Food, Home and Family-Making in Contemporary Guangzhou

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Declaration of Authorship

I, **Chen Liu**, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

Food is central to everyday family life in Chinese society, and in return, Chinese family cultures have a significant influence on daily food practices. This thesis considers the emergent relationships between the domestic and food consumption in contemporary urban China for Xiaokang (middle-level) households. Focused on Guangzhou (the largest city in south China), it explores the relations between everyday food practices, home cultures and the process of Xiaokang family-making. It argues that these relationships are socially significant, emotionally charged and politically contested. More specifically, topics addressed include contemporary ideals for home design; emotional family life and memory; family relationships (both conjugal and inter-generational); and the relations between the domestic and the public. The main findings also portray how Xiaokang households maintain and extend their social networks through home- or family-based food consumption; and they foreground the importance of internal migration in the geographical understanding of the connections between home-making, mobility and consumer cultures in the Chinese context. These issues are discussed via empirical materials generated through in-depth qualitative fieldwork with 27 households. More broadly, the thesis contributes to existing scholarship on: the geographies of home; the role of food practices in family-making; the recent changes in Chinese family lives and home cultures; and contemporary developments in Chinese urban consumer cultures. Moreover, this research indicates that future studies on consumer cultures in the Chinese context should pay more attention to both intergenerational and gender relations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> *Perhaps no other civilization has put as much emphasis on the art of cooking or taken so much pleasure in food as the Chinese.*
>
> *— Tuan, 2005, p. 230*

This quotation was on the first slide of my presentation to the Annual National Geography Conference of China, which I gave during the period of my initial 'pilot' empirical research (between July and August 2013). I was looking to highlight the significance of my PhD project and the value of focusing on food in order to understand wider social and cultural dynamics in contemporary China. The presentation went on to discuss the value of undertaking in-depth qualitative research with households on their food practices and described how I was approaching my initial empirical forays. After my presentation, one audience member asked me a fairly fundamental question: it is obvious that every family has its own way of managing their foodways, so why do you want to explain this? My response was simple: my research purpose is not to identify the differences in food habits between different families; rather, my research seeks to understand how (different) families use (different) foods and foodways to make their family lives and domestic spaces. In particular, I am concerned with the home- and family-making undertaken by the rapidly growing stratum of Xiaokang[1] (middle-level) urban households in contemporary China. Food, I suggest, is both a lens through which to see, and a means through which to do, domestic life.

After I moved to the research field and looked to recruit families with whom to work, further questions about my research purpose came to me from this new 'audience' – the potential research participants. When I was recruiting the participants in this research, I often sent each proposed informant a message via SMS or WeChat[2] with a short invitation, my thesis title and research aims (further details in Chapter 3).

[1] The definition of Xiaokang will be expanded in the 'Xiaokang life' section.
[2] WeChat is a free Chinese messaging and calling app for smart phones.

Interestingly, most of the proposed informants did not simply give me a 'yes' or 'no' reply; instead, they often asked me why I wanted to know how people, and especially they, ate and cooked at home. Although my answer was similar to the one I gave the academic audience member aforementioned, the responses I got were various:

> *'You have got in touch with the right people! We (he and his wife) are unique, because we are vegetarian! We are healthy eaters and we would like to share our stories with you.'*
>
> *'You want to understand my family through eating with us? But my family is a very ordinary family! Very ordinary! Just eating three meals a day. Is that helpful for your research?'*
>
> *'Sounds interesting. I will ask my husband and parents-in-law first. My parents-in-law manage our meals.'*
>
> *'Do you need to interview my son? He is the decision maker of family meals.'*
>
> *'I'm planning a gathering meal with my friends, you can come with Q (the person who introduced my research and me to this proposed informant).'*
>
> *…*
>
> *[These words are quoted from the SMS or WeChat messages I received from the proposed informants[3]]*

In these responses we catch a glimpse of the intertwining of family relations and foodways. It is those relations that this thesis explores.

Generally, this research aims to use the lens of food to understand domestic life in contemporary China. Food is central to everyday family life in Chinese society, and in turn, Chinese family cultures have significant influence on its wider food cultures. In order to understand the pivotal role of food in Chinese people's family life, this research explores the relations between everyday food practices, home cultures and the process of Xiaokang family-making in contemporary Guangzhou. It starts from a dual premise: that domestic and family life play an important role in shaping food cultures; and that food is central to the making of home and family. The research questions addressed include: how people from Xiaokang households in Guangzhou materially, socially and

[3] As not all of the senders finally agreed to participate in this research, I do not mention their names here.

emotionally construct their home through food cultures; how they maintain and negotiate their family relationships through everyday food practices; and how these food practices connect family life and wider society. The broader argument is that the relationship between families and food is socially significant, personally engaging, emotionally charged and politically contested.

The sections that follow provide a contextual background to Guangzhou and an overview of the consumer cultures and class position of Xiaokang people in contemporary China. The chapter then concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis and the chapters through which its objectives are pursued and its arguments are developed.

Social settings of the research

This research takes place in Guangzhou, which is the provincial capital of Guangdong province (the southernmost province in mainland China). As one of the first Chinese cities benefiting from the 'open and reform policy'[4], Guangzhou has become the leading pioneer of economic development and foreign interaction in mainland China (Xu & Yeh, 2003); the world's largest centre of manufacturing industry; one of the most important drivers for China's socialist capital accumulation (Lin, 1997); and, as the largest city within the transportation and tele-communication networks of south China, well-known as the 'southern gateway' of China. Currently, Guangzhou's municipality covers an area of 7,434.4 square kilometres with a census population of 13.08 million by the end of 2014 (SBGZ, 2015). The city of Guangzhou contains eleven districts: Yuexiu, Haizhu, Liwan, Tianhe, Baiyun, Huangpu, Panyu, Huadu, Nansha, Conghua and Zengcheng (South Daily, 2014).

Guangdong province is often described in terms of its history of economic

[4] The 'open and reform policy' is the nationwide economic reform programme in the People's Republic of China (PRC) which was established by the Communist Party of China led by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. Its main aim is to establish the strategies of domestic economic reform and open up the PRC internationally, including opening up the PRC to foreign investments and allowing the privatisation and contracting out of much state-owned industry. In short, the policy introduced the capital market to socialist economic development in the PRC.

leadership, in particular with respect to foreign trade (Chueng, 1998, 2002; Xu & Yeh, 2003; Lin, 1997). In imperial China, Guangdong province was an important area of export trades, marked by both a long coastline and the fertile Pearl River Delta – then one of the key agricultural centres in China and now a commercial and industrial centre. Guangzhou was a port city serving the shipping and shipbuilding industry in Guangdong province as early as the Han Dynasty (BC 202 – 220). By AD 622 in the Tang Dynasty it had become the starting point of the Maritime Silk Road, a trade and cultural transmission route that built up economic and cultural interactions throughout the Asian continent through the maritime trade of silk and other goods (SBGZ, 2015). Guangzhou was the predominant Chinese city for foreign trade until the conclusion of Opium War at the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, after which the defeated Chinese (Qing) government opened five treaty ports – Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai as well as Guangzhou – and ceded Hong Kong to the British colonial government (the victor of the war) (Xu & Yeh, 2003). After that, the other treaty ports and the colony of Hong Kong shared China's export trade economy with Guangzhou.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Guangzhou's social and economic development was heavily dependent upon national policies and strategies. The importance of Guangzhou as a commercial port declined in the Mao era (1949-1976), during which Guangdong was treated as a mediocre province in terms of economic development priorities, partly because the centrally planned economic system was imposed in all provinces regardless of their different levels of economic development in the past (Chueng, 1998). Xu & Yeh (2003) outline two specific issues. Firstly, the Mao era's socialist reforms promoted collective ownership and relations of production, whilst pulling the whole country back from the outside world in order to counter the western powers' 'containment policy'. In line with this national doctrine, Guangzhou role as a foreign trade hub became less significant. And secondly, the Mao-era national economic plans emphasised the importance of heavy industrial production, in particular in the basic metal and machine building industries. Since Guangzhou was traditionally a commercial port lacking an industrial base, it was

not bets positioned to receive state investment for industrial development. However, Guangzhou still played a significant role in foreign trade in the Mao era. In the spring of 1957, for example, the Canton Fair – the first and largest international trade fair in the PRC – was hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of China and the People's Government of the Guangdong Province[5]. This became a biannual trade fair that connected Guangzhou to the outside world in the closed PRC.

Guangzhou regained its prominence in Chinese national economic development after 1978. In this era of economic reform, and with its proximity to Hong Kong, Guangdong province has been central to the 'special policies, flexible measures' approach developed by the central government since 1979 (Li & Wang, 2003). This approach has seen Guangdong granted greater autonomy over economic policies, including budgeting, planning, material allocation, pricing, investment, labour management, and foreign economic policy (Chueng, 1998; 2002). These policy developments have in turn repositioned Guangzhou as one of the most important commercial cities in China (Xu & Yeh, 2003). In 1984, Guangzhou was designated as one of the fourteen coastal open cities, a political decision that supported economic and spatial expansion. In the mid 1980s, the Tianhe district was rebuilt as the CBD of Guangzhou and the Economic and Technological Development Zone (EDZ) was created. In the 1990s, urban strategy focused on developing Guangzhou into an international metropolitan city, and the financial, trade and tourist centre of the Asia-Pacific region (GZYEC, 1995). In the 21st century, policy focus has been on the connection and cooperation across the Pan Pearl River Delta region -- also known as the Pan Pearl River Delta Economic Zone, and including nine cities[6] in Guangdong province together with Hong Kong and Macau – which has further consolidated the economic and social development of Guangzhou. Due to these developments, by the time of my research, Guangzhou was being presented as perhaps the most open city in China, the most important city for foreign trade, and with an all-round economic strength of that placed it 'one step ahead' of other areas of China (SBGZ, 2015).

[5] http://www.cantonfair.org.cn/en/index.asp
[6] Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, Zhaoqing, Huizhou, Zhuhai, Jiangmen, Dongguan and Zhongshan.

These economic developments indicate a city that has changed rapidly over the last decades. These changes are not confined to the economy narrowly defined. In particular, working together with the housing reforms which opened up commercial housing markets (detailed further in Chapter 2), Guangzhou's recent development has resulted in a transformation of residential experience for many. Before housing reform, 'work units' were important neighbourhoods which provided urban residents with places to work, to undertake leisure, and for social communication. The subsequent commodification of housing not only brought about a privatisation trend in homeownership but also weakened urbanites' neighbourhood attachments. In their quantitative analysis of life course and residential mobility in Guangzhou, Li and Wang (2003) indicate that because of the growth of a middle-class population who desire and can afford newly built housing, as well as the growing recognition of housing as a type of investment and a means of asset accumulation, increasing residential mobility has emerged in Guangzhou. In turn, because of this relatively high residential mobility rate, it becomes less common for people to establish strong attachments to neighbourhoods and neighbours. Furthermore, Guangzhou, as the economic, political and cultural centre of Guangdong province, attracts huge economic capitals and migrants from both foreign and domestic areas. Guangzhou is one of the major immigrant destinations for both low-income workers and middle-class professionals within mainland China, especially from its less developed areas. According to the Sixth Demographic Census of Guangzhou in 2010 (SBGZ, 2010), approximately one-third of the population in Guangzhou are migrants. Most of these migrants come from rural or less developed areas within Guangdong province.

This increasing mobility, along with other current social changes, has been seen as bringing about new family dynamics in Guangzhou. An indicative case study is provided by Li (2011), who argues that marriage between urban women and rural men in urban Guangzhou might result in new types of family conflicts between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws. In the traditional patriarchal Chinese society, mother-in-laws had absolute power over daughter-in-laws and conflicts were caused by this oppressive

power of mother-in-laws and resistance to it. Nowadays, Li suggests, the conflicts between urban daughter-in-laws and rural mother-in-laws in Guangzhou are caused by their conflicting views on children's family position, gender values, consumption and lifestyle based on their different personal backgrounds. Intimate family relations are reshaped by, and help to shape, wider social and demographic dynamics. Thus, the trend to individualisation brought about by the open market breaks up the traditional norms of filial piety which requires daughter-in-laws satisfy their parent-in-laws unconditionally. More specifically, the different policies and public welfare systems in rural and urban areas, that in turn lead to distinct lifestyles and family and gender values. The unequal social welfare system between the urban and the rural makes urban daughter-in-laws and rural mother-in-laws hold different views on the value of children – for urban daughter-in-laws, children are important family members who are the hope of the family; while for rural mother-in-laws, children are future supports for their own aging lives. The family status of daughter-in-laws is thus implicated in Guangzhou's wider social, cultural and economic dynamics of livelihoods, migrations, residence, and housing markets. More generally, this research engages with Guangzhou as a particularly fertile, but also distinctive, setting for exploring contemporary family making dynamics in urban China.

Xiaokang life: middle-class consumption in urban China

The term 'Xiaokang' translates as 'small prosperity'. It originates from a Confucian imagination of the ideal society in China, referring to 'a state of society in which people live and work happily with a sufficient supply of goods to meet basic need' (Jing, 2000, p. 24) and are governed by a unified legal system. In the post-Mao period, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping first used the term 'Xiaokang society' in 1979 to signal the eventual goal of Chinese modernisation into the 21st century. In 1997, the goal of establishing a Xiaokang society in China was confirmed as an economic and political task by Jiang Zemin (the president of PRC from 1993 to 2002). However, increasingly

the ideal of xiaokang life has been associated with particular social groups, especially by non-governmental commentators. In particular, Xiaokang is also used as a term to designate a '(new) middle class' by Chinese scholars (Jing, 2000; Zhang, 2010; Tsang, 2014), whose lifestyles embody the 'small prosperity' idealised for the wider society. In this thesis, I therefore use the term of 'Xiaokang family' to describe the households that I studied both to signal their place within wider imaginaries of Chinese society and to indicate their social position within the new middle class, each having at least two middle-class members[7].

The growing middle class population in contemporary China since the post-Mao reforms in the late 1970s has been widely commented on (Bian & Zhou, 2014; Li, 2010; Yu, 2014; Zhang, 2010). In the Chinese context, the term 'middle class' is often explained as 'middle stratum' (*zhongjian jieceng* in Chinese), 'middle-income stratum' (*zhongdeng shouru jieceng* in Chinese), 'middle-income group' (*zhongdeng shouru qunti* in Chinese), 'white collar' (*bailing* in Chinese) or 'petit bourgeois' (*xiaozi* in Chinese) by Chinese government documents, media and scholars (Li, 2010; Ren, 2013). Although the definitions of 'middle class' in Chinese studies are diverse and contested, it is generally understood as a multi-layered notion that is implicated in China's recent socio-economic transformations.

Reviewing studies of Chinese social stratification, Li (2010) indicates that Chinese middle-class members can be filled into three major clusters (p. 5): the economic cluster (including private sector entrepreneurs, urban small businesspeople, rural industrialists and rich farmers, foreign and domestic joint-venture employees, and stock and real estate speculators); the political cluster (government officials, office clerks, state sector managers, and lawyers); and the cultural and educational cluster (academics and educators, media personalities, public intellectuals, and think tank scholars). The emergence of these middle class cohorts in China has also changed the way the country engages with the international community, because the middle classes

[7] More than a half of the researched households consist of more than three family members from three generations. Some of the family members in these households cannot be counted as middle-class individuals, such as retired grandparents and young children who have no income, but generally the households reach the threshold for middle-level income and middle-class living standards.

frequently embrace cosmopolitan values, build up economic and cultural links with the West, and constitute the major consumers of global resources / products. Internally, the rise of the Chinese middle class is primarily an urban phenomenon in major cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, the cities of the Yangzi River Delta (in east China) and the Pearl River Delta (including Guangzhou).

More recently, Ren (2013) defines the middle class as 'a dispositive that deploys practices, knowledge, measures and institutions that aim to manage, govern, and orient Chinese citizens' behaviours, gestures, and thoughts' (p. 143), including the neoliberal distribution of power, wealth and risk, the communicative distribution of the sensible, and the individualised distribution of values and norms. State, mass media and individuals are key players in deploying this middle-class definition: the state forms this middle-class dispositive through juridical power such as consumer protection and property laws; mass media makes the middle-class norm communicable; and individual citizens acquire and reproduce the middle-class norm through their performances of everyday life. In this sense, the definition of 'middle class' gains different meanings at these three levels. At the national level, due to Deng Xiaoping's strategy of constructing China as a Xiaokang society and thereby placing China within the ranks of lower to middle income nations, the Maoist term 'class' (used in relation to 'class struggle') has been replaced by 'stratum' (used in relation to the socio-economic positions of individuals). Nowadays, for the state, middle class is an ideal class which can both ameliorate social polarization and conflicts and reorient China's economy from the model which is overly dependent on exports to that driven by domestic consumption (Li, 2010). In a recent report on social stratification in contemporary China by the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS), Chinese society is divided into five social levels based on people's ability to access economic, political and socio-cultural resources: the upper, upper-middle, middle-middle, lower-middle, and bottom strata. The middle class or middle stratum are people from the upper-, middle- and lower-middle levels who:

do knowledge-based work, earn salaries, and possess not only the capacity to find a

profession that is relatively high paying, with a good working environment and conditions, but who also have the capacity to consume and maintain a quality of life in leisure; who hold a certain degree of control over their work; and who possess a consciousness of citizenship and public morality as well as associated accomplishments (CASS, 2002, p. 252).

