she employed properly her cross-border social capital, but she also improved her capacity to communicate, to negotiate and to orchestrate with heterogeneous sets of people. *Laobanniang*'s entrepreneurial careers are flourishing because they can translate the plurality of tangible and intangible skills and competences acquired during pluri-migrations into concrete petit capitalistic practices. What Ai

social relations in Taiwan. Networks serve as conduits for information, for mitigating problems of resource management and of practical control over commercial transactions. Here again, networking was made simultaneously on the physical and virtual level. Emotions largely interplayed within the mobilisation of social resources. The discriminatory labour market in Taiwan, summed to a disqualifying status both within her family and the Taiwanese society sustained Ai

married. As soon as she got out of the flight in Taoyuan Airport, she felt astonished, melancholic and sad:

> "I thought Taiwan was heaven, but as soon as I arrived, I realised it was earth, full of sand and roots, earth even deeper than Humen[113]".

After spending six months at the *merci* of her mother-in-law, taking care of children and of the housework, she realised that she was getting "mad", as she argued. She felt imprisoned, lonely, and nostalgic. She did not know who to talk with, she had no friends. One day, she went looking for her first job, within a small local factory:

> "we are Chinese, we cannot do anything else, we can only look for a little, undeclared job in the factory. They [the Taiwanese] do not want us, even some factories refuse to employ us, they ask for Taiwanese I

different situated and situational registers, but leading to a same condition of dissatisfaction and discontent.

Nevertheless, Xiao Xue did not give up reflecting on her own individual condition and on her life objectives. Certainly, negative emotions of sadness, of disillusionment, of tiredness, of weakness could have jeopardized the development of reflective resources sustaining the capacity of overturning a doubly disqualifying situation. However, such negative emotions entered the sphere of a collective sharing with her newly acquired "sisters". When negative emotions meet with social and affectional resources they can be individually and collectively turned into new emotional resources, vectors of transition and transformation.

Thereby, Xiao Xue realised that the months spent suffering at work had not been vain: there she could meet many other Chinese "sisters", who provided her with what she called a "familiar and family feeling" (*qinqi de ganjue* 親戚的感覺). They used to share experiences, to complain and cry together, but also to daily support each other. After one year, one "sister",

Not only *e-commerce* corresponded to a tangible way of earning money, but it was also an important practice for new professional socialisations, helping women to improve themselves in terms of skills and competences acquisition, as well as enlarging their contacts and networks. It also represented a powerful antidote to solitude, home-sickness and melancholia: a way to gain autonomy with respect to the marital regimes and to the familiar sphere.

What Xiao Xue qualifies of *daigou* 代購 *–online* bulk buying- turns her into *paodangbang* -"suitcase carrier"- a "purchasing agent", an "itinerant trader". This is the third *figure of navigation* I identify. This position requires her to perform new social, economic and affectional inter-actions with a huge ensemble of relationships, on a digital, transnational level, inside the new circuits of the virtual market. In the frame of the "rules of exchange" (Fligstein 2001) previously set by Ai

professional career, work and labour have taken for women an ambivalent social and emotional significance. On the one hand, labour and the labour experiences represented a central pillar for the making of modern and autonomous subjectivities, seeking for recognition and independence through employment and occupational status. Notwithstanding, on the other hand, labour regimes have represented, in China first and in Taiwan later, ordeals of suffering, of tiredness, of fatigue, of disqualification and humiliation.

When an unfair and segmented labour market is contested in Taiwan and virtual markets are creatively forged, labour, its meaning and its *praxis* are socially and emotionally transformed. Labour becomes not only social (Grannovetter 1994; Lallement 2007), but also "emotional" (

business draw a picture of global flows of people, capitals, commodities, but also practices and emotions, which are accelerating, and complicating contemporary lives in an unprecedent way (Urry 2007). It also shows the possible, potential and novel reconfiguration of local and translocal collaborations**,** thus the reconfiguration of sociality and labour relations. However, the causes and effects of such increasingly pervasive systems and processes of mobility are closely entwined with institutional regimes enabling and constraining movement.

Women and commodities' mobility, on the physical and virtual level, take place between the highly monitored borders of national states, which deploy administrated controls of immigration and commerce. Cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan do not only influence migratory policies, but they also concern trading agreements and business opportunities (Hsiao 2018). New material and immaterial borders (Balibar and Wallerstein 1988; Agier 2014), new spaces of control appear and influence the rhythm and the tempos of movement, which can be stopped, slowed down, and transformed into immobility and immobilisation. As shown by Steiner and Trespeuch (2014) national states play an important role both in supporting and in sanctioning markets and markets' operations. Markets are social and political fluid and changeable constructions (Fligstein 2001). The conflict and collusion between national systems of governance and the flexible structure of global financial markets produces a growing precarity and uncertainty of markets. In this sense, the political standoff and the ongoing conflicts between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan are not without effects of the structure, the functioning and the level of openness of the cross-border markets.

Starting from 2016, borders' controls and limitations for import/export between the two countries increased. The 2016 election in Taiwan[115], the decline of the Pro-Chinese Nationalist Party (KMD) and the ascension of the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) also played a role in strengthening borders' controls and commercial regulations (Rigger 2018: 144).

[115] The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP- *minjin dang* 民進黨) arrived at power in 2016, after the election of the new President Tsai-Ing Wen. The political shift immediately led to the renegotiation of economic relations with China and the Chinese Communist Party.

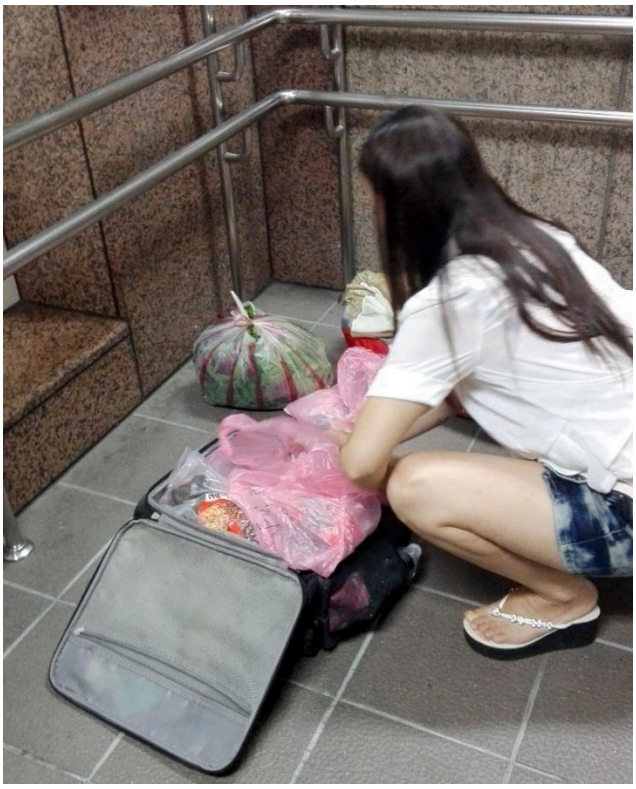

Figure 33 At Taoyuan airport, Xiao Xue takes some food provision out of her luggage to give it to Ai Hua. "Contested" goods such as spicy meat, chicken feer and some medical herbs were coming from China, carried inside Xiao Xue's suitcase. Taoyuan. March 2017.

In this respect, in 2018, while I was in Europe, far from my field sites in Taiwan, I received a *WeChat* message by Xiaoniu, thirty years old, Shandong native, living in Taipei and carrying on cross-strait *e-commerce*. Through her words, I could feel her stress and anxiety as for her business, since the trading company based in Danshui (Taipei) she used to cooperate with suddenly stopped deliveries. The virtual conversation I had with Xiaoniu elucidates such dilemma between State's borders regulations and women's translocal virtual business practices:

(First part of the conversation with Xiaoniu, abstracts translated):

> "[…] Last year in June (2017), the political factor made the transactions more and more risky and precarious. I remember it was the period of strong political standoff in terms of cross-border relations. Then, the logistics and logistic companies started talking with me about risks, they did not help me to transfer products anymore, and the products I sent back home were already one week late. The price shifted from 180 to 220 NTD, they said it was because of the risks, it was dangerous for them. They refused to send some products, for example some dried pineapple. From that moment on, Chinese customs required us to write down the content of the boxes we were selling […] and limited imports […]"

(Second part of the conversation, abstracts translated):

“everything got more expensive, and the requests and restrictions increased. I had to find another trading company […] but now it is getting harder and harder […]”

May 2018: **Xiaoniu**, Taiwan (Taipei)- **Beatrice**, Germany (Tübingen)

Figure 34 WeChat conversation between Xiaoniu (in Taipei) and I (in Germany).

In this context of instability, precarity and growing regulations of the import and export processes, the *daigou* practices developed by women become riskier and more uncertain. Trading companies distinguish between two kinds of products: "special products" (*teshu huo* 特殊貨), more expensive and riskier when passing through the customs (*hai guan* 海關), such as facial masks, cosmetics, medicines, and milk powder, and "food provision" (*shi pin* 食品), such as tea, pineapple cakes and candies. Transporters stopped trading "special products" for fear of penalties. Sending processes started taking longer. Products could be suddenly and inexplicably stopped for few weeks before expenditure. Therefore, women had to develop new strategies within the restrictive apparatus of States' regulations to navigate the disjunctures between political landscapes and the shifting opportunities of global trade (Ong 1999: 3). For them, this new configuration implicates imagining, inventing and re-inventing new *logistics*, which generate novel systems, routes and travel practices transporting objects from place to place.

2.2. Contesting markets, transgressing borders

The creative ways, the strategies and the resources Chinese women mobilised to enter obstructed local labour markets in Taiwan demonstrate their capacity to negotiate with risks, with precarious situations and with institutional constraints. Opportunities emerge from actors' capacity to aspire (Appadurai 1999, 2004), which, as proved before, constitutes a powerful fuel to action. Committed to earn money and to achieve their projects, *navigation skills* and *logistic competences*, together with transnational social and emotional networks constitute the pivot around which new logistics are re-invented, alternative roads are opened, and *new geographies of globalisation* (Sassen 2006a) are drawn. Movement and mobility are achieved with difficulty. They require the application and the constant re-arrangement of what I qualified before of *navigation skills* in the physical and virtual different social worlds.

Visibly, motion is not inevitable. Women generate and navigate through a fragile, changing and precarious set of trails which bend their way and then other ways with the exigencies of situations and circumstances, requiring efforts in terms of social and spatial arrangements. This new logistics has its own geography, which might be fluid, liquid, multiple and polyform. Undeniably, the proliferation of global networks of virtual applications and *online* transactions, together with the increasing digitalisation of economic practices produce new dynamics of re-scaling (Sassen 2006b: 98), which can potentially cut across the institutional and administrative dimension of territories and of national

states' borders. Business is "mixedly embedded" in economic, but also in political and institutional processes and structures (Kloosterman and Rath 2001). This situation concurrently generates new constraints to movement, new frontiers and obstacles, but also new opportunities of challenge, transgression and transcendence of different and heterogeneous types of walls and barricades (Brown 2010).

Since the beginning of 2016, Ai Hua and Xiao Xue started facing trading problems. Tthe commodities they sent from Taiwan to China were being "contested" (Zelizer 1994; Satz 2010) at the borders by the authorities. The intensification of import and export regulations made a certain number of goods and products forbidden from trade, or at least limited in quantities. The growing contempt and suspicion at the borders strengthened controls. Women, acting as *paodanbang*, with their luggage full of milk powder and cosmetics, were subjected to security checks and expensive fines while crossing the Strait. Trading companies started refusing orders. Ai Hua explained:

> "My clients were waiting, I could not run my business from Taiwan to China anymore through postal service and I was losing time, money and clients. I needed to find a solution and I asked to my friend

Feeling humiliated and exploited, she rioted against her husband and refused to work there anymore, she described her life like the one of a "cheap prostitute who was obliged to serve beer and *gaoliang* 高粱[116] to disgusting clients who touched my ass […] I had to stay awake until late with my husband and the drunk card players […] it was an awful life, I had not come to Taiwan to be the slave of my husband […] So, one day I said 'it is enough!', 'I do not want to do this anymore'". At the same time, she urgently needed money for herself, for her daughter and for the remittances she had to send to her rural family to Sichuan. Deprived of the right to work, the little jobs in the informal sector of the labour market did not enable her to earn money enough: "sometimes I helped to clean the floor of the restaurant in front of my place, sometimes I washed the dishes here and there, I sold some stuff…this sort of little jobs… but I did not get much money, and I needed money", she explained.

The contingent necessity of income for survival, together with socially and situationally constructed emotions of unfulfillment, dissatisfaction and disillusionment regarding her current living and working condition supported her project-making and sustained the mobilisation of knowledge, in terms of memories of the past. While looking for a way to secure herself with an income and to negotiate with a job within the condition of precarity and vulnerability she was subjected to, Huang Jing thought about her previous migratory and professional experiences in China. Before working *dagong* in Cantonese factories, she had been employed as a maid by a rich family in Chengdu, Sichuan province, China. She remembered that people were fascinated by Japanese dogs, and she heard the family members discussing several times about how to get dogs from Japan, which was rather difficult because of import-export regulations among the two countries. One day, walking on the street of her neighborhood, she saw "a lovely and furry dog" (*keai maohuhu de chongwu gou* 可愛毛乎乎的寵物狗), as she said. Fascinated, she started a discussion with the dog's owner, who explained to her that the dog came from Japan and that, despite an expensive price, he bought it easily in Taipei.

By re-mobilising both her former contacts in Guangdong province, composed of her colleagues of the factory, and new social capital in Taiwan, Huang Jing set an illegal trading of dogs between Taipei and Chengdu. She called on some smugglers she could meet in the gambling house, who enabled dogs' movement from Penghu Island[117] to Shenzhen. Huang Jing was in charge of negotiating the dogs'

[116] Taiwanese rice alcohol.
[117] Penghu and Jinmen are two Taiwanese islands situated in the middle of the Taiwan Strait. See the definition of the "Three-mini links" in the following chapter.

prices and getting in touch with her social connections in Shenzhen, who helped to transport dogs to Sichuan.

Legal restrictions, borders' controls and the morally contested dimension of this market (Steiner 2005) largely interplay within the orchestration of market's functioning and the strategies imagined by the actors to contest it. Digital and virtual marketplaces involve a multiplicity of actors. Those are the sellers, the producers, the clients; but also the administrative agents, trading companies, smugglers, tourist guides or *paodanbang.* The tempos of economic exchanges, of trading and of commodities' circulations become greatly variable. From Taiwan to China, *via* Penghu or Jinmen islands, dogs could smoothly circulate, but they could also suddenly stop, rotate, move back, and later re-move forward, according to the monitoring of borders, to the porosity of frontiers, to the vaporousness of barricades (Brown 2010), as well as the diverse opportunities of passage which emerge on the road . Thus, the liability of circumstances, the possibility to negotiate with structural effects, the emergence of new trails and roads are all crucial determinants in economic itineraries.

The exchange device reveals to be rather complex and articulated. However, despite accelerated or slowed down tempos, its translocal and virtual functioning sustains a possibility of transgression of trade regulations and, more broadly, of borders. But there is something more that asks for attention. Economic processes, commodities' itineraries, trails and movements are also embedded into actors' biographies. Their directions, orientations, and speed vary according to individuals' life patterns, bifurcations, turning points and emotional dynamics too. For instance, after running this business for two years, Huang Jing sentiments of guiltiness towards the dogs and the performance of an illegal activity grew. She decided to abandon this business and converted to Buddhism. She was employed as a maid by a local Taiwanese family, and she recited mantras while cleaning the floor to expiate her sins and purify her soul.

acquired and newly capitalised social and emotional resources took place. With the help of some previous colleagues and co-villagers living in Guangzhou -where she had previously worked- as well as of the Cantonese owner of a shop she had been employed in few years ago, she imported Chinese clothes to Taiwan, that she sells to her Chinese "sisters" who visit her beauty salon, or through some *WeChat* groups. She often moves back to Guangdong province to verify the products and to negotiate the prices, as she used to do before to Sichuan, when she was running the dogs' business.

Moreover, in April 2017, something curious happened. At Canton airport (Guangdong province), Huang Jing met a Chinese master calligrapher. With him, she organised a new business with him of calligraphies and Buddhist statues. So now, within her lodging, in the room adjacent the massage salon, she opened a little temple, where she venerates a little Buddhist statue, imported from

Figure 36 Huang Jing and her clients after the ceremony of blessing she had set for them in the temple inside her lodgings. I was offered by Huang Jing the calligraohy painting with the Dragon (imported from China, Xi'an, from where the lao yeye - the divinity- also comes from). Nanshijiao (Taipei). April 17th 2017.

Figure 37 Huang Jing's beauty centre inside her lodgings in Nanshijiao. The room for the beauty treatments and massage where she works is adjacent to the little temple she performs in as a Buddhist nun. Nanshijiao (Taipei). April 17th 2017.

Her sentiments of guiltiness for having cooperated with smuggles in setting and developing dogs' commerce sustained, as I have explained,

commodities (Satz 2010) were dogs, nowadays, the structure of offer and demand has changed. Thereby, Huang Jing needed to update her repertory of knowledge and her practices.

In such manner, this imposed to Huang Jing a re-actualisation of the type of commodities commercialised, which shifted from dogs to expensive and rare fish and salamanders (*wawa yu* 娃娃魚) imported from China and re-sold in Taiwan. What might not be evident to understand by a Western reader is the rationale of such bizarre commerce. According to the traditional medicine in China, some species of fish and salamanders have specific beneficial properties, especially in terms of skin care. Both in China and in Taiwan, the hunting of these animals is forbidden by law. However, in China, numerous cases of poaching have emerged so far. These products are rare and expensive. They are had to get, to transport and to commercialise, especially if they are alive. In her occasional trading, Huang Jing follows the same logistics are management as for the dog. However, in her explanation, I am quite sure she kept some elements tacit and secret:

> "When the fish arrives to Taiwan alive, it needs a place to stay [...] So, I put them in my bath-tub and wait for the clients to pick them up […] They need to stay fresh, otherwise they die […] If it dies, it loses its value, since the benefits are maximised just after the killing […] if you freeze them… well, that's a pity (*bing xia lai, jiu tai kexile* 冰下來就太可惜了)".
>
> **Huang Jing**, Thirty-six years old, Sichuan native, Nanshijiao (Taipei), 21.04.2017.

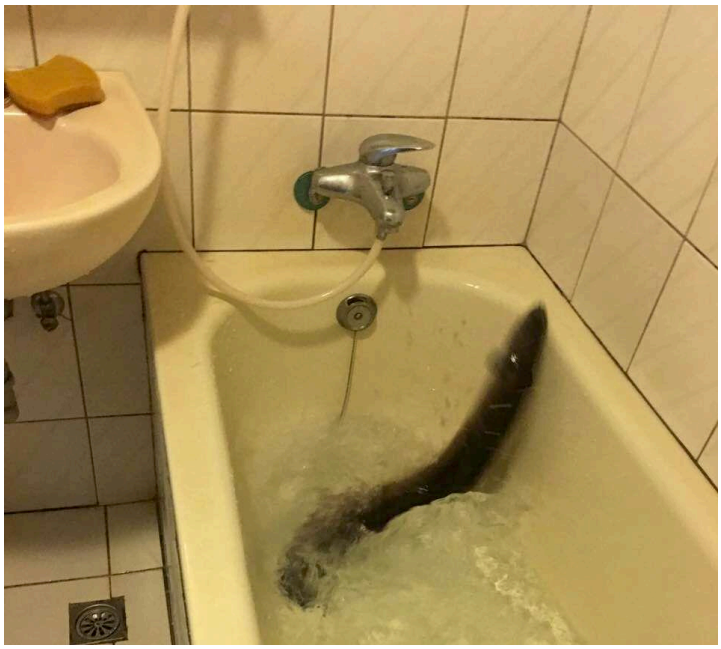

Figure 38 Fish and salamander stocked in Huang Jing's bath-tub, inside her lodgings, waiting for the clients to collect them. Nanshijiao (Taipei). April 2017. Once, Huang Jing killed one to prepare some facial masks.

The heterogeneous, moving and mobile examples I have provided so far suggest that markets represent simultaneously material, social and emotional fabrics, hence directly connected to social, material and emotional worlds constructed by the actors.

Negotiation, money bargain, extra fees, corruption and emotions largely interplay within the exchange and market device. As stated by Steiner (2005), interpersonal agreement is not created in a social *vacuum*: "the contested market contains many social microstructures, rules and norms that frame interactions so that transactions can take place" (2005: 205). After she expanded her market, Ai

In this regard, it clearly emerges how Ai

production of social, economic and emotional activities, promotes a new synthesis between a *lex informatica* and *lex mercatoria* (Reidenberg 1998), to which I add a third set of norms: a *lex adfecta*[120].

Within this Cross-strait group, Taiwanese products -milk-powder, cosmetics and facial masks- and Chinese goods –bras, chicken feet, underclothes, and spices- are commercialised. The alternative circuits of business are composed of emotional logistics, transgressed borderlands, innovative trails, surfing all at once through the interstitial spaces connecting territories and borders. As pointed out by Bayart (1994: 7), "the transformations of market economy often take unusual roads". Those low-value goods and commodities transit by, through and across the Taiwan Strait on *back-roads*: an alternative set of routes, made in little invisible microcosms, on the physical level of hidden containers on trucks, cargos and ships, or on the virtual level of the transactions on *WeChat.*

Through this *sui generis*, transgressive market *device* women experiment new social worlds, which transcend physical borders, being projected on the screens of the self-phones through which instantaneous transactions are produced. The investigation of the transits of objects and people leads to question the infrastructure in which logistics, trades, transactions, and more broadly, the market *devices* are co-produced. Roads (Harvey and Knox 2015), ports, waterways (Carse 2012), but also databases (Bowker 2005; Castells 2006) are examples of *infrastructures*. They are not limited to a mere technical dimension, but culturally, socially and economically embedded (Jensen and Morita 2015). In this respect, Larkin (2013) has defined infrastructures as "objects that create grounds on which other objects operate" (2013: 329). According to him, infrastructures are not only things, but also, and especially, relations between objects and subjects. From such relations, the possibility for social material and emotional fabrics through and inside infrastructures emerges.

Drawing on this conceptualisation, I consider here a *back-road* as one amongst the fundamental infrastructure(s) of these new markets, *sui generis economies* and capitalism. Furthermore, by following Jensen and Morita's reflection about the ontology of infrastructures (2015), *back-roads* represent *infrastructural experiments*, which open a large field of possibility. This does not only concern markets, exchanges and trades, but also new social, emotional relationships and inter-actions: "infrastructures hold the capacity to make new forms of sociality, remaking landscapes, defining novel forms of politics, reconfiguring subjects all at once" (Jensen and Morita 2015: 83). Within this framework, the expression of *back-road* takes the creative significance of social, economic and

[120] The "technological law", the merchant law", and the "law of affections".

emotional practices, made in little, hyper-local sections, more or less visible social worlds, simultaneously, instantaneously interconnected by the everyday life practices of the actors which make them possible.

What is more, the topographies and the morphologies of the trails, of the journeys and of the logistics suggest the floating, changing and uncertain dimension of *back-roads.* The complexity and intricacy of the *device* in which transactions are imagined and developed supports their mutable and precarious substance. According to the emergence of new opportunities and constraints, to the lability of local situations and distant circumstances, *back-roads* can suddenly bifurcate, rotate, move back or redirect. Since geographies are made of biographies and biographies are embedded in geographies, these routes and situations co-produce and co-perform women's lives and the conditions in which they can be lived and imagined.

Hypermobility and *simultaneity* are the characterising features of the economies that women produce: "the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space" (

socialisation among people: hyper-locality is declared. The repertories of social, economic, cultural and emotional resources which are fundamental to global economic activities are not automatically inscribed in the global, as advanced by Saskia Sassen (1995, 2006b) in her analysis of “the global city”. On the contrary, they are deeply integrated within the local.

Locality and local production are the first place where social, material and emotional fabrics are co-produced. Looking at Ai

global production, every day, from Monday to Sunday from 5 pm until late at night. Let me elucidate my purpose by another example.

May 12th 2017. 6 pm. Taipei, night market of Zhonghe.

Ai Hua invited me to go and taste some noodles -suanla fen- and I went there with Heqin who was also curious: being from Chongqing, she wanted to make sure that the taste was traditional. When we arrived, finding Ai

Figure 40 Inside Ai Hua's garage, the products imported from China, for instance the suanla fen she sells at the market, and all the goods ready for export are stocked. Zhonghe (Taipei). June 2018.

I remember myself having bought two huge boxes of Chinese rice crackers (*Wangzi xuebing* 旺仔雪饼) I offered to

Figure 41 Chicken feet, milk powder, spicy meat, traditional Sichuanese food imported from China and stocked inside Wenfeng's lodgings. Taipei. February 1st 2017.

Globalisation, performed inside global markets and/or produced in the hyper-local sections of people's everyday life practices turns to be an irregular process, highly embedded in *the local* (Appadurai 1999; Raulin 2000; Sassen 2006a). Ai

and can be discerned and detected thanks to her life lived inside locality, and the daily exchanges she has with her “sisters”.

Two other vivid examples of this imbricated relationship between global and local are illustrated both by the colourful, fluorescent bras sold by Fujin in Nanshijiao and the cosmetics sold by Nina in Banqiao.

Manufactured in China, Shenzhen inside the textile factory Fujin was previously working in, the bras -and, broadly, the lingerie she commercialises- are sent to Taiwan by Fujin’s previous boss, and the co-workers she kept in touch with through the application *WeChat* after arriving in Taiwan. Goods and commodities intended for international trade are projected to the global market, and bifurcate on back-roads to Taipei, where they are collected by Fujin and her business partners to be resold in her hyper-local shop or to the community of “sisters” situated in the virtual world of *WeChat.*

Fujin’s shop, Ai

in the labour market too. She alternated the performance of several professions in little street restaurants, shopping-malls, street markets.

Often, she had been fired by her boss. In other cases, she abandoned her jobs by herself since she considered the salary too low or the working hours too long. Despite the multiple, disqualifying labour experiences, Nina succeeded saving some money. Concurrently, she attended some vocational classes in the field of cosmetics organised by the Taiwanese government, and she earned a pension during the attendance. Improving her skills and competences in the field of aesthetic and cosmetics, Nina decided to develop her own economic activity. The pattern and the mechanism she followed are not much different from Fujin's ones.

Through the commercialisation of Taiwanese products to China and the import of Chinese cosmetics in Taiwan, she has opened her business: a beauty centre (*meirong yuan* 美容院), where she put into practice the art of *meixiu* 美秀, *i.e.* the eyebrow treatment she learnt during vocational training. Her entrepreneurial activity is produced and performed at the cross road between physical and virtual practices. By calling on her social and affectional networks in China, in Guangdong province where she used to work before, she has a plurality of cosmetics, facial masks, lip glosses commercialised between the two sides of the Taiwan strait. From a *yuangong,* like Fujin or Xiao Hua, Nina has also become a *laobanniang*- a "*glocal* boss".

The strong emotional sufferings and feelings of abandonment, of loneliness, of desperation she experienced in Taiwan were not without any impact in her business creation and performance. Nina explained how disconsolate, resourceless, and isolated she felt during the first months of her stay in Taiwan. During her plural professional experiences, as well as inside some *WeChat* groups, she could meet several "sisters", who were sharing a similar condition. In this sense, after opening her beauty centre,

lip glosses and make-up. They have become partners and they do also invest time and money in the activity.

Moreover, and not less importantly, similarly to Jin Jin's dance classes, or Weilian's cooking sessions,

I followed her to Shulin, in the suburbs of Taipei, and we met Xiao Xiao inside a little garage not far from the train station. Xiao Xiao had a job proposal for her as a seller of clothes imported from Fuzhou (Fujian Province), where Xiao Xiao had previously been working.

After migrating to Taiwan, Xiao Xiao kept contact with some co-villagers who still sell clothes at the wholesale markets (pifa 批發) in Fuzhou. Thus, she re-actualised her previous social networks of co-villagers in China, who send the clothes to her from Fujian to Taiwan. To evade taxation, Xiao Xiao decided not to open a shop, and to sell the goods through the WeChat groups of Chinese migrant women, while stocking them inside a rather messy garage. In addition to selling clothes, Xiao Xiao also trades Chinese traditional medicines, such as pills to treat osteoporosis (guzhishusong 骨質酥鬆), Sichuanese plums against constipation (bianmi 便秘) and some typical home-made spicy sauce (la jiang 辣醬) made by her mother. To run this second import business, she calls on networks of co-villagers in Leshan (Sichuan), her hometown, who send the products to Fuzhou, where they are collected by previous colleagues, who send them to Taoyuan Airport (Taipei). Now, Xiao Xiao needed Zhang Jing to explore and open a new market of milk-powder and cosmetics from Taipei to Xiamen, where she had a friend willing to open a shop of make-up and cosmetics. Moreover, Xiao Xiao cousin also lived in Xiamen and he was ready to help to collect food provisions -milk powder- and take care of the redistribution in Sichuan.

This snapshot illustrates, once more, the overlap between biographies and geographies. Individual biographical and migratory paths and the social and emotional capitals capitalised during migration merge with the trails, paths and journeys of the objects and commodities commercialised in the physical and virtual worlds. Concurrently, it illuminates how women, taking Ai Hua as an example, can ingeniously open and amplify new markets according to their own transnational networks of "sisters", previous colleagues, friends and family members. Networks reveal to be the necessary condition for both the production and the reproduction of these economies. They generate complex and enduring connections across space and time, between people and things. At the same time, they are the constitutive basis of the economy, which, without these dense spiderwebs of transnational social connections, could not exist.

noticed by Callon (1998, 2002), markets can evolve, diversify and differentiate according to a "reflexive action" (2002: 212) undertaken by the actors. Actors continuously question and re-define their organisation, arrangements, physical and virtual anchorages, *i.e.* the rules of the game. They can take hybrid and diverse shapes, according to the heterogeneity of products and services commercialised, the variety of the actors implied, the nature of the resources invested and the paths they go through.