Thus, three indicators can be refined to characterise the concept of the Chinese middle classes. Firstly, the middle class should have a middle-, lower- or upper-middle-level income. According to the 2012 statistical data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the term 'middle-level' refers to having a household income of between 78,200-126,100 CNY per annum (NBSC, 2012). The middle-level income bracket extends to 134,900-349,700 CNY per annum in Guangzhou (SBGZ, 2013a). Secondly, middle classes are framed as an urban group; in most definitions, members must be registered in an urban household and must hold an urban hukou[8]. And thirdly, middle classes should occupy specialist, professional or skilled jobs and should have completed at least post-secondary education.

At the everyday or individual level, the meaning of 'middle class' is inscribed in people's consumption of goods, built environment and media products (Ren, 2013). Through these practices of self-formation, the social group of middle-class people refers to individual citizens who are intelligent, civilized (*wenming* in Chinese), cosmopolitan and moral, responsible for their well-being and active in creating an individualised trajectory to their life. In this respect, 'middle-classness' becomes a component of an individual's life-making and life-building practices and a social distinction between those who can consume and those who cannot. These middle-class definitions, norms and ways of life are represented by mass media and then become communicable within the whole society.

In summary, the notion of middle class in the Chinese contexts refers to: the national discourse of middle-level income, lifestyle and living standards; social formation in a middle-class 'cultural milieu' (constituted in terms of cultural taste,

[8] *Hukou* refers to a record of household registration in China.

judgment and acquisition of cultural capital), which is influenced by the new geography of living in urban China (Zhang, 2010, p. 15); and an everyday practice of social norms of middle-classness (including through consumption).

It is clear, then, in the definitions of the Chinese middle class that consumption is a significant criterion, distinguishing this group from other social classes. Chinese consumers have increasing purchasing power. The consumption patterns in urban China have dramatically changed because of the remarkable economic development since the launch of the 'open and reform policy'. These transformations can be understood as a consumer revolution in urban China (Davis, 2005). According to Yu (2014), urban consumer culture in China has changed from a monotonous and state-planned model in the 1990s into a globalised and marketised formation in recent years. In other words, urban China has been transformed from a socialist society into a consumerist one. Additionally, Yu points out that the nature of consumption is not only formed by economic reforms and associated processes of globalisation but also shaped by the one-child policy during the past three decades. The 'singletons' born between late 1970s and 1990s have spent their childhood as the only repository of their parents' and grandparents' love in the newly consumerist China. Therefore, these younger generations not only become consumers but have also been a force that enhances their parents' and sometimes grandparents' purchasing power.

Xiaokang or middle-class consumers, among others, tend to consume more discretionary, luxury items, global brands, trendy or fashionable products and specialised household items which represent their tastes and aesthetics (Farrell et al., 2006; Elfick, 2011; Barton et al., 2013; Chan & Zakkour, 2014). It has been noted how they like using global brands (e.g. Apple, Starbucks, Nike and Gucci) to forge their social identities and form their desired lifestyles (Yu, 2014). According to Wang's (2005) research on the connections between Chinese 'bobo' (Bourgeois Bohemians) discourse and marketing, the new and young middle-class Chinese consumers (named 'neo-neo-tribal' or *xin xin renlei* in Chinese by Wang) are preoccupied by 'fashion', 'hair styles', 'computer gadgets' and 'relationships' and like to consume trendy, cool and stylish

goods (p. 546). In her opinion, 'bobo' is an imaginary class, because the population of such middle-class people is statistically small and bohemian tastes do not widely exist in urban China. However, as an imagination, the bobo discourse matters: it reveals that Chinese middle classes more generally want to keep pace with the rest of the world. Bobo cultures, for them, are a global fashion, a cool attitude and associated with premium values.

Xiaokang people are often presented as living in the newly built xiaoqu – 'enclosed residential housing units of the city, often surrounded by walls, protected by security guards, and hav[ing] internal government representative offices and property management employees' (Keith et al., 2014, p. 161) – or high-end apartment buildings which can provide them with eco-friendly living environments (Barton et al., 2013). As Feng et al. (2014) indicate in their home study of two gated communities in suburban Guangzhou, commercial houses are sold with ideas of comfort, intimacy, safety and trust, and consumed through urban residents' imagination of, and desire for, a brand new middle-class living environment. For the researched residents, home is a commodity which provides them with a physical place to live that conforms to their middle-class identities. Home, for them, is not merely a valued commodity, but also a sense of 'a haven, a calm escape from noisy, dirty, public urban space' (Yu, 2014, p. 128).

The privatised and commercialised housing markets have not only transformed home into a commodity but the market for home design and furnishing products has also proliferated. These home cultures of design and decoration can be seen as private or domestic parallels to other trends in urban consumer cultures. Based on her ten years of fieldwork in Shanghai, Davis (2005) uses visual cultures (home design magazines and websites) and shopping experiences to describe the emergent forms of home-based consumption after housing reform. The home magazines published in the mid-1990s connect Chinese home design with the global furnishing trends by reproducing images from European and North American magazines. Symptomatically, after its arrival, IKEA (a Swedish global furnishing retailer) quickly attracted a large number of Shanghai consumers who were looking for decoration ideas for their small

flats to fit their middle-income budgets. The popularity of IKEA also demonstrated that consumer cultures in Shanghai can not only be characterised as globalised, but also as pursuing an individualised shopping experience and service. For Shanghai consumers, the desire for a materially comfortable home and the pleasure of home renovation are central to their ideals of home design. In Davis' opinion, these home-based consumption practices can be considered as a reflexive and critical narrative that signify agency and individuation and an experience of emancipation (from the de-commodified past) in urban China.

For daily consumption, many Xiaokang people are keen on consuming green and healthy goods (Klein, 2013). Because of the rapid rise in food safety incidents as circulated by mass media – such as the melamine-tainted baby milk powder scandal, the 'gutter oil' problem (cooking oil recycled from kitchen waste in the gutter), and using industrial gelatine to produce jelly and yogurt – the food context in China has come to be seen as increasingly 'unsafe' in recent years. Responding to this context, Xiaokang people are said to engage their own understandings of safe food and create an alternative food network to minimise everyday food-related risks. For example, these consumers, who have great interest in high-quality and healthy food, have been seen as key actors in the multifunctional urban agricultural system (e.g. ecological farming which enables self-provisioning through 'rental farming' or 'weekend farming'[9]) that can provide them with organic and safe food (Si et al., 2015).

In sum then, Xiaokang consumer culture has been presented as providing a touchstone for understanding emergent developments in Chinese urban life. In this thesis, I extend the Xiaokang label beyond its use in designating a narrow and somewhat stereotyped cultural class. For the researched households, Xiaokang consumer culture is an important part of their ways of life. All of the researched households are urban registered households with middle-level income between 150,000 and 350,000 CNY annually. The parents from these households come from the

[9] 'Rental farming' or 'weekend farming' is an alternative food initiative in urban China. Through renting small plots (30m^2) in peri-urban areas, urban residents can grow their own organic vegetables during weekends.

aforementioned economic, political and cultural and educational clusters: 25 of them are working in education institutes; 6 of them are government officials; 14 of them are managers or senior employees in private, state-owned or foreign enterprises; 8 of them are working in governmental funded institutes; and 1 of them is a self-employed software developer. People from these households embrace global brands (such as IKEA and MacDonald's); have the capacity to consume products and services from both local and global suppliers; and tend to practice their awareness of public morality and responsibility to family through daily consumption (e.g. buying organic food for the family and treating family members in upscale restaurants). These everyday consumptions are not simply the characteristics of Chinese Xiaokang culture, but also the authentic practices which construct and reconstruct the connotations of Xiaokang lifestyle. In this thesis, consumption focused middle-class cultures extend beyond being merely strong adherents of particular trends (e.g. a taste for global brands, ecological consumption, a desire to live in gated communities), incorporating such dynamics into more 'ordinary' lifestyles. Ordinary consumption, including for Xiaokang, is not reducible to the symptoms of consumerism. For instance, consumption is also about household provisioning, the everyday conduct of domestic life, and the making of meaningful social relationships. Consumerist dynamics and ideologies work through these more mundane, but still vital, consumption processes.

Therefore, this thesis looks to move beyond the mediatised stereotypes of consumerist Xiaokang, using everyday food practices to this end. It applies a broadly understood 'practice approach' to consumption (further explained in Chapter 2) in order to explore how Xiaokang households in contemporary Guangzhou consume and use food to construct their home and family, culturally and socially, and how this helps to constitute their engagements in wider consumer cultures, urban property markets and family discourses. My intention in so doing is to move beyond the 'imagined classes' of marketing discourse, instead engaging with the everyday 'Xiaokang' consumption that has remained under-researched. As Bian and Zhou (2014) indicate, existing social and cultural studies on the Xiaokang phenomenon are too static, and

research on how people make their Xiaokang life and decide on their consumption patterns dynamically has been lacking.

Research objectives

This thesis adopts what has been broadly described as the 'practice approach' to understand the relations between food, home and family life in contemporary Guangzhou. I argue that adopting some precepts of the 'practice approach' usefully extends existing research on housing transformations (Feng et al., 2014), changing family values (Luo, 2009; Liang & Luo, 2010) and family relationships (Wu, 2007; Li, 2011), and household-based consumption (Xia, 1996) in contemporary Guangzhou. By so doing, this research provides an in-depth understanding of food consumption in Guangzhou in the domestic context and seeks to connect this domestic food consumption to wider consumer cultures and social transformations in urban China. The main objectives of this thesis can be outlined as follows:

1. To understand the relations between food and the process of home-/family-making through everyday food practices. Past studies have shed light on the important role of food practices in the construction and reproduction of the meanings of home and family relationships and on shaping the interdependencies between the domestic and the public realms. These studies have demonstrated the importance of exploring the detail of everyday life through doings to and with food. Adopting the 'practice approach' in this thesis, I want to develop this trend of food practices analysis to explore the material and emotional family experiences and home cultures in contemporary Guangzhou. How everyday food practices are accomplished with material cultures and emotional relations in the domestic sphere and how these actual 'doings' with and to food reflect and reproduce the social/collective values in contemporary China will be elucidated by the following empirical chapters. Key research questions here include seeing how wider Xiaokang consumer cultures (e.g. concerns about consuming safe food) and collective understandings of family and home

interplay with daily domestic food practices, and vice versa.

2. To conduct a social and cultural geography of the relations between everyday food consumption and the domestic sphere in urban Guangzhou, thereby extending the field of social and cultural geography within the Chinese academy. Whilst the importance of everyday life and the domestic are understood diversely in different social contexts, theories of the everyday have been constructed from a Western perspective. Empirically, everyday experiences – both in the Global North and Global South – have overwhelmingly been researched from a Western perspective. This thesis will provide an insight into everyday issues of domestic life and food practice from a Chinese perspective. In so doing it will also extend the emergent body of work that is developing social and cultural geography in China. The everyday experiences of urban consumers are generally absent in the fields of social and cultural geography in and of China (Zhu et al., 2014). Turning to home studies, again this study adds to existing work. To date, key areas of study in Chinese geography and social science have included: the transformations of home or the sense of home in the context of the emerging commercial housing system (Feng et al., 2014; Pow, 2007a; 2007b; Pow & Kong, 2007; Wu & Webber, 2004); and the family life of marginal groups, such as rural-urban migrant workers (see, for example, Li et al., 2009). These foci are important, but concentration upon them has meant that how domestic life is constructed and reconstructed by 'ordinary' urban residents is still under-researched. This research intends to fill that lacuna.

3. To achieve first-hand empirical data concerning the dynamic family relationships established through food consumption and in so doing to provide new ground for further studies on Chinese families. Over the past several decades, Chinese family values, structures and relationships have dramatically changed (I elaborate on this further in Chapter 2). Although a number of studies have analysed such changes and their social and cultural consequences, there are few studies that discuss family change in relation to food consumption. Seeing families as dynamic social constructions, this thesis aims to document new changes of home and family in

contemporary Guangzhou through the lens of food consumption.

Structure of this thesis

The thesis develops its account of Xiaokang food practices, consumer cultures, homes and family-making through nine further chapters. After this introductory chapter, the theoretical settings and research methods will be explained in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. The wider literature on theories of practice and current studies on food, home and family-making, developed both within and beyond the discipline of geography, is reviewed in Chapter 2, setting out the theoretical background for the thesis. The chapter contains four main sections focusing on: the connections between theories of practice and food consumption; the geographies of home; the relations between food consumption, home and family life; and existing studies on food and domestic life in the socio-cultural context of contemporary China. At the end of the literature review, I codify how this thesis both draws upon and develops the existing literature.

Chapter 3 explains the research methods and procedures of my fieldwork in Guangzhou. It also connects the theoretical and contextual backgrounds set out in Chapters 1 and 2 with the empirical chapters that follow. Chapter 3 critically considers the process of the empirical research that underpins this thesis. Issues considered include: the accessing and recruitment of research participants; the characteristics of the twenty-seven participating households; the research processes and various sorts of data constructed during the research and how this varied between case study households; my own positionality and its implications in the research process; the ethical dilemmas posed by the research process and how these have been negotiated; and the methods used in the process of qualitative data analysis.

The main body of the thesis consists of six empirical chapters on the relations between food practices, home and family life in contemporary Guangzhou. The six chapters have a ‘paired’ structure. The first two chapters focus on the relations

between food, the material home and the emotional and political registers of domestic life, with Chapter 4 focusing on the role of home design in domestic food cultures and reflecting on how households negotiate discourses of 'ideal homes' in practice; and Chapter 5 discussing how food memories of the past construct both the material home and family life in the present. Chapters 6 and 7 foreground insights on gendered/conjugal and intergenerational relationships at the family level. The explanation of how daily food practices draw out family relationships, and in turn, how family relationships have impacts on food practices are highlighted in these two chapters. The final two empirical chapters consider home as an important site that combines family life and wider social relations. Chapter 8 looks at forms of entertaining and hospitality at home, focusing on how wider social networks, both familial and non-familial, are practised within the home and through food. Chapter 9 focuses on 'eating out' to think about the 'doing' of family outside the bounded space of the home. These two chapters thus underpin how consumer cultures and social norms shape domestic life, and vice versa. Throughout these empirical chapters, I draw on particular examples to illustrate, demonstrate and develop the main arguments of the research. The text moves across case study households in turn, looking to combine the development of thematic arguments with a sense of how each household brings issues together in distinctive ways. Rather than synthesising materials from across all the cases within thematic sections, the approach in this thesis is to narrate food stories about particular households, while directing these towards the development of broader, thematic arguments. The intention is that readers gain both thematic insights and a sense of how these households 'do' food, home and family in practice.

To elaborate, Chapter 4 focuses on the relations between processes of 'accommodation' and home-based food consumption in contemporary Guangzhou. It deploys Daniel Miller's (2002) idea of 'accommodating' to understand how people connect their imaginations of the 'ideal' home and their real homes through the material cultures that relate to food. Particular attention is paid to how these material food cultures relate to the design and inhabitation of domestic space. The designing,

decorating and development of food spaces within the home are related to practices of cooking, eating, storing, growing food and 'wasting'. Overall, this chapter aims to sketch out an everyday geography of the making of 'ideal' homes by Xiaokang people.

Chapter 5 uses food memories to explore both the material and emotional aspects of Xiaokang food consumption. Considering home as an important place for the negotiation of the past and the present, and seeing memory as an embodied and emotive experience that can be recalled via food, the chapter explores how people embody and materialise their food memories in the processes of homemaking. The main argument is that food memories are key social forces which influence how people cook and eat at present and, in so doing, are engaged more broadly with their ways of making home and constructing domestic consumer cultures. In this sense, home becomes an articulation of the past and the present, and a site that is constructed temporally as well as socially and spatially. More specifically, the chapter seeks to analyse the ways in which food memories help to make the domestic space homely and how they allow individuals to remember and/or forget their place-based identities in a context of intra-national migration and rapid change. In so doing, the analysis connects household practices to collective history and tradition, revealing the relations between domestic food culture changes and wider social shifts in contemporary Guangzhou.

Chapter 6 focuses on the intimate relations between husbands and wives through the analysis of their management of daily meals and domestic food work. This chapter extends beyond research focused on the relations between gendered power, identity and the space of home, through a focus on food practices. It analyses how the gendered nature of domestic food work makes, remakes and unmakes the intimate relations between women and men. In particular, the narrated food stories explore how gendered domestic food work is undertaken in families with different forms and geographies of homemaking, creating intimacies even when families have to live apart.

Chapter 7 concerns food practices and intergenerational relationships within families. Human geography studies on age and familial relations have generated valuable literature on generational and intergenerational relations within and beyond

the family. However, the complex intergenerational relations beyond parent-child relations remain under-researched in geographical studies, limiting geographers' spatial understanding of family and age (Valentine, The Ties that Bind: Towards Geographies of Intimacy, 2008). The questions of how intergenerational relations are performed through everyday food practices and how domestic food spaces are made and remade are discussed in this chapter, in order to map the intergenerational relationships in Xiaokang families in Guangzhou. Particular attention is paid to the family form which I term the 'temporary three-generation family', characterised by grandparents temporarily living with their adult children's nuclear families, cooperating in providing financial and/or emotional support.

Chapter 8 uses the case studies of hosting meals and social gatherings at home as examples to elucidate the importance of home in the connections between family and wider social networks for Xiaokang people. Although home is considered as an open and porous place that intersects with complex social relations and emotions, and is thus regarded to be both public and private (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 27), there is a paucity of research on social activities with people who are non-family members at home. This chapter explores hosting distant relatives and friends at home, in order to explore how the space of home is reconstructed through the doings of kinship and friendship.