The markets circumnavigated by Ai Hua prove to be flexible, rotating and moving: the similarity in terms of migratory paths and resources among Chinese migrants, as well as their capacity to acquire new *navigation skills* enable them to multiply economic opportunities. Commodities, goods and products thus represent very complex social forms (Appadurai 2000), associated to the production of new knowledge, savoir-faire and imagination during their commercialisation process -the *navigational skills*. New markets constantly emerge.

A huge, heterogeneous variety of products can be sold thanks to innovative, creative logics of negotiation and exchange among people situated in different spaces and places -the *poles* of the economies. The poles constitute both the starting and the ending point of the economic circuit. Their plural nature derives from the imbrication between individuals' biographies and the geographies of the objects' trails. Thus, the poles of the economies also reveal to be multiple, and potentially endless. As markets grow according to the number of actors implied, the social and emotional resources women invest in the development of the economy strongly influence the emergence of new poles of connection and interconnection among the translocal and transborder sites. In this respect, I borrow Roulleau-Berger's illuminating expression (2009; 2016) to qualify these transnational networked economies of *multipolar,* since they start from and they reach different poles, which are declined on spatial -physical or virtual-, social but also emotional levels.

Drawing on Zhang Jing and

actors. In this regard, Eva Illouz's (2018) outstanding analysis reveals to be helpful here. She has convincingly pointed how "commodities produce emotions and how emotions are turned into commodities" (Illouz 2018: 8).

The products commercialised by women certainly correspond to their knowledge and awareness of market's demands and consumers' preferences.

origin of migrant women and re-sold in Taiwan.

Figure 42 Rural-to-urban-oriented economy: the starting point is in Chinese countryside in inner rural provinces and the final destination is in Taiwan. An intermediate stop in the Chinese city (for instance Shenzhen) for re-distribution often occurs.

b. Urban-to-urban-oriented economies of ambition

They cover two under-patterns and have a doubled orientation: from the Chinese city to the Taiwanese city (1) or from the Taiwanese city to the Chinese city (2).

But this is not all. Other different emotions are produced in these cross-border business practices. When Taiwanese products are sold in China, or Chinese commodities are imported to Taiwan, women manifest feelings of ambition and their seek for individual satisfaction. They prove to themselves and to the others their capacity to do business, which is, in their imaginary, associated to upward social mobility, hence to an improved social status. Low-educated proletarian in China before, and (re)subjected to social, economic and moral disqualification in Taiwan later, economic activities sustain new self-esteem, related to the figure of the entrepreneur, what Chinese migrants use to call *laobanniang,* the "boss" of themselves, to quote Ai

backwardness. Hence, these specific products are exported to Chinese countryside to secure local people with better life quality, health conditions, hygiene and food safety, which characterise the urban, metropolitan living environments they now reside in. Wenfeng, Xiao Xiao, Ai Hua among others often indicated their care, preoccupation and even worry for parents or relatives getting old, deprived of high-quality food provisions, health services and medicines.

Differently from the orange, fluorescent bra, the fancy clothes or the glamorous cosmetics, these goods do not only embody a modern status, but they also vehiculate sentiments of care and preoccupation for beloved people who do not share the same advantages of the Taiwanese living environment. Networks of fellow villagers living in Chinese coastal cities (mainly Shenzhen or Xiamen, where there are international ports) are being called on for the redistribution in the inner rural areas. The trails of products can thus bifurcate in the Chinese city and stop before being re-arranged for a new path towards the countryside. The track can shift to *urban to urban-urban to rural oriented economy.*

Figure 44 Urban-to-rural-oriented economy: the starting point is ithe Taiwanese city and the final destination is in rural areas of Chinese inner provinces. Here again, an intermediate stop in the Chinese huge coastal cities for redistribution is likely to take place.

Despite these common patterns that I have identified, this cartography is still far from being fulsome and remains incomplete: it cannot be complete. When the scale of movements is endlessly increasing and pluralising, when instantaneous *online* connections propagate, when the number of actors implied in trading expand, it cannot be exhaustive. When landings are uncertain since stopping points, red traffic lights proliferate, and roads bifurcate, mapping the multiplicity and the complexity of *the global* reveals its own confines. Globalised social worlds are suspended in movement. Movement is

continually coming into being. Bridges, interconnections, acrobatics, and the very ontological dimension of movement itself point out the limits of scratching a map and a rigid cartography. Yet, *transnational multipolar economies* must be conceived as a *constellation of points* –composed of times, spaces, goods, people and emotions- all instantaneously and simultaneously interconnected. They draw complex and complexifying chains of translocal emotions and affections which build bridges among sites, people and feelings. Far from being linear, these economies are highly bifurcated and intricated.

Journeys, movements and trails are best understood as "unfolding possibilities, involving speculative way-finding and serendipity" (Ingold 2000: 241). Rather than fixed and rigid, economies make their way step by step. Their mobile shape, unilinear orientation, unstable direction and the heterogeneity of goods, products and affections carried submit them to constant processes of metamorphosis. This derives from the complexity of the opportunities and the constraints of the situations and of the social landscapes. Firstly, emotions motivate both consumption (Ilouz 2009, 2018) and trading processes, hence economic activities. However, since they are socially constructed, they reveal to be temporary and situational. They can change over time.

Concomitantly, the transgressive dimension of such economies and the "contested" nature of commodities (Satz 2010) make the tempos of objects' movements unpredictable. This might be even truer in the frame of the multiplication of frontiers and borders' controls. The rhythm of globalisation and of the trading patterns reveals to be variable and uncertain (Brown 2010). For this reason, these transnational, transversal economies are rather *polymorph.* For instance, a *urban-to-rural-oriented economy* can turn into a *urban-to-urban-to-rural-oriented* economy, as products' displacements can suddenly stop, rotate, move back before moving forward. A *urban-to-urban-oriented economy* can mutate into a *urban-to-urban-to-rural-oriented* economy, and so can happen to the other patterns, which are potentially endless. In other words, inside the physical and virtual worlds, multipolar economies intersect complex, translocal and multiplying mobilities and roamings. Thus, the core of the question is not related the number of poles, or the directions they take, but their crossway, which takes place on a deterritorialized dimension.

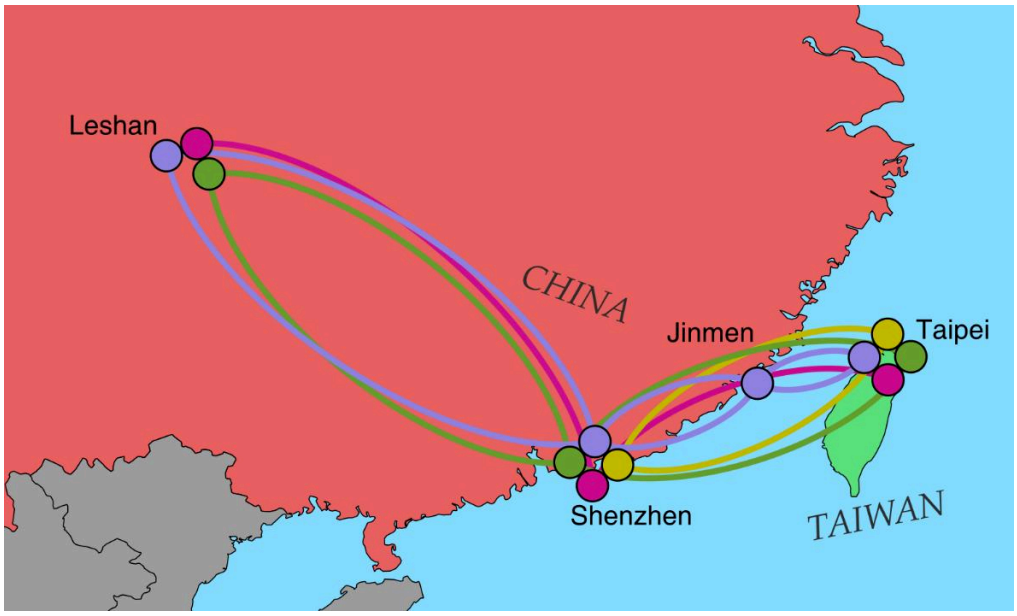

Figure 45 Multipolar economies take the shape of a constellation of points: economic circuits and trails mix and merge, they bifurcate, complexify and pluralise.

Multipolar economies are internally networked, partially digital, and multi-oriented, both to local and global markets and between the two. They are generated at the very intersection between physical and virtual spaces and they occupy a strategic geography. This geography is partially deterritorialized, partially territorialized. It cuts across borders and connects a variety of multiple points, represented by physical and virtual locations, people, norms, and emotions. Spatial rigid anchorages disappear (Tarrius 1989), and new physical and virtual, local and global arrangements emerge: the result is heterogeneity.

Beyond these considerations, I would like to stress another crucial element, which indirectly calls back to my introductory reflections about hegemonic categorisation processes and the construction of arbitrary taxonomies which misinterpret the empirical dimension of the situations observed on field sites. In my attempts to delineate a ground-based cartography, I drew on the spatial orientations of the trails and on the emotional attachments and significances attributed to the commodities by the actors involved in the economic activity.

Drawing on empirical evidence, I delimited the terrains of the trails and defined the type of economy according to the ways emotions become socially visible inside these physical and virtual spaces and places. Thusly, I purposely did not categorise the economies according to the nature of the products commercialised. This is because I did not want to produce hierarchies and rather pyramidal and vertical

structures. Let me elucidate my argument by few examples. I could have qualified a *rural to urban oriented economy* of "local to global oriented", but I deliberately did not.

As advanced by Roudomentof (2016), *local* and *global* are not two single and separated realities or substances. On the contrary, they co-exist and they are are co-produced. Several empirical researches and theoretical approaches (Robertson 1995; Raulin 2000; Beck 1999, 2003; Ritzer 2012 among others) have acknowledged that the local is not "outside" the global, since the global is forged by and inside locality, localities. However, what remains questionable is, to put it in Roudomentof's words (2016: 3) that "the local is viewed as depository of communal and social concerns" -what Appadurai (1999) called "culture"- and "the global is often interpreted as the purveyor of corporate transnational capitalism" as in

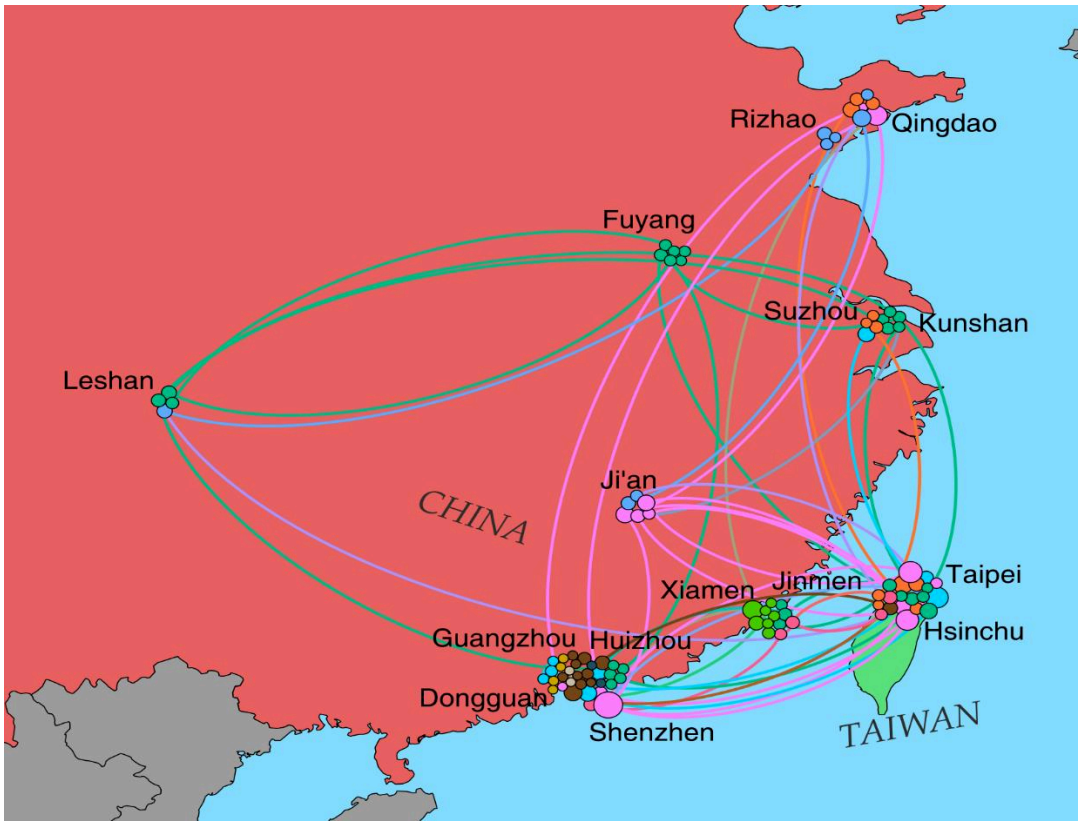

Figure 46 Networked, simultaneous and hypermobile connections of different points -people, locations, emotions- inside a ramified and bifurcated multipolar economy generated from and through the online exchanges within the WeChat group liang'an huxiang daigou 兩岸互相代購.

3. Global and Petit Capitalisms

3.1. New hierarchies and competitions

Throughout my rationale, I have so far shown that, in a context of inegalitarian globalisation, which tends to limit actor's margin of manoeuvre, strengthening exclusion, inequalities and subalternity, migrant women develop weapons to resist and to contest inegalitarian mobility regimes, governmental biopolitics and market's inequalities. I have advanced that when the access to local labour markets is restricted, women can develop a plurality of navigation skills to explore, circumnavigate new markets and produce *sui generis* economies which link the local and the global.

Setting sails through local consumption and global production, they generate alternative circuits of commerce, and generate innovative social, material and emotional fabrics, which contribute to the emergence of an *emotional petit capitalism*, on a translocal level. Heretofore, I attempted to elucidate how subalternity can be "done and undone" through practices of mutual help and performances of affections. Notwithstanding, when entering global, competitive markets, the solidarity bonds can be

threatened and challenged. Circumnavigating new global markets represents a possibility for women to translocally perform mutuality and to enlarge emotional networks of sisters, thus social capital, which is crucial for business development.

products to have them ready for sending. When I asked to Ai Hua the rationale of such functioning, which seemed to be increasingly *vertical* and *pyramidal*, she explained that it was related to the tacit rules of the exchange she had implicitly set:

> "As far as this business is sometimes illegal, because some products cannot be commercialised, or sometimes we simply exceed the quantities allowed, I preferred not to share the names of the trading companies with the other sisters, who are quite inexperienced. I do not want them to get in trouble, I do not want smugglers and companies to get in trouble and, especially, I do not want to get in trouble myself and my daughter".
>
> **Ai Hua**, Taipei, 16.04.2017

What Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao knew was that through what they call a *huoyun* 貨運 (delivery company), products were sent to Jinmen[126] There another local woman, or probably, many other women, who live(s) *in situ* stock them, and manage redistribution via different channels. Being in contact with smugglers and other trading companies both in China, Jinmen, and Taiwan, they know how to have the goods safely arriving to the harbour of Xiamen. Jinmen represented hence an extra pole of the multipolar economy developed by Ai Hua through her WeChat ties: a place which connects the constellations of localities in China and Taiwan. Also, and crucially, the island of Jinmen does not merely represent a pole of the commercial pattern. On the contrary, it is a cardinal logistic site for commodities' transfers and for the negotiation of trails, paths and roads. Exploiting the "poles" presented above, I propose here a graphic representation which includes this "strategic site of the global" (Sassen 1995) represented by Jinmen into the game of translocal commerce.

[126] A Taiwanese island between China and Taiwan. It has been a military fortress and inhabited mainly by fishmen for long time. However, the Chinese Reform of 1979, its geographic and military strategic location turned it into a contested site as for sovereignty and territorial rights by China and Taiwan.

Figure 47 The location of the island of Jinmen inside the multipolar economy set by Ai Hua, Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao.

Jinmen is a place of mystery for Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao. It is the theatre of the unknown, where Ai

felt enthusiastic and highly satisfied in working *with* Ai Hua, as she could improve her social and emotional capitals, earn money and abandon the reproductive labour she daily performed at home, she progressively started suffering as she was no longer working *with* Ai Hua, but *for* Ai Hua. The original tacit, unspoken contract they negotiated, based on an affectional deal of mutuality, knowledge and equal profit-sharing was being brokered by Ai

of capitalistic market (Ong 1999) inside the social, economic, moral and emotional interstitial spaces (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2015) co-produced and co-performed by women.

The affectional logics, which ruled those *sui generis economies* were gradually being subjected to new forms of *marketisation,* a force for monopolistic control rather than equality (Don Kalb 2005: 185), strengthening competition and concurrence in the markets. If markets and trading practices contribute to the constant co-production of social, emotional and material fabrics, they can also generate new disparities and relations of power among networks members (Lallement 2015), thus novel forms of subalternity and subjection among the actors implicated. From new, emotional, affectional socialisations, the professionalisation of *e-commerce* and transnational *daigou* activities generated new inequalities, status hierarchies and forms of (imposed) leadership (Lellement 2015, 2018). This emerging capitalistic competition was changing the nature and the substance of the emotional bond among women. The *elective affinities* were turning into new *dis-affinities*.

All along my reflection, I have assumed the dialectical dimension between aspiration and subalternity, considering the latter as a situational, situated, constructed condition. Apparently static and unsurmountable, the plural repertories of strategic resources women can mobilise reveal its fluid, rotating, progressive and regressive substance. At the same time, being fluid and mobile, subalternity can also be "redone", rising from the ashes like an Arab phoenix, taking different forms.

The puzzle thus turns around the continuities and discontinuities in the dynamic production, reproduction and deconstruction of subalternity: a word that requires *in fine* to be declined at its plural form *subalternities*. Within this tortuous, labyrinthic frame, Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao prove that the *navigational skills* and *logistic competences* newly acquired, together with the re-mobilisation of transnational emotional networks contribute to lessen the new condition of "subalterns of the subalterns" they were -again- trapped in.

3.3. A secret garage

Xiao Xue and Xiao Niao were determined to continuing business activities -source of autonomy of status recognition and of secured income- without Ai Hua. Deceived by her managerial attitude in running commerce with them, feeling re-positioned in a condition of precarity and uncertainty -the same condition they were initially determined to exit from- in March 2017 the two women transgressed the rules set by their *laobanniang*. Hence, secretly, they organised a trip to Jinmen, and they invited

me to join. Since they refused to abandon their transnational entrepreneurial activity, their aim was to directly get in touch with one of the women living *in situ*, Suqi, Ai

several compartments. Under the compartments figured the names of people but also of WeChat groups for individual and collective sending. Every shelf apparently belonged to a different person or to a group of people who make Cross-strait business. The place was organised into several parts, with several shelves, racks, luggage, packages and boxes. On the shelves, most of the products were already packed and appropriately wrapped, with pieces of paper and adhesive tape, ready for travel. On the stickers were written the destinations. In some cases, there was only one landing place, mainly Xiamen, Shenzhen, and Fuzhou. In some others, two poles appeared: Xiamen-Chengdu, Xiamen- Rizhao; Xiamen-Hefei; Shenzhen-Guilin; Shenzhen-Meizhou, etc.

Aside from the products I was used to see being commercialised during the sending preparations in Taipei I assisted at, in that garage I also found a lot of products imported from China: spices, chicken feet, jewellery, all sort of food provisions, even some animals in boxes (dogs and snakes alive). There were also medicines, fake clothes and bags. I remember few fake North-face backpacks, and some fake Louis Viton bags, coming probably from China, and huge jerrycans with alcohol. I was explained that the commerce is double-sided: from Taiwan to China, but also from China to Taiwan. Products were transiting within this place before redistribution both in Taiwan and in China, through a dense spiderweb of actors: people, who act as paodanbang, but also more or less legitimate trading companies, tourist guides and smugglers, all engaged within the logistics and the distribution activities.

This garage is a collective place, rented by Suqi, who makes benefits by sub-renting the shelves and the space to the different people involved in the business activities. Concurrently, it also belongs to some other "sisters" living in Taiwan, which use it as a landing place, a platform to connect the different senders, buyers, clients and little enterprises, who want to move products between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. It is, to quote Camille Schomoll's expression "a complex overlapping between spaces of production, spaces of trade, and spaces of consumption" (2006), which are all reciprocally constructed through a variety of social, cultural and emotional resources.

Looking at the shelves, at the products stocked, at the packages, I was wondering whether the orange fluorescent bra had, somewhen, somehow transited through that garage, or through another garage like that one. The answer is probably affirmative.

Meanwhile, I was fascinated by this system of exchange and interconnection, which I found simultaneously improvised, messy and very-well organised: a clandestine, hidden, vaporous, networked place where all sort of goods and products were scrupulously and meticulously stocked before redistribution.

What surprised me the most was that the place was apparently totally empty from people. There were only objects stocked. The people, the actors of trade are personified by the objects they sell but they mostly act virtually, and they are physically situated elsewhere.

I was assisting to one of the most evident and clamorous exemplification of the human dimension of the global. Globalisation was under my eyes, inside a little garage on Jinmen island, where I was assisting to local, regional and global connectivities. Walking inside the little corridors of the little garage, looking at the shelves and at the products, I got the chance to see how globalisation works and walks along the *back-roads*. As already pointed, only in the locality, one can study the concrete effects of globalisation, as "the local no longer opposes but constitutes the global" (Burawoy 2001).

We spent few hours inside since women were bargaining and negotiating new prices, new logistics, and new itineraries.

Trails, roads and routes are not static, but mobile. Sometimes they are improvised, messy, made and remade. They do change and vary their course (origin, destination and intermediate steps) according to the trading opportunities, to the necessities of the markets, to the availability of products and senders, to the borders' control administration, to the structures of the risk (Beck and Sznaider 2006), hence, broadly, to the variety of rather mutable regimes of mobility and immobility. In this sense, trails, tracks, roads and routes are constantly done and undone, shaped and re-shaped, re-directed as the business develops.

Routes, trails and roads are also socially, culturally and emotionally co-constructed and co-performed. This is a vibrating and pulsating version of globalisation, which constantly emerges and regenerates according to the movement of the trails, of the journeys and of logistics. Products can be stuck for days or months in the garage waiting for the good opportunity to pass, to be transferred, waiting for a client in Chinese Sichuan to make an order or even for a tour guide to help for the transfers. These roads are fragile, precarious and uncertain (Brown 2010):

> "When you enter this business universe, you need a lot of patience. We are not a big enterprise, like the one I worked for when I was in China. Here things are almost homemade, they are made by us, in little, and sometimes you just need to wait. On the contrary, as soon as you get an opportunity, you cannot miss it and you have to be quick and reactive".
>
> **Xiao Niao**, Twenty-eight years old, Hunan native, Jinmen, at the garage, 19.03.2017

While, astonished, I was walking around the corridors of the garage, Suqi sometimes suddenly answered to some phone calls from trading companies and smugglers, who discussed the logistics of sending processes with her. Something said by Suqi also impressed me:

> "Time is money and we do not have much time, the agency is coming soon, we have to finish wrapping the last boxes before expedition".
>
> **Suqi**, Twenty-four years old, Jiangxi native, Jinmen, at the garage, 19.03.2017

The floating, mutable and changeable nature of roads and trails, together with the strong but variable imbrication between biographies and geographies influence the speed of time, which can be extremely low, or strongly accelerated. The rhythm of this globalisation is difficult to anticipate, and the tempo can be rather fast or very slow. Inside this garage, as well as all along the back-roads, social, economic and emotional landscapes become "liquid" (Bauman 2000).

Time and space compression separate the qualities of borders (Brown 2010). Giddens (1999), Castells (2006) and, later Urry (2007) have claimed that the social is now represented by flows or networks which circulate globally. Indeed, the empty garage might be an emblematic example: the social seems to be disconnected from any place (Castells 2006). However, the objects stocked in the garage are the product of certainly improvised, complex, dynamic and difficult to observe, but still existing solid social relations, which must be investigated, and which cannot be neglected. To solve this conundrum, it is perhaps helpful to challenge and go beyond the traditional dichotomy proposed by Castells (2006) between "the space of flows" and "the space of people".

If the garage is empty, socialisation processes, economic exchanges, and emotional ties must be produced somewhere else. The affects and sentiments which drive women's creative economic practices are generated inside emotional places where people physically and virtually gather together, exchanging and sharing feelings. Every shelf apparently belonged to a different person or to a group of people who make Cross-strait business and who do not live on the island, but in China and/ or in Taiwan.

This hidden garage close to the harbour can at first sight, instinctively, be perceived as a mere, simple space of transit and of logistics: an "anodyne and anonymous site of solitude" (Augé 1990), which combines both the products and of the unknown people in charge of collection and redistribution. Indeed, its characteristics make it far from the traditional conception of both anthropological and sociological "place" (De Certeau 1980), defined into geometrical terms of social relations and social bonds (Augé 1990). The gloomy, mysterious and dark environment of this connection site seems to reduce space to a contract, thus to an exchange of money and services. However, the situation might be more complex.

It is the combination among economies, socialisations affections and emotions that we can find the clue to describe this place of jumbling between local productions and global circulations. Indeed, beyond the contractual dimension of the interchanges experienced within the site, a vivid, dynamic web of social connections and social interactions does exist. They are co-produced and co-constructed by the new actors of global economy.

through. Empty from people, it is full of objects and commodities which refer, represent, embody a plurality of lives lived and performed elsewhere.

The objects on the shelves, inside boxes or luggage, are imbued with social, cultural and emotional meanings: the significances the actors of their trade attributed to them. At the same time, if the objects were not positioned inside this garage, their producers, traders and consumers would not -and could not- be who and what they are. This garage reifies, and simultaneously, contributes to construct identities, subjectivities, economic practices, socialisations and emotional processes which are passed somewhere else, but without whose the garage could simply not exist. It is an immobile platform without which mobility could not exist. It is a metaphorical *Ithaca*, a land of arrival, but, especially of new departures.

What surprised me - and what may surprise the reader- is the nature, the form and the location of this site. On an island, on a borderland (Agier 2014), its social, economic and emotional position follows the opportunities and the constraints objects and subjects found and negotiated on their road. Its positioning is hence not only spatial and geographical, but also social and emotional. It follows the necessities and the logics of globalisation, and of the different hidden trails and back-roads of geographies and biographies.

Perhaps, when imagining the design of global trade, international business and transnational commerce, we may not intuitively think of such a clandestine, gloomy and hidden place. Nevertheless, this garage vividly represents one of the possible platforms of globalisation. It is not, as Augé would claim, a silent, cold and apathic circuit of exchange, one of the possible "installations needed for accelerated circulations of passengers and, in this specific case, of goods among sites" (Augé 1990: 76). It is an economically dynamic, socially living and emotionally vibrant place where the local and the global are simultaneously co-produced, co-experienced and co-performed.

Reasoning with Saskia Sassen (2006a), in the previous sections I have discussed the centrality of physical, local and localised places within the production of the global: "smooth places" (

bridge between the two. It is certainly an immobile platform, which cannot move itself. Yet, it enables movement, and it makes mobility possible.

Reaching and starting from this immobile platform, mobility shows its complexity, its polymorphism and its malleability. The garage is an accelerated, or decelerated, instantaneous or slowed down space of physical and virtual transitions, social, economic, and emotional transfers, as well as geographical and biographical transformations occurring all at once. Sociological and anthropological places are formed by individuals and groups' identities, through the complicities of language, of emotions and feelings, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how.

Despite its cold and apathic appearance, this garage creates passages, connects roads, and produces convergences among a plurality of objects and subjects' geographies and biographies. It draws new routes from the space to social and economic performances, socialisation processes and emotional practices. It is positioned on a borderland (Agier 2013), which is not *terra nullius*. It is a land for encounters among the diverse actors of globalisation. The objects stocked on the shelves are spectators of the future decisions, conventions, contacts, exchanges and interactions among the women who sell and buy them. Inside this site, the encounter between local and global trading companies, smugglers, tourist guides, and little *paodanbang* occurs.

The orange, fluorescent bra has probably gone through this -or a comparable- garage during its plural journeys across the Taiwan Strait. Beyond and behind shipping roads and harbours, it went through highways, "crossroads" and "open spaces" (Augé 1990), but also across hidden routes and back-roads, which do not have any hierarchical ontological priority (Hall 1990; Bhabha 2002; Roulleau-Berger 2016).

Regardless of their difference, these mobile infrastructures are all imbued with certainly heterogeneous, but rather strong social relations, emotional interactions and affections. The bra has also crossed spaces of daily life, where people pass, meet, gather, and produce sociality and affective ties. Circumnavigating physical and virtual seas, landing to diverse *Ithacas*, and mooring at different harbours, the bra's trail is imbued with and framed through different social, cultural, economic and emotional significances. Its producers, sellers and consumers, whose subjectivities overlap and merge, have creatively designed its path and travel patterns. Framing their own social, economic and emotional norms, through their innovative interactions, socialisations processes and translocal activities, they all contributed to forge the new order of the bra's social world.

3.5. When back-roads cross main-roads

Up to this time, I have defined *back-roads* as an alternative set of routes, which are fragile and changing, as they constantly modify their paths. The investigation of the directions and orientations of *back-roads* generally produce an analysis of the production chain and of the political economy of production hidden behind the chain (Marriot and Minio-Pauello 2012), focusing on manufacture, trading (Barndt 2008), and transport system and distribution processes (Rothember-Aalami 2004), which certainly prove to be embedded with political and institutional frames, but which remain, to some extent, detached from actors' -objects and subjects- lived lives, mobility experiences and socialisation performances.

Through the overlapping narration of women and commodities' mobilities, in terms of biographical, economic, social and emotional movements, displacements, circulations, I have attempted to show the emerging imbrication between geographies and biographies which are concurrently co-produced inside a plurality of places, spaces and temporalities.

Back-roads are the living infrastructures where these heterogeneous processes of spatial, geographical, social, economic and emotional mobilities take place, jumble, merge and juxtapose. Behind these hidden alternative business circuits, material, social, and emotional fabrics daily emerge. I call back to my introductory considerations about the ontological -and even epistemological- meaning of *back-roads*. As above-claimed, "back" does not mean less important, but, simply, less-visible, sometimes vaporous, clandestine. It is something which follows different, extra-ordinary, alternative trails and paths.

In this respect, Jinmen, Xiamen, Shenzhen global ports, as well as Taoyuan airport are sites for transit: specific, highly biopolitical infrastructures which make the synthesis between the local and the global visible. These places are emblematic carrefours where back-roads and main roads meet. In the same port in Jinmen island, cargos and tracks of international trading companies, ships carrying products for the large-scale retail trade and the official postal service – the *Xiaosantong*- encounter smugglers, tour guides and the lowly-visible *paodanbang*, carrying low-value products in their luggage. At the same time, the international, globalised ports of Xiamen and Shenzhen in China, where the low-value products coming from Taiwan arrive, are also the landing places of main roads, highways: in these places high-value goods are equally traded by big multinational companies and take different paths towards global distribution.

A similar rationale is valid for Taoyuan airport, where the goods hiddenly imported inside migrant women's bags and backpacks daily arrive, side by side with important containers of global manufacture and products of the international enterprises. The intersection, the junction or the simple crossing between back roads and main roads is both the meeting of the traditional set of routes of the markets and of the back roads of this globalisation made in little by local actors: the two are inseparable.

The worlds of the little, lowly-visible economies and the worlds of the great production can encounter, dialogue and merge within new places and spaces (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2016): the frontier between the two is rather porous and flexible (Roulleau-Berger 1999: 34). Despite their composite orientations, paths and bifurcations, the lands of arrival are the same and sometimes the trails can even intersect or juxtapose. The logics of profit-making and the exploitation of specific logistic systems can be similar. The difference is represented by the *regimes of mobility* (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) these actors and commodities are confronted to, which are inegalitarian, stratified and hierarchical.

This gap shows the Janus face of globalisation, which produced politics of mobility for someone or something and of politics of immobility and immobilisation for someone/something else (Brown 2010; Agier 2014; Ambrosini 2018). Consequently, what also varies are the means, the tools and the strategies adopted by the actors -objects and subjects- who do, however, participate all to the same globalisation.

Why should, in the end, the commerce of chicken feet or of milk-powder carried inside the luggage of a *paodanbang* between Taipei and Sichuanese countryside be very different compared to international business of Nike shoes, Huawei self-phones or Apple laptops, carried by a cargo of a multinational

enterprise? What makes the trading of an orange, fluorescent bra less legitimate and legitimised than big brand textile manufactures commerce? And also, if I follow the same logic, why should a home-made Sichuanese spicy sauce be really distinct from industrially-made cosmetics or pineapple cakes?

The products Chinese women send to China are often industrially made. They are commodified according to the logic of production of global capitalism and bought -often taking advantages of reductions and discounts- in big shopping malls in Taipei. Concurrently, clothes imported from China to Taiwan are perhaps coming from stock markets (*pifa shichang*) -of whose Zhang Jing and Xiao

noodles’ stand at a night market or inside a garage in Shulin.

They enter a new modern theatre and co-produce modernity and globalisation. Finance, multinational companies, chain productions, media images, food chains, big brands, and fashion contribute to generate several modalities of expression of globalisation and modernity. Meanwhile, and not less importantly, Sichuanese traditional plums against constipation or home-made spicy sauce made by Xiao

interaction between the local and the global, back-roads reveal the mutating substance of what Aiwa

social, economic and emotional connection and intersection between the macro and micro landscapes of the global.

4. Emotional Modernity

Setting sails through global capitalism and local consumption, navigating across a plurality of physical and virtual spaces, emotional lands, and social worlds, women's transnational economic activities show a very complex, changing and moving morphology. As claimed above, these *sui generis*, creative economies are built at the carrefour between *glocal* geographies and biographies, whose nature is intrinsically vaporous, unpredictable and mutable.

On the one hand, the fluidity and malleability of the social structures inscribed into a globalised, interconnected and flexible world (Bauman 2000; Urry 2007; Faist 2013) interplay in shaping and reshaping the functioning of social practices, emotional socialisations and economic activities. On the other hand, *multipolar economies* are designed, constructed and performed inside the physical and virtual spaces of actors' projects, intentions, imaginaries, affections and emotions which are, at their turn, moving and floating.

Evolving emotional ties and affective bonds largely contribute to the performance of these *glocal* spaces. They constitute their intrinsic ontological "binder" (Martuccelli 2002) and they are co-shaped by their practices, reified into new, unfixed norms and rules – the previously described *choreographies of affections*. In other words, economic activities are *constituted by* and *constitutive of* a synthesis between individual and collective aspirations and capacity of action, which are situated in the fluid local and global frame of opportunities and possibilities, but also constraints, risks, and uncertainties (Beck and Szneider 2006; Roulleau-Berger 2015), all being changeable, liable and flexible.

4.1. A production-consumption dilemma?

I have started my rationale by assuming that entrepreneurship, whether physical or virtual, performed inside local and global markets, represents for women a strategy of resistance to a subaltern positioning and that it contributes to "undo" and to deconstruct subalternity to a certain degree. This condition of vulnerability and precarity has emerged and re-emerged within the different, transnational orders represented by the state, the market and the familiar regimes women have faced during their pluri-migratory experiences, both in China and in Taiwan. These *orders of things*, based on a combination

of governmentality, familiar rules and the logics of the market have required migrants to cope with a plurality of obstacles inhibiting their paths towards individual affirmation, fulfilment, social mobility and recognition. However, as I have tried to show, women have proved to be able to multiply their creative repertories of resources, which frame their capacity of action and of social re-positioning within the hierarchical and inegalitarian orders of things they encounter. Those contribute to lessen a condition of subalternity, which reveals to be contingent. Its temporal and liable dimension makes it negotiable, contestable, and surmountable.

The articulation between a multi-scalar, translocal opportunity and constraints structure, which takes place inside local and global orders as well as and women's practices, proves to be dynamic, multiform and, in a certain way, "reflexive" (Giddens 1999; Beck 2003). Emotions, affections and intimacies largely contribute to produce actors' understandings of situations, and consequently their capacity to respond and to face the ordeals, the uncertainties and the precarity deriving from their mutable social positioning. Interestingly, the transformation, the evolution and the contestation of a subaltern condition start from emotional performances, situated at the very local level of daily interactions and intimacies, but which are progressively projected into new global arenas.

In the design, construction and performance of local and global economic activities women activate, re-activate and re-kindle a plurality of resources and different types of knowledge, of which the social and emotional use of digital platforms and new technologies is particularly emblematic. It is thus both in the "new technological paradigm" (Castells 2006) and in the particular frame of "time-space compression" (

Interruptions, gaps and dynamism derive from the compression of time and space together with the development of disembedding mechanisms, which "lift out" (Giddens 1990: 5) social activities from localised contexts and reorganise social relations across large time-space distances. If I position women's practices within this frame, a paradox[130] seems to emerge. Global markets, new technologies and transnational connections represent the arenas of modernity where subalternity can be "undone".

career by invoking an aesthetic universe (modern, consumeristic, and globalised), that dialectically negates the objective conditions, technical processes, ordeals of suffering during the labour process and professional career making, that, through the market, produced this very same bra. Concurrently, if this bra had not been transformed into a commodity, Fujin's biographical, migratory and professional trajectory would have probably followed a different road.

Nonetheless, instead of reducing the dilemma of the fabrics of modernity to a mere question of commodity fetishism (Kopytoff 1986; Pun 2005), I prefer here to consider and investigate the creative, adventurous process by which Fujin, like many other informants, re-approached and re-framed the modern project in their own terms. In a context of instability and uncertainty, this involves thinking about the multiple, plural significations that actors attribute to their own modernity. These are changeable, malleable and temporary. Individuals' lives and experiences represent the biographical solutions to the system contradictions (Beck 1999; Martuccelli 2002). Thence, to solve this conundrum, and to avoid any form of essentialism, it urges to understand how this concept -modernity or modernities- is constantly questioned and re-defined by the actors (Boltanski 2009; Roulleau-Berger 2016) and through their practices. In consequence, the frame cannot be other than an endogenous translation of social processes (Bayart 1994; Carsten 2003): the ways actors -objects and subjects- "reset" (Latour and Leclerq 2016) modernity for themselves and by themselves.

4.2. An ontological experiment

As claimed by Martuccelli (1999: 1), if "modernity" is a concept characterised by theoretical liability -hence unexhaustive definitions- "its conceptual indecision reveals its analytical utility" (1999: 1-2). How do women define the modernity they act in and they concurrently contribute to produce? I call back to my rationale about the open field of possibilities of social and cultural processes[131]- what Clifford has called "the reinvention of differences" (1980: 15)-, as well as about imagination (Appadurai 2004; Illouz 2009) as an operative tool. In this respect, imagination and aspirations are the *foci* to understand the creative ways women negotiate, design and reconstruct their present and their future as possible alternatives. They allow the emergence of a web for projects and open novel arenas for action inside new "spaces for hope" (

paradoxically reinforce their common thesis), the shared argument is that there are no unitary models of modernity. The construction of, and the possibility to produce different modernities do exist.

Women's emotional practices, affectional socialisation processes, physical and virtual gatherings, together with their innovative, *sui generis* economic activities, which take place in the real or digital worlds open a discussion about the "specific paths to and through modernity" (Clifford 1980), hence about what modernity is or what it can be. The creative and varied forms of hybridisation between locally designed economic activities and global markets, between everyday affectional practices, emotional performances and instantaneous, hypermobile communication on the virtual platforms, between the temporalities of daily routines and of the transnational, simultaneous transactions and movements follow the analytical questionings of the forms, the significance of modernity and push further a reflection about its ontological substance. Inside these vibrant, plural, mutable social worlds, oscillating between the local and the global, life possibilities and social configurations multiply and complexify.

Since their first entrance in the career during rural-to-urban migration in China, Chinese migrant women have proved to be conscious of their social, economic and moral lowered and disqualified positionings within the different spaces they have been situated in. The global, represented by the emotional desire of constructing a modern subjectivity, was the frame inside which women designed, imagined and forged their biographical and migratory paths, from the countryside to the Chinese city, and then to Taiwan. They have been aspiring to a modern, urban status since their adolescence in the countryside. Later, they yearned for autonomy, economic independence and a metropolitan lifestyle by looking out of the window of the factory while assembling pieces around the production line. The modern *horizon of hope* (Appadurai 2004) shapes and orients experiences and practices. "Trapped" inside rigid biopolitical migratory policies, oppressive familiar regimes and disqualifying segments of Taiwanese labour market, women proved their capacity to negotiate with the inegalitarian and hierarchical project of modernity and globalisation.

Shifting from *dagong mei* in China to *yuangong* -"trapped-in-migration lives"- in Taiwan, women proved their capacity to re-negotiate statuses. Through motion and navigation, their position transited to *paodanbang* -"suitcase carriers"- or it even transformed them into *laobanniang* -"*glocal* bosses". These *mobile* subjects crossed and circumnavigated old and new seas of ordeals and possibilities. They faced tempests and moored at unknown lands. They career-making processes and life trajectories were forged through the constant identification and re-definition of possibilities. They manipulated and

negotiated situational and situated social, economic and emotional resources inside dispatched spaces of local, global attachments and belongings. Opening to the global *horizon* of modernity, practices of translocal navigation redeploy objects and subjects' relations to spaces, places, people, hence, broadly to the social and the emotional themselves.

"Modernity at large" (Appadurai 1999) and globalisation generate structural constraints, obstacles, walls and barricades to migrants' subjectivity-making processes and social mobility. However, they are also a fertile field for negotiation of possibilities and opportunities, for project-making and for social, economic and emotional transformations, towards a deconstruction of a subaltern condition.

The perception of the global (Beck 2003) provided migrants with the consciousness of living in a world which, physically or virtually, surpasses, goes beyond (hyper)local and national borders. If the corridor towards the global seems to be an inevitable passageway, it is however accompanied by the awareness and the comprehension by the actors who cross it. Such cognisance is the starting point to imagine alternatives and negotiate strategies when local and global orders become oppressive. This means that when women acknowledge that "they have never been modern" (Latour 1994), but that they *can become* modern.

Conceiving the peculiarities of the modernity imagined, designed and produced by women requires a composite and creative work of imagination (Appadurai 1999; Ong 2003). To understand how Chinese migrants, oscillating between times, spaces and identities (Tarrius 1989, 2001) "reinvent their own difference (Clifford 1980) and actively negotiate their own modern order required placing the discussion in the frame of local and global opportunities and constraints that actors negotiate. It imposes to situate the production of modernity in the broader frame of social, economic and emotional co-construction of geographies and biographies. Emotions, affections and intimacies have a performative and transformative power (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). They shape a new scape of modernity. It is an emotional *scape*, inside which the *politics of imposed identity* (Ong 1999, 2003) declined all along the different steps of their career can be creatively transformed into new *politics of social, economic and emotional positioning and re-positioning* (Butler 2002, 2004).

What I attempt to qualify of *emotional modernity* might be thought in terms of "ontological experiment" (Jensen and Morita 2015), whose definition is not static, but dynamic, emerging and constantly re-configured. This modernity is as malleable as the social, economic and emotional worlds it is constructed in. It emerges *in motion*, by the very act of *navigation* through a plurality of mutable social,

economic, emotional and affectional landscapes, whose significance is highly "modern" since the actors of its performance want to be modern: they aspire to modernity.

Emotional modernity is *mobile*. It follows objects and subjects' movements, shifting, circulations and rotations. It can be imagined as a project of *becoming*, of transformation of objects and subjects, who transit and move through, inside and outside virtual worlds, digital platforms and *glocal* seas. It appears at the carrefour between local and global opportunities and constraints, where negotiation and transgression become necessary for social re-positionings and project-making. Emotional modernity is the transgression of an order through the production of social, economic and moral disorders. Actors desire to become modern subjects: their own project of modernity is inscribed inside socially constructed emotional situations. Actors translate their emotions into modern social situations and practices and produce modern social situations and practices through emotions.

Conceiving *emotional modernity* in terms of "ontological experiment" thus presents a double advantage. It concurrently enables to open the field of possibilities (Clifford 1980) and to situationally define its theoretical and empirical boundaries, which may reveal to be porous and flexible. Ontologies are about "how worlds are concretely made, conjoined or transformed by the co-evolving relations of actors, people, technologies, materials, spirits, ideas" (Jensen and Morita 2015: 82). Experiments are laboratories to produce innovation (Latour 1988), to generate the extra-ordinary, and the novelty which challenges the past and produces alternative futures.

4.3. Modern, emotional horizons of *becoming*

As a result, it is in *mobile* and mutable terms that women negotiate their *emotional modernity*. The modern frame they act in and they individually and collectively negotiate is as mobile as women's positionings, re-positionings, transits, transitions and transformations. It is by "undoing" and "unmaking" (Butler 2004), at least to some degree, a subaltern position perceived as unacceptable, "unbearable" (Butler 2002), undesired that objects and subjects contribute to forge their emotionally modern project.

Emotions generate and, at their turn, sustain this modern project. They emerge through and simultaneously open a work of imagination. Determination, ambition, aspiration co-produce women's physical and virtual, material and affectional, local and global mobilities, which are oriented, since their beginning towards a *horizon of becoming* modern, autonomous, independent. Concomitantly

produced from and sustaining emotions, this *modern horizon of becoming* draws lines of continuity amongst a variety of biographical experiences, economic practices, social relationships and affectional performances through times and spaces. It orients movements and frames individual and collective project-making processes. Through status shifting, social and economic re-positionings, emotional connections, possibilities and opportunities can be negotiated. Social, economic and moral inequalities, local and global hierarchies reveal their plastic substance. “Made in porcelain” (

market and of capitalistic modernity, towards the cities and to Taiwan, aimed at profit-making, as well as productive or reproductive labour exploitation.

Nonetheless, progressively, a new, emotionally modern *scape* is forged by women, through subversions and transgressions. It overturns both local and global market's translations of modernity, in China as well as in Taiwan. Through cross-border marriage migration, Chinese d*agong mei* become *dalumei*, hence stigmatised foreign spouses, whose decisions, aspirations and life patterns should scrupulously and obediently line-up with local familiar and social orders. It appears more and more visible how, both in China and in Taiwan, the family, the state and the market orchestrated normative modern orders and hierarchical regimes inside which women's conducts, behaviours and practiced were inscribed. Emotional contestations produce -and are situated inside- new physical and virtual social worlds, which exceed local borders and fixed normative boundaries. Emotional practices sustain the re-definition of affectional ties, kinship affiliations, and rhetoric's of home, which become new resources and weapons for resistance (Scott 1987).

Emotional modernity is hence a project of negotiation of the *selves* in a plurality of social, economic worlds which are simultaneously co-produced by women's emotional performances, affective practices and aspirations. The experiences of suffering, of vulnerability and of misrecognition and the emotions of disillusionment, of sadness, of abandonment and of regret which emerge and, at their turn, sustain them seem to be crucial to forge new imaginaries.

Concurrently, performative feelings of mutuality, of reciprocity and affections among *jiemei* allow the shift from the imaginary to operational plan[134] (Deleuze 1990). Emotional practices and performances of affections enabled women to negotiate, adapt and challenge the *politics of imposed identity* which characterised the different regimes of normativity they faced both in China and in Taiwan. Fuelled by the desire of forging a new subjectivity, and attaining a modern independent, autonomous status, women transcend the original project of capitalistic modernity, vector of rigid orders, constraints and hierarchies, and re-define it in their own terms, by their own means and resources, which are *in primis* emotional.

Emotional modernity is hence performed through *glocal* navigations, the reconstruction of spoiled *selves*, upward social and moral mobility, made on the back-roads of globalisation where spaces for

[134] Imaginary "is not the unreal, but the indiscernibility of real and unreal" (Deleuze 1990).

re-subjectivation emerge. The process of transition and transformation of the orange, fluorescent bra illustrates this situation: from a manufactured artefact, imbued with feelings of stress, exhaustion and exploitation to a commodity, concurrently symbolizing, enabling and fuelling individual pride, self-respect, social recognition, satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

Within the frame of *emotional modernity*, the emotional capitalistic culture (Illouz 2007) represented by the labour regimes in the Chinese global city or the mobility regime in Taiwan, is subverted, and re-defined by women's practices. The bra is turned into a commodity: it is socialised, and socially and emotionally performed as a tool of recognition and of appropriation of a *glocal* modern identity. From a product constructed within a regime of subalternity, the orange, fluorescent bra becomes an emotional discourse, an affectional translocal practice and a tool of socialisation to "undo" subalternity. Thereby, women re-negotiate and re-frame new "rules of the exchange" (Fligstein 2001), they re-define new labour regimes and labour relations, and contest (Steiner 2005) segmented and hierarchical markets.

New technologies and digital platforms interplay within these complex and polyform processes. They encounter migrants' daily performances of affects and emotions, enabling women to produce a new, re-framed social order. They translate emotions into practices to negotiate a new status legitimacy and collectively forge new self-awareness. Emotional modernity might be perceived as a constant "reset" (Latour and Leclercq 2016) of situations, practices and experiences, and a projection towards the future: a project of *becoming*, of navigating new lands, seeking for recognition, autonomy and independence. The translocal global spaces of navigation, together with digital platforms and the back-roads where objects and subjects circulate define the perimeter for the development of this alternative modern project, locally performed inside the *WeChat* groups of mutual help, or in a lingerie shop, or eating Sichuanese spicy noodles at a stand in a night market. It follows the instantaneous tempo of *online* conversations and digital transactions as well as the unpredictable rhythm of chicken feet and orange bras movement on the back-roads.

Objects and subjects' geographies and biographies define and are defined by emotions. Emotional modernity is a floating frame and practice of corrosion of the ordinary, through the production of the extra-ordinary. The latter becomes a project of new creative *selves* who can imagine and who can aspire. Imaginaries challenge, corrode and transcend local orders and the rigidity of the biopolitical devices imposing norms, rules, practices and identities. Women's ambitions sustain a projection

towards a future of possibilities, constructed in the frame of a subaltern condition constantly “done” and “undone”.

Part 5: *Ithaca* and Beyond

Re-mobilities, *Glocal* Navigations, and Cosmopolitan Moorings

In March 2018, the doorbell of a little beauty salon in Baoan district in the Southern Chinese city of Shenzhen rang. It was a local deliverer, carrying a package coming from Taipei. Inside the box, properly stocked near pineapple cakes, candies and cosmetics, the orange fluorescent bra was back to China.

What did it happen to the bra? It was back to Shenzhen, the very same city it had been manufactured in. It is in Shenzhen that its biographical career had started, around the assembly line of a factory. How could it be back there? How had its road been reversed and re-oriented?

In the frame of *emotional modernity*, movement is pluralised.

previous movements. Determined to achieve their modern subjectivity-making project, women negotiated their *horizon* of transformation and of *becoming*, through the multiplication of practices and interconnections in the *glocal* space, on a physical but also on a virtual level.

Crucially, women's *mobile* careers have been constructed through movement. Movement is physical and virtual, material and emotional. Emotions and affections, as a resource, a competence, and a practice follow women's pluri-mobilities and re-migration patterns, from China to Taiwan and from Taiwan to China. Emotions formulated in China and reformulated in Taiwan, can be re-formulated, once again, during further movement. However, they change form and shape according to the lived situations and contexts they are re-performed in.

Comprehensively, movement represents an endless possibility of *becoming*, of subjectivation and re-subjectivation, as well as of social, economic and moral status re-positioning within different spaces and orders. Women left their rural villages and migrated to the city in China. They circulated "here and there" inside and outside the urban spaces. At each step of their career, realizing the constraints which inhibited the achievement of their modern subjectivity-making project, women re-migrated. They arrived in Taiwan, where they oscillated between different orders, through adaptability, negotiation and transgression, aimed at attaining the same *horizon* of modernity.

Across the local and global seas, the *figures of navigation* that I have identified support the visualisation and the understanding of the progressive contestation of subalternity. Women's ambitions and aspirations, subjectivation and subjection processes, framed the diverse social, economic and emotional practices. All along their roads, subalternity, as a constructed positioning, has emerged under different forms and required women, at each step of their trajectory and biographical career, to identify new techniques to overstep it. At different levels, both *laobanniang* –"*glocal* bosses"- and *paodanbang* –"suitcase carriers"- succeeded lessening their subaltern condition at a certain degree.

Differently, *yuanggong* –"trapped in migration lives"- could difficulty dismantle the subaltern position they endured in Taiwan. Nevertheless, despite localised and situated dominations, motility (Kaufmann et al. 2004) and mobility have persisted as a *horizon* of possibility for new transition and transformation for these women. When local resources are not enough to cope with situated order, movement and re-migration become an alternative strategy to contest subalternity. Mobility and circulatory knowledge are, once again, mobilised by women. Migratory paths become multidirectional. They can bifurcate, reroute, reverse and take different roads, drawing infinite connections between biographies and

geographies. Movement makes possibilities multiplying. Motility opens new seas to navigate and new lands to dock the boats on. Time, space and identity (Tarrius 2000) are permanently negotiated and transformed in situation, and according to the new significances and meanings the actors attribute to the. Hence, they can also be vectors of attachment, of anchorage, and of belonging to a multiplicity of places, where, potentially, movement and re-location can occur.

Re-moving, re-migrating become a resource for women. Societies, locations, social and moral worlds are fluid and liable, hence continually contestable. As they did before by leaving China, *yuangong*- "trapped-in-migration lives"- can negotiate modernity and social repositioning by contesting local social, economic and familiar order through divorce and re-migration. The *glocal*, once again, turns into a social, economic and emotional mobile space for designing alternatives, through motion. Settlement loses its original significance (Tarrius 2000) of stability and fixity: it becomes fluid, dynamic and processual. When local and global social attachments and affectional anchorages multiply, the field of possibility for motion is enlarged.

Thereby, facing difficulties in mobilising social, economic and emotional resources and knowledge in Taiwan, women can engage in re-migration journeys across their life-course. Fascinatingly, but not surprisingly, the interconnections their mobility practices have produced among diverse local and global spaces, times and identities turn to be the frame inside which future mobilities are potentially inscribed. Complex canvas of re-migration and re-mobility pattern emerge. The seriality of migration (Ossman 2013) becomes a constant in women's biographical careers. The possibility of multiple migrations over the life course appears (Ossman 2013; Yeoh 2016). When space, territories intersect with identity and subjectivity, emotions and affections, social, economic and moral re-positionings can be re-negotiated. Taiwan, the land of women's arrival has been progressively constructed as a space to stay in, to settle down, to develop social, economic and moral status re-positioning. When constraints and obstacles inhibit the achievement of this project, re-migration can be produced. Taiwan can be turned into a new land for departure. It opens for new navigations and re-mobilities, translocal journeys and mooring, which make movement potentially endless. Women can leave Taiwan and re-move back to their society of origin: China.

Following and tracking

to China, during her pluri-migrations in China and, later, from China back to Taiwan again. Her mobility career is reversed, reversive and rerouted. On the move, she interacted with a plurality of actors, Chinese divorced returnees, I also narrate the experiences of, which are constructed in interaction with Xiao Mei. What I attempt to show is that re-migration alters the directionality of movement (Ho 2019: 9), not only between two countries (Ho 2019:10-11), but also among a plurality of places. Not only it switches the sites of origin and destination. Also, and crucially, it engenders endless connections, imbrications, anchorages and attachments among old and new constellations of physical and virtual, material and immaterial, affectional and emotional places, spaces and people.

This potentially perpetual transit brings individuals back *on the move*. Situated identities and emotional subjectivities take another road, entering new, further steps in their biographical, social, economic and moral career-making. New re-scaling processes emerge. Geographical and social borders, mobility regimes, and migratory policies generate obstacles and dis-affiliations for migrants. Therefore, local and global orders and barriers do not only concern the spatial dimension of territories, spaces and geographies. When mobility and social, marital and migratory status are co-produced, such regimes interplay in the spheres of residence rights, of citizenship, as well as of identity and subjectivity (Coutin 2015).

Social, economic and emotional spaces become *trans* and cross-border: the virtual arenas for old and new interactions, practices and interconnections. Through their lives of travel, women generate cross-border geographies. Their social, economic and emotional traslocal networks connect times and spaces and the global but also very local levels of their daily life, such as the countryside they return to, together with the cities they (temporary) settle down in. Individual biographies become cosmopolitan, since they are constructed in the frame of back-and-forth continuous virtual movements, physical displacements, journeys or emotional communications *inside, outside, through and between* the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The places and spaces of pluri-migrations being all at once intertwined and interconnected, biographical careers take *orbital* shapes within the liminal and liable diameter of the *horizon of hope* (Appadurai 2004), ambitions and possibilities.

The journey of the orange, fluorescent bra follows, once more, the tempo of such hypermobility and simultaneity. Its career goes with women's physical, virtual and emotional movements.

borders of the *glocal*, new points of junction, of encounter, of connection engender to emotionally cosmopolitan social, economic and affectional practices.

Chapter 1: Re-migration Biographies and Geographies

From Taiwan to China, women re-cross the Strait. Back on the plane, they carry with them a suitcase of sadness, dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Perhaps, it is in their hand-luggage that there is some place for ambition and aspiration while re-orienting their road and re-versing their path towards the place they came from: China.

In China first and in Taiwan later, biographical, social and professional paths have been constructed by actors who oscillated among aspirations, efforts and the confrontation with the *orders of things*. The liability of social worlds makes individuals' status and situated positionings unfixed and liminal. Yet, this same fluidity and unpredictability can also make negotiation processes precarious and rather unstable. Bifurcations constantly emerge in the life pattern and career-making processes and make situations and positionings highly *mobile* and reversible (Roulleau-Berger 2014a, 2015). When expectations, ambitions and aspirations are not conformed, or do not match anymore with the reality of situations, global and local bifurcations, hence reorientations, can happen and induce new displacements. Objects and subjects can hence take the road again. They can re-move, re-migrate towards old and new lands, sojourning or settling, moving back and forth on a potentially endless temporal scale.

For these reasons, to analyse women's mobilities from Taiwan back to China, I do not use here the expression of "return migration" (Cerase 1974;

crossed during migrations and mobilities largely interplay in forging and sustaining re-migration paths. Anchorages, attachments and senses of belonging, summed to local and global social, economic and affectional resources configure and, at their turn support, the spatialities and temporalities of their new *glocal* movements and *in-between* existences.

1. Divorcing, Re-migrating: Individual Resistance and Self-esteem

The *mobility regime* (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013) which framed women's migration to and installation in Taiwan established a strict and necessary relation between marital status and rights' attribution, which shape the dialectic between mobility and immobility. Marriage is the *conditio sine qua non* to enter the territory and settle down, and it anchors migrants' mobility right to a precise marital regime. A change in terms of marital status[135] which derives from divorce can jeopardize migrants' rights to stay in the territory, engendering expulsion and deportation. At the same time, re-mobility and re-migration as a practice deriving from individuals' choices and motivations cannot be simplistically reduced to biopolitical governmentality. They require further investigation. In the frame of the opportunity and constraint structure, it is a matter of apprehending the vocabulary of motives (Mills 1940) which generate and sustain the making of re-migration careers. It is in a situated and situational understanding of actors' perception of their own re-positioning that re-migration patterns should be framed.