Chapter 9 moves the viewpoint from home spaces to public eating spaces. Urban food spaces provide every imaginable culinary temptation and build up urban living patterns (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 122). These spaces, therefore, offer not only food and drink but also a whole experience for urban consumers. Focusing on family-based eating out, this chapter discusses the process of family-making in public spaces. It argues that eating out is both a way of doing family outside home and a way of creating family spaces in public settings. The findings of this chapter also suggest that public eating spaces are given diverse meanings through the practices of eating out.

Finally, in Chapter 10 the main arguments, findings and contributions of the thesis are outlined; and thoughts on key areas for future research on food and home/family-

making in contemporary China are highlighted.

In sum, this thesis charts the relations between food consumption, home and family life in contemporary Guangzhou from a social and cultural geography perspective, focusing in particular on Xiaokang households. It so doing it contributes to a better understanding of the relations between domestic food practices and family life from a Chinese perspective.

Chapter 2

Literature review

This chapter provides a critical review of the relevant literature in order to structure a theoretical and contextual background for the following empirical chapters and their detailing of the relationship between food practices and home/family-making processes. It develops its argument in four parts that progressively focus in from broader questions of approach to the thesis' substantive concerns.

The first part of the chapter positions the research in relation to some key parts of the wider literature on practice theories. In terms of my focus on everyday food practices, I now outline how the heterogonous body of work looking at consumption through 'theories of practice' (Warde, 2005, 2014) offers important insights for my work, and indeed for wider studies of Chinese consumer cultures and home/family-making. In the second part of the chapter, I turn to the second core concern of the thesis, home. More specifically, I elucidate the emergent body of work on 'the geographies of home', which over the last decade has begun to form a distinctive area of debate and research both within my discipline of Geography and within interdisciplinary work on home cultures and domesticity. I focus on three key insights for my own research: the interwoven material and symbolic qualities of home; the relations between home, identity and power; and the relations between domestic, private space and wider public society.

The last two sections of the chapter critically discuss the literature on the role of food practices in home/family-making in both non-Chinese and Chinese contexts. In the third section, then, I look at existing research that inspired this thesis through bringing together interests in food consumption and home and family making, albeit in non-Chinese contexts. Specifically, I draw out key insights on the importance of food to domestic material culture, on how food practices are implicated in family relationships, and on how domestic food consumption relates to wider spaces beyond the home. In the final section I turn to the existing literature closest to this study, in that it focuses on

food and family making in Chinese contexts. Together, these bodies of work provide important insights on which my own research drew, as well as indicating key areas where this study offers a novel contribution.

Theories of practice and family-based food consumption

The term 'practice' refers to the way of operating and questions of doing and making (de Certeau, 1984) or, as others have put it, the organisational character of human activity, individuality and social order (Schatzki, 1996). The basic insight of what is now sometimes termed 'the practice approach' promulgates a distinct social ontology: 'the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings' (Schatzki et al. 2001: 12).

In his influential theory of social practices, Schatzki identifies two key aspects to this ontology. The first emphasises the performative nature of practice and action, understanding practice in the sense of doing and action. The second considers practice as 'a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings' (Schatzki 1996, p. 89), constituted through understandings, 'explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions', and what he calls "teleoaffective" structures which embrace 'ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions, and moods'. In other words, practices are bound up in discourses and structures that extend beyond their immediate 'doing' and performance. In this sense, for Schatzki, the analysis of practice must coordinate an account of wider spatiotemporal entities with an understanding of the performance or action of human existences.

Pointing out that practice theory is (or should be) a component of a broader cultural theory, Reckwitz (2002) argues that practice theory 'places the social in "practices"' and 'treats practices as the "smallest unit" of social analysis' (p. 246). Like Schatzki, he therefore views a practice as not simply what people do or an act they perform, but rather, a co-constitutive relation between human actions and the larger-scale social order. Practices are 'a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects

are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood' and a social type of 'behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds' (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Moreover, practice theory decentres text and conversation and emphasises the central position of bodily movements, things, practical knowledges and routines. Simultaneously, it encourages self-understanding which considers agents as 'carriers of routinized, oversubjective complexes of bodily movements, of forms of interpreting, knowing how and wanting and of the usage of things' (p. 259). Therefore, practice theories have proposed an approach that understands the nature and transformation of our living world through bodily movements, material cultures and practical knowledge and routines.

In this thesis, I see family-based food consumption as a practice; as specific doings, actions and performances of everyday life that are keyed into wider practical dispositions, understandings and structures. In so doing, I draw on thinking that has looked to deploy the notion of 'practice' to provide new analytical insights into consumption and its organisation. Everyday practice is unavoidably co-constitutive with the production (making) and usage or consumption of (doing with/to) things (de Certeau, 1984). In looking to build up a more general approach that applies practice theory to consumption, Warde (2005, 2014) argues that theories of practice:

> *emphasise routine over actions, flow and sequence over discrete acts, dispositions over decisions, and practical consciousness over deliberation …… [Thus] emphasis is placed upon doing over thinking, the material over the symbolic, and embodied practical competence over expressive virtuosity in the fashioned presentation of self (Warde, 2014, p. 286).*

In this sense, for Warde, the engagement in practice comprises the nature and process of consumption. In turn, consumption – which Warde defines as 'a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience,

whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion' (Warde, 2005, p. 137) -- is inherently intertwined with components of practice, and it is only through practice that other facets of consumption, such as its role in social and cultural distinction, are realised.

Although practice theories challenge ideas of consumption as individual choice – with their emphasis on collective explanations of routine, know-how, shared understanding, as well as on the coevolution of the materials, technologies, competencies and meanings that converge in a performance of a practice (Shove et al., 2012) – individual consumers are still positioned at the intersecting point of practice. An individual's pattern of consumption – of expenditures, possessions, their portfolio of cultural activities – is constituted by the whole volume of his or her practices (Warde, 2005). As Reckwitz (2002) notes, the individual is 'the unique crossing point of practices, of bodily-mental routines' (p. 256). Thus, the 'practice approach' of consumption is an approach that 'stresses the routine, ordinary, collective, conventional nature' of consumption and views practices to be 'internally differentiated such that persons in different situations do the same activity differently' (Warde, 2005, p.146).

Developing Warde's (2005) material and practical view of consumption, Shove et al. (2007) provide a stronger connection between material cultures (things) and practice (both practice-as-entity and practice-as-performance). They too see consumption as not just about having (possessions) but 'doings …… shaped by and constitutive of the complex relations – of materials, knowledges, norms, meanings and so on – which comprise the practice-as-entity' (Shove et al., 2007, p. 13). In their materialized theory of practice, however, objects are not simply a component of practices, but also an active agent that make up the design of everyday life and social relations together with process and practices. In this way, Shove et al. established a strong connection between consumption, technology and social changes in both the convergence and divergence of daily practices. For them, there exists an important relationship between the sociotechnical scripting within the deployment of things and

the symbolic aspects of their design, acquisition and use (Shove, 2003; Shove et al., 2007). There is a co-evolution of the consumption of technology and consumption practices. These in turn relate to wider moralitites (meanings of right and wrong) and an ideal order of society. That is, the daily consumption of technology is not just a consequence of individual choice or personal preference, but also an important component of 'social practices "governed by norms like respectability, appropriateness, competence and excellence" (Harvey et al., 2001). An analysis of these interwoven elements is 'necessary [in order to] to understand the collective dynamics of normalization' (Shove, 2003, p. 198-199), that is how particular forms of consumption become not only widespread but 'normal' and 'the norm'. Furthermore, Shove and others have teased out a twofold conjunction of theories of practice, culture and technology based on their materialized theory of practice: firstly, 'things are integrated into practices-as-performances … so they are of consequence for the emergence of practices-as-entities'; and secondly, collective trajectories of material-material and human-material complexes are 'formulated through enactments of practice' and able to change 'the conditions of future rounds of integration' (Shove et al., 2007, p. 148-149).

Turning to the studies of food that appropriate such a 'practice approach', scholars have long recognised food consumption as a lived experience of doing and/or doing with food. Focusing on domestic food practices, and working with de Certeau's wider framing of consumption as practice and use of things, Luce Giard (1998) describes the practices of domestic cooking as a way of operating through which tactics are invented and everyday trajectories are carved out. Through an exploration of the practices of everyday cooking, and how they intersect with gender, bodily interactions, memories/emotions, time-space and the dichotomy of the public and the private, she suggests that domestic spaces should be considered as important social machines. To this extent, cooking becomes a 'medium for a basic, humble, and persistent practice that is repeated in time and space, rooted in the fabric of relationships to others and to one's self, marked by the "family saga" and the history of each, bound to childhood memory just like rhythms and seasons' (p. 157)'. That is, through domestic practices –

here it is cooking -- food is ingrained into everyday routines, conventions and emotions that have wider social significance. For Giard, such practices need not conform to wider socio-political powers, but provide a space for their tactical inhabitation. For her, everyday food consumption can be seen as a practical and material way of doing things with and to food.

More recently, the domestic practices of food provisioning (Meah & Watson, 2013; Watson & Meah, 2012), eating (Knight et al., 2014) and 'wasting' (Evans, 2011; 2012) are not only considered as ways of doing family which construct daily domestic routines, but also as social practices which engage domestic food activities within the wider social and political conditions through which food is consumed. This body of work sees quotidian food consumption as important family practices which construct and re-construct family boundaries, everyday life, family relationships and material cultures within the domestic, temporally, spatially and socially. Many of these works have a predominantly sociotechnical perspective (Shove, 2003; Shove et al., 2007) or work from the perspective of tracing socio-spatial trajectories of things and human behaviours (Evans, 2011; 2012; Watson & Meah, 2012); they are focused on explaining and understanding everyday consumption as an involvement in routinized or conventional practices which are socially organised and governed. In consequence, they often neglect important aspects of food consumption, including, I suggest, the role of the body and emotions as components of practices. As Warde (2014) mentioned in his discussion of the problems and limits of theories of practice in consumption studies, although bodily processes, the senses and emotions are all clearly strongly connected to routinized habits and their actual performance, they remain under-represented in practice-theoretical accounts of consumption.

Helpfully, emotions and the wider norms, standards and institutions that ground practices are central to family studies conducted via a 'practice approach'. According to Morgan (2011), a 'family practices' approach is closer to the routinized, habitual and repeated ways in which family life and relationship are actually lived and experienced. Family practices are always interacting with and shaped by other areas of social life.

They are not simply practices that are done by family members in relation to other family members but they are also constitutive of that family 'membership' at the same time. Critically applying more general theories of practice, including Schatzki's (1996) and Reckwitz's (2002) as discussed above, Morgan defines family practices as the practices that are 'orientated to others who were designated as, [or] treated as, co-family members' and simultaneously 'reflective practices' that 'construct, reproduce family boundaries, family relationships and possibly more discursive notions of the family in general' (p. 163). Furthermore, family practices are concerned with the fluidity of familial boundaries in terms of who can be counted as a family member and the ways in which family life embraces other areas of social life (such as consumption).

Emotions play vital roles in the routines of everyday family life, and in turn, family practices are always built in emotions. Morgan (2011) uses the idea of 'emotional work' – which does not simply focus on the measureable and readily identifiable household chores but also pays attention to the emotional interactions among family members – to analyse the association between emotions and family practices. Familial emotional work involves the management of one's own and others' emotions and the kinds of efforts that make individuals feel 'emotionally drained' after the accomplishment of routinized family practices. Also important to Morgan is the positioning of emotional life within family relationships – a 'deep, complex and multilayered set of linked strands that are seen as being of particular importance in a person's life' on the basis of the analysis of 'broad cultural variations and historical shifts in structures of feelings' (p. 125). For him, a practice approach to family studies successfully emphasizes all these aspects, including:

> *'doing' ..... which might be identified as 'emotional work'; .... the everyday and the repeated which takes our understanding of emotions beyond anger and distress; and the reflexive character of family practices which deems that family practices are orientated to others who are defined as or in relation to family members and that, in enacting these practices, ... we can see how emotional practices are not simply matters for an individual's 'inner' life but are shared with others within family, and*

other, configurations (Morgan, 2011, p. 126).

Morgan's account of family through a practice theory lens is thus of particular value in centring on the emotional and offers a valuable counter-point to the more techno-centric and rather emotionless accounts of others, such as Shove et al.

Drawing on the theoretical insights of work on practice, consumption and the family, the following empirical chapters explore everyday food consumption in contemporary Guangzhou as an articulation of food practices and family practices that involve 'doings' (performances) with food and food-related things (e.g. kitchen appliances, tea set, tablecloth and dining table); that reflect and reproduce people's understandings of and engagements with various knowledges and skills (e.g. how to manage a proper family meal), emotions and social relations (e.g. kinship and friendship); and which shape and are shaped by the changing family norms, housing markets and consumer cultures in Guangzhou (see details in Chapter 1). The thesis draws out the material ways in which Xiaokang people organise their family life and home routinely and conventionally, and illuminates how these practices can also be invested with meanings, emotions and expressions of identity and power. It combines attention to individual and household performances with a concern for the wider norms, standards and institutions within which these performances are implicated. Taking inspiration from work such as Morgan's (2011), it recognises not only the socio-material nature of family life but also its emotional qualities, seeing these different registers as being brought together in the case of food and family-making.

Geographies of home

This thesis explores the relations between food practices and family making in relation to the geographical space of 'home'. Home is a landscape – 'an indicat[or] of cultural regions', 'an economic entity' and 'a domestic space' (Domosh, 1998, p. 276) – which provides fertile soil for social and cultural studies. The term 'home' can be seen 'as a repository for complex, interrelated, and at times, contradictory sociocultural

ideas about dwelling, living/being, experiencing the world (belonging), and interacting with other people (family), places, spaces, and objects' (Peil, 2009, p. 180). It is both a natural and familiar site for its inhabitants and a cultural landscape that gives meaning to their everyday life (Crang, 1998, p. 28).

How home is/or could be understood is the main question of the inter-disciplinary debates on home. Shelley Mallett (2004) identifies the notion of 'home' as a conflation of house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying. Specifically, home is:

> *about people's relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things. It can be a dwelling place or a lived space of interaction between people, places, things; or perhaps both …… Home can be singular and/or plural, alienable and/or inalienable, fixed and stable and/or mobile and changing. It can be associated with feelings of comfort, ease, intimacy, relaxation and security and/or oppression, tyranny and persecution. It can or can not be associated with family. Home can be an expression of one's (possibly fluid) identity and sense of self and/or one's body might be home to the self. It can constitute belonging and/or create a sense of marginalisation and estrangement. Home can be given and/or made, familiar and/or strange, an atmosphere and/or an activity, a relevant and/or irrelevant concept. It can be fundamental and/or extraneous to existence. Home can be an ideological construct and/or an experience of being in the world. It can be a crucial site for examining relations of production and consumption, globalisation and nationalism, citizenship and human rights, and the role of government and governmentality. Equally it can provide a context for analysing ideas and practices about intimacy, family, kinship, gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality. (Mallett, 2004, p. 84).*

Likewise for cultural geographers, home is a complex and multi-layered concept that refers to 'a place/site, a set of feelings, and the relations between the two' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, pp. 2-3). Thinking about home highlights the relations between place, space, scale, identity and power (Peil, 2009). In order to clarify the socio-spatial

relations and emotions associated with home, Blunt and Dowling (2006) propose a critical geography of home that focuses on the spatialised and politicised understandings of home and its three overlapping components: 'home as simultaneously material and imaginative; the nexus between home, power and identity; and home as multi-scalar' (pp. 21-22). This view draws on housing studies as well as Marxist, humanist, feminist and cultural geographies of home. These elements are not only embedded in the positive ways of homemaking, but also intertwined in disruptions or unmakings of home and domestic lives (Brickell, 2012, p. 228). Thus, home, for (critical) geographers, is a social, spatial and political notion that is underpinned by its social construction and deconstruction.

As the empirical chapters of this thesis are organised on the basis of Blunt and Dowling's three-dimensional framework of the (critical) geography of home, it is useful to provide a detailed discussion of wider literature on these three elements respectively, and then to bring them into the subsequent section reviewing existing work on the relations between food consumption and home/family.

Home as a material and/or imaginary place

The geography of home is 'important in both material and symbolic terms' (Blunt & Varley, 2004, p. 4), as the material and imaginary forms of home are the most intuitive and common patterns of home. The notion of living in a material home not only refers to human habitats but also everyday material culture, the domesticity of things. We cannot live in a world without things. Over recent years, a trans-disciplinary body of work has been developed addressing the material culture of home. Material culture is 'a tool for self-actualization, and practices … illustrat[ing] the importance of personal engagement with the domestic environment for the concretization of domestic relationships' (Gullestad, 1993; Garvey, 2001, p. 49). In the quotidian, we are encountering, living with and dealing with things within the home. Viewing household-based consumption as a whole process of selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair, and disposal of things and artefacts; substantive works have highlighted the importance of things in the experience of our everyday lives (Miller, 1998a; 2001a;

2008; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007) and the central position of materiality in understanding everyday practices (Warde, 2005; 2014).

As domestic material cultures are entangled with the complexity of commodities in consumer society (Appadurai, 1986), they accurately represent the mundane life experiences and social relations that consumers construct around particular things and artefacts (Miller, 1998a). In other words, material culture has a strong connection to consumption. It is central to our everyday experiences and our relationships with others in the consumer society. Material culture is also a social practice. For Woodward (2011), the cultural meanings of consumption are constructed by the imaginative and emotional engagement of object-centred (object, here, refers to commodity and its 'potential to be decommodified through subjectification practices') use-value in person-object interactions (p. 372). Moreover, he indicates that the mundane consumer objects within home spaces, such as ovens or televisions, can transit/unfold (meaning they can form people's sense of self and feeling of attachment) through the materiality of everyday practices. In other words, domestic material culture studies are notable for their combined interests in consumption and everyday practices.