Oscillating among ordeals, challenges, creative adaptation strategies and social, economic, moral and familiar re-positionings, women are engaged in a constant *work* of appreciation of their *selves* (Roulleau-Berger 2003, 2007). This introspective work lies on the examination of the conformation or disparity of their hopes, desires and ambitions with the context, the reality of situations and lived experiences which characterised their daily practices of life, work and interactions in the society of arrival. Emotions and feelings are generated and simultaneously support these processes of evaluation and negotiation of social re-positioning. Taking the road again, engaging into further movement and entering a new biographical step of life trajectory ask to women a complex and even contradictory

[135] Executive Yuan (行政院).2002. "The

social and emotional work of introspection and projection. An analysis of present situation and of future possibilities shapes motivations, choices and decisions.

1.1. Beyond divorce

February 27th 2017. Taipei.

In the early morning, I received a phone call from Xiao Mei, a Chinese migrant woman living in Hukou village. She seemed confused and her words were ambiguous and unclear. She asked me to take the first train from Taipei and join her in Hukou. She said it was urgent. Her voice was broken, and her claims were confused, so I decided to join her immediately.

The first time I met Xiao Mei was in December 2016. She was twenty-nine years old Guangdong native, from the rural village of Xingning (Meizhou). At the age of 15, she left the countryside and migrated to Shenzhen, a large coastal city, where she worked in the local factories for several years. Through marriage with a Taiwanese native, at the age of 21 she re-migrated to Taiwan, where she had been living for seven years when I met her. In Taiwan, Hukou village, Xiao Mei was living at her husband's family, with her mother and sister in law, that she considered conservative and narrow-minded. Her husband was a local taxi driver and their relationship had been deteriorating during the last years, as Xiao Mei had explained to me because of the strong jealousy of her husband, which inhibited her desire of independence and autonomy. Her biographical trajectory in Taiwan had been constructed oscillating between familiar duties, unpaid reproductive work at home - taking care of her husband's family and of her little child- and a long and frustrating waltz of precarious and disqualifying employments in the local labour market.

When I arrived, Xiao Mei was waiting for me with a couple of luggage at the train station. As soon as she saw me, she cried and clearly stated:

> "I want to divorce. I cannot stand this life anymore. I do not want to remain in that house with that people anymore. I want to go back to China […] I have been thinking about this for several weeks and it was hard to make this decision. But I want to divorce, I do not want to stay with my husband and his family anymore, and I do not want to live in this country anymore […] I know that I could remain, I could find a house and move out, you know? I obtained Taiwanese citizenship last year. But Taiwan is an unfriendly place to me […] I have been living here for seven years and my life was not successful. I tried my best, I tried had (*fuchu de nuli qishi tai duo le* 付出的努力其實太多了), but it was vain, I failed (*buguo dou shi bai fu de, mei you chengong* 不過都

是白付的，沒有成功). Sometimes I ask myself ‘why? Why did this happen to me?’ Taiwan is not my home, China is my home (*Taiwan bus hi wode jia, wo jia zai dalu* 台灣不是我家，我家在大陸). Please help me to escape (*baituo ni bang wo likai* 拜託妳幫我離開) […] I am still young, I can still build a life somewhere […] I cannot live here anymore, I cannot stand this life anymore; I want to divorce immediately and get on the first flight to

going back to the China very soon. The following morning, I accompanied Xiao Mei to Hukou City Hall (市政府) to fill in and sign the divorce documents. That very afternoon, I accompanied Xiao Mei to Taoyuan airport. She Xiao Mei took a flight, she left Taiwan and returned to China.

Figure 48 Xiao Mei's divorce documents (lihun xieyishu 离婚协议书) that I signed, providing my personal data, passport number, address, etc., since I was the third-party witness. My name appears on the left side.

This snapshot elucidates how Xiao Mei's experience is generated and, at its turn, sustains strong emotions of suffering, of deception, of frustration and of sadness. Such feelings frame and are framed by the circumstances in which her biographical turning point is inscribed. Concurrently, the structural constraints related to the migratory legislation in Taiwan interplay in shaping and redirecting her mobility.

Marriage and migration are in Taiwan intrinsically correlated by a complex and strict set of regulations which associate marital status to the access to residency and to citizenship. On the same biopolitical vein, the article 31 of *Taiwan Immigration Act* (1999, 2008), which regulates divorce for foreign spouses, elucidates the tight relation between marital status and rights' assignment, especially concerning the residence permit.

the contract, if foreign spouses have not obtained Taiwanese citizenship, they are required to leave the country.

Implicitly this legislation raises important questions about the link between divorce and return migration, or, at least, re-mobility. However, governmentality and this specific mobility regime need to be articulated with the grammars of individual choices and motivations which shape women's biographical trajectories and patterns of re-migration.

I had met Lily in November 2016 in Taipei, while she was following make-up vocational classes in Sanchong and I performed as her model the day she obtained her make-up artist diploma. At that time, she performed an undeclared job in a little restaurant of Taipei, often disputing with her husband and her mother-in-law who daily maltreated her. While living in Taiwan, Lily often showed disappointment and frustration as for her living and working condition. Living in the suburbs of Taipei, and working as a waitress, she was unsatisfied. She had the feeling of not having attained the upward social mobility her marriage-migration experience was aimed at. She did not have time to take care of her child, since she had to work and study. She had no time for herself either.

One year after divorce and re-migration, sitting on the sofa of her new apartment, watching TV and eating pumpkin seeds, this is what Lily explained to me:

“

the potential link between divorce and mobility, but it invests the definition of re-migration itself and the significance actors attribute to it. In this respect, several studies have suggested the propensity for mobilities just before or after a divorce (Flowerdew and Al-Hamad 2004).

Broadly, these works indicate that the proximity to social networks is important by migrants experiencing divorce. Migrants tend to move back where their social relationships are, hence, in most cases to their city or village of origin (Michielin and Mulder 2008). However, methodologically, these quantitative studies are unable to delve into the emotional factors involved in shaping migration choices before, during, and after a divorce. Moreover, by analysing the link between divorce and re-mobility, these studies tend to reduce divorce to the only element influencing return migration. The situations I have empirically observed on the field present different scenarios.

Analogously to the other thirty women I met, Lily or

“My husband was violent […]

within a plurality of spaces are all crucial elements which are pondered by actors while imagining and designing their future biographical and mobility steps.

Subjectivity-making processes shape the configuration of re-migration and re-orient movement towards new projects of recognition, self-esteem and ambition. In the vocabulary of motives used by women when describing their decision making, old and new aspirations, hopes, imaginaries mix and merge, drawing continuities in the career-making process. The horizon of upward social mobility, the making of an independent, autonomous and recognised *self* has not changed. It still represents the pivot around which Lei

and that I am not a good wife. I am twenty-eight years old and I am so tired of being treated like a slave (*nuli* 奴隸)."

Xiao Mei, Hukou, 29.11.2016

In her decision-making, Xiao Mei took an introspective look to her migratory paths and biographical experiences. At first sight, leaving Taiwan, abandoning her husband's family and her child represents a biographical, social, geographical but also emotional rupture in her career. As suggested by Kim et al. (2017: 38-39) in their study of marriage-migrants in Korea who divorced and left the country, women are not supposed to return to the country of origin. They are "expected to integrate into the society of destination, bear children, and assume a lifelong responsibility of performing care work for their marital families" (

dissatisfaction, anger, sadness, frustration, but also imagination, ambition and hope, which open for the new configurations of her future life trajectory. Abott (2001) has advanced a narrative conception of the turning point, which is an *instantaneous* social process. At a certain, precise moment, the subject produces a dialogue between her immediate present and her the proximate future.

The interconnection and imbrication between *now* and *later* bring about a processual change, which adjusts the individual's spatial, social and existential pattern. This biographical redirection of the existence is imbued with a strongly introspective discourse. Xiao Mei looked back to her past, she analysed her present and projected herself, again, towards the future. Wherefore, by producing a deeply emotional discourse which connects her past, her present and her future in terms of ambitions and possibilities,

into women's capacity of ponderation and understanding situations and lead to the mobilisation of previously acquired resources within the different social and moral spaces she had been crossing so far. Such *continuum* between past, present and future is thereby incarnated by

I bought a ticket, that was very expensive, and I jumped of the first flight to Guilin. [in Guanxi province, where she comes from] I was not sure that was the best choice, but at that moment, I did not know much where to go and what to do”

Xiao Li, Ttwenty-six years old, Guangxi native, Dongguan, 25.01.2018

The meanings attributed to the places multiply. Women are engaged in physical and virtual, spatial and temporal, social and emotional processes of continuous deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, displacement and replacement. Going back to the society of origin does not preclude the possibility of further re-migration, corresponding to different stages of life cycle (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). It is a matter for women of identifying, according to the repertories of social and economic resources they can mobilise, as well as to the opportunity/constraint structure, a place to, at least temporarily, migrate back. Moreover, and importantly, emotions, affections, senses of belongings and of attachment interplay within the construction of the representation, the meaning and the significance of the place elected by women for resettlement.

In his investigation about the "meanings of places" (Agnew 1987; Gufstanson 2001: 5-7), Agnew (1987) has identified three major elements which can influence actors' affinities or electivity for places: *locale*, the settings in which social relations are constituted (these can be informal or institutional); *location*, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale; and *sense of place*, the local "structure of feeling" (1987: 28). Yet, to fully capture the meaning of place, Agnew argued that the complementarity of all three elements should be considered. Thus, meaningful places emerge in a social context and through social relations. Emotions -socially and situationally constructed- contribute to the attribution of such meanings. Therefore, places are certainly geographically located, but also socially, economically and emotionally situated inside the spaces, temporalities and identities (Tarrius 2000, 2001) of migration. Places provide individuals with a social, but also emotional, affectional, "subjective territorial identity" (Agnew 1987).

The choice of the place is associated and co-produced with the processes of social, economic and moral re-positioning (Lefebvre 1968) of individuals after re-migration. At the very same time, the translocal, virtual and pluralised dimension of Chinese women's movements does not fit with Agnew's definition of the place and of territorial identity (Agnew 1987). Such conceptualisation reveals to be rather static. Physical and virtual, material and emotional, instantaneous, polyform and plural movements call into question the fixity of the location. To some extent, the simultaneity of positioning generated by the performance of new technologies makes the choice of the place less relevant for women. While being in China, they can simultaneously, virtually, also be in Taiwan.

"Places are like ships, moving around and not necessarily staying in one location" (

of every form of rigid and inflexible conception of places, times and spaces. They challenge the ontology of a distinction between “places” and “people”. Rather, there is a complex relationality of places and persons connected through both performances (Sheller and Urry 2006) and performativities (Hannam et al. 2006). Sedentarism disappears (Tarrius 1989). Spatially and morally, physically and emotionally, places have no rigid geographical boundaries (Tarrius 2001). Physical and virtual, material and immaterial (Balibar 2011; Agier 2014), geographical and social frontiers do exist, but they can be challenged through movement and re-positionings.

Therefore, anchorages become plural and variable. Destination and return can be inversed (Ho 2019). The meanings, attributes and boundaries of places are constantly redefined and renegotiated through women’s acrobatics. Places are not essence, but *processes* (Massey 2005). They are dynamic in their substance and meaning(s) (Lefebvre 1968). Continually produced and reproduced, their definitions are fluid, changeable and dynamic. They evolve over time according to individuals’ social, economic and moral positionings inside and outside the space (Tarrius 1989, 2001). Emotional dynamics largely interplay in the attribution of such significance. Consequently, movement(s) and attachment(s) are not linear sequences. On the contrary, they roam, rotate back and forth and change direction over time (McHugh 2000). Settlement and re-settlement lose their analytical pertinence when analysing returnees’ patterns.

2.1. Back to the village

The highly emotional dimension of the sequence of departure makes women re-migration fast and impetuous. Women acknowledged having left Taiwan in the grip of strong feelings of suffering, desolation, and torment. Mimi, thirty-year old Anhui native, who currently lives and works in Shenzhen, explained her sorrow and sadness all along her trip back to China. She associated her sufferings to an emotional seek for comfort and consolation: the desire to succeed in the ordeal. Leaving Taiwan, as she claimed, corresponded both to a “liberating” (*jie fang* 解放) act, but also to a painful experience, as she was abandoning her social ties and affectional attachment (Hidalgo and

money, nothing, I had nothing (*shenme dou meiyou, yiwu suoyou* 什麼都沒有，一無所有) […] I flew to

Thence, the contours of women's experiences and of the ordeals they encountered on their roads have modelled a plurality of meanings associated with the rural countryside. During their adolescence and first adulthood in the city, the village represented a backward site, a place to leave behind, peopled by "soiled" rural peasants, incompatible with the modernity women aspired to. While initially constructing a new life trajectory in Taiwan, struggling for adaptation and facing social contempt and disqualifications, the countryside was identified with a broader idea of national belonging (Anderson 1994). It reinforced a sense of individual and collective destiny (Tarrius 2000) among a community of Chinese sisters. When the condition of subalternity had been being partially undone, the community of origin, together with the familiar and kinship ties, as well as the co-villagers, turned into a resource for social and economic mobility in Taiwan, often representing one of the poles of the transnational multipolar economies developed by women.

Now, in a context of urgency and need, it takes the connotation of a place for affections, composed of familiar, emotional ties: a comfortable space to find social, economic and moral support. When in 2018, I met again Xiao Mei in Shenzhen, we discussed about her life re-shaping after I left her at the train station in the direction to the airport the year before:

"

> I did not want to spend more time in the village, I did not like life there. I think I spent too much time in the city, in Dongguan before and in Taiwan later, I was not used to that kind of life anymore […]".
>
> **Xiao Li**, Dongguan, 25.01.2018

If we follow my previous rationale,

In February 2017, Xiao Mei returned to rural Xingning, pushed by the desire of rebuilding a life there. She had been absent for more than twelve years. She had left home at the age of fifteen to migrate to Shenzhen, where she had been employed in the industrial sector of textile and electric companies. Later, after marriage-migration to Taiwan, she had been working in cafeterias, restaurants, night markets, supermarkets in Hukou and close Hsinchu. She had performed undeclared jobs as cleaner or baby-sitter in the invisible segments of local labour market, when she was deprived of the working permission. She also helped some "sisters" in their *online* business activities (*daigou*) on *WeChat*. Therefore, Xiao Mei multiplied her knowledge in different fields. Such knowledge supports now her new ambitions and her desires to bring innovation in her life and in her rural village of origin. The pluralisation of biographical, migratory and professional experiences all long her tortuous paths have shaped, framed and reconfigured her life ambitions, her projects and her conception of herself and of her capacities. To put it with Wyman (1993: 96), "apart from material goods and new technological skills, returnees also bring back new ideas and a new flexibility of mind".

Nonetheless, after few months, her business failed. Xiao Mei had to close the street restaurant. She did not lack in tangible resources (Polanyi 1983), represented by capitals, provisions and logistics. She did not even lack in human capital, considered here as skills and competences. What was missing were specific intangible resources (Polanyi 1983) missing in the rural world and identified in this case as a heterogenous ensemble composed of a "modern capitalistic culture" (Bayart 1994; Boltanski and Chiapello 1999), a *modern* conception of entrepreneurship, and the consequent *modern* social capital: the clients. The structure of rural labour market, together with local social norms and cultural practices contribute to build barriers to upward occupational trajectories of return migrants.

Women identified in the process of re-migration to China as an "exit door" from a temporary trap in Taiwan. However, subalternity, malleable and liable, can re-appear, under the forms of old and new barriers, hierarchies and inequalities. Once again, women need to develop tactics and strategies to overstep such a condition. In this sense, not only do skills, financial and human capital shape return experiences. Local power relations, traditions and cultural practices also have a significant – but, I repeat, not exclusive- bearing on returnees' capacity to invest their return experiences in their home communities (Faist 2000; Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Sinatti 2011).

Xiao Mei currently lives and works in Shenzhen. When we returned together to her rural village for the New Year celebration, Xiao Mei took me to the place where she had previously opened the street restaurant. We walked around, friendly talked to the local people we met, who ironically cheered Xiao Mei as the "old sister who lives in Taiwan" (*taiwan dajie* 台湾大姐). Hence, Xiao Mei explained to me the reasons for which she had to give up with her entrepreneurial initiative there:

> "My business did not work well. In the countryside, there is nothing. No opportunities of personal and entrepreneurial development. Do you see them? They are friendly (*reqing* 热情) certainly, but they are soiled (*tu* 土). They have never left this place and they do not know what the world outside looks like (*waimian shijie she shenme yangzi de* 外面世界是什麼樣子的) […] People do not have the same mentality of us (*sixiang* 思想), people from the city. *Biandang* are very convenient when you work hard and you do not have much time to sit down and eat a meal at noon, but people here are slow and the do not appreciate this idea […] They are very different, they are lazy, and they do not understand what making money means […]

People do not understand much, and I do not know what to talk about with them. That kind of lifestyle does not suit me anymore […]".

Xiao Mei, Xingning, 09.02.2018

2.3. Orders of aspiration and new ethics of the *self*

Through her considerations, Xiao Mei opposes, once again -as it happened when she left the countryside for the first time to live and work in large coastal cities- the slow and smooth rhythm of rural life to the accelerated, dynamic, and modern tempo of the city life. Implicitly she compares two different practices of life and work, which generate two opposed and incompatible orders of things. This leads to differentiated and unmatchable social and moral obligations, structures of practices and, more broadly, *ethics of the self* (Foucault 1984). Migration, urban life, professional experiences inside the *urban scape* both in Chinese and Taiwanese cities have modelled and re-modelled women's perspectives, ambitions and initiatives.

zainabian fazhan 忍不住在那邊發展): no jobs, old people, narrow-minded attitudes […] the city is my new home now."

Wang Mi, Thirty-three years old, Hunan native, Dongguan, 29.01.2018

Re-migration and reintegration in the countryside seem to be rife with obstacles (Gmelch 1987). Every individual biography is re-constructed oscillating between marginalisation, confrontation, adaptation, and readjustment. Social walls, economic barriers and moral fences are produced on women's roads towards resettlement. Back to her home village, Wang Mi spent few months working in a little local shop. However, the salary was poor, and she found the job "boring" as she said, especially if compared to industrial work performed in the factories or to her employment experiences as cosmetic seller or waitress in Taiwan:

"Indeed, I did not feel tired […] in the countryside, life is slow and work is slow too, perhaps too slow for me […] I got urban rhythm (*chengshi sudu* 城市速度), and I went way faster […] people are so slow, they do things slowly and this annoyed me a lot […] They also speak slowly […] The shop opened early in the morning and closed early in the evening, that did not fit my rhythms anymore since I was used to start later and to finish late at night […]"

Wang Mi, Dongguan, 29.01.2018

Wang Mi or

concerned with their family's reputation.

for relocation, through further migration. Returnees, similarly to Xiao Mei, progressively realise that, as people who have “been away”, they are viewed differently (

women felt frustrated, unfulfilled, unsatisfied by the lack of local employment opportunities and upward social mobility. Movement, mobility and motion vary according to spaces, temporalities, social and emotional positionings, which are all mutually co-produced. Spatial contiguities and temporal continuities (Tarrius 2001) are generated by and, at their turn, support movement and displacements, as Wang Mi words suggest. Past and present social and urban experiences in China and in Taiwan mix and merge; emotions, aspirations and ambitions are built from and produce new subjectivation processes which interplay in the design of re-migration patterns.

More than settlement, "reintegration process" (Constant and Massey 2002; Cassarino 2004) or "assimilation" (Brubaker 2001), what emerges form women's re-migration canvas is a strict link between the construction of a new subjectivity and old and new des-affiliations to spaces, place, temporalities. Anchorages, moorings, belongings and aspirations beat the rhythms of social, economic and moral re-positionings during re-migration. In the table which follows, I have mapped women's post-return urban re-positioning when back to China.

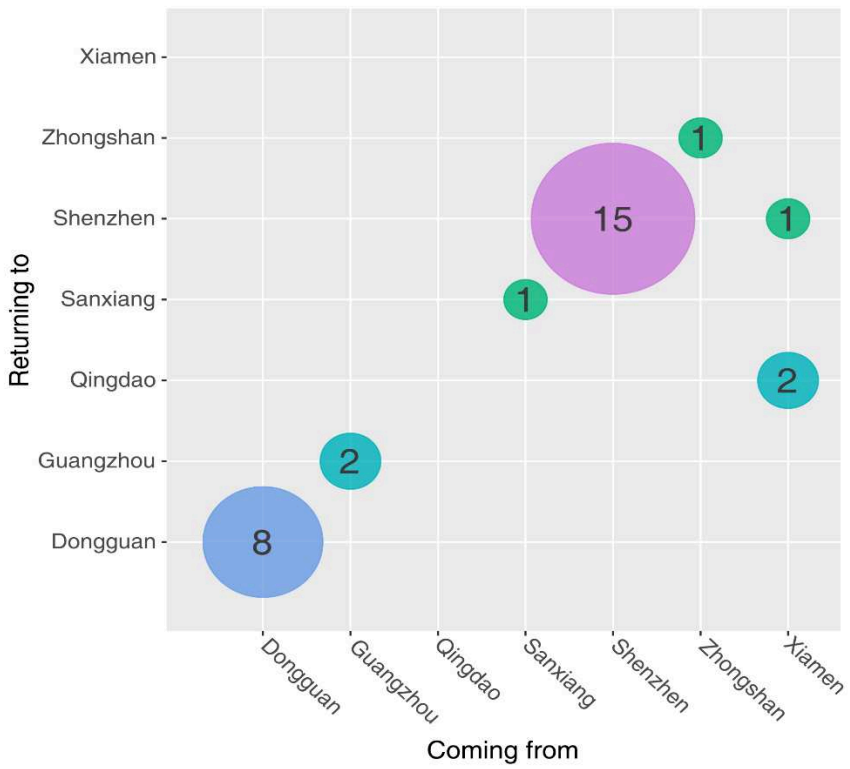

Figure 49 Women's re-mobility canavas: the link between the last city they had been living and working in in China (before marriage-migration to Taiwan) and the return destinatin emerge, since the city is often the same.

This graph helps to schematically and quickly visualise women's re-mobility patterns: from a first step, and stop at their rural village of origin, they rapidly re-migrate somewhere else, and most likely to the large coastal cities where they had been previously living and working in. The visualisation suggests a link between the city they left when moving to Taiwan and the city they returned to, when back to China to Taiwan. Let me elucidate this point.

If it is true that women tend to primarily move back to their rural village of origin, their stay at home are generally short and temporary. Migrants cannot "take their place" in the countryside anymore: modern, urban and independent subjectivities do not fit the rural social, economic and cultural space anymore. The discrepancy between the old daily life and social norms and the modern, metropolitan, accelerated living situations women have experienced and contributed to produce is too deep. The image of "backyard" (*tu* 土) countryside women had constructed since their very first departure during adolescence seems, in the end, not to have changed much. Time has passed, individual migratory patterns, marriage, labour and mobility experiences have multiplied. They brought women to discover a plurality of lands and social worlds.

However, once again, the urban environment of large coastal cities is associated to opportunities, possibilities and project-making for women. Subjectivity and identity interplay in the negotiation of this new process of re-mobility when women re-move to the city. Time, space and aspirations constitute vectors of attachment and of belonging to the city where migrants have previously constructed part of their existences. The legitimacy of the urban space is sustained by feelings of belonging and of anchorage with the urban space and with the people residing there. Subjectivity-making processes re-spatialise migration and support further movement to the city. Continuities with the past biographical experiences in China and in Taiwan related to ambitions, aspirations and projection towards the horizon of transformation emerge. Nevertheless, the social, economic and moral frontiers which characterised the urban space while young *dagong mei* were living and working there, have not disappeared over time. Their persistence challenges re-settlement processes and require women to develop new forms of negotiation and strategies to "take their place" in the city and negotiate opportunities in the labour market.

3.1. Old and new urban barriers

I introduce here Jia Lin. She is a twenty-nine-year- old Hainan native who currently lives and works in Shenzhen, in the peripheric district of Baoan 宝安, where she shares a little apartment with Xiao

Mei. Baoan is in the suburbs of the city. It is populated mainly by rural migrants, since it is close the industrial areas where they are employed and characterised by relatively cheaper rents. Jia Lin, after a first labour migration from a rural village in Hainan province to Shenzhen, has also experienced marriage-migration to Taiwan, and post-divorce return migration to China.

These two *yuangong* -"trapped-in-migration lives"- in Taiwan have constructed their return careers to China together. In 2016, after a seven-year stay in Hsinchu, Jia Lin divorced first and re-migrated to China. Analogously to the other returnees, her return trajectory is also characterised by a first stop of few months at her village of origin. Unable to tolerate rural life anymore, she decided to move again, and she oriented her road towards Shenzhen, a place she was familiar with and where she had maintained few social connections, represented by *guanxi* of previous colleagues and co-villages still working *in loco*.

However, after arrival, Jia Lin felt disoriented. Before migrating to Taiwan, she had spent few years in Shenzhen. At that time, she had been working *dagong* in local factories and in the sector of small urban production. During her first migratory and labour experiences in Shenzhen, she faced the obstacles to integration in the city to which migrant workers are subjected to, in terms of restrictions to the access to social rights and employment disqualification in the labour market (Pun 2005; Li and Tian 2010; Roulleau-Berger 2015). Nonetheless, those memories did not inhibit Jia Lin to re-move to Shenzhen. Jia Lin was confident in her capacity to negotiate new opportunities *in loco*, deriving from the repertories of social and economic resources capitalised during the past ordeals of labour, migration and marriage, across spaces and places:

> "Shenzhen was a familiar place, I had spent long time there before and I knew where to go, where to look for a place to stay […] I was not a *cungu* 村姑 (rural naïve girl), I spent time abroad and I grew up, I became an adult […] I had seen so many bad things in Taiwan that I could not be scared of anything more […] This time, I was not scared of going to the city, I had become a city dweller […] I still had few friends there and some colleagues who could help me to settle down and find a job […]"
>
> **Jia Lin**, Twenty-eight years old, Hainan native, Shenzhen, 19.02.2018

The city of Shenzhen was for her a place to negotiate her new expectations in terms of social, economic and moral re-positioning. It is a space where, thanks to the her new "affiliative competences" (Roulleau-Berger 2014a) in terms of reflexive understanding of the opportunity and constraint structure, she could develop upward social mobility. Her previous urban stay in Shenzhen produced a sense of belonging and of anchorage to this place, associated to a securing feeling. The city hence

corresponded to the modern subjectivity she could construct during mobility patterns: a mundane, modern place to build the new step of her post-return life pattern. Howbeit, unexpectedly, this time, that very first perception of Shenzhen radically changed after few weeks there. The order of memory clashed with *the order of things* she was facing in the city. The urban space had changed during her absence. New obstacles where emerging due to the urban changes of the city. She did not recognize neighbourhoods anymore, she explained how lost she felt while walking in the streets she used to go through several years before:

> "I had already spent long time there before going to Taiwan and I know the city very well… I mean, I want to say that I thought I knew the city very well because when I arrived, I realised that things had changed. Seven years ago, I had also been living in Baoan, at that time rents were so cheap! Now prices are very expensive. Everything is expensive, even more expensive than in Taiwan! I could not recognize the streets and I even got lost few times. The metro has changed, the streets have changes, the restaurants, the shops… everything is so different […]".
>
> **Jia Lin**, Twenty-eight years old, Hainan native, Shenzhen, 19.02.2018

The perception and the definition of *transformation* and *change* is highly subjective. It is shaped and concurrently shapes women's perception of their sense of affiliation and disaffiliation, of belonging and attachment to the place or of detachment and exclusion. These feelings and emotions contribute to forging social practices, in terms of understanding of the opportunities existing in the city and well as of individual social, economic and moral re-positioning. Jia Lin's degree of preparedness of re-migration was weaker than

presents multiple and contradictory facets. It simultaneously corresponds to a place of sufferings, generated and sustaining the previous ordeals of misrecognition and social contempt Jia Lin experienced while, as a young *dagong mei*, she worked in the local factories.

Concurrently Shenzhen is associated to a place for re-gaining autonomy and recognition, after the marriage and migratory experience in Taiwan, which has humiliated Jia Lin's *self*, but also opened the stage for re-migration and for further biographical re-positionings. Shenzhen is perceived as a space for the achievement, after the tortuous adventures across diverse local and global seas and normative orders, of the project of autonomous, independent and modern status. The work of imagination and of projection developed by Jia Lin, but also by Xiao Mei, Wang Mi, Lily, Lei Xin and the other women who left Taiwan to re-move was produced by and, at its turn, reinforced a new image of their *selves*, esteem and consideration. These new *ethics of the self* reveal to be crucial to organise the re-integration and re-settlement processes in the city, as Jia Lin explained:

> "After I found an apartment, the first thing I did was looking for a job. At the beginning I did not consider that as a problem […] When I was younger, and I lived here, finding a job was far from being complicated […]

salary was poor […] I did not want to go back there when I returned this time […] I was not fifteen years old anymore and I could not accept anymore that sort of working conditions […]

In this sense, the new *aspiring ethics of the self* collide to the inegalitarian structure of Chinese labour market – that I have defined and described in the third part of this work. Years have gone by. However, the barriers generated by the rural-urban divide, the low educational level, the status and the gender bias still limit return migrants' access to salaried employment (Hagan and Wassik 2016; Flahaux 2017). Indeed, the industrial sector, represented by the factory, remained an option for Wang Mi or for Jia Lin. Nevertheless, these new subjectivities, forged through novel self-esteem, dignity, ambitions and aspirations draw a moral ban to such downgrading employment. For instance, Jia Lin started a new search for a job which could ensure her a certain social status. She acknowledged spending three months in vain looking for a position as a secretary in offices, or as a seller in some renewed shopping malls or boutiques:

> "I did what I used to do before, when I was younger […] I walked around the city, and I moved especially to the city centre, to Yanhe street, to the old street, to Shenfang district, there are many nice and fashionable shops there and I thought I could find a job, but nothing! I was asked for a diploma, some certificates, for a higher education level…and I could not find anything. I felt very depressed as I did not want to go back to the factory […]

her social and economic status. However, now, back to China, the reproduction of old barriers to salaried employment and the consequent social and moral recognition damage her self-esteem. At the very same time, the fragmentation of experiences, and the multiplication of local and global hierarchies and constraints that Jia Lin had to overstep during pluri-mobilities provided her with reflective resources (Roulleau-Berger 2001, 2014a). These sustain an important, and constant, work of imagination and of creativity. A critical understanding of situations summed to a reflection about the strategies she had previously deployed to cope with the diverse obstacles in terms of employment or social dignity, produced -and were simultaneously sustained by- emotions of determination, of courage, of tenacity and persistence:

> "I could not re-move back to my parents' place, I just left them by saying that the countryside was not the place I wanted to develop myself […] When I was in Taiwan, I also had problems to find an employment, that as hard, but there is always a solution […] When I divorced I cried, when I came back, I cried, but then, I told myself *yao zhanqilai* 要站起來 (you have to stand up), *yao zhanqilai*"
>
> **Jia Lin**, Shenzhen, 20.02.2018

As observed all long the progression of women's migratory and professional careers, the condition of subalternity is "made" and "unmade", "done" and "undone", according to the lived situations, experienced practices, social, economic and moral constraints, together with the opportunities and possibilities women can negotiate. Jia Lin's experience shows that the process of "taking her place" or, perhaps, "re-taking her place" in the city is bifurcated and tortuous. It requires time, resources, migratory knowledge, as well as creativity and determination. Initially, by calling on her previously acquired repertory of social resources, she succeeded finding an employment in Shenzhen, which enables her to survive. However, she felt constantly frustrated by this re-positioning.

Old emotions of dissatisfaction and unfulfillment previously experienced both in China during youth as well as in Taiwan re-emerged. Such negative emotions progressively turn into resources to overstep a new condition of immobilisation. Negative emotions of anger, of dissatisfaction and the perception of injustice do not only provoke a responsive action in terms of contestation of a situation. Crucially, they also call back to previously deployed strategies of transgression and practices of resistance.

Noticeably, the new, precarious and disqualified job Jia Lin found did not provide her with the wage she wished nor with any perspective of career advancement, limiting the perspectives of occupational mobility (Roulleau-Berger 2015). Hence, the segmentation of local labour market, summed to the increasingly inegalitarian structure of Chinese urban society (Li and Tian 2010), in terms of housing

(Li and Shin 2013), social services and protection (Pun 2016), jobs' opportunities and social stratification make Jia Lin questioning her return decision and the new, potential shape of her life cycle:

"

Butler's reflection (1993, 2006) and push it further, Jia Lin's questionings, doubts and perplexities prove how the flow of life over time entails effects that condition the future. On the other hand, it is the present that shapes the past, ordering, reconstructing and interpreting its legacy, with expectations and hopes also helping to select what best serves the future.

Chapter 2: New Hyperlocal Neighbourhoods for Global Social and Emotional Practices

Re-migration turns to be a complex, multifaced and mutable process. Its variety and polymorphism not only derive from the plurality of returnees' experiences -in terms of biographical trajectories, social displacements and professional paths- but also from the emotional significances they attribute to the different social and moral spaces they cross and live in.

The emotional meanings of the place are highly subjective and intimate. They derive from individuals' appreciation of the articulation between time, space, and experiences and from the attributes assigned to the different forms of *attachment* (Callon and Latour 1986; Raulin 2000; Tarrius 2001; Bastide 2015), which can be physically and virtually performed. The relationships in terms of social, economic and symbolic bonds with the geographically distant, but emotionally adjacent places women crossed by women can be creatively transformed into helpful tools and strategies for re-settlement, re-adaptation and renovation of individual life patterns. Translocal social networks of "sisters" (*jiemei*), *glocal* affections and cross-border *formal* (Carling and Erdal 2014) and *informal* (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001) *attachments* represent crucial supports and resources not only for immediate daily survival, but also for new processes of *self-affirmation* and efforts of upward social mobility. One more time, back to China, when local social worlds, rural or urban becomes oppressive and inhibits women's project-making processes, the global turns into a resource and a space for practice.

open and navigate through new virtual, translocal markets. Since the local industrial segment of the Chinese labour market is inegalitarian and hierarchical, women refuse its re-integration and seek for other *glocal* markets.

Parallels in terms of practices of contestation and of resistance among the different spaces, temporalities and social positions re-emerge back to China too. And this is not anodyne. They derive from complex, translocal, physical and virtual, material and emotional assemblages of social, economic and affectional resources which can be constantly re-mobilised. Territories, borders, geographically-bonded places are, during re-migration processes, transgressed and transcended (Brown 2010) again.

During their displacements and roamings between rural and urban spaces, between China and Taiwan, women re-generate *sui generis*, innovative processes of territorialisation, de-territorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 2006) and re-territorialisation (Harvey 1989; Sassen 2006a), on local and global scales, on physical but also virtual levels. Patterns of re-migration transform local social relationships; they re-spatialise rights, sentiments of belonging and of affectional attachment (Tarrius 2001). Translocal practices learnt in Taiwan and projected on global arenas are re-performed, re-kindled and re-shaped within the Chinese localities that women move back to. Spatial, geographical, physical, material borders do not delimit the social and emotional reproduction of migrants' life worlds, "in connection with countries, or spaces, in which they claim belonging, membership or diverse attachments" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992).

Mobilities, immobilities and moorings (Sheller and Urry 2006) occur dialectically: "the contemporary round of global restructuring has entailed neither the absolute territorialisation of societies, economies, or cultures onto a global scale, nor their complete deterritorialisation into a supraterritorial, distanceless, placeless, or borderless space of flows" (Brenner, 2004: 64). Instead, translocal social, economic and moral spaces reveal to be complex, tangled mosaics of varying and "interpenetrating nodes, levels, scales and morphologies" (Brenner 2004: 65). They suggest lines of continuities embedded in migrants' life-course and biographical trajectories. The polymorphism of the spatial and emotional geographies which derive from a *sui generis* of material displacements of objects, immaterial, virtual circulations of emotions and women's physical displacements impose to re-think and re-consider movement beyond migration.

1. Social and Emotional Re-spatialisations

1.1. Emotional corridors, cross-border *jiemei*

Doubts and perplexities characterise returnees' careers. Nonetheless, despite their strong emotional scope, they do not necessarily correspond to an obstacle to individuals' affirmation and projects.

Distinctly, during and after re-migration trajectories, individuals remain creatively connected to the diverse societies, places and people. Emotions represent the metaphorical "sticking glue", which enables women to *be in*, to *move through* and to *relate to* the plural social worlds they cross. Hence, individual attachments to people and places are multiple and changing, yet fundamental to women's experiences. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) have pointed out the centrality of what they called "informal attachment" to places: the affectional and emotional ties to a specific site and to the people -here the "sisters" still living in *one* society of destination or of departure. Thus, when Jia Lin divorced, she returned to Shenzhen. However, when she physically crossed the border, returning to China, she virtually remained in Taiwan, by keeping in touch through *WeChat* with her "sisters". So, when she saw

indecisive significances they attribute to the geographical places, but also the social and moral spaces they traverse.

Additionally, when the virtual practices of socialisation and of mutual help among "sisters" are, once again -and I stress this point- reproduced, following women's life trajectories and biographical ordeals through the spaces, mapping movement and drawing a cartography of return patters results a difficult operation. Xiao Mei and Jia Lin's virtual and physical encounters and practices of reciprocity raise a crucial point. Emotions as resources and competences which had been learned in China during the first migratory and labour experiences in the factory and in the urban space of the city and re-kindled, re-modelled and re-performed in Taiwan are now re-actualised and re-produced when women re-migrate back to China. Hence, these processes of *territorialisation*, *de-territorialisation* and *re-territorialisation* are intrinsically emotional and affectional. Emotional and affectional practices are translocally produced and re-produced.

Women migrate and re-migrate. The tanks of emotions migrate and re-migrate with them, following the tempo of their movements. They contribute to define and re-define spaces, places and temporalities; they shape and frame the opportunities and the obstacles, the possibilities and the constraints migrants encounter on the paths they walk through. Emotions sustain the mobilisation of previously acquired social and affectional resources, which reveal crucial during the new practices of contestation of the local order, by circumnavigating *glocal* seas.

The *emotional algorithm* on *WeChat* which had previously linked women together replays a role within this process of re-connection during re-migration. In Taiwan, it generated practices of solidarity and mutual help. Now, back to China, it re-played a role in the production of a junction between old translocal affectional ties, geographical distances, and new virtual connections. It opened smooth (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) corridors of intermittent emotional movement and communications. Yet, it is highly de-territorialized. It transcends borders, spaces and physical sites. Old and new practices of solidarity and mutual help emerge. The affectional ties performed physically and virtually in Taiwan open for new sentiments of "being together", *i.e.* part of a translocal, cross-border emotional collective destiny (Pollack 1995; Tarrius 2001). Practices of mutuality and reciprocity learned during the cross-border, translocal experiences of mobility, can be locally performed, and re-kindled within the hyperlocal microcosms of the cities and the neighbourhoods women return to.

The contingent, situational nature of mutuality, reciprocity and affectional ties means that they can be potentially -spatially and temporally- recalibrated during migration, re-migration and the diverse mobilities. They are generated "here and there" (Tarrius 2000), in the past, present or in the future.

To clarify and resume my argument, I suggest that emotions, feelings and affections to people and places actively forge relocation and movement. But that is not all. They are generated from and, at their turn, produce new social and affectional morphologies of translocal practices during re-migration and attempts to re-settlement. They build continuities with the past experiences, which support social and emotional projection towards the present and the future of practices.

The parallels in terms of local and global social and emotional practices emerging from women's translocal bonds, connections, affiliations challenge the local and the global as bounded-sites for action (Amit 1999; Candea 2009; Falzon 2009) and suggest, once more, their strong multi-scalar and mutable imbrication. The dichotomy of emplacement-displacement losses its significance inside *glocal* spaces where social practices, emotional ties and economic activities are all at once interconnected on a physical and virtual level.

Along this line, the city reveals to be, as during previous rural-to-urban migration, a "strategic site" (Sassen 1995) on the global scale. Analogously to Taiwanese cities and neighbourhoods, the spaces of the Chinese city and its hyperlocal neighbourhoods contribute to forge circuits of translocal everyday life performances, capturing "a sense of distanced yet situated possibilities for constructing and reconstructing social relations" (Smith 2005: 237).

been translated, as I have shown all along this work, into different practices. In Taiwan, affectional practices emerged from and were, at their turn, supported by emotions of nostalgia, of homesick, of loneliness, of deception, of disillusionment.

Back to China, women re-articulate, according to the new situated and local circumstances, these very same social and emotional practices they had been performing within different, previous spatialities and temporalities in Taiwan. The new emotions generated from and sustaining practices have changed, since they depend on the socially and morally constructed dimension of new situations and circumstances. Nostalgia, deception as for divorce and children abandonment, worry as for the future, homesickness, but also aspiration, ambition and determination to reconstruct the life courses and to make money characterise the practice and the emotional performances amongst "sisters".

Despite the differences in terms of situations, spaces and temporalities, the continuity in terms of *praxis* is hence produced *on* and *through* the digital platform *WeChat*. This social and emotional infrastructure for practices enables, again, an appropriation of interconnection and simultaneity by the actors who know how to make good use of it, while negotiating opportunities and coping with difficulties, whenever and wherever they are physically located. No matter whether they are physically positioned in rural areas, in Taiwan, or in the Chinese city, *WeChat* sustains, once more, immediate, simultaneous emotional communications, which are turned into precise social inter-actions. Nodes, nipples and affectional networks are translocally re-mobilised and re-actualised, following the social and emotional patterns learnt during the previous socialisation processes in diverse spaces and places of mobility.

Knowledge, practices, emotions and affections transcend borders and make spatial rigid delineations meaningless. Women's re-migration and new social and economic practices within the Chinese city generate, once again, global-scaled dynamics. The mutable and malleable definition of spaces, which have no more physical and temporal delineations, generate new, *sui generis* articulations among physical and virtual movements, individuals' biographies, life trajectories and emotional practices. Virtually dislocated, geographically dismantled, affectionately transgressed, when the contours of territories become emotional, the *choreographies of affections* become translocal.

2. Modern Carriers of Social Change

In July 2017, Xiao Mei realised that her business had failed in the countryside. Thus, she considered moving somewhere else, where she could succeed in her project. She got in touch with Jia Lin, who was back to Shenzhen and who, at her turn, had got in touch with Xiao Mei before leaving Taiwan. By that time, Jia Lin was working in the Sichuanese restaurant, experiencing strong economic pressure as the salary was poor, while living expenses and the rent she had to pay were expensive. When Xiao Mei informed her of her plan to re-migrate to the city, Jia Lin immediately invited her to her lodgings: they could live together to alleviate financial stress, sharing the fees together. When in January 2018 I contacted Xiao Mei, she was already living with Jia Lin.

I was thus invited to join the two women in Shenzhen, Baoan district, where I lived with them for a month. The lodgings were austere and unfurnished, but the rent was of 2 000 kuai RMB per month, hence rather expensive. The apartment was very small and lacked facilities. The toilets and the shower were situated outside, in the corridor as in common use with the other people on the same floor. Jia Lin and Xiao Mei were also sharing a bed. Xiao Mei looked almost embarrassed of hosting me in that uncomfortable place. When I arrived and rang at the doorbell, she came downstairs to welcome me, and she almost felt obliged to justify and legitimize the poor conditions of the little apartment:

> "Shenzhen has changed a lot and rents became very expensive, everything is expensive now [...] It is still hard for us to pay the rent, but things are improving as we are earning more and more money. I still need to pay my uncle back, as he lent money to me. After I will have paid him back, I will buy a fridge and I will improve my life […]

distance, women could through *online* conversations on *WeChat* share information and knowledge about their expectations and the experiences of return, identifying together solutions to rebuild their career in China. They discussed about divorce, legal documents, Taiwanese citizenship, children, and strategies of resettlement, in terms of housing and employment opportunities in their society of origin.

Along these lines, Jia Lin warned Xiao Mei of the obstacles in the access to salaried employment in Shenzhen. She told Xiao Mei that she had to recalibrate her expectations in terms of economic mobility because of the disqualifying structure of the local labour market. However, that did not correspond to

and mother in law exercised on her limited her margin of manoeuvre and the potential for networks expansion and *online* commerce improvement.

Nevertheless, Xiao Mei was aware of the opportunities in terms of social and economic mobility offered by the world of translocal physical and virtual entrepreneurship. In Taiwan, she had been observing Chinese sisters developing a plurality of economic activities. She had partially learnt the functioning of *online* and *offline* business in interaction. So, she was ready, back to China, to translate the tacit knowledge and savoir-faire capitalised in Taiwan into new practices (Roulleau-Berger 2002, 2014b). In this sense, her entrepreneurial ambitions had matured over time. Before returning to China, Xiao Mei had meticulously prepared her re-mobility pattern. Through the *WeChat* groups of Chinese "sisters", she could get in contact not only with Jia Lin, but also with other divorced women who had re-moved to China. She made inquiries about the structure of urban opportunities and constraints, pondering how to organise and develop her re-migration social and economic career.

Following this perspective, researches about return migrants' professional re-integration have demonstrated a high propensity for self-employment and business formation among returnees (Constant and Massey 2002; Démurger and Xu 2011), mainly justified by the local labour market inegalitarian structure (Levy 2008). However, if the structure and segmentation of labour market can be an analytical prism under which understanding Xiao Mei's entrepreneurial initiative, it is also incomplete.

Employment does not only correspond to a means of survival and of economic security. It is also often associated by women to deeper processes of subjectivity-making, individual affirmation, self-fulfilment and, more broadly, recognition (Roulleau-Berger 2009). All along their career-making, the jumbling articulation between economic, social and moral positionings has always been crucial, indivisible and inalienable for women, especially when facing disqualifications and subalternity. Autonomy, modernity and independence have constantly been important fuels for action and re-action, which led to migration and re-migrations. In this respect,

“

United-States, *informal human capital* capitalised abroad can be successfully re-mobilised in the informal sector of the city, through entrepreneurial activities.

Despite their plural experiences, in the formal sector of the urban wage labour market, women's lack of codified knowledge excludes them from the recognition of their tacit skills which have been developed across the migratory circuits to advance in their economic career (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2001). In Rizhao, Lily looked for employments in shopping malls and high-class restaurants and hotels. However, she was refused employment since she was unable to formally prove having capitalised experiences in these fields while living in Taiwan. The same did Lei Xin. She used to work in a private company office during her stay in Taipei. She stayed at the front desk, she answered the phone and accompanied clients to the different offices. Back to China, she tried to find similar positions both in Guangzhou and in Dongguan, but since her education level was formally very low, she could not be employed**.**

Per contra, it is in the frame of a lack of social and economic recognition that individuals feel legitimate to produce new economic activities, since "they feel to be competent in the fields where they are socially qualified of incompetent[140]" (Roulleau-Berger 2014a, 2017).

Also, and crucially, a link between the number of professional experiences performed in Taiwan and the development of entrepreneurial activities and business during re-migration experiences is visible. This might lead to presume that the pluralisation of jobs and positions in Taiwan supported women's multiplication of both social resources and knowledge- in terms of skills and competences (Roulleau-Berger 1999, 2010)- which reveal to be helpful while setting commercial activities during re-mobility to China. Moreover, bridges and connections become visible between entrepreneurship in Taiwan and its re-performance when back to China. Such a tendency to develop new entrepreneurial activities back to the Chinese city seems to be particularly strong when previous professional entrepreneurial experiences -physical or virtual- in Taiwan are numerous.

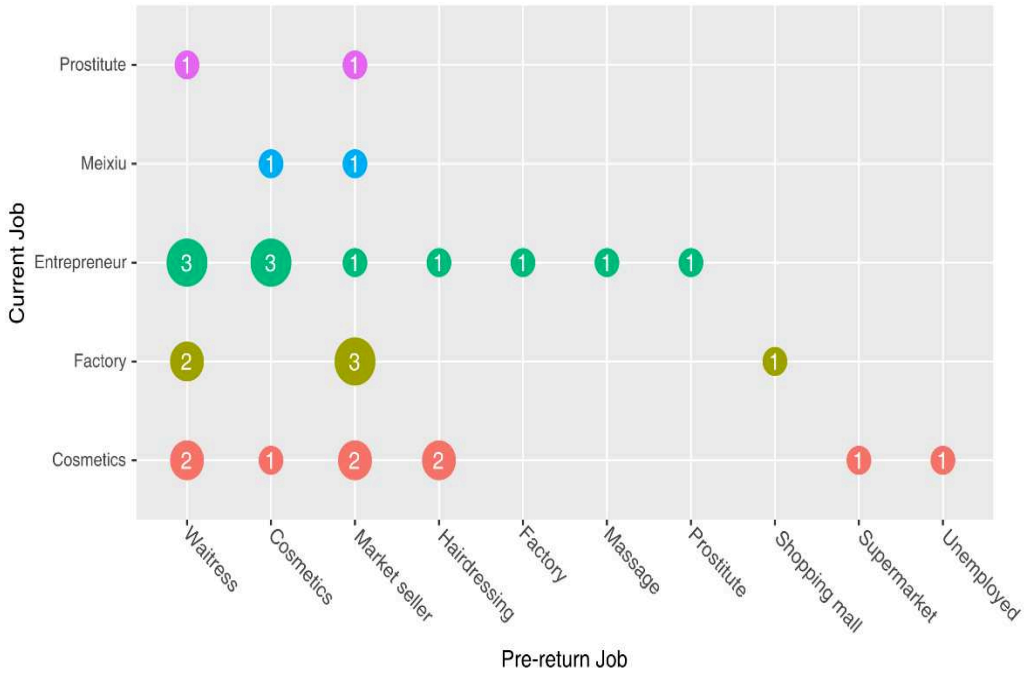

Figure 50 The link between the latest job performed in Taiwan and a tendency to develop entrepreneurial activities one back to the Chinese city.

What emerges is that the multiplication of professional experiences in Taiwan, together with the pluralisation of social and professional roles performed at the workplaces sustained an increased, *translocal* seek for social recognition (Honneth 2000) and for a new status after return migration. The multiplication of professional experiences in Taiwan provided women with an increased level of skills, savoir-faire, and competences, but also creativity and original ideas which lead to entrepreneurship. The formal sectors of Chinese labour market being stratified and inegalitarian, entrepreneurship turns to be, once again, and in China now, a channel not only to a secured employment and income, but also to social and moral recognition.

2.1. Return of “innovation”

By developing her *biandang* business,

urban *guanxi*- with previous colleagues and friends while staying in Taiwan. However, she kept important transnational networks of sisters based in Taiwan. These overlapping circumstances increased the difficulties towards social ascension and upward economic mobility.

When she moved back to Shenzhen, Jia Lin was alone. Facing old and new obstacles in the access to the local labour market, she initially called on her limited networks of co-villagers to find a poorly payed, disqualifying employment in a Sichuanese restaurant. Paradoxically, she was back to a disqualifying segment of the labour market, like the ones she had integrated few years before during rural-to-urban migration. Once again, this employment did not provide her with the self-esteem and the social dignity she was seeking for. Back to China, Jia Lin re-experienced subalternity. This degrading social and economic positioning generated the reformulation of emotions of dissatisfaction, unhappiness and discontent. The structure of the labour market seemed, once more, to inhibit her chance to renegotiate a modern, autonomous and independent status. In the frame of such negative emotions, the *turning point* of her biographical, social and professional positioning emerges when her individual career enters the intersubjective sphere of interaction. Jia Lin's situation changed when Xiao Mei sent a *WeChat* message to her, explaining that she was going to Shenzhen.

the structure of the salons with the places she had been previously working in during her stay in Taiwan. She evaluated what the Chinese local market could offer. Progressively, she understood that business innovation, which could have sustained upward social and economic mobility, derived from a projection and transposition of local commerce towards a global horizon. Yet, she needed more economic resources, hence capitals to invest.

Imitating

Jia Lin: [sends a little emoticon with a dog] sister, are you there?

Nina: [sending a dancing warm] Here I am! Long-time no seen! (*haojiu bu jian* 好久不見) Where are you?

Jia Lin: Shenzhen

Nina: How is it? What are you doing?

Jia Lin: I am back, want to start a business

Nina: Which business

Jia Lin: nail polish, cosmetics, eyebrow care (*meixiu* 美秀)

Nina: I see

Jia Lin: I need your help

Nina: tell me (*gan sha* 幹啥)

Jia Lin: *yao qian* 要錢 (need money)

[…]

Nina: The most important thing is to have clients satisfied; no matter if you do it professionally or not, clients must be happy, so that they come back […] Chinese people are more and more exigent, you have to convince them that what you do is better than what other people do, and also, prices must be competitive […] Tell them that you are doing something innovative, tell them that your make-up is Taiwanese style (*taishi* 台式) […]".

***WeChat* conversation, between Nina,** in Taipei and **Jia Lin**, in Shenzhen, 11. 11.2017

Looking at

cities they have been previously living and working in China, Taiwan, and the new places of post-return settlement.

3. New Urban Theatres[142]: Taiwanese Style Performances, Taiwanese Citizenship Re-spatialisations

generate new translocal economic activities, through the contestation of the labour market, as well as through the production of new *glocal* and virtual segments of markets. *Yuangong* in Taiwan, during re-migration women can re-negotiate a status and shift to a *paodanbang* or a *laobanniang* re-positioning.

More concretely, entrepreneurship is not only a proactive response to local labour market structural inequalities, but also a means of status achievement and a way towards individual and public recognition of the identity (Margalit 1996; Honneth 2006). Taiwan as a place has a strong social, economic, emotional and identity connotation. When women realised the significance that a Taiwanese style product or commercial activity had for local Chinese people, they could play with their newly acquired citizenship status, transforming it into a resource for upward social and economic mobility, as well as for gaining local respect, dignity and recognition in the public sphere of the city. From this curious practice it emerges that patterns of re-migration and post-return economic activity transform social relationships of citizenship (Ho 2019). They re-spatialise identity performances, implying shifts in terms of rights, status, obligations and senses of belonging. But they also contribute to forge, frame and re-define professional experiences and economic activities, in order to improve its owners' benefits and interests.

March 3rd 2018. 8 am. Shenzhen.

Xiao Mei was slicing meat and getting the biandang ready for selling. Before opening the stand, we stopped by a local meat stand owned by a co-villager of Xiao Mei who sold expiring buffalo meat[143], imported from the near countryside, thus very cheap. While cooking, Xiao Mei also asked me to go and get a little tank of colza oil in an adjacent shop, owned by the nephew of her cousin. When I came back, Xiao Mei was friendly chatting with a middle-aged local Cantonese, who was waiting for his biandang. The gentleman was curious about the way Xiao Mei cooked the food, and he asked Xiao Mei what made the Taiwanese biandang so different from the Chinese equivalent, called hefan 盒飯 (also, "boxed-meals"). After having cheered him, wishing him a "good morning" using the Taiwanese common expression of zao an 早安[144], Xiao Mei explained:

> "We, the Taiwanese (*women taiwanren* 我們台灣人) use very high-quality products, only olive oil imported from Western countries and cow meat […] Also, the quality of vegetables is very good, look at these onions or potatoes (*maling shu* 馬鈴薯[145]), they are fresh and perfumed […]".

In the presentation of herself at work,

I can go to the hospital of Taiwanese people, I can use my Taiwanese insurance to pay, and people respect me […] Before nobody cared about me, while now, I got some respect (*zunzhong* 尊重) […]

to generating new anchorages and settlements. Following this line, recent researches by Carling and Erdal (2014) have suggested that formalised attachment to the country of destination -in the form of citizenship- can be a trigger for return migration, as it enables transnational mobility. Nevertheless, such formal attachment in terms of social rights and rights to mobility does not correspond to what Mortensen (2014) has called a “safety valve in case of unsuccessful return”.

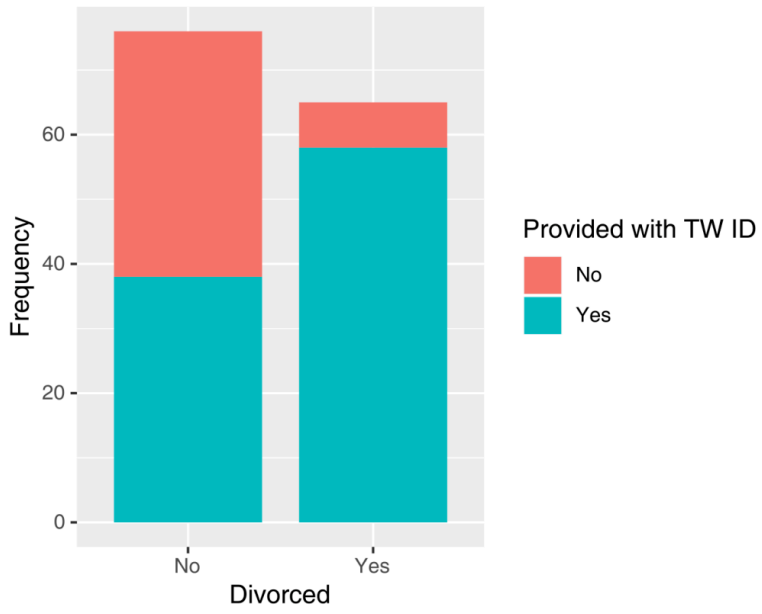

Figure 52 The ratio between divorce and the obtention of Taiwanese citizenship.

According to the most recent revision of Taiwanese Immigration Act (2008), Taiwanese citizenship can nowadays be octroyed after a stay of six years in the territory. In this sense, most of women who engaged in re-migration have obtained Taiwanese citizenship. This could seem paradoxical, but it is not. It might make us presume that by obtaining local citizenship, women were willing to settle-down in Taiwan on long term. However, after becoming Taiwanese citizens, women who divorce are likely to leave the country and move back to Chinese society. There, they are not provided anymore with local *hukou* -the household registration and the consequent rights it provides individuals with- since they gave up with Chinese nationality.

This conundrum needs to be inscribed in the general economy of migratory, biographical and professional careers, articulated around different mobility regimes, rights, status and identity attribution in China and in Taiwan. The previous rural *hukou* represented for migrants a vector of prejudice, stereotyping but also social and economic disqualification, which strongly limit their social rights in the city and their paths to upward social mobility. On the contrary, Taiwanese citizenship seems to be equal to an urban *hukou* in terms of rights and social profection.

Divorced women tend to wait for the obtention of Taiwanese citizenship before engaging into re-migration. Taiwanese citizenship hence reveals to be double-goaled. By erasing borders' identity controls deriving from the regimes of mobility, it makes movement possible. It simplifies connections with the cross-border places, spaces and people. Physical movement being unrestrained, temporary

displacements, visits and travels are facilitated. Concurrently, in *one* society of departure, for instance China, it promotes (temporary) settlement and can sustain re-integration within urban society and local labour market. By replacing the previous rural identity, embodied by rural *hukou*, it provides women with a new identity and status, which support material recognition of social rights and moral recognition.

This is true for most women I interviewed who engaged in re-migration. Xiao Mei or Lily could, through re-mobility, shift from a *yuangong* positioning in Taiwan to a new status of *laobanniang* in China.