For home studies, it is widely acknowledged that home interiors can help to underpin our familial social lives and social relations (Miller, 1998a), enabling self-expression and the performance of love and devotion (Miller, 1998b; Gregson, 2007). Home interiors also represent how households relate to the dynamics of social change outside the domestic space (Shove, 2003). The questions of how things lead their social lives within domestic spaces and what people do to/with these interiors are central to these studies (Blunt, 2005a). According to Daniel Miller (2001a), the consumption of things originates from home. In turn, through our consumption practices home possessions are used to negotiate the relationships between people and the wider materiality of home (Miller, 2008). Focusing on domestic interiors, Miller (2002) proposes the notion of 'accommodating' to examine the relationship between the home and the people who dwell within it. This idea of accommodation emphasises the reciprocal process of both making the home for our life and adapting ourselves to the

material home (see further details in Chapter 4). This process of accommodating is not only spatial, but also temporal. Gregson (2007) indicates that a 'gap in accommodation' (the temporalities of accommodating things) exists between the 'physical and representational registers' (p. 162). People's doings with and to things in the domestic sphere can open up this gap, making the process of accommodating transient. Nonetheless, through attending to processes of domestic accommodation the identities and social relations of love, care and devotion that sustain the mundane family life within the domestic interior can be presented and narrated.

This transience of homemaking often intersects with class, gender and ethnicity. For example, considering home as a transient aesthetic entity, Clarke (2001) argues that home decoration as an expressive form not only relates to the formation of middle-class identity, but also to the consolidation of working-class identity. Drawing on her ethnographic research in north London, Clarke challenges dominant assumptions about working-class sociality being connected to public rather than private domains. Her ethnographies have clearly shown that working-class women have their own ideas of the 'ideal home' that are not about being judged or inspected by others from the public domain (actual and potential visitors).

To summarise, for these studies, the material home is achieved through an on-going practice of homemaking. This practice is influenced by the imagination of the 'ideal home' and its intersection of social identities, and is about the trajectories of things and the social relations between people, things and home. Furthermore, these things are not only the possessions of their owners but also influence their lives. The process of homemaking or accommodating comprises both material and practical constructions by human and non-human forces.

Home, power and identity

Having established home as a material and imaginative construction I now want to argue that home and home-making are also imbued with questions of identity, and in particular with gendered identities and power relations. As the term home is linked to belonging and the original place from whence we come, identity and self-definition are

always bound up with people's feelings about home, their perceptions of belonging and alienation at home, their understanding of home's meanings, and the power relations between cohabitants. The space of home can tell us 'the sort of social relationships we believe in and the practices that sustain them' (Crang, 1998, p. 29). To understand how people define some places as home but not others, and some identities as homely but others as not homely, geographers try to map the meanings of home and homelessness, and of the homely and unhomely home.

Gender and age are key dimensions that differentiate the meaning of home and practices with/within home (Mallett, 2004). Gender is 'an inherently unstable, continually self-deconstructi[ng] discursive formation' which is socially and politically constructed temporarily and spatially (Jackson, 2005, p. 103). Feminist scholars are keen on exploring the meanings and values of domestic spaces, and understanding them as gendered spaces, as 'gender is crucial in the lived experiences and imaginaries of home' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 15). Their view is that 'day-to-day life (the economy, society and the form of the built environment) is structured around cultural understandings of "public" and "private" as well as gendered understandings of space and place' (Ekinsmyth, 2001a, pp. 58-59).

As Mallett (2004) indicates, studies on gender and home generally focus on 'work or production, consumption, spaces including house design, and/or housing tenure and the house as an expression of status' (p. 75). For feminist geographers, home is not only a workplace implicated in the oppression of women, containing unpaid housework such as cleaning, cooking, laundering and dish washing, but also a place for expressing and performing women's power and their dynamic relations with men (Johnson, 2006a). Indeed, women always make their own meanings of home through their domestic work. Unpaid domestic work is bound up with the production and performance of feminine subjectivities. Thus. in Pink's (2004) work on gendered homemaking, her informants argue for a femininity that rejects the traditional gender role that sees women as housewives who should do household work obsessively, but do not simply reject unpaid domestic work nor its association with femininity. Rather, they

prefer to have autonomy to organise their domestic work in ways that allow them to construct a desirable domestic subjectivity and home-making role. They cast themselves as contemporary women who use their own knowledge and morality to determine the value of their domestic objects and situate their relationships with other people in their homes through their practices with such material objects (see also, Quinn, 2010; Yantzi & Mark, 2008). As an example, Danny Miller notes how the social organisation of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) projects in the UK confirm the decoration of home as masculine work coupled with feminine creativity and encouragement (Miller, 2012). As homemakers, women are creative and imaginative agents, expressing and performing their femininities in the course of shaping wider home cultures (Pink, 2004; Johnson, 2006a; Gregson, 2007).

Men, and the performance of masculinities within the domestic sphere, are also highlighted in home studies. It was traditionally assumed that the home or private sphere was for women, while men were thought to belong in public space and the public sphere . However, even in this traditional gendering of private and public space, home is not a meaningless place for men; rather, it is a space in which they have 'ultimate authority but limited responsibility for the domestic work', 'a haven from the pressure of the outside world', and 'a place of leisure and recreation' (Mallett, 2004, p. 75). Moreover, with the changing normative gender roles and the increasing equalities between men and women, home becomes a more complicated place that is established by both genders and their power relations. On the one hand, men construct their masculine power in the domestic realm through their active roles as proper partners who see household work as meticulous but not obsessive (Pink, 2004); for instance, a proper father or grandfather tends to takes an active part in childcare and the gendered construction of domestic carespaces (O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003; Mann & Leeson, 2010; Tarrant, 2013a). On the other hand, men can express and perform their masculinity through doing traditionally feminine work. In Pink's (2004) sensory exploration of domestic material culture and gender identities, she looks at how men who live alone, in house or flat shares and as single fathers, perform traditionally feminine tasks, such

as food preparation and dish washing. Drawing on the data collected from these male informants, Pink argued that men's sensory and intellectual experiences and understandings of the home are constructed and represented differently from women – they locate agency in the essential nature of their personalities, but never feel obsessive about housework, which is common for women. For Pink, men's home creativities challenge traditionally gendered uses of space and situate their personal qualities (e.g. of being meticulous or lazy in their homes) quite differently from those of housewives and non-housewives.

The notion of home, therefore, can be considered as a space implicated in masculine power and male identity. However, crucially, gender researchers consider home neither as a place for men nor as a place for women, but as a site for negotiations and power relations between both genders. In contemporary Western society, household work is often shared (more) equally between men and women. Many quantitative and qualitative studies on household work and homemaking have demonstrated that, although the organisation of household work varies between different households from different social classes, the work is allocated to both men and women according to their available time in both Western and non-Western societies (Gregson & Lowe, 1995; Pink, 2004; Lam, McHale, & Crouter, 2012). Therefore, home is both a place where traditional gender roles and patriarchal social relations are affirmed, and a site where women's power is reinforced and where such traditional gender roles are challenged and subverted in the modern world.

The research literature on home and gender sometimes intersects with an interest in family identities and intergenerational relationships. For example, Gill Valentine (1997) discusses the intersections between gender and parenting. Specifically, she explores the gendering of parental practice in negotiating children's spatial boundaries and protecting them from public dangers: parents hold changing and complex attitudes towards gender and safety. Contrary to the traditional view that girls are more at risk in public space than boys, Valentine's research suggests that girls are more capable of safely negotiating public spaces than boys, as girls are more self-aware, sexually mature

and responsible. Furthermore, a gendered division between 'supervising' mothers and 'disciplinary' fathers is demonstrated in parenting practices. The practices of grandparenting are also strongly gendered. To understand the spatial and temporal practices of grandfathers, Anna Tarrant (2013a) explores the complex ways in which men renegotiate the terms of hegemonic masculinity associated with their ageing. Focusing on the grandfathers' caring practices, she indicates that old grandfathers never act as de-gendered men who are limited to their private homes, but instead, that caring work provides the old men opportunities for accessing public spaces to perform their masculinities.

Home and wider society

Home is not simply a closed and private space, but rather, it is a social organisation shaped by the public sphere. As indicated by David Sibley (2005), human geographers and other social scientists often make a division between the public and the private: the former spaces being cast as both threatening and a terrain of control, while the latter ones are considered to be secure and comfortable. However, this division is not stable. The dichotomy of 'public space as a space of difference, of encounters with strangers as well as with familiars, is erased. But anxieties about threatening others can never be erased – they are only displaced' (p. 158). Industrialisation has created boundaries between the public and the private, which 'are often used to refer to a distinction between worlds of work and home, or between the state and domestic family life' (McCarthy & Edwards, 2011, p. 166). Nevertheless, home is never separated from public, political worlds but is created through the extra-domestic and vice versa (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 27).

The idea of 'home' not only refers to the dwelling place where we live but to particular emotional qualities of 'homeliness'. This also complicates the 'private' spatiality of home. In their analysis of the production and reproduction of the ideal of a 'homely' home, Blunt and Dowling (2006) point out that dwellings are constructed as homely or unhomely homes by the actions of individuals, businesses and the state. In addition, they explore two types of ideal home design – the suburban house and the

apartment in the high-rise building – to illustrate the boundaries between the private home and public affairs. The suburban house-as-home separates public and private, including through its spatial separation from the masculine workplace. The high-rise apartment blurs the boundaries between the public and the private, because these city homes are planned by the government to rehouse working-class inhabitants who are unable to afford high-price houses. Therefore, suburban houses are often represented as homely homes, whereas public apartments in high-rise buildings are often understood as unhomely spaces or homeless homes (see also, Bennett, 2011). Moreover, homely spaces can also be intimate, friendly and comfortable spaces beyond the domestic home, such as shopping malls, children's play facilities and tourist destinations, which enable family practices or activate a sense of belonging and feelings of home (Sibley, 2005; Su, 2014).

Work on the geographies of home has also considered domestic and family mobilities as intrinsic to home-making. Family life is not disrupted by everyday mobilities; they are a part of it. Domestic homes are not simply static; they are made through movement. According to Morgan (2011), there are three types of mobilities which have impacts on the spatial and temporal practices of family members: low, medium and high mobilities. For him, 'low mobilities' designates one or more partners working at home that 'entails a relatively high degree of concentration of family practices which have to be co-ordinated with each other in a way which is regularly visible'; 'medium mobilities' suggests the commuting of one or both partners on a regular basis; and 'high mobilities' describes the situation 'where one or more partners may be away for substantial periods of time' (p. 84-86). These family mobilities make a strong connection between the private home and the public geographies of the workplace.

On a wider geographical scale, family mobilities and the notion of 'mobile homes' also refer to migration. Literature on the geographies of home has paid particular attention to transnational migration. The transnational mobility of people, things and cultures has influential effects on both the physical/material and emotional aspects of

the time-space of home (Tolia-Kelly, 2004a). The transnational home is always considered as a consequence of migration. When transnational migrants settle down in a new place, they tend to remake their home in the new place. This process of homemaking or remaking is connected with racial/ethnic identities, nostalgias, and other place-based or social identities. For example, in their research on diasporic homemaking by Hindu immigrants in southern California, Shampa and Sanjoy Mazumdar (2009) examine the ways in which immigrants create their meaningful home in new places abroad. Through religious activities (such as home blessing), and home redesign and redecoration with religious objects and other artefacts with special religious meanings, new diasporic Hindu homes are constructed to be as similar as possible to those in their native land – India – in a new place. In Divya Tolia-Kelly's (2004a) research with 'twice-migrant' East African Asian women in London, she explores how domestic material culture may act less as a simple re-creation of a past home elsewhere and more as a memory space, linking diasporic domestic homes to other spaces and times. Tolia-Kelly's focus is on material decoration, but food is often recognised as having a central role to play in such domestic memory practice. For example, in Sutton's (2006) study of cooking skills and collective memory, cooking skills are not only practical knowledges that accomplish the dynamic making of home and family life, but also a tie that connects the 'proper life' in the present to a remembered tradition (past) and an imagined future. In his empirical case, two Greek women combine the traditional Greek discourse and modernity discourse of cooking through their kitchen practices: on the one hand, both of them learn how to cook from the older generations and keep the traditional receipts; and on the other hand, these two women have encountered the modern and globalised food cultures – they are global consumers of ingredients and ways of cooking. In this way, the kitchen becomes a space that links daily cooking processes, collective memory and national identity.

In sum, then, work exploring 'the geographies of home' has argued that home is not simply a bounded, closed off, private space, separated from the public sphere. Home is shaped by wider public discourse, policy and spatiality. Home can be mobile.

Homeliness may come not from spatial isolation so much as from spatial connection. For my own research, this wider literature offers important conceptual insights – for example on how family domestic food practices may be shaped by wider public discourses of home and homeliness – and empirical directions – for example, in the context of Guangzhou with its largely migrant population, to consider the importance of family mobilities in home-making practice.

Food consumption, home and family

A mutual relationship can be seen between food practices and the domestic. On the one hand, it is generally assumed that home is an important articulation of the local and global food system, linking private food habits and wider food systems (Valentine, 1999). On the other hand, food consumption and production also play a crucial part in the (re)construction of the meaning of home (Bell & Valentine, Consuming Geographies: We are Where We Eat, 1997). Food is central to the process of 'domestic organization, determining the configuration of members, status relations, and the longevity of the household' (Julier, 2013, p. 343). Daily food practice is often considered as vital to both the material and imaginary home, shaping intimacy and family members' complicated relationships. Food practice and its location are important to the reproduction of everyday life and social order (Watson, 2013). Within the family space of home, food practices not only make, remake and/or unmake domestic spaces, but also reproduce social relations within and beyond the family.

Once more deploying the classification by Blunt and Dowling's (2006) of three overlapping components of critical geographies of home (introduced in the previous section), this third part of the chapter discusses the linkage between food practices and home-/family-making, drawing on Anglophone food studies. It considers: the material cultures that connect food and the domestic; everyday food practices, identities and social relations; and the connections between domestic food spaces and wider society (including both national and transnational aspects of domestic food).

Food and material cultures within home

The connections between food and home are not only symbolic but also material and practical. Tracing the home-based consumption of food, kitchen appliances and other food-related things, home studies have indicated that domestic food spaces are forged by the complex and changeable relations between practice, devices and time, which are affected by wider socio-political issues. Critically, food-related things are not simply located in home spaces; rather, they constitute the fabric of the dwelling structure and provide the environment for habitation. At the same time, these food-related things and technologies, such as microwaves, fridges, dishwashers and food storage shelves, are not only cohabitating with us and serving us, but also living their own lives (see, for example, Watkins, 2006; Hand & Shove, 2007; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007).

Domestic food spaces, especially kitchens, are frequently debated in current home studies. With the growth of research interest in home, domestic practice and family lives, and an increasing anxiety about the loss of home cooking and culinary traditions in the contemporary Western world (e.g. Duruz, 2001; Short, 2006; Meah & Watson, 2011), the domestic food space in both Western and non-Western society attracts more and more attention from scholars from multiple disciplines, including anthropology, sociology and human geography (e.g. Murcott, 1983; Floyd, 2004; Llewellyn, 2004; Johnson, 2006a; 2006b; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007). This body of work has considered the kitchen as a material and imaginary space that represents and (re)constructs modern life and social networks.

In particular, work on the the discourse of 'domestic modernity' has examined the spatial dynamics of modern/Western kitchen design, in different historical periods. Feminist geographers have made important contributions in this regard. These scholars have used various descriptions of the 'ideal' modern kitchen in the Western world to analyse the gendered power relations of the modern kitchen. Two aspects of domestic modernity – scientific management and the patriarchal gaze – which were widely spread across the Western world during the twentieth century, can be identified

in such kitchen studies (Johnson, 2006a). According to Johnson (2006a), domestic kitchens in the late nineteenth-century were spaces constituted of food, dirt, women and servants (see also, Davison, 1978; Tuan, 1974). However, along with the disappearance of servants and the emergence of new domestic sciences and technologies in the twentieth century, there can be found a transition to a domestic variant of scientific management, appealing to notions of efficiency of time and space (Johnson, 2006a; Llewellyn, 2004). Pointing out that modern architects use the same organising principles of scientific management in both Europe and America, Llewellyn (2004) reconceptualises the kitchen as 'the workplace of the woman, the domestic labourer, often seen in parallel to her male counterpart's workplace on Fordist production lines' (p. 45). In other words, the kitchen is a site for the exploitation of women. However, using his empirical research on the British kitchen in the early periods of the twentieth century, Llewellyn also argues that the kitchen, whilst 'designing women', was also contested and influenced by notable women designers, becoming a space where ideas of efficiency could serve both the subordination of domestic labourers and the empowerment of women.