Mei or even Jia Lin's ones suggests that this kind of situation is not without repercussions during resettlement and reintegration processes back to the Chinese city. In this sense, it reduced the chances of contesting and transgressing the local labour market to negotiate an alternative, "decent" (Margalit 1996) place in new markets, by the means of entrepreneurship.

A similar condition characterises Mimi's post re-migration life shape. Back to the village in Anhui and, later, to the city of Shenzhen, Mimi needed money for herself and for the child she had left in Taiwan. Her strong feelings of guiltiness for having abandoned her son in Taipei pushed her to look for capitals to constantly buy expensive presents for him, as a "compensation for her absence", as she claimed (Shenzhen, 03.02.2019). Mimi currently works in a local supermarket, were the salary is poor. She lives in the dormitory provided by her employer, in order to save money for her child. Mimi feels frustrated, unhappy. Her routines of life and work are constructed through sentiments of dissatisfaction, of sorrow, and of regret.

As for *paodanbang* or *laobanniang,* social and economic opportunities, citizenship, identity, subjectivities, together with emotions and affections all contribute to frame and shape women's patterns of re-migration, and project-making processes. They are generated and, at their turn, sustain reflexive competences (Roulleau-Berger 2014b), which are locally and globally (Beck 2003) performed. Reflexivity is a constant, rather than a variable, in women's re-migrations career making. It requires to be continually mobilised towards new positionings and re-positionings. It emerges and develops at the cross road between "personal lives and globalising social influences [which enable] the *selves* to engage with constructive renewal opportunities and risks which induce constant negotiations and change" (

3.1. From a double absence to multiple presences

The performative translation of Taiwanese citizenship and “identity for others” (

In this regard, women do not seem to care about citizenship itself. What seems important to them are the social, economic and emotional repercussions that citizenship entails: the status, the representation and a recognized image of their *selves*. As suggested by Milton's research (2002: 108-109): "the process of living and learning to live in particular contexts provides each individual with the reference points for defining their own personal identity […] The things that matter most to people are the things that make their life most meaningful […] the things that induce the strongest emotions and feelings […]".

Identity is not reducible to the ontology of a territory (Ambrosini 2008), but it integrates the rich diversity of migratory experiences, social statuses, economic positionings, but also affections and emotions. These generate a plurality of relational practices which vary according to the modalities of socialisation, trajectories, statuses and subjectivities, specifically connected to migration. Women's social, economic, migratory experiences contribute all together and all at once to the identity definition, which is based on diversified belongings, constantly decomposed and recomposed (Blanc et al. 2013: 11) across spatialities, temporalities, emotions and affections. When re-entering the public space of the city, subjectivity is, in this sense, re-constructed by the means of a performative identity within new alterities[147]. *Women can be Taiwanese, Chinese or both* according to the opportunities, the necessities dictated by the different situations, multiscale and multi-scalar social, economic and emotional opportunities and constraints.

The lived experiences and the resources capitalised within the diverse economic, social and moral transnational regimes generate multiple subjectivities for individuals and enable creative preformation of citizenship and identity.

Through re-migration and multiple mobilities, women shift from a “double absence” (Sayad 2002), declined into the production and re-production of a condition of subalternity in China first and in Taiwan later to a double -or even multiple- presence(s), made of multiple subjectivities and identities, transnational senses of belongings and attachments, cross-border emotional and affectional ties, *glocal* social statuses and translocal *online* and *offline* practices. What Sayad had qualified the “trauma” of migration (1999), in terms of ruptures, liminality and disorders in the country of departure and of arrival proves to be ably convertible into a resource, by acquiring -or simply playing and performing- new senses of belongings.

3.2. Emotional moorings and transnational material geographies

In the district of Baoan, not far from

competences in the fields of make-up and cosmetics, the two women needed to improve their professional competences to have their beauty salon more competitive than the Chinese local ones.

Their knowledge of the local market and of the range of offers available in Shenzhen supported women to re-invent their offer, by projecting their business to the global market and making good use of the resources it could provide. Sinc in China, hairdressing and manicure centres were extremely popular, they needed to improve in the field of *meixiu*, eyebrow treatments and coloration: attractive but still not much developed in the local market. For these reasons, Jia Lin and Vicky contacted again Nina in Banqiao -who was their previous *meixiu* treatments teacher- and solicited her instructions. Since Nina was planning a trip to China to visit her parents in Dongbei, she decided to make a stop in Shenzhen to visit Jia Lin and Vicky and to provide some guidance to them. For a couple of days, Nina assisted her two sisters in the salon, offering new technical training in the field, as she used to do in Taiwan before.

Figure 53 In her beauty salon, Nina teaches meixiu *free courses to the "Chinese sisters" willing to open beauty centres. Taipei (Banqiao). March 2017.*

Figure 54 In their newly-opened beauty salon, Nina assists Jia Lin and Vicky and teaches them new techniques for make-up and meixiu *treatments. Shenzhen. February 2018.*

Through

Jia Lin. Moreover, again, and similarly to Nina before, by sending text messages from Taipei, she virtually shared her business experience and *know-how* in terms of economic skills, entrepreneurial knowledge and marketing strategies, providing social, economic and moral support to the new "Taiwanese bosses" in Shenzhen.

March 6th 2018. Shenzhen. Baoan district.

The doorbell of Vicky and Jia Lin's beauty centre rang. Busy in colouring a client's eyebrows, Jia Lin asked me to open the door. It was the courier, carrying six huge boxes. I brought them inside and as soon as she finished, Jia Lin got a pair of scissors to cut the packaging. Inside, it was full of Taiwanese facial masks, lip-gloss, and some specific eyebrow products coming from Taipei and sent from Nina. The goal was to use Taiwanese cosmetics to make the "Taiwanese style" beauty salon "even better, even more Taiwanese" (geng hao, zhenzheng de taishi 更好, 真正台式), as Jia Lin commented. Nina had also sent few gifts from Taiwan to her sisters, basically food – pineapple cakes and sugar candies (niuga tang 牛軋糖). Moreover, as curious as it seems, inside the last box we opened there were few fluorescent purple and orange bras, coming from Fujin's lingerie shop. Fujin's idea was manifest: having the two women getting familiar with the bras and the lingerie she commercialised in Taiwan, "taking a look at the quality and shapes", as she claimed, to potentially enlarge her market in the future.

Women who had already engaged into *online* socialisations, affectional exchanges and virtual economic activities, can now produce entrepreneurship both on physical and digital levels. Economic savoir-faire, entrepreneurial knowledge and *online* business competences capitalised in Taiwan before are re-mobilised after re-migration to the Chinese city by women who become *laobanniang*. Xiao Mei, Jia Lin and

of daily life, and hyperlocal economic practices, constructed through the mobilisation of local and global social, economic, material and virtual, and affectional resources. Once and again, the local and the global mix and merge. Their encounter induces novel and original economic forms, socialisation practices and strategies to "take place" for migrants within newly-reconstructed social, economic and emotional spaces.

Fujin's bra, which moved from China to Taiwan, which circulated through *glocal* seas and which returned to China now is imbued with highly social and emotional relationships as well as economic interactions: the two mutually support each other. Tangible things, material objects can help migrants to experience existential continuity within their geographical displacements and identity transformations (Hall 2010; Lau 2014; Plasquy 2014). At the very same time, reciprocally, migrants draw geographies of social and emotional attachment, as well as biographical and affectional anchorages through objects. The transition in women's careers and positionings is supported by and, at its turn sustaining the transition of objects: the changes that occur in the perceived meaning and performed significance of the artefacts, the products and the commodities illustrate this overlapping process of co-construction of re-migration geographies and biographies. I re-call here Alfred

social, economic and emotional practices. Mobility and immobility, attachment and dispatchment, emplacements and displacements can be creatively performed through a plurality of social and affectional moorings, physical and virtual, local ang global anchorages.

The lived, experienced and socialissed objects contribute to create and re-create material and social environments (Miller 2008), as well as emotional and affective ties, breaking spatial and social borders and transgressing geographical and political walls. By eating the pineapple cakes or the candies sent by Nina, wearing Fujin's bra or putting on Taiwanese facial masks, emotions and imagination are generated and, at their turn, sustain, women's awareness of multiple, translocal and overlapping existences among *glocal* spaces. The day of the courier delivery, when Vicky arrived at the shop and discovered the packages, she looked extremely joyful and fulfilled:

> "These candies are the favourite of my youngest child! He always wanted to eat a lot and I had to hide them at home: if he found them he could eat all the candies at once […] I miss my children, I miss Taiwan [broken voice] Eating Taiwanese food gives me a feeling of family (*geiwo jiating de ganjue* 給我家庭的感覺) […]"
>
> **Vicky**, Thirty-three years old, Guangdong native, Shenzhen, 06.03.2018

Such affectional, intimate emotional discourse shows that transnational social processes do not solely occur when individuals share space and time with each other or with objects, but also when they are engaged in inner works of imagination and memories, recalling or imagining other people, past places or shared experiences (Svašek 2014: 22). Objects, products, commodities [148] and gifts from the homeland to new places or from the new places from the homeland may also stand for distant affectional ties. Eating the Taiwanese candies virtually placed Vicky back to what she qualifies of "home".

Bras, candies, cosmetics may thus be an important way for migrants to evoke memories from faraway places (Svašek 2007) and feelings of connectivity. They support a sense of transnational lived experiences and practices lives. On the one hand, memory and imagination surrounding material culture help to sustain emotional relationship with distant affectional bonds, triggering nostalgic stories as well as evoking feelings of homesick (Svašek 2007; Plasquy 2014). On the other hand, they

[148] I call back on my reflections about "multipolar economies of homesickness" (Part 4, chapter 3.2 "Back-roads, Unseen Trails and Multipolar Economies"), where women eat traditional Sichuanese spicy chicken feet, and commercialize them in Taiwan, not only to earn money, but also to "feel home away from home" (see Plasquy 2014, chapter 3 on Spanish migrants in Belgium who organize events during the Catholic celebration of El Rocío. He shows that the image of the Virgin, in transit and transition, had a variable, changing emotional impact on the organizers who felt "at home").

reinforce women's conviction of the emergence and development of multiple, pluri-located and simultaneous biographical, physical and virtual positionings. Possibilities and continuities co-produce each other: they correspond to the very substance of *translocality* itself. In this sense, translocality, as an experience and a performance, constantly changes its shape and content. Its polymorphism derives from the processes of multiple translocal negotiation and change according to the emotional lived situations women experience, together with the multiplicity of their *glocal* social and economic practices, generated and performed *online* and *offline*, cutting through and across spatial, social and emotional borders.

3.3. Mobility beyond migration

Migrants' translocal economic activities and social positionings, hyperconnected communications, and transborder competences break down simple definitions of migration, return, community, transience and localism. *Translocality* is a mutable, malleable and fluid condition of movement and motion. It is co-produced and co-performed by the actors of mobility -objects and subjects- through their different positionings and re-positionings inside and outside the local and global (micro)cosmos they cross, hence through the practices they generate to creatively negotiate and define their produce social worlds. Movement pluralises. It dynamically invests a multiplicity of local and global places, material and emotional spaces, physical and virtual temporalities, whose contours shape and are shaped by objects and subjects' biographies and geographies. In this sense, *mobility* goes *beyond* migration. It concerns a very wide range of physical and virtual displacements, emotional shifts, material re-locations, subjectivity re-spatializations. It takes a large variety of forms, practices, and scales (Cresswell 2010). It implies social, economic and emotional permanent and potentially endless re-positionings and circulations.

Per contra, movement becomes mobility through everyday social, economic and emotional practices, which make it meaningful, through a variety of different strategies and tools. The meanings of places are plural, variable and floating. They shape and are shaped by the significance actors attribute to the social lived situations, together with the emotional performances they construct inside and outside the spatial and moral spaces they go through.

Mobilities require to be apprehended both in their ontological and phenomenological dimensions, *i.e* the multiple displacements and anchorages, re-scaling processes (Sassen 2006a), and re-spatialisations dynamics (Debarbieux 2019) which involve human and non-human (Latour and Woolgar 1986). Place,

movement and biographies reveal to be strictly interconnected and inseparable. When movement becomes mobility –hence when it takes a subjective and intersubjective sense and significance- *the social* is constructed, re-constructed, co-produced and co-performed. It follows the rhythms, the sequences, the circulations of individual and collective destinies (Tarrius 2000, 2001) forged during and through mobilities. Thus, the very definition of *the social* as a spatial, emotional, physical and virtual construction is highly heterogeneous (Law 1993: 2, 2006), mutable and floating. It is a vast, varied and polyform space for multi-scaled, multi-sited and multi-formed *possibilities*.

The sense of movement becomes part of everyday life performance, experience and perception, through interactions with people, objects, and places, which are trans-located around an infinite constellation of points, all at once connected by virtual emotional interactions on digital platforms. *The social* may become *mobility* itself: social, economic, material and emotional worlds constantly move, float, roam, oriented towards an infinitive *becoming*. The actors of movement – objects and subjects- are engaged into a constant journey and a plurality of physical and virtual navigations, sailing a translocal sea of experiences, knowledge and transformations. The mesmerising *horizon of hope* in terms of aspirations and ambitions of the *emotional modernity* stands in front of the actors. Within movement, time and space compression, the *aspirational infrastructure* (Shrestha 2018) becomes transnational: possibilities are always "there", awaiting and accessible. The crucial question is to define where this "there" is.

Chapter 3: *Orbital* Mobilities, Pendular Circulations, Cosmopolitan Biographies

Moving, roaming, and circulating reveal to be intrinsic and constitutive elements of objects and subjects' biographies and geographies. Women continually move back and forth local and global seas. They cross and transgress spatial and moral borders and explore new lands. Mobilities and moorings, generated by plural formal and informal attachments, bring about the projection towards further movements. Yet, re-migration back to China is not the end of a cycle. When countries of source and destination are reversed during migrations and re-migrations along actors'life-course (Ho 2019: 9-10), relocation and settlement are replaced by mutable "temporary sojournings" (Ley and Kobayashi 2005).

Re-migration is nothing but a fluid, dynamic and temporary step of movement, which does not end when women return to their society of origin. This step, or stop, corresponds to a stage in the biographical and mobility trajectory. It generates new opportunities for further mobilities. In the globalised and hyperconnected frame of *emotional modernity*, there is no permanent settlement nor assimilation. Lives are lived and performed inside, outside and through the local and global places and spaces, virtual temporalities, translocal relationships, but also works of imagination and aspiration. The fixed Euclidean geometries of territories and borders progressively lose their necessity. However, this is not the end of spaces. On the contrary, the contestation of their rigidity enables new, imaginative performatives of spatialities and temporalities, from which novel possibilities emerge.

Times, spaces, places are physically and virtually re-defined by migrants' competences (Roulleau-Berger 2015, 2017) and capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2004). Women's new *lives of travel* make movement potentially endless. Mobility careers progressively take *orbital* shapes, expanding and dilatating the diameter of their movements and possibilities. Newtonian mechanisms to apprehend spatiality disappear to give way to an Einsteinian theory of relativity as for mobility. Circumnavigating (cyber)seas, docking at old and new, physical and virtual lands, the multiplication of ordeals of challenge imposes new trans-border, trans-local cosmopolitan positionings to those capable women who want to affirm their new modern, ambitious and independent subjectivities.

1. Wanderings, Journeys, Virtual Movements: Cosmopolitan Biographies and Translocal Existences

1.1. Back to *Ithaca*

March 12th 2018. Shenzhen.

Xiao Mei and I woke up early in the morning to finish packing her huge and heavy luggage. We ate breakfast quickly and went to Shenzhen airport. Xiao Mei was back on track, on the move again. The road this time was to Taiwan. At the airport, I went grabbing a coffee, while Xiao Mei started queuing at the gate.

mobility took a different form for Xiao Mei. The *mobility regime* had changed, negotiated by Xiao Mei's through her multiple identities and plural translocal practices. Her newly acquired citizenship turned into a resource to enable movement without borders' controls, social contempt and moral suspicion as the first time she arrived in Taiwan. Xiao Mei smoothly landed to the island.

Seven years had passed since Xiao Mei, newly-married, first travelled to Taiwan. On that time, she had been exposed to the biopolitical border controls since her movement was highly monitored and subjected to a precise mobility regime, represented by the restrictive migratory and marriage policies. On the contrary, this time, newly-divorced, her arrival is unrestrained. This land, unknown and unfamiliar before, has been symbolically transformed through

Taiwanese identity, by deriding her Cantonese client in Shenzhen, Xiao Mei is everyone as she *can be* everyone, being, potentially, everywhere.

Therefore, movement and mobility strongly shape identity-making and subjectivity-construction. They lead to the emergence of mobile, multiple *selves* (Goffman 1973) which reveal to exist not only within the physical sites of daily life, but also at the multi-sited, virtual level of movement. Such pluralisation of the *selves* (Roulleau-Berger 2001, 2007), deriving from the lived experiences of migrants are anchored in their mobile existences, generated from and, at their turn, sustaining movements and mobilities.

As observed by Glick Schiller et al. (1992) in their pioneer studies on transnationalism, "while some migrants identify more with one society than the other, the majority seem to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation" (1992:11). It is a matter of multiple, plural and polyform homes, situated "here" and "there", or here and there at the same time. The capacity to circulate among diverse physical and virtual spaces, local and global spaces breaks, as pointed by Tarrius (2001, 2015) an order on which were erected identity legitimacies, attachments to the places: the relation between identity and alterity is challenged and transformed (Agier 2014). However, it does not lead to a negation of individuals' subjectivities, but to processes of dynamic and malleable transformations. Territories, spatialities, identities juxtapose in the frame of *glocal* movement. The "bipolar fixity of conventional studies on migration -based on an origin, a destination, and a more-or-less definitive and statistically measurable relocation between the two- has been challenged" (King 2000: 89).

The poly-presence of trans-migrants (Al-Ali and Koser 2002) emerges in the frame of continuous movements and in their capacity to transcend the fixity of spatial places, social spaces, through new mobilities occurring not necessarily at a physical level, but which are performed virtually and emotionally as well. *Ithacas*, attachments, locations and dislocations follow the virtual, instantaneous rhythm of digital communications, emotional sharing and affectional exchanges among a plurality of spaces all at once interconnected.

New *mobile* itineraries emerge: from China to Taiwan, from Taiwan to China, then back to Taiwan or to China. Such physical geographies are generated from and, at their turn, support, virtual, emotional and affectional patterns. The two are inseparable. *Ithaca*, as a land of departure, of arrival and of new departure, is produced from and concurrently sustains a work of imagination and a capacity to aspire

(Appadurai 2004). *Ithaca* is the very essence of movement itself. *Ithaca* is a *horizon of hope* (Appadurai 2004) and the concretisation of a project. *Ithaca* is a *becoming*, an heterotopian space for infinitive possibilities.

Aspiration and imagination are generated from and, at their turn, push towards further movement. These two levels are strictly interrelated and increasingly interconnected since such movement deriving from and producing emotions does not require to be necessarily physically performed. It reveals to be *nonlinear* and floating: an endless Odyssey without fixed or permanent settlement. Multiple identities, subjectivities, social anchorages, emotional moorings, affectional belongings and economic practices open a continuous experimentation of new social worlds, of which some are yet to be produced.

Reflexivity on movement is crucial for its very production and for the construction of *mobile* existences by individuals who circulate. Beck (2003) talked of *dialogic imagination* as the keystone for multiple-positionings and for a proper, and reflexive, mobilisation of the necessary resources for individuals to "take their place" within the diversity of the spaces invested during migrations. Women's multiple, multiform and rotating movements prove that *imagination* does not only cross – *día*- the levels of reflexivity, understanding and knowledge – the *logic,* the *logos.* Imagination turns to be *diatopic* too. It traverses, transgresses, and transcends several diverse places, *i.e.* the *topos*: mobility regimes, local and global territories, physical and virtual spaces. Within this geographical polygamy, women's career become modern odysseys of permanent emotional movement towards new constellations and practices. *Ithaca* is everywhere, since it *can be* everywhere.

1.3. Old and new emotional constellations and choreographies

It is by making good use of a huge range of resources and competences that Xiao Mei could return to *Ithaca*. In the frame of such back-and-forth mobilities, social and emotional resources represent the necessary condition for physical movement. To paraphrase

Once again, while planning her temporary displacement to Taiwan, Xiao Mei called on her translocal networks of *jiemei*: the "sisters" she has never left as they could constantly keep in touch while she was in Shenzhen. Checking flight tickets, Xiao Mei contacted Nina in Taipei, and some other *jiemei* in Hukou –the place she was living in before- to look for tangible help once back to Taiwan. She needed someone to pick her up at the airport -specifically Nina- someone to offer an accommodation to her during her short stay, as well as someone who could provide her with new resources both for her economic activity and for

Studies on transnationalism, as a pertinent analytical frame to apprehend migrations and mobilities, have pointed out the centrality of transnational social networks within the processes of so called "assimilation" (Brubaker 2001), "settlement" (Carling and Erdal 2014) or "incorporation" (Faist 2013) within the several, spanned societies migrants live in. However, the permanent, long or short term mobilities developed by women call into question such categorisations, even when they are apprehended on a transnational level. The *dialogic*, *diachronic* and *diatopic* dimensions of mobilities and economies, within a time-space compression and a hypermobile, simultaneous frame for inter-action challenge every conception of fixity and sedentary. It is not only, or even, no more a matter of being "here" and "there", or "here and there and the same time" (Tarrius 2002; Portes 2010). When bodies, emotions and everyday practices – whether social or economic- combine with new technologies and virtual performances, movement becomes polyform, polyhedral, and, especially, continuous and potentially infinitively performable.

After that first stop at

Figure 55 Inside Fujin's lingerie shop, women welcomed Xiao Mei and me "back home". Taipei (Nanshijiao). March 2018.

During the party, Fujin declared her desire to expand her market. If, so far, products -the lingerie, the bras, the underclothes- were sold only in Taiwan through the *WeChat* groups of "sisters", she was becoming more and more determined to have them circulating in China as well. She explained this to Xiao Mei. Thus, they had a brief discussion about new import/export procedures and trails, logistic matters and management of products trading and displacements on the back-roads Fujin had been exploring so far. As I have advanced before, she could rely on the help of her "sisters",

again within this situation. Their encounter is drawn in the contours of an actualised *choreography of affections*, where the figures dance wearing colourful, fluorescent bras and take pictures for Fujin's business advertisement.

Figure 56 Women's walking the catwalk in Fujin's lingerie shop wearing her made in China bras. Taipei (Nanshijiao). March 2018.

1.4. *Orbital* mobilities

Women are not only "here and there", but also, in Mc

has forged the outstanding expression of "circulatory territory[149]" (2000, 2001) to define a space which is delimited by migrants' networks and circulatory competences. Within "circulatory territories", regulations, norms and original socialisations become manifest (2001, 2015). Practices transcend a bounded-site notion of territory (Amit 1999) and call into question sedentarism and fixity (Tarrius 2000, 2001). Territories are not designated according to spatial fixities, but from the practices of mobile trans-migrants, provided with a new "power over the historical and constitutive immobility of the sedentary devices of national states" (Tarrius 2001: 66).

Along these analytical lines, women's "up and down, round and around" (McHugh 2000) movements generate *non-universal* (Beck 1999, 2003) antigravity forces and antigravitational norms. Bodies, particles, objects and subjects' attractions are not proportional or rectilinear anymore. Their movement transgresses every form of mathematical, geometrical calculation. At the same time, women's mobilities from the countryside to the city in China, among diverse urban spaces, from China to Taiwan, and from Taiwan to China do not only occur at the physical level of displacement. It is indeed a matter of circulation. However, this circulation occurs simultaneously and instantaneously, since it is concurrently produced by physical but also virtual displacements and roamings.

Moreover, movement does not only invest the individual experience of subjects. Objects, emotions and affections do also circulate, side by side, together with individuals. The canvas of mobility become extremely complex and ramified. These include objects, subjects and emotions' movements, which are all at once co-produced and co-performed. Times and spaces are crucial in the definition and the performance of movement. However, they can be virtually and emotionally co-performed too.

The *perimeter* of the *orbit* touches several points, which correspond to the differently located places invested by mobilities. These places can continuously multiply or decrease according to the social affiliations and disaffiliations, reflexive resources, emotional anchorages, and economic practices of women. Places are hence a mutable and increasing constellation. They correspond to the rural villages and to the Chinese and Taiwanese cities women develop temporary sojourns in. According to the opportunity and constraint structure, in terms of social and economic mobility, as well as resource mobilisation, a new place can emerge, and an old place can disappear.

Meantime, the points touched by the perimeter of the *orbit* do not only correspond to physical spaces, but also to *glocally* dispatched individuals, social networks and emotional ties. Their link can be virtually established too.

Figure 57 Xiao Mei's orbital mobility career.

Nevertheless, this representation is limited. And it could not be else than limited, finite. Liable and temporary, it may vary over time and over biographical, social and professional future shifts. The shape, the perimeter and the points connected through this *orbit* are instable. The *orbital speed* and the *orbital period* can also be uncertain. They can shift, oscillate, and suddenly stop. They can slow down or speed up. They can also retrograde. Women's careers are made of bifurcations (Roulleau-Berger 2010), which occur at the spatial, temporal and identity levels of the career-making processes.

Women moved to Taiwan, they settled down, but they also reversed their mobility patterns, through re-migration back to China. Some, like

The speed of movements and of dislocations is variable. Accelerated or slowed down, it depends on social, economic, emotional and affectional opportunities and constraints. Analogously to the motion of *orbit*s, women's mobilities are highly irregular too. There is no uniform, regular and pre-determined pattern. Breaks, breakings and retrogradations can also occur. In this respect, to apprehend women's *orbital mobilities*, metaphorically, Newtonian mechanisms are not sufficient. Their geographies are made of polyhedral, polyform and mutating paths, explainable and visualisable only through a metaphorical Einsteinian Theory of relativity. The notion of *relativity* I figuratively use here has no negative sense. It emerges from the constant process of scaling and re-scaling, of negotiation and re-negotiation of the local and global opportunity and constraint frames.

Lin would have been happy to join us. However, the flight ticket was expensive for her and the professional constraints required her to keep on working at the beauty salon, that she could not abandon for a couple of weeks. However, when physical movement cannot take place, virtual worlds remain an option to re-produce *online*, on and through digital platforms, what cannot be physically, materially done *offline*. Xiao Mei had money enough to arrange a trip to Taiwan. The mobility and citizenship regimes do not impede her displacement anymore. However, economic resources are crucial for movement. Jia Lin could not buy a flight ticket since she had professional obligation in China, as she needed to work, embedded in economic pression due to familiar constraints, since she had to send a living subsidy to her child who lived in Taiwan.

Nevertheless, she could virtually accompany Xiao Mei to visit Nina in Banqiao or Fujin in her lingerie shop, by keeping in touch on *WeChat* and video-calling them when it was convenient. *Orbital mobility careers* challenge physical and material constraints through their projection inside virtual, digital, *online* spaces for socialisations and inter-action. *Online* and *offline*, women are not only "here" and "there", or "here and there at the same time" (Tarrius 1989, 2001; Waldinger 2008). They are here and there, there and here, concurrently interacting with one, two, three… a plurality of individuals who are, at their turn, "there", "here" and "there".

The virtual and emotional dimensions of movement, of connections and interconnections, summed to de-territorialised places and intertwined social worlds bypass, overstep Newtonian mechanics. They increasingly produce complexity, malleability, but also unpredictability. Movements can be planned *online*. They are projected into the immanence of present action whose acceleration and instantaneity are very strong. Metaphorically, the notion of "relativity" might explicate such complexity and volatility. It accounts for gravity as due to the curvature of space and time, which are, in the globalised context, "compressed" (

translocal, *glocal multipolar economies* women are part of. Objects, subjects and emotions dispatched inside and outside a plurality of local and global places, translocal physical and virtual spaces and accelerated or slowed down temporalities, all contribute to shape and re-shape the *orbit*s they concurrently navigate through.

An *orbital career* takes, figuratively, the shape of *geodesic*: the original straight, "smooth" (

from one profession to another before succeeding in the negotiation of a job considered to be satisfactory. At the same time, the global, as a horizon, represented from Taiwan and from the virtual worlds they can operate in, closely support their activities, practices and re-positionings. Circulations within circulations emerge, and the shape of the *orbit* complexifies. The choice of staying, of sojourning or of moving transnationalise the perimeter of territories, of places, of spaces but also of emotions, affections and imaginaries.

2. *In-betweenness* and Translocal Futures

2.1. *In-between* existences

After dealing with her business, making new affairs for herself and for her "sisters" located both in China and in Taiwan, Xiao Mei moved to Hukou, the place she had been living in during her seven year-stay in Taiwan. Her ex-husband, parents-in-law and, especially, her child, were still there. Her child represents the reason of her visit to Hukou, a crucial vector of *attachment* to this place. The trip to Hukou was for Xiao Mei a socially and emotionally constructed moment of reconciliation with her past experiences and of consolidation of her new, translocal, mobile life pattern. The last time she had been to Hukou was characterised by the impetuous of her departure and the sufferings generated by the situation.

Her temporary transnational sojourning in Taiwan is inscribed within the newly-shaped mobile form of

face". Being "here" and "there" can open potentially endless opportunities of social, economic and moral re-positionings, since the spaces and places individuals can act in multiply.

In this sense, Xiao Mei, Lily or Lei Xin could transform cosmopolitism into a resource for *glocal* navigation and upward social mobility. Cosmopolitism meant to them the opportunity for multiple positionings and plural performances of subjectivity and identity, which sustained increased rights and an improved social status. On their side, Jia Lin or Vicky have experienced to some extents this double face of cosmopolitism, since, during re-migration, they had to cope with an important transnational reproduction of social hierarchies and economic inequalities. However, as for other women, like Mimi or Xiao Li, cosmopolitism has revealed its inegalitarian dimension through the redefinition of subalternity within the different spaces of mobility. Women's potential for inter-action and social re-positioning has been, in this sense, highly impacted and inhibited.