Additionally, kitchen design is not stable; rather, it is dynamic due to the changing gender roles of women. The role of Western women was transformed from household manager to scientific overseer in the 1920s, to the economiser in the 1930s and 1940s, to perfect mother in the 1950s, to sexually liberated paid workers in the 1960s and 1970s, and to 'do it all' 'superwomen' in the 1980s and 1990s (Johnson, 2006a). Existing research suggest that the design of kitchens shifts in ways that both follow and mould these remarkable alterations. For example, Saarikangas (2006) examines how the spatial arrangements of kitchens was changing to represent the expanding role of active, professional housewives in Finland from the 1930s to 1950s. According to her, during the 1930s the kitchen was separated from other rooms, and defined as unhygienic, strictly in its own space. However, during the 1950s the spatial continuum between kitchen, dining corner and living room became central in the house. This re-visualising of the space of the kitchen was in turn, Saarikangas suggests, a re-visualising

of women's housework and their social stature. Similarly, in Jerram's (2006) research on German kitchen design in the 1920s he emphasises that the changing social status and ideologies of women can be represented and constructed through kitchen design. By outlining the conflicting models for professional kitchen design in Frankfurt (which segregated women's workspace from their domestic social and leisure space with a wall) and Munich (which socialised women through enforcing a union between women's domestic work and social life), he suggests that the form of kitchen space can function as an index and structuring agent of gender and sociability.

As well as professional designers, 'housewives' also play an important role in the redesign and remaking of their domestic cooking and eating spaces. In Supski's (2006) analysis of the significance of the kitchen to immigrant women who moved to Australia during the late 1940s to 1950s, the immigrant women construct their new home through the kitchen by re/negotiating the kitchen space to create the feeling of home in their new settlements. Based on their understanding of domesticity, these women build up forms of 'homely' kitchen to shape their domestic spaces and to construct their social identities. That is, women not only inhabit the space of the kitchen, but they metaphorically become it (Llewellyn, 2004, p. 55). At the same time, the space of the kitchen can confirm the importance of women's surveillance of other household members (especially their children), and indeed the importance of women being seen by others (Johnson, 2006a). Through women's creative use of the kitchen, the kitchen becomes the site of their multiple subjectivities, the central place for their domestic work and the negotiation of women's relations to other household members (Supski, 2006). The kitchen is also a space that combines women's domestic work and leisure; it is often 'an expansive kitchen-meals-family-games precinct where most informal family and entertainment activities occur (Dovey, 1994; Johnson, 2000)' (Johnson, 2006a, p. 129). Therefore, the kitchen is not only a physical space, a room in a house, but also a set of political roles that extends beyond a material dwelling. It is understood as a place 'where work mingles with desire, pleasure, creativity, violence, safety and other people; and where domestic technologies, architects and designers create devices and spaces

which shape gender' (Johnson, 2006a, p. 123-124). As I discussed in the previous section, in the interrogation of the dynamic gendered nature of domestic spaces, the kitchen is viewed as both an oppressive space for women and a site of potential empowerment for women, an expression of female pleasure.

Kitchen design is not only about building up the physical form of the kitchen; it also relates to the social life within kitchens. Living with a kitchen is a process of accommodating it, through moving things in, re-designing it and renewing it (Shove, 2003). In this somewhat invisible process of consumption, the kitchen and its appliances become the agents of people's self-expressions, engaging them in relationships with both previous occupants and gender issues. As part of her in-depth study of how we live with things domestically, Gregson (2007) explains the remaking of a new kitchen after moving home through an ethnographic story about 'Jo-Anne'. Jo-Anne redecorates her new kitchen with 'new lighting, cutlery, shelving, bowls, dishes, plates, cooks' knives, wooden chopping-board, pans, a range of pasta jars, and a table and chairs – all from IKEA – plus a new tiled floor, microwave, toaster and espresso-maker', which allows her new kitchen to be 'seen [as] "contemporary" style; to satisfy her demands for easy-care hygiene, and – perhaps – to constitute her as the tasteful desirable other to an as yet unknown taste-conscious male' (Gregson, 2007, p. 38). That is, Jo-Anne tries her best to transform the look of her new kitchen, in order to express her self-identities, tastes and social relationships with (actual and potential) others.

Kitchen appliances can also tell us stories of household actions. The accommodation of kitchen appliances, such as refrigerators (Watkins, 2006), dishwashing machines (Shove et al., 2007; Gregson, 2007) and freezers (Hand & Shove, 2007), are associated with gendered culture and identities. For example, in her research analysing the accommodation of refrigerators in mundane post-modern English homes, Helen Watkins (2006) pointed out that refrigerators reflect and represent everyday practices of social reproduction in contemporary English society. The fridge, in her analysis, not only maps out the household moral economy, feminising the process through women's traditional responsibilities for feeding, nourishing and

caring work, but is also the centre of kitchen lives. Thus, the fridge performs a domestic order,, shaping rhythms, organising space, time and people within and beyond the kitchen.

Much domestic material culture has an infrastructural quality, underpinning the doing of domestic life. In considering how households think about processes of material 'ridding' and waste, Gregson suggested that household appliances are 'disclosed to be things accommodated primarily for their capacities', for when these appliances are out of order, 'our homes would lose their capacity to be so accommodating' (2007, p. 128-129). In her work on instances where kitchen appliances break down, and their impact on home life, she investigates how both the capacities of appliances and the trajectories of wasting help to construct and reshape the relations of care and devotion between household members – wives, husbands, parents and children. From her point of view, getting rid of things is part of the process of accommodation. Similar to other studies on household waste in the throwaway society in the UK (Gregson et al., 2007a; 2007b; Bulkeley & Gregson, 2009), in this kitchen research, Gregson uses two stories of failed kitchen appliances – a microwave and a dishwasher – to explain how these failed things engaged with people-appliance accommodation. Appliance failure not only leads to throwing away and wasting but it is also followed by the continued accommodation of such things. The whole generic trajectory of kitchen appliances – from being moved in to being replaced or got rid of – is intertwined, Gregson suggests, with the notion of 'dwelling', a union of people, material things and place.

Gregson's work also illustrates how the material form of the kitchen is not simply accomplished spatially, but also temporally. Tracing the social life of kitchens, Shove et al. (2007) discuss the question of kitchen 'renewal' or redesign and refurbishment. Central to their approach is an argument about the interdependencies between (everyday consumption) practices, (socio-technological) devices and (socio-technical) systems. In their opinion, kitchen design or renewal is both a home-based form of consumption and a social practice. It is triggered by consumers' pursuit of new things

and their aspiration to express identities and establish social relations, and their need to accomplish new kitchen-based activities. Considering the daily consumption undertaken within the kitchen to be both symbolic and cultural, and both material and practical, Shove et al (2007) connect kitchen possessions and kitchen performance through a system of what they term 'having-doing dynamics' (having referring to material possession and doing referring to performance). This dynamic system proposes a co-constitutive relationship between kitchen possessions and practice, and asserts that the balance between possessions and performance / practice is precarious[10]. It also suggests that the consumption of the kitchen is organised by both the possessions people have and their kitchen practices of past, present and future. In this sense, the combination of kitchen possessions and practices has arguably shaped and transformed the meaning of the kitchen and reconfigured domestic routines, both spatially and temporally. For Shove et al. (2007), the core set of their concerns is unmistakably the interdependencies between (everyday consumption) practices, (socio-technological) devices and (socio-technical) systems. From their point of view, the kitchen can be regarded as an emblematic social space in this regard.

Domestic food practices and family relationships

Above, I considered how existing research on the materiality of domestic food consumption spaces, specifically on histories of kitchen design and accommodation, offers valuable insights on the import of what we might assume are humble, unremarkable places. I now turn to consider how the domestic food practises staged by spaces like the kitchen play a vital role in the construction and negotiation of family relations. The negotiation of power among family members has been a central concern of the previous studies on food and domestic space, with home considered 'a site of multiple, sometimes contradictory, consumption practices crossed by complex webs of power relations between household members – [which]… in turn both shape and are

[10] The imbalance between possession and performance can be formulated as 'missing possessions' and 'deficient performance' (Shove et al., 2007, pp. 26-34). The former condition means the inadequacies of kitchen appliances and technologies that prevent or constrain people's daily practices; while the latter one refers to that people who are unable to put all their kitchen possessions into practice.

shaped by the ways in which both individual and household identities are constituted' (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 59).

The construction and negotiation of gender relations are always prominent in discussions of food practices and family relations. On the one hand, in almost all societies, food provisioning is considered as women's unpaid work, that in turn provides a valued identity or gendered power for women (DeVault, 1991). Therefore, the domestic cooking space – the kitchen – is highly gendered and strongly defined as women's space (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 72). As I discussed in the previous section, the modern kitchen is designed by women, for women and at the same time designs women (Llewellyn, 2004). The kitchen, in this sense, can be described as a demarcated laboratory for housewives (Saarikangas, 2006), a place for women to gaze at themselves and their home (Lloyd & Johnson, 2004), a site to deploy the empowerment of women (Llewellyn, 2004; Bennett, 2006), and as an association with daily routine and ritual which maintains gendered roles and responsibilities (Floyd, 2004).

On the other hand, the spatial and gender power in the kitchen is never static; rather, it is a making process that never ends (Meah, 2014). The meanings of home and family can be (re)constructed through the changing family relations involved within food practices. Seeing family meals as significant ways of 'doing' family, Marjorie DeVault (1991) suggests that 'a "family" is not a naturally occurring collection of individuals; its reality is constructed from day to day, through activities like eating together' (p. 39). This notion of family combines two emphases: it pays attention directly to wider understandings of 'family', and shows 'the operation of an ideology of family life in contemporary urban households'; while, at the same time, it provides a way to think about 'family' as a form of 'social organization that is not inevitable' (DeVault, 1991, p. 18). Although her research is based on the analysis of people's accounts of the day-to-day work of feeding their families, DeVault's account goes beyond the everyday, showing that the invisible work of feeding the family is part of a larger structure of social relations of caring and power. Therefore, her research moves from considering the work of feeding the family as 'women's experience' toward

recognition of 'the ways that… [such a] discursive construction obscures the diversity of lived experience in material settings' (p. 30). In other words, family is constructed routinely and socially.

This view has been developed in the *Changing Families, Changing Food* research programme undertaken by Peter Jackson and his colleagues. They see focusing on 'the practical work involved in "doing family"' as 'a way of avoiding ideological references to "the family" as a social institution or as a timeless, natural unit of society', and as allowing attention to the practice of everyday life and different ways of 'doing family' (Jackson, 2009, p. 4). In turn, a focus on family food practices means that family is recognised as an important social and political articulation within wider food systems. Domestic space is a dynamic space of food provisioning, storing, cooking, eating and wasting, a complex assemblage that goes beyond any easy statistical measurement as single units of food consumption (Valentine, 1999).

In the ritual of preparing food, knowledge is demonstrated. Food making in the kitchen can be understood as an embodied knowing process that enhances women's sense of agency in homemaking. Food preparation work re-appreciates women's positions and their power to reshape the relations and spaces of home (Matthee, 2004). In Bennett's (2006) research, which explores the power relations identified in a farming family through the kitchen in Dorset, England, the embodied sense of gendered power is examined. In this research, the power relations are contradictory, both constructed and represented by the kitchen. On one the hand, the kitchen symbolises patrilineal inheritance in wider society through the domestic work within it, such as food preparation, cooking, clearing up, child caring. On the other hand, the kitchen is also the place where gender roles are remade and subverted, as it reveals the complexity of power relations and the resistance of patriarchal orders by women. In contrast, in the Hausa villages of northern Nigeria the kitchen exists as a separate site where cooking takes place and cooking for family members is a female activity shared, or rotated, among co-wives in polygamous households (Robson, 2006). Here the kitchen is a site of female co-operation, jealousy and various other charged emotions.

Moreover, the separate kitchen arrangements can not only be translated into the social control of gendered bodies, but also embedded in complexly interlocked and interdependent men's and women's lives (Robson, 2006). The strict gender norms which separate women's bodies from public masculine lives are both maintained and challenged in the kitchen. Therefore, in Western and non-Western worlds, the kitchen is both a place where traditional gender roles and patriarchal social relations are affirmed, and a site where women's power is reinforced, where normal gender roles are challenged and subverted. Moreover, the discussion of how domestic food practices are gendered is not limited to considerations of food and femininity. As men have begun to engage more frequently in cooking and other domestic practices, the pre-existing gender cultures are changing. Men's willingness to participate in feminine cooking work has been focused on in recent studies of masculinity (Meah, 2014). What men 'do' is no longer confined to their jobs and the public sphere; masculinity has profound connections to domesticity (Gorman-Murray, 2008). In Meah and Jackson's (2013) ethnographic research into kitchen practices in South Yorkshire in Britain, they suggest that men's entry into the kitchen has facilitated the expression of masculine subjectivities – as husbands and fathers – while creating anxieties for women: kitchens are experienced as uncanny spaces by women as men increasingly assert their presence in this domain. Though feeding the family is still the responsibility of women, the kitchen inscribes masculine identities and enhances the equality of men and women. Participating in domestic work, for men, is also a way to perform their understanding of being 'proper' fathers and partners. In Metcalfe et al.'s (2009) study on food and family life, through analysing the ways in which fathers' describe their food practices within the home they conclude that men perceive food provision work and their place within it through their identities as fathers and as partners. Whilst men's involvement in food practices reiterates the traditional gender role that women take the major responsibility for feeding the family, their food practices are central to their fathering and partnering. Therefore the spaces of shop, kitchen and dinner table are not only feminine but also masculine places. The spatial and social construction of home

and family through food is also interwoven with the daily performance of intergenerational relationships. Bell and Valentine (1997) note how people use 'proper' 'family meals' to construct 'proper families' and how they worry that other styles of domestic eating, such as individualised meals and / or 'grazing', undermine family life. Eating with family can be considered as a way of making people's family identities and relations. Writing in the British context, they describe what seems to count as a proper parent-child relationship at the dining table: parents supervise their children at the table through teaching them which foods are edible, telling them how to prepare family meals and cultivating their table manners (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 67). In this sense, the dining table becomes a site where children are disciplined, civilised and socialised. In addition, food practices can mark and make divisions between generations. In their recent work, Curtis and her colleagues (2009) explore how intergenerational relationships transpire through the lens of food. Their main argument identifies generational identities as being established through 'the denotation and articulation of similarities and differences: both these processes of identification manifest through family narratives such as food-related scripts that symbolise the continuity with the past and act as moral referents against which current practices are compared' (p. 91). That is, generational identities and relationships are discursively constructed and negotiated through food-related narratives and practices.

The connection between domestic food spaces and wider society

I outlined earlier how scholarship on the geographies home has importantly argued that home is not simply a bounded, closed off, private space, separated from the public sphere, but shaped by wider public discourses, policies and spatialities. This insight has also been developed in more specific work on domestic food practices and spaces. Various influential studies illustrate the point. An early example was Miller's (2010) study of kitchen decoration within state-provided houses in the UK (first published in 1988). In this research, he describes the council houses and flats, where tenants were prohibited from making any major changes, as 'modernist prison[s]' and indicates that the process of the tenants' kitchen decorating work negotiated their

relationships between their homes and the ultimate owner – the state. In other words, Miller set an interest in kitchen design and redecoration, which as we have seen has become a major interest in work on home and food spaces, in the wider context of the mediation citizen- state relations through practices of consumption.

More recently, a range of work has connected home eating to wider public dynamics through an interest in the role of anxiety in cultures of food consumption. Anxiety can be considered to have 'social significance insofar as it was a shared experience that resulted in some discernible action by significant numbers of people'; and be 'social insofar as they involve … connections of various individual sorts and entities that spread out over space and time' (Jackson & Everts, 2010, p. 2793). Social anxiety about food consists of a number of worries, three of which have been explored in recent empirical studies: the 'demise' of home cooking; fears about food safety; and concern about where food comes from and questions of provenance. Studies on these issues have argued for recognition of how such wider public debates and policy responses are bound up with the quotidian organisation of domestic food practices.

Claims for, and debates about, the demise of home cooking and domestic food skills have been widespread in discussions of modern, industrial food provisioning systems. For some the issue is associated primarily with that industrialisation of food, in particular the development and popularisation of prepared and convenience foods (Lang et al., 2009) and the innovation of new kitchen technologies (Giard, 1998) focused on convenience. However, also prominent in this debate are elements of 'class pathologization' (Hollows & Jones, 2010, p. 308) and a culture of 'blame', where lower social classes, especially women, are castigated for failing to feed their families properly (Jackson et al., 2010). Empirical research suggests a more complex interweaving of food provision political economy and domestic food practice.,Meah and Watson, for example, focus on the patterns of continuity and change in families' domestic kitchen practices across three generations in the UK (Meah & Watson, 2011) (see also Meah & Watson, 2013; Watson & Meah, 2012). Their findings indicate that a family's food provisioning is socially and culturally embedded, and engendered from a range of

factors including exposure to external influences, life-course transitions, and the practical management of household rhythms. In addition, this research cast an eye on men's engagement in food provisioning work and challenged the view that the intergenerational transfer of cooking skills lies firmly with women (e.g. Charles & Kerr, 1988; DeVault, 1991).

Meah and Watson (2013) also explore how UK public policy agendas for food safety and for reducing household food waste potentially pull practices of domestic food provisioning in conflicting directions. On the one hand, food waste policy moralises the acts of both food saving and food disposal, and expresses an ethics of thrift; yet on the other hand, people tend to be concerned with related food safety issues (e.g. cooking expired food). Under these circumstances, how public discourses of environmental responsibility (in relation to food waste) and responsibility to self and one's nearest and dearest others (in relation to food safety) have to be negotiated in domestic food practices. Drawing on empirical research on people's 'real' reactions towards this policy context, Meah and Watson argue that a successful policy of reducing food waste has to be rooted in the organisation of quotidian routines of food practice.