Therefore, pluri-migration and tortuous mobility patterns can also produce new fragmentations of women's lives and existences (Bauman 2003; Roulleau-Berger 2017). The pluralisation of the biographical and migratory steps of the career can also produce partial losses of the sense of orientations (Schutz 2010). Anchorages, attachments and affections become unstable. Nomadism detaches, to some extent, individuals from their place of belonging and of certainty. Jia Lin and Vicky have initially felt lost when back to China. Only after a long and complex work of reflexion and ponderation, they could make good use of translocal repertories of social, economic and emotional resources as well as of previously capitalised migratory knowledge to succeed in their daily ordeals.

However, as shown, that was not the case of Xiao Li or Mimi, who felt lost during their stay in Taiwan and who felt lost again once back to China. This permanent movement also, and crucially, dissociates actors from their affections, their anchorages with places, spaces and social relationships. Mimi acknowledged crying every evening since she felt guilty of having abandoned her child. She missed Taiwan and her son, but she was not ready to move back. Concurrently, she was worried about for her current precarious economic condition, as well as about the uncertain future shape of her life course.

Geographical and spatial distances may generate sufferings and affectional sacrifices. Also, and crucially, despite an upward social re-positioning, all women, like Xiao Mei, Lily, Vicky, Jia Lin and the other who left Taiwan, were mothers: mothers separated from their children and from their affections.

Re-migration has thus placed women into an ambivalent positioning. On the one hand, it revealed to be a means to achieve upward social mobility, to re-construct the life course, overstepping and overcoming a disqualifying condition in Taiwan. At the same time, it generated spatial, social and emotional distances and ordeals of suffering for women who abandoned their affections in Taiwan.

In-betweenness as a cosmopolitan condition of biographical positioning (Beck 2003) is produced and performed to put the pieces of the puzzle together. Being "here" and "there", on the Chinese and the Taiwanese sides of the Strait provides women with a sentiment of continuity and of multiple belongings. It sustains attachments, anchorages and affiliations. Spatially and temporally de-territorialised, social and emotional continuities emerge from social and affectional relationships, physically and virtually maintained throughout the spaces of mobility. *In-betweenness* enables migrants, like Xiao Mei, to go back, through a process of physical, external, but also "inner" (Beck 2003), emotional mobility.

Biographies and geographies merge and transcend physical territories, spatial and social borders. Translocal existences are built through the negotiation of spatial, temporal and emotional distances. The physical displacements and virtual connections performed inside *glocal* spaces generated emotional continuities and affectional proximities, despite geographical separation. The sense of "absence" (Sayad 1999) and of detachment, the frustration deriving from the affectional distances can be solved through such a negotiation of cosmopolitanism. From the precarity, uncertainty and sufferings experienced during re-migration to China, Xiao Mei re-defined her cosmopolitan existence, and she was now back to Taiwan.

In a certain way, she has never completely left the place. From China, Xingning or Shenzhen, spatially distant, she has remained socially and emotionally close to her child and her "sisters" through mobile, digital communications and exchanges, produced and performed inside the virtual worlds. She used to regularly video-call her child on *WeChat*, or to send messages, pictures and emoticon to her "sisters" inside the *WeChat* groups. Negative emotions of nostalgia, abandonment, separation, surrender revealed to be constructed, *mobile* feelings. They were engendered and sustained from the geographical, spatial, temporal and emotional distance from places and social relationships. However, these constructed and situated feelings could be progressively and creatively de-constructed, "undone" through virtual connections and digital affectional practices.

By maintaining emotional and affectional links with places, spaces and people from China through digital platforms; by producing translocal economic activities between China and Taiwan and, eventually, by temporary sojourning in Taiwan to physically meet her “sisters” and her “child”,

2.2. Cosmopolitan, translocal futures

From “here” to “there”, from “there” to “here”, “here and there”, women’s *lives of travel* challenge, transgress, transcend and transform national frontiers, social boundaries, emotional borders. Their *orbital mobility careers* connect people, places and spaces and, as I have suggested, are permanently oriented forward, towards new adventures and new *Ithacas*. In the context of *emotional modernity,* acknowledging the hypermobile, simultaneous and highly connected dimension of individuals’ biographies raises puzzles about the future shape migrants’ mobility can or cannot take.

Driven by imagination, ambitions and aspirations, women reflect (Beck 2003) on their choices and on their future positionings. They are aware of the risks they can encounter on their plural and changeable roads and of the consequences of movement. Mobilities are introspective, retrospective and anticipatory. Movement as an inner, intrinsic condition of the existence requires women to constantly imagine and re-imagine, reflexively and emotionally, their *selves* and their *selves* in the future. It is "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernity itself" (Beck 1999: 21).

Jørgen Carling and Marta Bivand Erdal (2014) reflected on the link between return migration and the development of transnational practices and existences[150]. Through quantitative research based on surveys with Irani, Pakistani and Afghani refugees, they analysed how transnationalism shapes return intentions and experiences. Drawing on the migratory history chart as a tool for displaying migration trajectories (Carling 2012), they provided a schematic visualisation of the interaction between return migration and transnationalism (Carling and Erdal 2014: 5). On the abscissa (x axis) they positioned the locations, hence the origin and the destination; while on the ordinate (y axis) figures the time frame. They displayed individuals' migration histories as "lines that can be traced upwards through time and sideways between locations" (2014: 6) and they visually added wave-like fields between the origin and destination to denote transnational practices at different stages of the migration trajectory.

Hence, by re-modeling and actualizing Carling and Erdal's visual conceptualisation and drawing on

Figure 59 Mobilities, re-mobilities and virtual, simultaneous, spatially distant but emotionally closed translocal practices in Xiao Mei's orbital mobility career case.

places they stayed in before. *In fine*, the dotted lines suggest that future mobilities, migrations and positionings are highly uncertain, but potentially endless. Being simultaneously, physically or virtually, at each place, emotional cosmopolitanism and translocal positionings open for endless future possibilities. Women are here and there, round and around: the plurality and rich variety of the resources they dispose of multiply their opportunities and forthcoming life-shaping.

Hyperconnection, simultaneity and *in-betweenness* are the keystones of the architecture of mobility, which is rather unrigid and sailing. The "new flows and new forms of movement unique to over-connected world" (Cresswell 2010) propagate in the field of possibility (Geertz 1973). Giddens (1990) and Bauman's (2000) analyses of post-modernity or late modernity in which this "space of flows" (Castells 2006) is inscribed have identified nomadism as the main feature of individuals' life-cycles. According to their conceptualisations, nomadism is synonym of precarity and vulnerability. From the unpredictability of compressed time and space frames derive new vacillations, risks, and menaces for individuals (Roulleau-Berger 2018), which might seem to be metaphorically "imprisoned" in the cage of incertitude. Undoubtedly, such elements exist.

Nonetheless, inequalities and the conditions of subalternity generated from globalised moral and material insecurities do not necessarily condemn migrants to empty, "lost" (Roulleau-Berger 2017), senseless or "wasted" (Bauman 2003) lives.

keep on moving between the two sides (*liang bian pao* 兩岸跑), I can go back and forth (*pao lai pao qu*) or even go somewhere else […]".

Xiao Mei, Taipei, March 2018

In fine, and I would like to conclude on this hypothesis, there is not only one *Ithaca*, but there are many *Ithacas* for Xiao Mei, like for the other migrant women. *Ithaca* is for migrants a land of arrival and of departure. *Ithaca* is the complexity and the plurality of lives which constantly riot against spatial, social and moral hierarchies. *Ithaca* is a project of navigation, to contest and transgress subalternity. It is a *glocal*, social and emotional space for re-positioning and for the realization of ambitions and aspirations. *Ithacas* are *loci* of resistance which draw a cosmopolitan Odyssey of experimentation of plural worlds, which constantly transform the protagonists -objects and subjects. In other words, it is a competence and a practice of cross-borders, translocal lives: *pao lai pao qu* existences emotionally and affectionally lived across borders, taking place and shape inside potentially the infinitive physical and virtual, material and emotional worlds of globalisation.

(Unconcluded) Conclusion

Perspectives for Future Research

In her introduction to A *Sociology of Globalization* (2006a), Saskia Sassen has suggested that the new rhythms of the social life, the tempos of mobilities and the constant, endless processes of location and relocation intrinsic to globalisation inaugurate a vast program of research for social sciences, which remains largely unfinished (Sassen 2006a: 3).

However, if Sassen has integrated this important consideration in her premises, I prefer to include such pondering in my (un)concluded conclusive remarks.

economic and moral spaces they go through, women's individual and collective practices suggested than when local orders become oppressive, global spaces turn into new sites for contestation and for transformation.

Creativity, imagination and aspiration are the *horizon* inside which transgressive individual and collective social, economic and emotional practices are generated. Motion, transformation and contestation enable migrant women to dismantle and deconstruct vulnerability and precarity. Subalternity, as a temporary and liable position, shows *in fine* its plasticity, fluidity and breakability. Navigating through translocal seas, migrant women can "undo" hierarchies and subaltern positionings. When *navigation skills* are transformed into daily practices of resistance, the global space generates the very possibility for social, economic and moral re-positionings. Perhaps, today's *paodanbang* - "suitecase carriers"- might become *laobanniang* -"*glocal* bosses"– tomorrow. *Glocal* seas are opened to constant processes of transition, of transformation and of *becoming*.

Integrating emotions and affections in the analysis of mobilities have been a crucial preoccupation in my investigation. Considering sentiments, feelings, emotions and affections as *resources*, *competences* and *practices* has been at the core of my analysis. This enabled to situate practices within their different translocal, *diachronic* and multiscale perimeters. I have examined the social construction of emotions during objects and subjects' mobilities showing how location and dislocation experiences and situations of motion and stasis can generate and, at their turn, be supported by emotions and affections.

Conceiving social, economic, migratory and professional experiences as being socially and emotionally constructed has strengthened the comprehension of women's everyday practices and life experiences of migration. Such social and emotional practices co-sustain and co-shape each other, forging continuities and discontinuities in terms of attachment and dispatchment, affiliations and disaffiliations to the various temporalities and the spatialities of mobilities. Thereby, what seems to me increasingly urgent in today's understanding of globalisation is to include emotions, their production and reproduction within local and global social processes. The dialectics between emotions and mobility could therefore represent a novel and important analytical angle to apprehend social and economic practices, as well as migratory and mobility processes within a plurality of different contexts and social worlds.

All along my rationale, I have attempted to show how emotions can be mobilised with other repertories of social, economic, moral and affectional resources to produce inter-action.

social and emotional biographies and geographies contribute to the negotiation and the formulation of an *emotional modernity.* It is a *sui generis* modernity which emerges from and, at its turn, supports a constant work of local and global imagination and projection towards a plurality of *horizons.* Situated and situational, these *horizons* of transformation and of *becoming* are fluid, malleable and multiscale.

Emotional modernity is permanently re-framed according to the rhythms and the tempos of mobilities inside local and global, physical and virtual seas. In this sense, the navigation through objects and subjects' experiences, tracking and following, through multi-sited physical and virtual ethnography, their roads opened an important discussion about what globalisation is, or what globalisation might be. At the end of this work, the substance, the shapes and the forms of globalisation seem to be increasingly mutable, malleable and floating.

The perimeter of local and global practices appears to be plastic. *Orbital mobilities* are constructed through creative socialisation process, affectional ties and translocal, transversal and transgressive actions, which occur on multiscale, variable levels. Situations, practices and experiences of mobility, of circulation and of roaming take place at the crossroad among social and emotional, physical and virtual, material and immaterial, local and global spaces, places and temporalities. The scaling and re-scaling processes (Sassen 2006a) in terms of times, spaces, socialisations and emotions of the mobility practices are produced at the intersection between hyperlocal microcosmos and global spaces. They challenge and transcend any fixity and rigidity while approaching globalisation.

Objects and subjects' biographies and geographies are constructed *in motion*. Being *on the move*, constantly on the road, "here" and "there", they do not only transcend spatial and temporal fixities, but they make rigid and static qualifications and definitions meaningless. They take place and, at their turn, sustain growing and complexifying forms of local and global imbrications and interconnections. They link places, spaces and people within physical and virtual, material and emotional worlds. Objects, subjects and emotions' compound, multiple and translocal mobilities shed light on the mutable and malleable substance of globalisation and on the diverse, creative and porous forms it can take. Some of such configurations are yet to be invented.

Carried by migrants, *laobanniang* or *paodanbang*, the orange, fluorescent bra crosses lowly-visible back-roads. Nevertheless, it also moves transported by trading companies on accelerated, compressed high roads. It traverses local and global seas. It moors inside a hidden garage in Jinmen, at the stand of a night market or in a lingerie shop in Taipei. But it also waits for transit permission at the harbour

of Shenzhen or in Taoyuan airport, side by side with the containers of Nike shoes, Apple laptops or Huawei self-phones ready for the global distribution chain. The mobilities of the bra are produced and performed by the lived lives of the actors who gave birth to it and who transformed its biographical existence and social life through a constellation of practices, physically and virtually performed inside and outside a variety of places, on different *mobile* routes.

The bra's trails, journeys and itineraries are polyhedral and polyform. They vary and they constantly change. They can be re-routed and re-oriented, following the rhythms of women's mobilities, practices and aspirations. Its paths and its tempos cut through the times, the spaces, the identities (Tarrius 2000) and the emotions of women's migrations. Their future is unpredictable and uncertain. What other forms and shapes could such paths take? As I have claimed my introductory considerations, some roads, routes, or trails may have to be identified and created yet.

Given the porosity of material and spatial borders, the fluidity of physical and virtual social worlds, the contestable dimension of markets (Steiner 2005) and of labour regimes, as well as the mutability of local and global scales, at the end of this work, further questionings about the future roads of the orange, fluorescent emerge. The malleability of social, economic and emotional practices summed to the use of digital communication platforms make its future itineraries open to new bets. Its geographies and biographies transcend physical reality and they extend the field of possibility to potentially endless local and global, *online* and *offline* places, spaces and practices.

Over and above, inside different social worlds, there might be other bras or other artefacts commodified by other migrant workers. Who are they? Who could they be?

Glocal social, economic and emotional practices produced by the actors of globalisation take place and shape within different, creative and multiplying places, spaces, social and emotional worlds. They could take similar, or different, forms and shapes everywhere. In this regard, I would like to rapidly shift back to Europe. For instance, in Southern Italy, from the global cities of Naples, Bari or Foggia, hidden containers carrying second hand clothes, bags, pieces of furniture, electronic devices, etc. are frequently sent to Northern African on porous and lowly-visible back roads [151]. Different,

[151] I sketch here few opening reflections for further investigations based on the fieldwork carried on for the research projects directed by Professor Roulleau-Berger in the frame of the International Associated Laboratory (LIA) CNRS-E

heterogeneous and creative "poor-to-poor" markets (Roulleau-Berger 2017) are produced and re-produced by other actors of globalisation: transnational migrants coming to Italy from different countries and circulating around Europe. Concurrently, if we move to the East, in the Chinese coastal city of Yiwu (Zhejiang Province), Chinese and international migrants draw novel and *sui generis* social, economic and emotional paths of globalisation. They create and enlarge new markets which connect a growing number of local and global spaces (Roulleau-Berger 2018), places and people. From China to Central Asia, from the Middle-East to Africa, the products they commercialise move, shift, circulate on other polyform routes.

In November 2017, while conducting fieldwork in Yiwu[152], we met an Algerian "*glocal* boss" in charge of transnational trading processes between China and Northern Africa. As incredible as it seems, few years before, that man had been living in Lyon, France which had become one of the "multiple poles" of the transnational economies he had later generated. By that time, among France, Italy and Maghreb, hidden inside his luggage, he had been commercializing Italian and French clothes to Algeria, contesting markets and transgressing borders.

Analogously to Wenfeng and Xiao Niao, that translocal trader had also paid fines at the borders' customs since commerce and trading were forbidden. Like Huang Jing in Canton, or Zhang Jing in Fuzhou, he also used to spend time in huge stock markets in the Italian cities of Florence and Rome, looking for good offers and cooperation perspectives. All in all, the social and economic patterns he followed and the business strategies he adopted proved several similarities with Ai

Bras, like other artefacts and commodities, are several in number and could take pluralising, complexifying, mutable and heterogeneous roads drawn and invented by the diverse actors of globalisation. The case of Chinese migrant women's translocal *e^3-commerce* between China and Taiwan reveals to be one amongst the multiple *glocal* economic patterns that objects and subjects can take in a globalised context. Perhaps, the orange fluorescent bra might reach

and co-shaping malleable practices, globalisation cannot be else than plastic and fluid. It can take plural and polyhedral forms, according to the places, spaces, temporalities and emotions it is performed through. The field of possibility remains open. Indeed, the *figures of navigation* of the *glocal* seas I have identified throughout my research and I have described the experiences and the practices of are situated and situational. Globalisation varies according to the opportunities objects and subjects can negotiate on the road, as well as on the constraints, obstacles and walls which inhibit and block their paths, producing stasis and immobility.

Therefore, circularly, I come back to my introductory questionings**:** how far can the bra go? Which *Ithacas* could it land to? Which local and global, physical and virtual seas can it circumnavigate in the future? Endless processes of territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation accompany and frame its movements. Odysseus returns to Ithaca only to move again.

Going global means imagining new possible seas for circumnavigation, where different practices, socialisations, economic transactions and affectional exchanges could, or could not emerge. It is time now to imagine the possible existence of other factories within other social, economic and geographical worlds where the little hands of different migrants produce bras and develop their movements. Would the patterns and the trails be the same? Could they be similar? In other circumstances, in other geographical places and social places, at different temporalities, different mobility patterns could emerge.

Globalisation reveals its fluidity and malleability. It challenges binary separations between local and global, between physical and virtual, between material and emotional. Back-roads and main-roads proved to be embedded and inseparable. Globalisation can be defined in different ways, shaped into the economic practices, the social experiences and the emotions of its actors. Dialectically, local and global seas are indivisible: they reciprocally co-exist and co-produce each other.
Circumnavigating the *glocal* signifies conceiving endless possibilities for adventures, for displacements, for movements which exceed the local and global, material and immaterial, physical and virtual, social and emotional re-compositions of mobility. Mobility and globalisation co-shape each other. *Ithacas* are everywhere. *Ithacas* are infinitive, as infinitive are the possibilities for mobility and transformation. Globalisation is the making *in motion* of diverse experiences of fluidity, malleability and porosity.

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Annexes

Summary of the Interviews Conducted in China and in Taiwan 2015-2018

Name	Interview date	Place of birth	Year of birth	N° plurimigration CH
Ai Cheng	12.07.2015	Jiangxi	1985	4
Lin Ting	28.07.2015	Hunan	1989	4
Chen Li	29.07.2015	Hubei	1990	5
Zhang Xue	27.07.2015	Henan	1989	6
Chen Yan	8.2015/ 27.12.2016	Sichuan	1985	7
Shi Hai Zhen	07.2015/ 02.2017	Guangxi	1982	6
Fei Fei	8.12.2015	Henan	1982	6
Wang Xiao Li	4.08.2015	Sichuan	1989	8
Xiang Beibei	8.07.2015	Jiangxi	1984	7
Li lu	13.07.2015	Guangdong	1990	6
Xiao Mei	8.12.2016	Sichuan	1986	2
Jiang Liyun	2015 + 8.12.2017	Sichuan	1982	1
Yi Jun	9.12.2016	Sichuan	1985	2
Huang Yun	9.12.2016	Hainan	1985	2
Mei Lin	10.12.2016	Guangxi	1982	2
Guo Yan	16.12.2016	Sichuan	1983	3
Chen Yu Ying	16.12.2016	Hunan	1981	2
Betty	17.12.2016	Guangdong	1985	2
Li Xin	19.12.2016	Anhui	1988	3
Yu Mei	20.12.2016	Guangxi	1982	1
Lily	21.12.2016	Shangdong	1988	2
Ruby	11.2017	Hunan	1983	3
Shi Yuan Juan	27.12.2016	Anhui	1984	1
Hong Hong	10.01.2017	Hunan	1988	1
Amy	12.01.2017	Hunan	1985	3
Xiu Lan	12.01.2017	Yunnan	1984	4
Xiang Xiang	13.01.2017	Hunan	1980	2
Wen Lin	13.01.2017	Sichuan	1988	6
Juan Juan	14.01.2017	Jiangxi	1981	5
Zi Xun	15.01.2017	Hubei	1991	3
Lin Xin Xin	17.01.2017	Dongbei	1988	4
Danny (Xiao Mei)	2016, 2017, 2018	Guangdong	1990	5
Cai Mei	17.01.2017	Guangdong	1988	5
Xiao Yin	29.01.2017	Guangxi	1982	4
Xiao Yan	31.01.2017	Hunan	1985	2
Li Fuqin	2.02.2017	Chongqing	1987	7
Jenny	02.02.2017	Henan	1983	3
Xiao Lan	3.02.2017	Yunnan	1980	3
Zhang Xiao Lan	04.02.2017	Guangdong	1985	3
Qian Qian	06.02.2017	Hubei	1988	5
Lilli	07.02.2017	Hubei	1988	4
Chen Jie	08.02.2017	Guangdong	1986	2
Xiao Lin	10.02.2017	Sichuan	1985	6
Wu liang	21.02.2017	Jiangxi	1982	5
Xiang	21.02.2017	Hunan	1989	4
Zhang Liyue	26.02.2017	Hunan	1991	4
Wen Lin	28.02.2017	Sichuan	1982	5
Linda	1.03.2017	Henan	1986	4
Ye WeiLian	3.03.2017	Guangdong	1983	3
Lisa	04.02.2017	Henan	1981	4
Qiu Lin	05.03.2017	Fujian	1986	2
Lan Xin	08.03.2017	Guangdong	1983	3
Bian Li	08.03.2017	Sichuan	1981	5
Yi Li	09.03.2017	Hunan	1980	6
Wendy	10.03.2017	Henan	1982	3
Chun Chun	16.03.2017	Hubei	1988	6
Xiao Rong	17.03.2017	Hunan	1981	3
Ning Ning	23.03.2017	Henan	1985	4
Bing Bing	24.03.2017	Dongbei	1983	3

Name	Interview date	Place of birth	Year of birth	N° plurimigration CH
Juzi	24.03.2017	Jiangxi	1983	4
Nina	25.03.2017	Dongbei	1982	7
Tina	25.03.2017	Shanxi	1989	6
Bei Bei	29.03.2017	Hubei	1988	5
Mei Mei	25.03.2017	Hubei	1983	4
Han Lin	25.03.2017	Hubei	1985	4
Zuo Menghan	01.04.2017	Chongqing	1980	2
Huang Jin	27.03.2017	Hunan	1988	4
Mei Mei	27.3.2017	Fujian	1984	2
Hong Hong	27.3.2017	Guangdong	1985	2
Xun Ziqi	26.4.2017	Sichuan	1980	5
Sunny (Ai Hua)	30.3.2017	Hunan	1981	7
Yin Yin	01.4.2017	Sichuan	1983	4
Li Xiao Huo	01.4.2017	Guangxi	1985	3
Huang Jin	04.04.2017	Sichuan	1980	4
Tina	05.04.2017	Hubei	1985	6
Wen Feng	07.04.2017	Chongqing	1994	6
Feng Yu	14.04.2017	Hunan	1990	4
Feng Mei	14.04.2017	Hunan	1990	4
Meng Mei	16.04.2017	Sichuan	1980	3
Loffy (Luo Fei)	17.04.2017	Jiangxi	1986	8
Emma	18.04.2017	Jiangxi	1982	3
Candy	18.04.2017	Fujian	1984	3
Su Ling	21.04.2017	Sichuan	1983	4
Wei Yuan	22.04.2017	Guangxi	1982	2
Yang Fang	23.04.2017	Sichuan	1983	5
Joy	24.04.2017	Fujian	1981	2
Xiao Qing	25.04.2017	Anhui	1982	4
Lan Xin	28.04.2017	Henan	1989	5
Xiao Mi	29.04.2017	Chongqing	1984	2
Yumi	30.04.2017	Hunan	1983	3
Mona	2.05.2017	Fujian	1984	3
Xiao Ping	3.05.2017	Hubei	1983	3
Zhang Li	3.05.2017	Guangxi	1986	4
Liu Yi Xin	5.05.2017	Hunan	1984	3
Yan Yuxian	6.05.2017	Hunan	1984	6
Ai Hua	6.05.2017	Hunan	1983	7
Anna	8.05.2017	Hunan	1988	4
Zhang Jing	8.05.2017	Henan	1985	6
Ping Er	9.05.2017	Fujian	1983	3
Angela Lin	10.05.2017	Jiangxi	1984	4
Qing Rui	9.05.2017	Guangdong	1982	2
Yang Mei Ling	11.05.2017	Hunan	1989	3
Xiao Niao	12.05.2017	Hubei	1985	6
Mei Hong	16.05.2017	Hubei	1986	2
Rui Xian	16.05.2017	Fujian	1981	3
Judy	27.05.2017	Jiangsu	1983	6
Pan Xin	6.06.2017	Guangdong	1985	2
Zhen Yu Ping	10.06.2017	Hubei	1981	2
Juan Juan	12.06.2017	Henan	1984	3
Hong Jie	1.06.2017	Anhui	1980	6
Meggie	22.06.2017	Shangdong	1984	2
Jia Lin	01.2018	Hainan	1988	8
Lei Xin	12.01.2018	Henan	1986	6
Vicky	22.01.2018	Guangdong	1987	7
Wang Mi	04.03.2018	Hunan	1986	4
Xiao Li	21.01.2018	Guangxi	1992	5
Miao	11.03.2018	Hubei	1987	9
Chun Li	19.02.2018	Hubei	1985	4

Name	Interview date	Place of birth	Year of birth	N° plurimigration CH
Rong Rong	03.2018	Sichuan	1987	5
Mu Xin	09.01.2018	Anhui	1987	3
Xiao Li	12.01.2018	Guangdong	1986	9
Xiao Ye	18.02.2018	Guangxi	1987	3
Yuyu	19.02.2018	Henan	1986	6
Mei Mi	06.03.2018	Jiangxi	1986	3
Mimi	21.01.2018	Anhui	1989	4
Mi Xiang	14.02.2018	Hubei	1985	8
Xiang Xiao	07.03.2018	Hunan	1986	6
Julie	03.2018	Hubei	1986	4
Pei Li	03.2018	Hubei	1984	7
Ping Er	07.02.2018	Jiangxi	1990	8
Tania	23.01.2018	Guangdong	1989	5
Pan Ni	21.02.2018	Jiangxi	1986	6
Xiao Mei Lin	02.2018	Sichuan	1987	6
Bei Bei	02.2018	Sichuan	1986	5
Li Mei	09.03.2018	Sichuan	1986	8
Susu	14.01.2018	Henan	1985	4
Qing Rong	19.01.2018	Sichuan	1986	7
Bian Xiao	02.2018	Sichuan	1986	8
Lan Lan	02.2018	Jiangxi	1988	7
Wang Mei	27.01.2018	Sichuan	1988	8
Xiao Chun	12.02.2018	Anhui	1987	8

Name	Age/year arrival TW	Husband's job	Broker	Lived with husband in CH	Arranged marriage for others?	TW ID
Ai Cheng	2008	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Lin Ting	2008	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	yes
Chen Li	2013	taishang	self	yes	no	no
Zhang Xue	2008	taigan	self	no	no	no
Chen Yan	2008	taigan	self	no	no	no
Shi Hai Zhen	2007	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Fei Fei	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Wang Xiao Li	2005	taishang	self	yes	yes	no
Xiang Beibei	2006	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Li lu	2011	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Mei	2009	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Jiang Liyun	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Yi Jun	2010	taishang	self	no	no	yes
Huang Yun	2007	seller	meipo	no	yes	yes
Mei Lin	2014	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Guo Yan	2010	taxi driver	internet	no	no	yes
Chen Yu Ying	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Betty	2009	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Li Xin	2012	taigan	self	no	no	no
Yu Mei	2007	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Lily	2010	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Ruby	2013	taigan	self	no	no	no
Shi Yuan Juan	2012	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Hong Hong	2013	taishang	self	no	no	no
Amy	2011	seller	meipo	no	yes	no
Xiu Lan	2012	taxi driver	self	yes	yes	yes
Xiang Xiang	2006	taigan	self	no	yes	yes
Wen Lin	2014	taigan	self	no	no	no
Juan Juan	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Zi Xun	2013	taishang	self	no	no	no
Lin Xin Xin	2011	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Danny (Xiao Mei)	2015	taigan	self	no	no	no
Cai Mei	2014	taishang	self	no	no	no
Xiao Yin	2013	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	no
Xiao Yan	2004	seller	meipo	yes	no	yes
Li Fuqin	2011	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Jenny	2014	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Lan	2000	seller	meipo	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Xiao Lan	2007	seller	meipo	no	yes	yes
Qian Qian	2012	taigan	self	no	no	no
Lilli	2010	taigan	self	no	no	no
Chen Jie	2007	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Xiao Lin	2008	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Wu liang	2006	seller	meipo	no	no	no
Xiang	2009	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Zhang Liyue	2013	taishang	self	no	no	no
Wen Lin	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Linda	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Ye WeiLian	2008	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Lisa	2007	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Qiu Lin	2009	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Lan Xin	2008	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	yes
Bian Li	2005	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Yi Li	2004	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	yes
Wendy	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Chun Chun	2012	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Rong	2009	worker	meipo	no	yes	yes
Ning Ning	2012	taigan	self	no	no	no
Bing Bing	2010	taigan	self	no	no	yes

Name	Age/year arrival TW	Husband's job	Broker	Lived with husband in CH	Arranged marriage for others?	TW ID
Juzi	2009	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Nina	2010	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Tina	2013	taishang	self	yes	no	no
Bei Bei	2011	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Mei Mei	2009	worker	meipo	no	no	yes
Han Lin	2010	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	no
Zuo Menghan	2006	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	yes
Huang Jin	2010	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Mei Mei	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Hong Hong	2007	worker	meipo	no	yes	no
Xun Ziqi	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Sunny (Ai Hua)	2011	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Yin Yin	2007	worker	meipo	no	no	yes
Li Xiao Huo	2012	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Huang Jin	2004	worker	self	no	no	yes
Tina	2009	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Wen Feng	2014	worker	meipo	no	no	no
Feng Yu	2014	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Feng Mei	2009	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Meng Mei	2003	worker	meipo	no	yes	yes
Loffy (Luo Fei)	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Emma	2003	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Candy	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Su Ling	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Wei Yuan	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Yang Fang	2005	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Joy	2002	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Xiao Qing	2003	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Lan Xin	2015	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Mi	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Yumi	2003	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Mona	2005	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Xiao Ping	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Zhang Li	2007	taigan	self	no	no	no
Liu Yi Xin	2008	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Yan Yuxian	2007	seller	internet	no	no	yes
Ai Hua	2003	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Anna	2010	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Zhang Jing	2014	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Ping Er	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Angela Lin	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Qing Rui	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Yang Mei Ling	2013	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Niao	2013	taigan	self	no	no	no
Mei Hong	2012	taishang	self	yes	no	no
Rui Xian	2003	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Judy	2003	taxi driver	meipo	no	no	yes
Pan Xin	2013	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Zhen Yu Ping	2009	taigan	self	yes	no	no
Juan Juan	2010	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Hong Jie	2000	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Meggie	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Jia Lin	2011	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Lei Xin	2011	taxi driver	internet	no	no	no
Vicky	2010	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Wang Mi	2011	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Xiao Li	2010	worker	meipo	no	yes	no
Miao	2011	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Chun Li	2011	worker	meipo	no	no	yes

Name	Age/year arrival TW	Husband's job	Broker	Lived with husband in CH	Arranged marriage for others?	TW ID
Rong Rong	2010	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Mu Xin	2009	taigan	self	no	no	no
Xiao Li	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Xiao Ye	2007	seller	meipo	no	no	yes
Yuyu	2006	taxi driver	meipo	no	yes	yes
Mei Mi	2005	taigan	self	no	no	no
Mimi	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Mi Xiang	2005	taishang	self	yes	no	yes
Xiang Xiao	2007	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Julie	2006	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Pei Li	2004	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Ping Er	2013	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Tania	2011	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Pan Ni	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Xiao Mei Lin	2009	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Bei Bei	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Li Mei	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Susu	2003	worker	self	no	no	yes
Qing Rong	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Bian Xiao	2007	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Lan Lan	2012	taigan	self	yes	no	yes
Wang Mei	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes
Xiao Chun	2008	taigan	self	no	no	yes

Name	Divorce	Children	Latest employment	Entrepreunership?	Care?	Daigou
Ai Cheng	yes	2	market seller	no	no	no
Lin Ting	yes	1	factory worker	no	no	yes
Chen Li	no	0	factory worker	no	no	no
Zhang Xue	no	1	supermarket	no	no	no
Chen Yan	no	1	massage	no	yes	no
Shi Hai Zhen	no	2	waitress	no	no	yes
Fei Fei	yes	2	prostitute	no	no	no
Wang Xiao Li	no	1	unemployed	no	no	yes
Xiang Beibei	yes	1	restaurant	yes	no	no
Li lu	no	0	waitress	no	no	no
Xiao Mei	no	2	waitress	no	no	no
Jiang Liyun	yes	1	prostitute	yes	no	no
Yi Jun	no	2	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Huang Yun	no	2	market seller	yes	no	yes
Mei Lin	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	no
Guo Yan	no	1	unemployed	no	no	yes
Chen Yu Ying	yes	1	cosmetics	no	yes	yes
Betty	yes	0	waitress	no	no	no
Li Xin	no	1	unemployed	no	no	yes
Yu Mei	no	1	waitress	no	no	no
Lily	yes	1	cosmetics	no	yes	yes
Ruby	no	1	unemployed	no	no	yes
Shi Yuan Juan	no	2	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Hong Hong	no	2	factory worker	no	no	no
Amy	no	2	laundry	yes	no	yes
Xiu Lan	no	2	laundry	yes	no	yes
Xiang Xiang	yes	2	laundry	yes	yes	yes
Wen Lin	no	0	market seller	yes	no	yes
Juan Juan	yes	1	cosmetics	yes	yes	no
Zi Xun	no	2	factory	no	no	no
Lin Xin Xin	no	2	unemployed	no	no	yes
Danny (Xiao Mei)	yes	1	supermarket	yes	no	yes
Cai Mei	no	1	hairdressing	no	no	yes
Xiao Yin	no	1	hairdressing	no	no	yes
Xiao Yan	no	1	factory worker	no	no	no
Li Fuqin	no	2	shop's owner	yes	no	yes
Jenny	no	1	factory worker	no	no	no
Xiao Lan	no	1	caregiver	no	yes	no
Zhang Xiao Lan	no	1	factory	yes	yes	no
Qian Qian	no	0	prostitute	no	no	no
Lilli	yes	2	waitress	no	no	no
Chen Jie	no	1	waitress	no	no	no
Xiao Lin	yes	2	prostitute	no	no	no
Wu liang	yes	0	market seller	yes	no	yes
Xiang	yes	2	shopping mall	no	no	no
Zhang Liyue	no	2	waitress	no	no	no
Wen Lin	no	2	massage	no	no	no
Linda	no	1	shop's owner	yes	no	yes
Ye WeiLian	no	2	market seller	yes	no	no
Lisa	no	0	shopping mall	no	no	no
Qiu Lin	no	1	factory	yes	yes	yes
Lan Xin	yes	1	prostitute	no	no	no
Bian Li	yes	1	prostitute	no	no	no
Yi Li	yes	0	prostitute	no	no	no
Wendy	no	2	supermarket	no	no	no
Chun Chun	no	2	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Rong	no	3	cleaning	no		no
Ning Ning	no	2	waitress	no	no	no
Bing Bing	yes	1	cosmetics	yes	yes	no

Name	Divorce	Children	Latest employment	Entrepreunership?	Care?	Daigou
Rong Rong	yes	1	massage	no	no	yes
Mu Xin	yes	1	market seller	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Li	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	no
Xiao Ye	yes	1	waitress	no	no	no
Yuyu	yes	1	unemployed	no	no	no
Mei Mi	yes	1	cosmetics	no	yes	yes
Mimi	yes	2	cosmetics	no	yes	yes
Mi Xiang	yes	1	hairdressing	yes	yes	no
Xiang Xiao	yes	1	waitress	no	no	yes
Julie	yes	2	waitress	no	no	yes
Pei Li	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Ping Er	yes	0	hairdressing	yes	yes	yes
Tania	yes	1	waitress	no	no	no
Pan Ni	yes	1	supermarket	no	no	no
Xiao Mei Lin	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Bei Bei	yes	1	market seller	no	no	yes
Li Mei	yes	1	prostitute	no	no	yes
Susu	yes	1	waitress	no	no	yes
Qing Rong	yes	1	cosmetics	yes	no	yes
Bian Xiao	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Lan Lan	yes	1	waitress	no	no	yes
Wang Mei	yes	1	factory worker	no	no	no
Xiao Chun	yes	2	hairdressing	no	no	yes

Name	Divorce	Children	Latest employment	Entrepreunership?	Care?	Daigou
Juzi	yes	1	cosmetics	yes	yes	no
Nina	no	1	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Tina	no	pregnant	cosmetics	yes	yes	no
Bei Bei	yes	2	cosmetics	yes	yes	no
Mei Mei	no	2	unemployed	no	no	no
Han Lin	no	1	factory	no	no	no
Zuo Menghan	no	0	factory worker	no	no	yes
Huang Jin	yes	1	dance teacher	yes	no	no
Mei Mei	yes	1	prostitute	no	no	no
Hong Hong	no	0	prostitute	no	no	no
Xun Ziqi	yes	1 (CH)	prostitute	yes	no	yes
Sunny (Ai Hua)	no	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Yin Yin	no	1	factory	no	no	no
Li Xiao Huo	not yet	1	factory	yes	yes	no
Huang Jin	no	1	cosmetics	yes	no	yes
Tina	no	1	unemployed	no	no	yes
Wen Feng	no	0	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Feng Yu	no	0	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Feng Mei	yes	2	factory worker	no	no	no
Meng Mei	no	0	factory	no	no	no
Loffy (Luo Fei)	yes	1	cosmetics	no	no	yes
Emma	no	1	market seller	yes	no	no
Candy	no	2	factory worker	no	no	no
Su Ling	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	no
Wei Yuan	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	yes
Yang Fang	yes	1	waitress	no	no	no
Joy	yes	2	seller	no	no	no
Xiao Qing	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Lan Xin	no	2	market seller	yes	no	no
Xiao Mi	yes	2	Factory	no	no	no
Yumi	yes	1	waitress	no	no	no
Mona	no	1	market seller	yes	no	no
Xiao Ping	yes	1	cosmetics	no	no	no
Zhang Li	no	1	waitress	no	no	yes
Liu Yi Xin	no	1	hairdressing	no	no	yes
Yan Yuxian	no	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Ai Hua	yes	2	market seller	yes	no	yes
Anna	no	0	shopping mall	no	no	no
Zhang Jing	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	yes
Ping Er	yes	1	shop's owner	yes	no	no
Angela Lin	no	1	shop's owner	yes	no	no
Qing Rui	no	2	market seller	yes	no	no
Yang Mei Ling	no	1	factory worker	no	no	yes
Xiao Niao	no	1	factory worker	no	no	yes
Mei Hong	no	1	waitress	no	no	no
Rui Xian	no	1	supermarket	no	no	no
Judy	no	2	shopping mall	no	no	yes
Pan Xin	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	yes
Zhen Yu Ping	no	1	cosmetics	yes	yes	yes
Juan Juan	no	1	shopping mall	no	no	no
Hong Jie	yes	1	prostitute	yes	no	yes
Meggie	no	1	housewife	no	no	yes
Jia Lin	yes	1	waitress	no	no	yes
Lei Xin	yes	2	waitress	no	no	yes
Vicky	yes	1	shopping mall	no	no	yes
Wang Mi	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Xiao Li	yes	1	market seller	yes	no	yes
Miao	yes	1	market seller	no	no	yes
Chun Li	yes	1	cosmetics	no	yes	yes

Name	Domestic violence	Discrimination employment TW	denied access to employment or discrimination initial hiring	Unfair treatment at work	Conflictual professional relations
Ai Cheng	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lin Ting	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Chen Li	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Xue	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Chen Yan	no	yes	no	yes	no
Shi Hai Zhen	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Fei Fei	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wang Xiao Li	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Xiang Beibei	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Li lu	no	no	no	no	no
Xiao Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Jiang Liyun	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yi Jun	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Huang Yun	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mei Lin	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Guo Yan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Chen Yu Ying	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Betty	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Li Xin	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Yu Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lily	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ruby	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Shi Yuan Juan	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Hong Hong	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Amy	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Xiu Lan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiang Xiang	no	yes	no	yes	no
Wen Lin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Juan Juan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zi Xun	no	no	no	no	no
Lin Xin Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Danny (Xiao Mei)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cai Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Xiao Yin	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Xiao Yan	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Li Fuqin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Jenny	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Lan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Xiao Lan	no	no	no	no	no
Qian Qian	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lilli	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Chen Jie	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Lin	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Wu liang	yes, first marriage	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiang	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Liyue	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wen Lin	no	yes	no	yes	no
Linda	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Ye WeiLian	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lisa	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Qiu Lin	no	no	no	no	no
Lan Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bian Li	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yi Li	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wendy	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Chun Chun	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Rong	no	no	no	no	no
Ning Ning	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bing Bing	no	yes	yes	yes	yes

Name	Domestic violence	Discrimination employment TW	denied access to employment or discrimination initial hiring	Unfair treatment at work	Conflictual professional relations
Juzi	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Nina	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Tina	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bei Bei	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mei Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Han Lin	no	no	no	no	no
Zuo Menghan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Huang Jin	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Mei Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Hong Hong	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Xun Ziqi	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sunny (Ai Hua)	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Yin Yin	no	no	no	no	no
Li Xiao Huo	no	no	no	no	no
Huang Jin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Tina	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wen Feng	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Feng Yu	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Feng Mei	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Meng Mei	no	no	no	no	no
Loffy (Luo Fei)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Emma	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Candy	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Su Ling	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wei Yuan	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yang Fang	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Joy	no	no	no	no	no
Xiao Qing	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Lan Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Mi	yes	no	no	no	no
Yumi	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mona	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Ping	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Li	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Liu Yi Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yan Yuxian	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ai Hua	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Anna	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhang Jing	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Ping Er	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Angela Lin	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Qing Rui	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Yang Mei Ling	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Niao	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mei Hong	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rui Xian	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Judy	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Pan Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zhen Yu Ping	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Juan Juan	no	yes	yes	no	no
Hong Jie	no	yes	yes	no	no
Meggie	no	no	no	no	no
Jia Lin	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Lei Xin	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Vicky	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Wang Mi	no	yes	yes	no	no
Xiao Li	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Miao	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Chun Li	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

Name	Domestic violence	Discrimination employment TW	denied access to employment or discrimination initial hiring	Unfair treatment at work	Conflictual professional relations
Rong Rong	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Mu Xin	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Li	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Ye	no	yes	yes	no	no
Yuyu	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mei Mi	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mimi	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Mi Xiang	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Xiang Xiao	yes	yes	no	no	no
Julie	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Pei Li	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ping Er	no	yes	yes	no	no
Tania	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Pan Ni	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Xiao Mei Lin	yes	no	no	no	no
Bei Bei	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Li Mei	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Susu	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Qing Rong	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Bian Xiao	no	yes	no	no	no
Lan Lan	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wang Mei	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Xiao Chun	yes	yes	no	yes	yes

Name	Harassment, humiliation, and forms of verbal and moral violence	Unjustified firing procedures	Remigration CH
Ai Cheng	yes	no	no
Lin Ting	yes	no	no
Chen Li	yes	no	no
Zhang Xue	yes	yes	no
Chen Yan	yes	no	no
Shi Hai Zhen	yes	yes	no
Fei Fei	yes	no	no
Wang Xiao Li	yes	no	no
Xiang Beibei	yes	yes	no
Li lu	no	no	no
Xiao Mei	yes	yes	no
Jiang Liyun	yes	no	no
Yi Jun	yes	yes	no
Huang Yun	yes	no	no
Mei Lin	yes	yes	no
Guo Yan	yes	no	no
Chen Yu Ying	yes	no	no
Betty	yes	yes	no
Li Xin	yes	no	no
Yu Mei	yes	no	no
Lily	yes	yes	no
Ruby	yes	yes	no
Shi Yuan Juan	yes	no	no
Hong Hong	yes	no	no
Amy	no	yes	no
Xiu Lan	yes	no	no
Xiang Xiang	yes	yes	no
Wen Lin	yes	yes	no
Juan Juan	yes	no	no
Zi Xun	yes	no	no
Lin Xin Xin	yes	no	no
Danny (Xiao Mei)	yes	no	no
Cai Mei	yes	yes	no
Xiao Yin	yes	yes	no
Xiao Yan	yes	no	no
Li Fuqin	yes	no	no
Jenny	yes	no	no
Xiao Lan	yes	yes	no
Zhang Xiao Lan	no	no	no
Qian Qian	yes	yes	no
Lilli	yes	no	no
Chen Jie	yes	yes	no
Xiao Lin	yes	yes	no
Wu liang	yes	yes	no
Xiang	yes	yes	no
Zhang Liyue	yes	no	no
Wen Lin	yes	yes	no
Linda	yes	yes	no
Ye WeiLian	yes	no	no
Lisa	yes	no	no
Qiu Lin	no	no	no
Lan Xin	yes	yes	no
Bian Li	yes	no	no
Yi Li	yes	yes	no
Wendy	yes	yes	no
Chun Chun	yes	no	no
Xiao Rong	no	no	no
Ning Ning	yes	yes	no
Bing Bing	yes	no	no

Name	Harassment, humiliation, and forms of verbal and moral violence	Unjustified firing procedures	Remigration CH
Juzi	yes	yes	no
Nina	yes	yes	no
Tina	yes	no	no
Bei Bei	yes	yes	no
Mei Mei	yes	yes	no
Han Lin	no	no	no
Zuo Menghan	yes	yes	no
Huang Jin	yes	no	no
Mei Mei	yes	yes	no
Hong Hong	yes	no	no
Xun Ziqi	yes	yes	no
Sunny (Ai Hua)	yes	yes	no
Yin Yin	no	no	no
Li Xiao Huo	no	no	no
Huang Jin	yes	no	no
Tina	yes	yes	no
Wen Feng	yes	yes	no
Feng Yu	yes	no	no
Feng Mei	yes	no	no
Meng Mei	no	no	no
Loffy (Luo Fei)	yes	yes	no
Emma	yes	yes	no
Candy	yes	yes	no
Su Ling	yes	no	no
Wei Yuan	yes	yes	no
Yang Fang	yes	no	no
Joy	no	no	no
Xiao Qing	yes	yes	no
Lan Xin	yes	yes	no
Xiao Mi	no	no	no
Yumi	yes	yes	no
Mona	yes	yes	no
Xiao Ping	yes	no	no
Zhang Li	yes	yes	no
Liu Yi Xin	yes	yes	no
Yan Yuxian	yes	no	no
Ai Hua	yes	yes	no
Anna	yes	yes	no
Zhang Jing	yes	no	no
Ping Er	yes	yes	no
Angela Lin	yes	yes	no
Qing Rui	yes	yes	no
Yang Mei Ling	yes	yes	no
Xiao Niao	yes	yes	no
Mei Hong	yes	no	no
Rui Xian	yes	no	no
Judy	yes	no	no
Pan Xin	yes	yes	no
Zhen Yu Ping	no	no	no
Juan Juan	no	no	no
Hong Jie	yes	no	no
Meggie	no	no	no
Jia Lin	yes	no	yes
Lei Xin	yes	no	yes
Vicky	yes	yes	yes
Wang Mi	no	no	yes
Xiao Li	no	no	yes
Miao	yes	no	yes
Chun Li	no	no	yes

Name	Harassment, humiliation, and forms of verbal and moral violence	Unjustified firing procedures	Remigration CH
Rong Rong	yes	no	yes
Mu Xin	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Li	yes	yes	yes
Xiao Ye	no	no	yes
Yuyu	yes	yes	yes
Mei Mi	yes	no	yes
Mimi	no	no	yes
Mi Xiang	yes	no	yes
Xiang Xiao	no	yes	yes
Julie	yes	no	yes
Pei Li	yes	no	yes
Ping Er	no	yes	yes
Tania	no	yes	yes
Pan Ni	yes	no	yes
Xiao Mei Lin	no	no	yes
Bei Bei	yes	no	yes
Li Mei	no	no	yes
Susu	yes	yes	yes
Qing Rong	no	no	yes
Bian Xiao	no	no	yes
Lan Lan	yes	yes	yes
Wang Mei	no	yes	yes
Xiao Chun	yes	no	yes

Summary

Abstract

Mobilities, Translocal Economies, and Emotional Modernity. From the Factory to Digital Platforms, between China and Taiwan

Keywords: globalisation, mobilities, emotional modernity, virtual ethnography, glocal markets, emotions, subalternity, China-Taiwan.

On the backroads, hidden inside a suitcase, invisible to border controls, *an orange, fluorescent bra* made in a textile factory in Southern China crosses the Strait and arrives to Taiwan. There, it wanders and circulates, on translocal physical and digital platforms, and it moves back to its place of production in China. Questioning the movements of this object implies interrogating the social and emotional patterns of its producers: young female workers who engage into rural-to-urban labor migration in China first, and marriage-migration to Taiwan later. The *sui generis* path of this bra illustrates women's mobilities, which cross several social, economic and moral barriers, circulating through the borders of hierarchical, inegalitarian and rigid normative regimes.

My research investigates the translocal, creative strategies these women develop, on a physical and virtual level, to "undo" a condition of subalternity experienced all along mobilities. Inside the hyper local microcosmos of their daily translocal lives, women contest markets, produce disorder and re-define an *emotional modernity.* Through a plurality of material and immaterial, virtual and emotional practices, Chinese migrant women cope with local and global hierarchies and inequalities to "take their place" inside new *glocal* spaces.

Transnational entrepreneurship, under the form of an *emotional petit capitalism,* sustains women's social, economic and emotional re-positioning. Setting sails through global production and local consumption, Chinese women produce *multipolar economies* which connect the multiple physical and digital spaces of their migrations. The cartography of the social, economic and emotional labyrinthic and bifurcated movements of the commercialised objects demonstrates the hybrid and syncretic convergence between the logics of the market and hyperlocal practices.

Theoretically, epistemologically and methodologically, this work contributes to a global economic sociology, to a sociology of emotions, and to a sociology of transnational migrations.

This works seeks to rethink and reconsider the movements and mobilities of objects, subjects and emotions within the complex frame of a dialectic between the local and the global, the physical and virtual, the material and the emotional. Women's translocal *emotional petit capitalism*, generated through social networks and developed on the backroads, constitutes the mutable, malleable and polyhedral substance of globalisation. In that respect, the backroads, trails and paths of *glocal* economies can cross, merge and mix with the main roads of global markets. Globalisation can thus emerge inside these social, economic and emotional hyperlocal sections, all at once interconnected.

Résumé

Mobilités, économies traslocales et modernité émotionnelle. De l'usine aux platformes digitales, entre la Chine et Taiwan

Mots-clés : globalisation, mobilités, modernité émotionnelle, ethnographie virtuelle, marchés glocaux, émotions, subalternité, Chine-Taïwan

Sur des routes secondaires, caché dans une valise, invisible aux contrôles frontaliers, un *soutien-gorge orange fluorescent* produit dans une usine textile dans la Chine du Sud traverse le Détroit et arrive à Taïwan. Là-bas il se promène et circule, sur des plateformes translocales physiques et digitales, et revient à son lieu de production en Chine. L'investigation des mouvements de cet objet revient à interroger les parcours sociaux et émotionnels de ses productrices : des jeunes travailleuses qui s'engagent d'abord dans une migration de travail des campagnes aux villes en Chine, et ensuite dans une migration par mariage à Taïwan. Les parcours *sui generis* de ce soutien-gorge illustrent les mobilités des femmes, qui franchissent plusieurs barrières sociales, économiques et morales, en traversant les frontières de régimes normatifs hiérarchiques, inégalitaires et rigides.

Ma recherche analyse les stratégies translocales et créatives que ces femmes développent, au niveau physique et virtuel, pour « défaire » une condition de subalternité expérimentée tout au long des mobilités. Au sein du microcosme hyperlocal de leurs vies quotidiennes, les femmes contestent les marchés, produisent du désordre et redéfinissent une *modernité émotionnelle*. A travers une pluralité de pratiques matérielles et immatérielles, virtuelles et émotionnelles, les migrantes chinoises font face

aux hiérarchies et inégalités locales et globales afin de « prendre leur place » dans des nouveaux espaces *glocaux*.

L'entrepreneuriat transnational, sous la forme d'un *petit capitalisme émotionnel*, soutient les repositionnements de ces femmes. Navigant entre production globale et consommation locale, les femmes chinoises produisent des *économies multipolaires* qui connectent les espaces multiples physiques et digitaux de leurs migrations. La cartographie des mouvements labyrinthiques et bifurqués, au niveau social, économique et émotionnel, des objets commercialisés démontre la convergence hybride et syncrétique entre les logiques du marché et les pratiques hyperlocales.

Sur le plan théorique, épistémologique et méthodologique, ce travail contribue à une sociologie économique globale, à une sociologie des émotions, et à une sociologie des migrations transnationales.

Ce travail vise à repenser et reconsidérer les mouvements et mobilités des objets, sujets et émotions dans le cadre complexe d'une dialectique entre le domaine local et global, physique et virtuel, matériel et émotionnel. Le *petit capitalisme émotionnel* translocal des femmes, généré à travers les réseaux sociaux et développé dans les routes secondaires, constitue la substance mutable, malléable et polyédrique de la mondialisation. Dans cette perspective, les routes secondaires, parcours et chemins des économies *glocales* peuvent traverser, fusionner et se mélanger aux routes principales des marchés globaux. La mondialisation peut ainsi émerger de ces sections hyperlocales sociales, économiques et émotionnelles, toutes interconnectées à la fois.

摘要

流動性，跨地域經濟和情感現代性：從工廠到數字平台，中國與台灣之間

關鍵詞：全球化，流動性，情感現代性，虛擬民族志，全球本地化市場，情感，底層性，中國 - 台灣

通過支路，隱藏在行李箱內，一個在中國南方紡織廠制造的橙色熒光胸罩穿過海峽並抵達台灣。在那裏，它在跨地域的物理和數字平台上徘徊和流傳，然後又回到了中國的制造地點。討論這一物品的運動意味著詢問其生產者的社會和情感模式：年輕的女工，她們首先在中國經曆農村到城市的勞務移民，後來又通過婚姻來到台灣。這個胸罩的特殊路徑顯示了女性的

流動性，這些流動性跨越了不同的社會、經濟和道德體系，在分層的、不平等和僵化的規範體制之間流轉。

作者的研究調查了女性在物理和虛擬層面上發展的跨地區、創造性策略，以“消除”在流動過程中一直經曆的底層性條件。在日常跨地域生活的超本地化微觀世界中，女性抗爭市場，攪動秩序並重新定義情感現代性。通過多種物質和非物質、虛擬和情感實踐，中國女性移民應對本地和全球的等級制度和不平等，在新的全球本地化空間內“取得一席之地”。

以情感小資本主義形式出現的跨國企業家精神維持著女性的社會、經濟和情感重新定位。中國女性在全球生產和當地消費之間航行，產生多極經濟，連接其遷移的多個物理和數字空間。商品複雜和分叉運動的社會，經濟和情感圖像展示了市場的全球邏輯與經濟和情感超本地化實踐之間的混合和融合彙聚。

在理論、認識論和方法論層面上，這項研究對全球經濟社會學、情感社會學和跨國移民社會學做出了新的貢獻。

本研究旨在重新思考和審視物品、主體和情感在地方與全球、物質與虛擬、物質與情感之間的複雜框架內的運動與流動。女性通過社交網絡產生並在小路上發展的跨地域小資本主義構成了全球化的可變、可塑和多面的內容。全球本地化經濟的支路、足迹和小道可以跨越、融合和混合全球市場的主要道路。因此，全球化可以在這樣的，彼此相互聯系的社會、經濟和情感超本土區域中浮現。

Riassunto

Mobilità, economie translocali e modernità emozionale. Dalla fabbrica alle piattaforme digitali, tra la Cina e Taiwan

Parole-chiave: globalizzazione, mobilità, modernità emozionale, etnografia virtuale, mercati glocali, emozioni, subalternità, Cina-Taiwan

Lungo strade secondarie, nascosto in una valigia, invisibile ai controlli doganali, un reggiseno arancione fluorescente, fabbricato in un'azienda tessile della Cina meridionale, attraversa lo Stretto e arriva a Taiwan. Qui inizia a viaggiare e a circolare su binari fisici e virtuali translocali per poi ritornare al luogo in cui è stato fabbricato. Interrogarne gli spostamenti implica di interrogare i patterns sociali ed emozionali di chi lo ha prodotto, ossia delle giovani lavoratrici coinvolte in un doppio movimento migratorio: in primo luogo dalla campagna alla città cinese e in secondo luogo dalla Cina a Taiwan in seguito a un matrimonio. I percorsi sui generis del reggiseno illustrano bene tale doppio movimento, che attraversa molteplici regimi sociali, economici e morali, dato che varca le frontiere di regimi gerarchici, dove sussistono forti diseguaglianze sociali e legislazioni rigide.

La mia ricerca si concentra sulle strategie creative translocali che queste donne adottano sia fisicamente che virtualmente per "disfare" la condizione di subalternità vissuta migrando. All'interno del microcosmo iperlocale della loro quotidianità translocale, queste donne contastano mercati, producono disordine e ridefiniscono una modernità emozionale. Tramite svariate azioni materiali e immateriali, virtuali ed emozionali, le migranti cinesi sfidano gerarchie e disuguaglianze locali e globali per farsi spazio nei nuovi spazi glocali.

Sotto forma di un *piccolo capitalismo emozionale*, l'imprenditoria transnazionale ne sostiene il ricollocamento sociale, economico ed emozionale. Ponendosi tra produzione globale e consumo locale, le donne cinesi producono economie multipolari che connettono i molteplici spazi fisici e virtuali delle loro migrazioni. La cartografia sociale, economica ed emozionale dei labirintici spostamenti degli oggetti commercializzati dimostra la convergenza ibrida e sincretica tra le logiche globali del mercato e le abitudini emozionali/emotive iperlocali.

Da un punto di vista teorico, epistemologico e metodologico, il presente lavoro s'inscrive nella sociologia economica globale, nella sociologia delle emozioni e in quella delle migrazioni transnazionali.

L'obiettivo è quello di ripensare oggetti, soggetti e movimenti emozionali nel quadro dialettico tra locale e globale, fisico e virtuale, materiale ed emozionale. La piccola imprenditoria translocale di queste donne, generatasi all'interno di reti sociali e sviluppatasi lungo strade secondarie, costituisce la mutevole, malleabile e poliedrica sostanza della globalizzazione. Le strade secondarie, le piste e i sentieri delle economie glocal possono incrociare, mescidandosi, le strade principali dei mercati

globali. La globalizzazione può insomma manifestarsi all'intersezione tra società, economie ed emotività iperlocali.