The concern with where food comes from (food provenance) is the third type of food anxiety in the modern world. Provenance has multiple layers of meaning, consisting of a 'spatial dimension (its place of origin)', a 'social dimension (its methods of production and distribution)' and 'a cultural dimension (its perceived qualities and reputation)' (Morgan et al., 2006, p. 4). When cooking work takes place in domestic kitchens, the people who take the responsibility for feeding the family focus on food provenance as an ethical issue. In particular, domestic cooks are implicated in a complex ethical field of how to mediate a responsibility for oneself, for one's nearest and dearest, and for distant others (human and non-human) involved in the food provisioning system. Paying attention to day-to-day food practices in the domestic sphere, research has looked to shed light on how the discou rses that are expressed through ideas of food provenance are negotiated and performed in everyday feeding and cooking work, and to demonstrate that the concerns about provenance are

embedded in the wider ethics around food chains (Meah & Watson, 2013).

In sum, a range of work increasingly understands domestic food practice as central to wider cultural economies of food provision and consumption. Some of this work pursues such links through a focus on the social design of domestic food spaces (such as kitchens) and technologies; some focuses on domestic food knowledges; all argues that domestic food practice is bound up with a range of wider policy concerns.

Food and family-making in urban China

In this final part, I want to turn more directly to existing research on food and family-making in urban China. Chinese culture is 'a food-centred culture' (Simoons, 1991, p. 14). In Chinese society, when people talk about food, they associate food with cooking, with the taste, texture, colour and flavour of dishes, with the many different cuisines of the country, and with the geography and history of dishes (Tuan, 2005). The Chinese love of food is not only indicated by Chinese people's 'search for pleasures of the palate', 'the popularity of specialized restaurants', 'the rich vocabulary of taste and texture' and 'detailed knowledge of its geography' (p. 232), but also permeates daily family lives. Below, I focus on the relationship between food and home in Chinese families, providing a contextual background for the empirical chapters. In the sections that follow I first summarise the key ideas from recent Chinese family studies. Then, given my own research's contention that everyday food practices can reveal the recent social changes in China and the day-to-day habitus[11] of Chinese people, I use several empirical examples to explain the importance of food in social and cultural studies of Chinese families. Three issues in particular are highlighted: the negotiation between the traditional and the modern, family-based food practices, and existing research on food provisioning outside the home through shopping and dining out.

[11] 'Habitus' refers to the social structure of an individual's everyday life and his/her social disposition, which is 'constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52).

Changing family and kinship in contemporary China

To date, Chinese family studies have identified three overlapping changes in contemporary China concerned with family values, family structures, and gender and inter-generational relations within families. Let me discuss these in turn.

The first change highlights a transition in family values. In imperial China, the concept of 'family' was defined according to Confucian and Taoist theories. The ideal family form in traditional Chinese society can be characterised as 'three generations – parents, children, and grandparents – living under one roof' (Saso, 1999, p. 1). This traditional family pattern emphasises the significance of the extended family, the absolute power of parents (especially fathers) and husbands, the responsibilities of parents in cultivating and educating their children, the filial piety of children, and the duty of every family member to maintain the peace and harmony of the family (Wright, 1964; Shek, 2006). Traditional Chinese society is a 'son preference' society, with patriarchy central to many ideas of family (Shen, 2011). In contemporary China, these traditional values have been dramatically altered (Arnold & Liu, 1986; Chu & Yu, 2010). According to Shek (1996; 2006; 2010), traditional values and beliefs about family have gradually been replaced by Western influenced understandings of family socialisation and family member roles, within the contexts of the economic development and globalisation of Chinese society. The modernisation and globalisation of the Chinese family is characterised, by Shek, in terms of the weakening of intergenerational bonds and the gradual increase in equality between genders (Shek, 2006). Chinese urbanites have adopted more liberal attitudes towards marriage and family, and accepted both childfree marriages and premarital sex, both of which were considered immoral in traditional cultures (Xu et al., 2007).

Moreover, because of the shrinking number of children in each family, children's family position has shifted. According to the statistical data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)[12], the fertility rate in China has dramatically dropped from 6

[12] http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/china_statistics.html

births per woman in 1970 to 1.7 in 2012, due to the one-child policy[13]. The decreasing number of children in each family has brought about a change in children's value within the family realm (Goh, 2011, p. 5): the traditional ideal that saw children as old age insurance (*yang er fang lao* in Chinese) has been replaced by a more emotional and psychological value that recognises children as companions for their parents (*yang er ban lao* in Chinese).

However, on the other hand, traditional family values are still important to contemporary Chinese families: the three-generation family structure is still an important family type (Zeng, 1991; Shen, 2013); and the son preference tradition is still prevalent (Chu & Yu, 2010). Furthermore, traditional family ideals have significant influence on policy-making in contemporary China. For example, the new marriage law postulates that adult children should support their parents both emotionally and financially (National People's Congress of China, 2001a); and the child protection law demands that parents should raise and care for their children whilst they are minors (National People's Congress of China, 2006). Additionally, although the one-child policy has been strictly applied in both urban and rural China, it nevertheless allows couples in rural areas to have a second child when their first child is a girl (National People's Congress of China, 2001b).

In addition to the changing gender and generational values in urban China, there has also been a trend to individualisation in family formation: increasingly, individuals and the differences among family members play key roles in the construction of family (Shen, 2013). According to Yan (2009; 2010), although the progress of individualisation in contemporary China emerged along with the spread of modernity since the early twentieth century, it remained as an abstract discourse rather than a social trend until the Mao era. The traditional Chinese culture emphasises collective interest over the individual interest and that the individual belongs to the collective organisation (such

[13] Also known as family planning policy, which is a population control policy of PRC. This policy was established in 1981 by the central government of PRC. According to this policy, each urban couple is allowed to have only one child unless their first child had died of a non-inheritable disease or handicap or is disabled. Otherwise, the couple will be fined by the local Population and Family Planning Commission.

as family, community and the state). The importance of the individual was introduced in China as part of the state-led pursuit of modernity and as a response to the imperial and colonial challenges of the West since the nineteenth century. However, this emphasis on individual values was only acknowledged among some elites and politicians and had little impact on ordinary people. During the Mao era, private ownership was eliminated and the free market was closed to a great extent through a series of socialist reforms including the establishment of rural collectives and urban work units and the nationalization of industry and commerce. Under these social transformations, individuals were separated from their families, kinship organisations and local communities and reorganised into collectives and work units. At the same time, individuals were encouraged to self-sacrifice to achieve a Communist utopia through prioritizing loyalty to the party-state over family duties. Thus, despite the collectivization of the economy and the elimination of private property during the Mao era, and an ideological commitment to force individuals to live in a collective way, individuals were also disembedded from the traditional, mostly Confucian and patriarchal values of family, kinship and community and able to participate in public affairs as citizens rather than merely as members of their families. That is, individuals in the Mao era were pulled out from the familial axis and pushed into a new axis between the individual and the party-state.

After the economic reform in the late 1970s, individualization gained a new meaning in relation to policies of privatization and the development of a market economy. Because of the invisible hand of the market and the rise of non-state enterprises, the retreat of the party-state from its previous control over social life, the replacement of the dominance of Socialist ideologies by neoliberalism and the destruction of mobility constraints, individuals were encouraged to seek their life based on their knowledge, skills, and hard work. In this context, individual labour mobilities – in particular rural-urban migrations – and new groups of self-employed individuals emerged.

Additionally, the privatisation of homeownership since the housing reforms have

had great influences on the trend to individualisation in urban China. Due to the housing reforms (launched in 1980), there has been a trend towards the privatisation of public housing[14] and the growth of commodity housing supply and consumption in urban China (Zhang, 2010; Deng et al., 2011; Tsang, 2014). Although these reforms have increased house prices, they have resolved the problem of a shortage of housing supply under the old system. China's housing reform process has had four main milestones (Deng et al., 2011). The first of these was the beginning of nationwide housing reform with the *Implementation Plan for a Gradual Housing System in Cities and Towns* issued in 1988[15]. Next came the establishment of the *Housing Provided Fund (HPF)* policy in 1994; followed by the *Economical and Comfortable Housing* programme *(ECH)* in 1998, which aimed to provide affordable housing to middle- and low-income urban households. Then in 1998 came *A Notification from the State Council on Further Deepening the Reform of the Urban Housing System and Accelerating Housing Construction*, which prohibited the government and government-funded institutions (such as schools, police systems and public hospitals – also known as work units or *danwei*) buying new houses for their employees and transformed public housing into social rental housing[16]. These housing policies and programmes have pushed social housing units on to the market and made market-provided housing more affordable for urban families (see also, Wang & Murie, 2011). However, the public or institutional housing supply still plays an important role in the housing system of urban China. For example, some of the participants in my own research (who are employed in government- or state-funded institutions or enterprises) rent and/or have rented institutional houses at low prices, as housing provision is still a part of institutional welfare for some work units/*danwei*. Generally, due to housing reforms, homeownership in urban China has shifted from state or collective ownership into private ownership. This economic and housing transformation also brings an

[14] Before the housing reform, housing was a part of social welfare in urban China, being allocated to each urban family by government-funded institutions and state-owned enterprises.
[15] Between 1980 and 1987, the housing reform was only carried out in several selected areas including Zhengzhou, Changzhou, Siping, Shashi, Yantai, Tangshan and Bengfu.
[16] This social rental housing sector was then regulated by the *Cheap Rental Housing program (CRH)* established in 2004.

awareness of individual rights and destroyed the traditional definition of the individual as merely a part of the collective (Yan, 2009; 2010).

Associated with this individualisation trend, the importance of personal emotions and desires have become more appreciated within Chinese cultural life, and thereby the Chinese family has become a place for the negotiation between family identity and individual values: the major function of family has shifted from a corporate group for the survival of the collective to a private haven for every family member (Yan, 2009). As Shen (2013) identifies in her empirical research on the individualisation of family life in urban Shanghai, the valuing of the individual has become the core of family: individuals construct the family life, rather than vice versa. In this sense, family life becomes a part of individual life. Every individual is able to build and express his or her identity through family life. This individualization trend brings a more equal family relationship to urban Chinese society, since every family member is perceived to have equal rights. In rural areas, the pursuit of individual desires and development through family life has also become a widespread value among young villagers. Hanse and Pang's (2008) study of Chinese young rural residents' views of the tensions between individual and collective in relation to family, sketches out two aspects of: first, young villagers tend to take individual responsibility for the failure of themselves and their families; and second, they acknowledge their family as the only collective of importance to them, but pay more attention to their own interests, rights and aspirations. Therefore, the process of individualization in Chinese society does not just dis-embed individuals from family and kinship networks, but instead, brings about new connotations for family life in both urban and rural societies. On the one hand, increasingly individuals tend to give priority to their personal lives and choices; while on the other hand, family is still an important social organisation which shapes and is structured by personal life and social networks.

The second major area of family change identified in existing studies is the transformation of Chinese family structures after 1949. In his study on the changes in Chinese family structure, Tsui (1989) identifies five major types of family formations in

urban China, based on statistical data from the Five-City Family Survey of 1985: 'single-member', 'nuclear', 'stem', 'extended' (families constituted of both immediate and collateral relatives), and 'other' (families consisting of unmarried brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews or nieces and/or families with co-residing people without blood or marital relations). Based on the quantitative data, he points out that the number of extended families (which is the most traditional Chinese family mode) is decreasing, while the nuclear family has become the dominant family type in contemporary China. More recently, based on the nationwide household survey in 2008, Ma et al. (2011; 2013) demonstrated that the mainstream family type in China is now the nuclear family (50.2% of their researched families are nuclear families).

In consequence, they argue that gender and intergenerational relations should be considered as the most important family relationships in urban China. Specifically, they indicate that the traditional parent-centred family structure is being replaced by a child-centred pattern (see also, Li & Zheng, 2009). This child-centred structure is also described as the '4-2-1 syndrome' (*si-er-yi zonghezheng*), which refers to four grandparents and two parents pampering the only child (the 'little emperor') in their family. In such families, the two parents have to look after both their four parents/parents-in-law and their child (Jing, 2000; Kong, 2010). The childcare undertaken by many caregivers in this 4-2-1 family structure has been viewed as an important lens to understand the changing intergenerational relationships in contemporary China. For example, in her research on parenting and grandparenting in contemporary Xiamen (one of the major cities in Fujian province, south China), Goh (2011) proposes a framework of childrearing which integrates parents and grandparents as a unit: the intergenerational parenting coalition (IGPC, *kua dai yu er zu he* in Chinese). Based on her empirical research, Goh summarises two characteristics of childrearing in contemporary urban China. First, there are bidirectional influences between the 'IGPC' and children. Although parents and grandparents often hold different childrearing philosophies and methods, and thus can find it difficult to coordinate a unified approach to raising children, these adults can find collaborative

ways to care for the only child. And second, the singleton children / grandchildren are not simply spoilt 'little emperors' who are the passive recipients of their parents' and grandparents' care and love but, rather, they are active agents who participate in, challenge and change the way in which their parents and grandparents treat them. In addition, these singletons tend to hold strong senses of a family responsibility to support their older parents both financially and emotionally when they are grown up (Tu, 1997).

This child-centred family structure also challenges the patrilineal kinship system and its gender values. As Fong (2002) argues in her research on empowered women in the one-child era, the nationwide one-child policy emancipates women from the burdens of high fertility and thereby enables women to break away from bearing and rearing children and get paid jobs outside home. Women thus can provide their own parents and children with financial support, which was traditionally recognized as something only in men's capability. In addition, the one-child policy enables brotherless daughters to play equally important kinship roles as sons, and to take on roles that were reserved for sons traditionally, such as the right to inherit family resources. Thus, singleton daughters are no longer excluded from the responsibility for the family's future, but instead, they are treated as the only hope of their family, the same as sons.

To sum up, the key changes in family formation in urban China can be characterised as the reduction in family size, the diversification of family types, and the mainstreaming of the nuclear family. This trend is apparent in Guangzhou. According to the data from the Sixth Population Census of Guangzhou (SBGZ, 2013), the average number of family members in each household is 3.21, and households consisting of three people or less make up 75.34% of the surveyed households (3,785,278). As in urban China more generally, the nuclear family is the dominant family type in Guangzhou.

As I began to indicate above, questions of family identity and relationships – in particular with respect to gender and generation issues – in both rural and urban China

are the third key area of insight drawn out in existing Chinese family research. Among the studies of gender issues, it is women's position, power and identity in the complex kinship system that perhaps most frequently draw scholars' attentions. The traditional imperial model of the Chinese family emphasises a patriarchal kinship institution and a patrilineal system of transmission of identity, power and patrimony, and many argue this has been core to Chinese family structures both past and present (Brandtstadter & Santos, 2009). However, the importance of the matriarchy is well recognised too. As shown in Stafford's (2009) research on the real power of women in family life, women – especially mothers and wives – play important roles and have substantive power in enacting and (re)producing traditional values, forms of relatedness, and emotions in private life. This importance of women is represented by popular sentiments (both historical stories of 'great mothers' and contemporary soap operas which portray balanced gender power) and national orthodoxy (such as the 'mother-worshipping' tendency in Chinese tradition). Empirically, Judd (1989) suggests a non-hierarchical and relatively egalitarian family form in rural China, based on her qualitative research on married women's connections with their natal families. In her study, the researched women tend to visit their natal family regularly after marriage, because daughters are assumed to have increasing responsibility for supporting their parents. Therefore, women's relations with their natal families in practice constitute a significant part of the rural kinship system in present-day China. In this system, women are not merely victims subordinated to a patriarchal family life, but active agents in practicing and reproducing kinship. In a more recent quantitative research project, Ma et al. (2013) demonstrate that an increasing number of newly married couples choose to live independently from their parents, rather than choosing the traditional way of life, patrilocal residence. That is, the married woman no longer automatically becomes a member of her husband's family; instead, she can organise her new family with her husband on the basis of an equal conjugal relation.

Although the conjugal relationship has gained an increasingly significant value within both nuclear and extended families in contemporary China (Yan Y. , 1997), the

intergenerational axis, which was believed to be the central family relationship in the past, has not lost its importance in the current one-child era. Emotionally, as I mentioned above, research has shown that intergenerational links are still strong in practices of child-caring. Because of the growing participation of women in the labour force, limited day care for preschool children, expensive private babysitters and mistrust towards domestic helpers in contemporary China, retired grandparents become the ideal and most trustworthy caregivers (Goh, 2011). Moreover, materially the intergenerational housing support in both rural and urban areas ties people from different generations together. In their work on housing arrangements in urban Tianjin, Li and Shin (2013) investigate the intergenerational housing support between retired parents and their adult children. Drawing on quantitative analysis, they identify four types of intergenerational support relationships: 'traditional' (children support parents); children dependent on parents; mutual support; and no support between these two generations. They highlight how the issue of mutual housing support between generations has become an important issue in urban China. Focusing on rural areas, Wang (2010) examines how working-class families cope with the hardships created by industrialisation or modernisation and housing reform in contemporary China. It is a conventional belief that the rural parts of China are more traditional. Contrary to this belief, Wang points out that the core of Confucian family values – filial piety – is 'dead' in rural China as most rural residents have established nuclear families and left their parents in 'empty nests' (2010, p. 978). However, the younger parents still want their own parents to live with them in order to care for their children and to support them both financially and emotionally. Reciprocally, the senior parents tend to work and live with their adult sons in order to secure filial services from their sons. In both urban and rural contexts, then, intergenerational relations are a key issue of research concern.

In summary, because of the economic and social development, population control strategy and trends to individualization, the patrilineal kinship system has replaced by a relatively bi-lineal (both of patrilineal and matrilineal kinship system are conceived to

be important and valuable) and neo-local (couples set up their post-marital residence independently from their parents) one in present-day China (Yan, 1997; Stafford, 2009; Ma et al., 2013). This transformation reflects a more equal model of gender relationship within the family arena in contemporary China.

Food consumption and the negotiation of the traditional versus the modern

Concerning 'modern' food consumption, Chinese family studies have elucidated recent social changes and, in particular, recognised how everyday food practice epitomises the combination of the traditional and the modern in contemporary China. In contemporary China, on the one hand the old values of traditional food cultures are dramatically changed but, on the other hand, some elements from them are still deep-rooted in the norms and regulations of food practice. During the past few decades, due to the growth of family incomes, the development of the food industry, the globalisation and urbanisation processes, and the expansion of international branded supermarkets and fast food chains in China, Chinese people have experienced the modernisation/westernisation of their daily diets (Pingali, 2007). This modernisation/westernisation is manifested by two main factors: the decline and diversification of rice (oriental food) consumption; and the faster growth of household food demand for wheat, livestock, dairy, and other temperate zone products (which are considered Western foods) than for other food products (Yen et al., 2004; Pingali, 2007).

However, this growth of a westernised lifestyle and food culture does not lead to the death of Chinese food culture. The traditional foodways are still alive and continue to be the major way of life in China. For instance, for both middle-class and working-class Chinese families food is regarded as a treatment for and prevention of disease, following the traditional belief that the boundary between food and medicine is ambiguous (Koo, 1984). Chinese people tend to use special foods to maintain the health of family members, particularly in their 'special periods'. Following traditional ideologies and knowledge, Chinese people, especially Chinese women, prefer to use

special foods to feed and protect family members, at the same time as they also apply the Western or modern ideas of nutrition when preparing meals for their families. For instance, there is strict food restriction during pregnancy in every Chinese family. When a woman is pregnant, she should take both the obstetrician's advice and dictates from the doctor and comply with food restrictions based on Chinese traditions, guided by her mother, mother-in-law, sisters and, sometimes, male relatives in her family (Martin, 2001). After she gives birth to a child, this young mother has to experience one-month of dietary precautions, including eating more food and giving up cold food, based on traditional norms (Raven et al., 2007).

Although ingrained Chinese food traditions still play a key role in contemporary family life, the influence of modern and scientific culture on everyday life should not be ignored. In contemporary Chinese societies, nutritional ideas from the West are widely accepted, and combined with Chinese 'food theories' by families, in order to provide a better food environment for every family member (Martin, 2001; Jiang et al., 2006). Guo's (2000) research on the intergenerational division of food exemplifies the modernised way of feeding children in Jiangsu province. In her research, Chinese parents tend to apply modern food knowledge to feeding their children. The term 'modern food knowledge', in Guo's research, refers to food knowledge based on Western medicine and modern nutritional science, such as feeding children vitamin pills, raw vegetables, pork bones and pork or chicken blood in order to keep them in nutritional balance.

Overall, these past studies have suggested that, through the negotiation of traditional and modern foodways in the domestic sphere, the modern 'Chinese family' has been constructed as a social organisation by both traditional intelligence, which is handed down generation-by-generation, and 'developed' expert food knowledge from the West.

Feeding the Chinese family

I argued above that there is a growing interest in family food practices in Anglophonic and especially European literatures. This thesis looks to extend such work

to the Chinese context of middle-level households in Guangzhou. In so doing it is also able to draw on a limited body of other Chinese research that has considered how family relationships (especially from intergenerational and gendered perspectives) both shape and are shaped by everyday food practices. As different family members play different roles in modern Chinese families – through food provisioning, serving and eating – this strand of work has focused on the question of who takes the major responsibility for feeding their families.

Unlike the food studies conducted in other social contexts, which tend to explore the dynamics of gender identity in food practices, the works on domestic Chinese food culture pays more attention to the intergenerational relations that are constructed by food. For example, in his edited book, *Feeding China's Emperors*, Jing (2000) manifests that children are getting more and more powerful in Chinese families, and can be regarded as the consumers who determine the family's overall spending on food and other goods. This child-centred culture can be recognised as the main characteristic of Chinese families both within and outside China. More recently, in Jiang et al.'s (2006) research on food experiences in Beijing families from an intergenerational perspective, the impact of grandparents on young children's eating behaviour is explored. They believe that retired grandparents have become the main caretakers of children in contemporary Beijing, replacing the working parents in that role. In addition, they point out that this prevalent social phenomenon sometimes causes severe problems: such as childhood obesity and family conflict between grandparents and parents around the issue of feeding the children. Their main argument not only supports the idea of a new child-centred family structure in mainland China, but also outlines the consequent changes in rearing children – the burden has shifted from wives and mothers to grandparents. Another valuable study is about food systems in Chinese-American families. Focusing on Chinese families from both China and America, Chen and Kennedy (2004) identify five variables that contribute to children's health significantly: age, sex, parenting style, communication between parents and children, and behaviour control of children. They point out that, in both societies, the children's

healthy behaviour could be constructed by clear communication, adequate behaviour control by parents and structured parenting. In this research, parents are considered to be the force regulating children's proper behaviours and the key players in controlling children's weight. These studies have paid active attention to children and the importance of intergenerational relations between (grand)parents and children in making 'proper' Chinese families.

Apart from these daily practices of eating and feeding, the intergenerational relationship can be also formed through domestic practices around more 'extreme' issues, especially food safety problems in urban China. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the social anxiety about food safety problems has become the major food concern in contemporary China. In this context, domestic food practices are prominently influenced by (grand)parents' fear and anxiety about unsafe baby food. In their research on (grand)parenting practices after the 2008 infant milk powder scandal in China, Gong and Jackson (2012) indicate that the unsafe food environment not only undermines Chinese (grand)parents' trust in domestic infant formula and encourages their high loyalty to foreign (imported) brands, but also influences familial intergenerational relations, in particular relations between young mothers and their in-laws, as people from these two generations have different knowledge of childcare. Therefore, at the domestic level, food-related anxiety refers to both the question of how to choose baby formula and how to manage the gap in rationalities about feeding the child.

The intersection of intergenerational relationships and gender identities are explored as well. For example, Bhandari and Smith's (2000) work shows that Chinese parents' educational and income levels are related to consumption of different foods. Interestingly, mothers' educational levels have a deep impact on the consumption of nutritious and preferred foods, but fathers' education levels have an effect on the consumption of these foods only when it interacts with their income level.

In sum, there is emergent work on how changing family structures and values play out through food consumption practices. This thesis provides a more sustained, in-

depth qualitative study, and draws on wider insights about the role of food practices in shaping the geographies of home, in order to advance this important area of concern.

Doing family through food consumption outside home

The final component of studies on food and the Chinese family involves a focus on food consumption outside of the home, including food shopping in markets and supermarkets and eating out in restaurants. Food shopping is a crucial constituent of domestic food work in every society. Seeing food purchasing as women's work, Chen (2008) creates a geography of shopping and leisure based on her qualitative research with Taiwanese mothers. From her point of view, traditional food markets, which are considered dirty and noisy places, are only workplaces for women, but supermarkets can be considered as a perfect leisure space for women, as they can provide a comfortable environment for family shopping experiences.

While paying attention to eating out, researchers often see the popularisation of restaurants as part of both traditional and modern lifestyles for Chinese people. Eating out is a traditional food activity for Chinese people. Tuan (2005) points out that, historically, the prosperity of restaurants can be considered as a key indicator of the Chinese way of life, based on Macro Polo's description of the food shops and restaurants in Hang-chou, the capital city of China at that time. Shifting from ancient China to the contemporary world, in order to understand the social and cultural aspects of eating out, several researchers have investigated food-away-from-home (FAFH) consumption in China, drawing on quantitative methods based on national household surveys and data collection. These studies have attributed the popularity of eating out to increasing household income, the development of the food industry, the marketisation and modernisation of contemporary China, and the minimisation of family size. Certainly, the quantity and patterns of food consumption have experienced sharp changes in urban China. Until the 1980s, Chinese people living in mainland China tended to prepare most food and meals at home with ingredients produced at home and purchased from state-run food stores or farmers (Min et al. 2004). When it came to the 1990s, individuals and families started to demand more meat consumption and

prepared food from outside home, and experiences of eating out as part of family life became more common (Ma et al., 2006). In addition, according to Min and others' (2004) research, increasing FAFH consumption offers great opportunities to foreign restaurants and food sectors in China, as the popularisation of Western food (especially US fast food) in both Western restaurants and Chinese restaurants grows.

Thus increasingly eating out can be recognised as a part of family life. In his work on KFC in Beijing, Lozada (2000) indicates that eating in KFC is part of the social life of Beijing children and an important component of local Beijing life. The meaning of KFC experiences are changing: for the local consumers, it has transformed from a taste of modernity and foreign culture into simply a convenient and clean food; while for KFC itself, it changes from the original globalised or foreign landscape into a more localised place. These changes globalise Beijing children, who are frequent consumers of KFC, and localise KFC as a part of the everyday urban foodscape. These children's experiences in KFC undoubtedly make their family embrace glocalised cultures, as they always bring their parents to KFC restaurants.

Therefore, the notion of family is extended into public spaces due to social development in contemporary China. The relationship between food and the Chinese family is not locked in the domestic space, but a part of modern public life.

Conclusion

In this literature review chapter I have critically analysed the wider literatures on practice theories as a way to approach consumption and on the geography of home; and then sought to show how those broader approaches can be seen as present within existing empirical examinations of domestic food practices and family-making in both non-Chinese and Chinese contexts. In conclusion, I want to re-evaluate the studies on food and Chinese families and explain the organisation of the empirical chapters that follow, using the theoretical and contextual settings explored in this chapter.

Home is a space or a place that is physically, emotionally and politically

constructed by human practices and social relationships between people and things. It is both a temporal and spatial notion that has a profound impact on our everyday life. The notion of home is associated with other geographical scales, including the body, community, nation, region and even the globe. For scholars who intend to understand our everyday practices and the domestic space through the lens of food, home is considered to be a significant geographical scale for accomplishing everyday food practices, a space that is made, remade and unmade through what people do to and with food. Additionally, through debates on daily food practices, often invisible aspects of family life and domestic space are brought into view.

However, this relationship between food practices and home is still largely overlooked by scholars who are studying food cultures in and of China. The works on food and family life in China's contexts are relatively static. The 'practice approach' emphasizes doing. It refers to a routinized way of bodily movement and mental activity that enable explanations and understandings of self, others and the living world. Seeing home and family making as a practice, social scholars have re-defined the meaning of home to be a process embedded in the daily routine (see, for example, DeVault, 1991; Miller, 2001a, 2002; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007). However, for the studies on food and Chinese families, scholars have overwhelmingly paid attention to food behaviours that distinguish the traditional and the modern, reflect gender/generational norms and relationships, and connect the domestic into wider social changes. They tend to overlook the conventional routines that accomplish the reproduction of home cultures and family relations.

The paucity of work considering the relationship between domestic food practice and everyday mobilities is a second shortcoming of existing studies on Chinese families. The existing literature has considered everyday food practices as an important way of creating Chinese families. Despite some scholars have paid active attention to family-based eating out, how other daily family-based mobilities, for example, moving home, everyday commuting and daily leisure have impacted on eating patterns and family relationships are overlooked. For the sake of understanding the dynamics of family life

through food, how daily commuting, regularly eating out and rural-urban migration are inscribed in everyday food practices will be discussed in the empirical chapters.

Furthermore, the material culture of, or related to, food is under-researched in the Chinese context. As reviewed in the fourth part of this chapter, the scarce studies on food and Chinese family life primarily focus on the changing values, norms and manners of food in the changing Chinese family. Among these studies, food is generally considered as a social and cultural force that constructs and reconstructs family roles, rules and rhythms. These works have rightly indicated that food plays a significant role in making Chinese families, constructing and re-constructing family relationships and negotiating the meanings of home and family for Chinese people. However, such studies have ignored the material aspects of home and family life and their role within wider, value-laden imaginations of both. Non-Chinese work on the material spaces of home, and how these construct food practices, can usefully be extended into Chinese scholarship. Moreover, although these studies have highlighted the importance of the family relationship in the establishment of new urban cultures in China through the lens of food, the questions of how Chinese people endow meaning within their dwelling homes through food practices and how they create their own everyday geography of food through the home/family-making are taken for granted.

Finally, the existing literature on the Chinese family has explained the intergenerational relationship between grandparents, parents and children through the '4-2-1' phenomenon or the 'child-centred' model that sees the only child in each family as a spoiled 'little emperor'. But nowadays, the first generation of 'little emperors' have grown up and become the 'parental emperors' who should take responsibility for their own children and ageing parents. As James Watson (2000) predicts in the last chapter of *Feeding China's Little Emperors*,

> *In the future …… Chinese wage-earners will have to choose between the demands of their children and the expectations of their retired parents. If the balance of consumer power shifts again, and seniors reclaim their hegemonic position within the family, the sequel to this volume – 30 years hence – could well be entitled*

"Feeding China's Retired Emperors" (p. 212).

Now, when more than 10 years have passed since the first publication of *Feeding China's Little Emperors*, it is the right time to think about new questions about singletons that have emerged in recent years. These questions might include how the little emperors and empresses set up their new families? Do they manage their family life in a similar way to their parents? And how do these changes play out through their food choices and practices? To answer these questions, this thesis aims to construct a social and cultural geography of Chinese home-/family making through an insight into household-based food practices, drawing on empirical studies in Guangzhou.

Linking this theoretical and contextual background to empirical studies, the next chapter will sketch out how this research studies home and family practices in urban Guangzhou methodologically, detailing how I collected and analysed the household data in this research. After that, the empirical chapters that follow refer back to the ideas introduced in this chapter, in order to examine how these ideas are relevant to the everyday geography of food and home in contemporary Guangzhou. The empirical chapters of this study apply the 'practice approach' in the exploration of food consumption in the family realm, providing a dynamic explanation of the conventional and routinized family life through the lens of food and protraying the transformations of socio-cultural contexts and standards both materially and emotionally from an everyday perspective. To connect my empirical studies in Guangzhou to geographies of home, I organise the six empirical chapters on the basis of the three key analytical dimensions established by the geographies of home literature (and deployed in the reviews above). The first two chapters of the empirical research focus on the material/imaginative and emotional homemaking through culinary cultures and food memories. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 provide intersectional perspectives of gender and intergenerationality through discussions on household-based food practices in mundane life. The final two chapters consider the porosity of home based on the analyses of family eating outside of the home and the making wider of social networks through food based hospitality within the home.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter explains the research methods employed to discover the everyday food practices in this research. It is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the research methods that have been adopted in existing home and family studies which provide the methodological background for this research. The second part focuses on the research methods used in this research.

Researching home

Various qualitative and quantitative methods have been applied in home studies. This section outlines the key methods in the existing literature on the exploration of how home is socially, culturally and politically constructed, experienced and (re)presented in everyday life. It begins by discussing the representation of home through texts, interviews and ethnographies on home culture and personal lives. Then, it turns to explaining the sensory methods applied in current home studies. Finally, this section looks at the use of national household surveys and databases in establishing the contexts and settings of home.

Representing home: life stories

Using life stories is important in representing home and the lived experience within the domestic space. For home studies, life stories refer to 'the study of people in their own words, both in text (including diaries, memoirs, letters, autobiographies and writing) and in person (through, for example, oral history interviews, focus group discussions, reminiscence work and ethnographic research)' (Blunt, 2003a, p. 71). These life stories 'provide a rich source for studying personal memories and lived experiences of home' through the representation of personal life within the wider political, social and cultural contexts in which they are situated and constituted (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 33). This section divides the method of life stories into two types –

life stories in text and those in person – to illustrate how to use home-based stories to represent the connections between home and personal life.

Life stories in text: writing home and identity

Working with both contemporary and historical life stories in text (recorded life writings) can help geographers to understand home in relation to 'gender, race, class and sexuality' (Blunt & Dowling, 2006, p. 34). Using the example of her doctoral project on imperial domesticity in British India during the conflict period of the Indian 'Mutiny' in 1857 and the reconstruction of imperial rule, Blunt illustrates the importance of life stories in text in understanding home in the past (2003a). Together with the archives of parliamentary papers, newspaper articles and photographs, the main data for her doctoral research were letters and memoirs written by British women who were living in India, and life stories collected through interviews and questionnaires by other researchers. These personal sources about the representations of and by British women helped her to study the lives of women and find out the answers to her research questions including 'what did it feel like to live so far from home? What was everyday life like for British women in India? What were the poser relations shaping imperial domesticity? How was home-life in India challenged by the "mutiny" of 1857? How were "empires in the home" reconstructed and maintained after the suppression of the "mutiny"?' (Blunt, 2003a, p. 74). Moreover, through the interpretation of these life stories, a feminist understanding of how and why everyday life and personal emotions become personally and politically important was drawn out.

Focusing on more contemporary life in Finland, Saarikangas (2014) uses the written memories and essays of women living in the suburban Helsinki metropolitan area from the 1950s to the 1970s, together with the historical architectural data of the planning and construction of suburbs in the Greater Helsinki region and texts from magazines such as *Kotiliesi* (*Home and Hearth*) and *Kaunis Koti* (*Beautiful Home*) and newspapers from the same period. Using the evidence of women's writings about their emotional understandings of their suburban home, domestic work with modern devices, and daily practices with their children in the suburban yards, she reframes the

suburban areas of Helsinki as reproductive sites of normative notions of family and gender. Therefore, life writings provide rich sources for researchers to open the 'black box' of everyday life and the representation of home in the past and in the present. Through reading and interpreting life writings, researchers sketch out a portrait of family life and home culture through combining the texts of home with social, cultural and political contexts.

Life stories in person: exploring the lived experiences within home

As well as second-hand documents and archives, first-hand accounts of family life and relationships are also 'useful in building up a composite picture of wider social patterns of experience', that show the 'unfolding of events across different stages of the life course and as a consequence trend' and 'mapping patterns of adult behaviour onto early (childhood) experience' (Gabb, 2008, pp. 37-38). Many scholars have used personal life stories – both verbal and written – to analyse how people manage their family lives in the past, the present and in the future. Usually, these life stories are analysed and accompanied with visual resources and participant observations. For instance, in several multi-disciplinary studies on the (re)creation of identity and belonging in the post-migratory home (Christou & King, 2010; Kinefuchi, 2010; Barrett, 2011), the scholars have conducted face-to-face interviews with migrants which focus on place-based identity, belongings, and everyday life experiences inside and outside of home. Through these life stories of personal lives, the emotional and social construction of identities and the space of home are sketched out.

Most of the existing work on home culture has focused on both the visible and invisible aspects of home and has explored the social life with/of domestic things, drawing on household-based ethnographies and interviews. Ethnography refers to 'a range of qualitative research practices, employed, with varying levels of theoretical engagement, in academic and applied research contexts' and is 'a reflexive and experiential process… [during] which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced' (Pink, 2009, p. 8). Differing from traditional ethnography, ethnographers who work with home culture do not live with the researched families for

a long time. Instead, they visit domestic spaces and collect people's stories about their interior things (Miller, 2001). For example, in Miller's (2008) study on modern life and material culture, in contemporary London, ethnographies took place in several private houses in a random street to explore the significant roles of interior things in people's social relationships and private lives. The participants of this research came from different places, having different ages, genders, occupations, but living in the same street. Through showing their homes and telling stories about their home possessions, their everyday habitus and routines are revealed.

Household-based ethnography requires an accessing practice as well: not just observing in the field, but also participating in household practices with informants. This practical approach makes the bodies of researchers and people who are researched into tools of research (Woodyer, 2008). For example, in her research on the domestic practices with things in everyday habitats, Gregson (2007) uses her body as a research tool: she positioned herself amongst participating households, helped the household members do certain activities (for example, hanging wallpaper), as well as observed what people did. At the same time, she talked with the participants about their lives, their hopes, their fears, their aspirations, their goings-on, their homes, their previous homes, about past and present lives, and about their rooms and their things.

Interviews are also important in the exploration of the complex relations between human and non-human actors. For instance, in Woodward's (2001) research on the process of aesthetic choices of domestic objects, he uses face-to-face interviews to capture his informants' coherent and plausible narrations about their household things. In so doing, the 'authentic' data from interviews manifests that domestic things provide opportunities for negotiating the boundaries of self and others in a consumption process which fuses aesthetics with ethics. Interviewing is a useful method for understanding family relationships as well. In her study of Chinese domestic life, Shen (2013) applies in-depth interviews to collect data about married young people's (who were born after 1966) complex relations with their parents, in-laws, children and spouses. Gathering the in-depth data, Shen emphasises the importance of individuals'

sensees, social identities and biographies in their 'doings' of family.

In addition, oral history or biography about everyday life is applied to the research of home and family life. For example, Brickell (2008) uses oral history interviews (assisted by a 25 year-old male graduate and a female research assistant) to explore the perceived connections between drinking, drunkenness and domestic and public violence in Siem Reap, Cambodia. A result of free-ranging and open-ended interviews, these oral histories of both men and women are about personal memories of the experience of violence in the past and in the present. With the analysis of these resources, Brickell synthesised her empirical findings to show the discursive social, political and economic links made by participants between alcohol use and gender-based violence. To understand the family changes under social transformation, Li and Zheng (2009) collected the biographies of four families in Beijing who shared the same ancestor (the authors call the researched people 'grandchildren of a grandfather'). Through the analysis of how the ideas of love and marriage, family values, family relationships (including intergenerational and sibling relationships and relationships among distant relatives), as well as the relations between family and wider society, they construct a strong connection between individuals, nuclear families, extended families and wider society in urban China.

These personal life stories have paid attention to the lived experience in the domestic sphere through a participatory approach. Rather than working with 'dead' archives and documents, collecting lived life stories in person is accomplished through a process of knowledge coproduction by the interaction between the researcher and the researched.

Interpreting home: researching home with home writings

Home writings which constitute of texts and images from fiction, magazines, household guides and designers' works are useful resources for researching both historical and contemporary homes. Nikolas Rose (1998) extends Foucault's work on governance by highlighting the central place of consumption in governing through

consumer choices that make us 'under the guidance of cultural cognitive authorities, in the space of regulated freedom' (p. 166). Guided by this extension, Jacobs and Cairns (2008) investigate interior design and decoration in modern Singapore drawing on cover images and a series of articles appearing in the HDB publication *Our Home* (1972-1989). Analysing these textual and visual materials, they indicate that this officially-produced home magazine offers practical advice, including dealing with colour, clutter, ornament and managing atmosphere, on transforming flats in high-rise buildings into proper and ideal homes.

In another study on home-based consumption, Hand and Shove (2004) collected qualitative data from home magazines, in order to understand the material culture in domestic kitchens. In this study, they outline the material culture in the kitchen based on two home magazines published in UK (*Good Housekeeping* and *Ideal Home*). Employing visual and stylistic analysis to describe the images, competences and technologies represented in the advertisements, features and editorial comments, they outline the changing kitchen regimes from 1922 to 2002. In 1922 the kitchen in the UK is efficient, isolated and functional, but transforms into an entity with automation and aesthetics in 1952 and then into a site for living, leisure and self-expression in 2002. After the analysis, they apply a metaphor of orchestra to synthesise such changes: new products, technologies (such as the fridge-freezer) and/or skills change the configuration the whole kitchen and make the kitchen dynamic.

Other social relationships within the domestic sphere, for example, relationships between human and animals, have also been researched through home writings. Foregrounding the relationship between human and pests in the process of homemaking, Power (2007) focused on the description of pests and pest-related domestic activities in articles, advertisements and reader advice columns from four Australian home magazines: *Australian Women's Weekly*, *Australian House & Garden*, *Australian Home Beautiful* and *Better Homes & Gardens* between 1951 and 2005. Through analysing these pest-related contents via two themes, 'pest' identity (which refers to how to identify pests) and how pests impact on home and pest-control

practices, she highlights the importance of non-human agency (pests) in the homemaking process.

Apart from home magazines and personal writings, designers' plans of the 'ideal home' are also important sources for home studies. Llewellyn (2004), Saarikangas (2006) and Jerram (2006) have used designers' drawings and other historical materials to support their analysis of home design and gendered identities within home. Llewellyn organised his research around the work on domestic modernity by two women: a housing consultant Elizabeth Denby and an architect Jane Drew. Using Denby's paper on kitchen planning and Drew's design drawings of modern kitchens, Llewellyn sketched out how the modern kitchen is both designed by women and designing women. Saarikangas' analysis was based on various data, including architectural material (new buildings and their plans), the depiction of the discourse on housing in architectural and domestic magazines and home decoration manuals, photographs and memoirs of those living in the new suburbs around Helsinki in the 1950s. Interpreting these textual and visual materials, she made an argument of the modern kitchen as a site that renegotiates and redefines the intertwined notions of gender, class, nation and cleanliness. Design sketches are important resources for Jerrem to explore the modernity of the kitchen in Weimar Germany in the 1920s. Drawing on the kitchen designs and models provided by the city planners of Frankfurt and Munich, Jerrem pointed out that the Frankfurt designs liberate but segregate women while the Munich designs liberate and socialise women. Then he uses this evidence to support his main argument that the kitchen has the coercive capacity to compel certain forms of social relationship.

In short, these studies have used home writings to explain how home can be a social, cultural and political construction and an articulation of the social relationships between human and non-human beings. Therefore, the interpretation of home through the existing texts is not merely redescribing the notion of 'home' in different social contexts based on various texts and visual documents and/or archives, but also a way of revealing the social relations between people, home and non-human others (things

and animals).

Sensing home: sensory ethnographies

With the 'sensorial turn' in social sciences and humanities (Howes, 2003, p. xii), scholars from multiple disciplines began to apply sensory methods in their research to understand people and places (Pink, 2009). The word 'sense' has a dual meaning: first, it refers to order and understanding; second, it means the feelings driven by different sense modes – touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing and the sense of balance (Rodaway, 1994). These six senses are intertwined with each other and with social, cultural and political contexts in tangible and intangible ways (Mason & Davies, 2009). Sensory exploration offers great opportunities to understand the embodied experiences and materiality of home and the definition of home (Pink, 2004; 2005).

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is on why and how to use visual methods to research home. The second part is on other sensory methods in home studies.

Visualising home: images and making images in home studies

Visual methodologies, which refers to a series of research methods which use 'various kinds of images as ways of answering research questions, not by *examining* images – as do visual culture studies – but by *making* them' (Rose, 2012, p. 10, italics in origin) are widely used in home studies, in order to visualise invisible domestic lives. Due to the development of image technology, photographs become an active tool in fieldwork which makes the physical and human world visually and conceptually more accessible (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003). Two key visual technologies can be found in the representation of home culture:

The first technology is analysing existing family photographs taken by either household members or professional photographers. According to Gillian Rose (2003a; 2008), family photographs are not only objects embedded in the practices of maintaining familial identities, but also play an important role in 'producing domestic spaces for family' (2003a, p. 126). In other words, family photos are important

participants in family photography practices that encounter 'subject positions, social relations and place-making processes' (Rose, 2010, p. 23). In practice, analysis of family photos or albums (Chambers, 2003; Hallman & Benbow, 2007), published albums (Blunt, 2003b) or art photographs produced by professional artists (Brickell, 2013) is often adopted when exploring emotions, intimate relations, and family lives in different social and cultural contexts. Along with collecting these visual resources, archives and oral autobiographies are used to assist examination of the meaning of the photographs. Therefore, these family photos and albums provide important insights and representations of home and family.

As well as representing the meanings of family photos, making photos is always intertwined with the research process for geographers and other scholars who are interested in the spatiality and temporality of home. As Pink (2013) indicated in her book *Doing Visual Ethnography*, it is useful for ethnographers to use visual technologies, images, metaphors and ways of seeing to produce ethnographic knowledge. A widely adopted visual method for doing ethnographies and other qualitative research on the domestic sphere is 'participant-directed photography' or 'auto-photography' which refers to encouraging participants to take photos of their possessions and living environments. There are two ways to conduct participant-directed photography: analysing the contents within the photographs alone; and asking the photographers to write captions in each photos and to take part in face-to-face interviews on their photos (Johnsen et al., 2008). In home studies, researchers tend to use the latter research process to explore home culture. For example, in their exploration of household gender relations and translocal identities, Brickell and Datta (2011) conducted oral histories and semi-structured interviews alongside participant-directed photography with their respondents in Slorkram commune, Siem Reap of Cambodia. Their empirical research was in two stages: in the first stage, they provided disposable cameras to their respondents, gained the informed consent for using these photos in future works (such as reports, presentations and publications), and asked them to take photos of anything they thought was important or interesting in their lives

in their domestic spaces; in the second stage they interviewed their respondents about their photos and family lives.

Images can not only be understood as representational snapshots, but also as resonant blocks of space-time (Latham & McCormack, 2009). Influenced by the non-representational shift in visual research methods, researchers consider photography as a picturing practice (Crang, 1997; 2003a) which is constituted by 'a recognisable configuration of norms, conventions, ways of doing, know-how and requisite arrays material things' (Schatzki, 2001, p. 3). For example, drawing on their observations of digital photographing, Shove et al. (2007) explore how technologies are domesticated and defined by a framework of expectations and conventions. In their research, the process of photo taking is considered as a significant way of practising home and family.

Apart from photos, other images and image technologies are also important in visualising home. For instance, Pink (2013) points out that video ethnographic research which focuses on how knowledge is created through the relations between ethnographers and video subjects, the technologies used, and local and academic visual cultures, has a long history in social science studies (see also, Collier & Collier, 1986; Morphy & Banks, 1997). For researching domestic spaces, video ethnographies are applied to exploring the details of daily life. These videos are recorded by household members and researchers together along with interviews and observations to achieve a deep understanding of the social relations between people and their living environment through verbally and embodied performances (see, for example, Belk et al., 2007; Pink, 2004).

Sensory home tour: hearing, smelling, tasting and touching the material home

Although visual analysis is central to the sensory work of home, other senses – touch, smell, hearing, taste and the sixth sense (instinct) are also crucial to home studies. Understanding sensory experiences beyond the visual is important for researching home-based and familial practices (e.g. Tolia-Kelly, 2004b; Bingley & Milligan, 2007). For the purpose of exploring people's identities, relations, practices and emotional feelings about home, researchers often tend to conduct home journeys

in domestic spaces. During such journeys, researchers share the home experiences and practices with the researched informants, and create new knowledge from their reflexive experiences.

For example, Pink (2004) combines different senses in her project *Cleaning, Homes and Lifestyles* between 1999 and 2000. During her fieldwork, Pink stayed in the home spaces of some of her informants, in order to be a participant in their everyday lives. Using 'real' ethnography, she interpreted the sensory and embodied experiences in home. Through talking about and perceiving the smell of air fresheners, fresh air, scented oils, candles and cleaning products; the sound of speech and conversation, of music, radio, television, dogs barking, windows knocking; and the tactile feelings of freshly laundered and ironed sheets and clean towels with the informants, she was able to examine the informants' perceptions and experiences of home.

Collecting data through/from surveys

Quantitative methods, including national or regional surveys and questionnaires, are also important ways for scholars to understand family changes, family relations and lifestyles on wider geographical scales. As surveys and questionnaires use 'a series of "closed" questions' which contain several clear options for respondents, these two quantitative methods are 'more economical than interviews', 'can gather large amounts of data in a relatively short time', and 'it is easier to ensure participant anonymity' (Gabb, 2008, p. 31). Therefore, these methods are considered highly advantageous by researchers who want to understand the general situation and trend of family changes. For example, in their research on the nature of environmental action in and around the home and the local sustainable development, Barr and Gilg (2006) conducted a large questionnaire survey of 1600 households in Devon, a county in the UK. Using this data set, they sketch out an overview of the way in which environmental action is framed in everyday practices and how these practices are reflected in different segments of the population in forming different lifestyle groups. To understand the westernisation and modernisation of Chinese families in urban areas during the social transformation in

China, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences set up a family research group to conduct a survey in five Chinese cities: Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou, Lanzhou and Harbin (Ma et al., 2013). In the end they acquired 4016 completed surveys from 4016 households. After quantitative analysis of these surveys, the members interpreted the data and created a report of family change and current family structures in urban China.

As well as collecting first-hand data from national household surveys on family structures and relations, scholars have also applied survey methods to explore the sense of home and material culture within the domestic space. For example, seeing quantitative surveys as a helpful and constructive method for the exploration of the material structuring of domesticity, Freeman (2004) studies design history and the way in which people make design choices during their purchases of new kitchens. In this study, the percentage of kitchen furniture market sales, kitchen/kitchen appliance expenditure, people's preference of kitchen style, their understanding of the modern kitchen and their instrumental and expressive considerations of kitchens are researched and analysed through structured questionnaires (with a sample size of 74 respondents from the UK). The intersections of gender, age and social class within the above issues are also measured through quantitative analysis. These surveys are sometimes conducted along with qualitative methods. In the Chinese context, Feng et al.'s (2014) structure their analysis on how the concept of 'home' is created and defined by residents of two gated communities based on 538 questionnaires, participant observation with 40 researched residents and 21 semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study outlines how the residents construct their sense of home through the socio-cultural and physical environments within and around the gated communities.

Moreover, utilising the secondary data from national surveys is common to understand the evidence trends in family behaviours, lifestyles and beliefs, as these surveys can provide ample information for contextualising and re-contextualising home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). In home studies, secondary quantitative data plays a

significant role in depicting the transformation of household demography and family structures in different cultural contexts. Using secondary household data, such as online data sets in housing research in the USA (Listokin et al., 2003); United Nations Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Varley, 1996); the Survey of Urban Households in China (e.g. Min et al., 2004; Yen et al., 2004; Ma et al., 2013); and quantitative data sets from the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit (Jackson, 2009) and District Council censuses (Duncan & Smith, 2002) in the UK, the changing household scales, family structures, kin networks, family activities and household consumptions are outlined in order to provide the specific research background for these studies.

Research methods and procedures of this research

This research adopted multiple qualitative methods, which have been widely applied in previous home studies, to explore the home/family-based food practices in contemporary Guangzhou. The complex connections between the practices of home and family relations and food in these households are researched through two paths: household-based ethnographies and in-depth interviews using visual materials. Along with this empirical research, I also collected secondary statistical data from household surveys conducted by the Guangzhou Statistical Bureau and academic institutions. The research procedures will be explained in the remaining parts of this chapter, drawing on my research experience of the pilot work between June and August 2013 and fieldwork from November 2013 to May 2014 in Guangzhou.

Access

For this research, the problem of accessing the 'field' is twofold. First is the difficulty in obtaining the agreement to enter a person's home from all his or her family members. It is common in every society that people do not like to invite strangers into their most private spaces – their homes. Using the snowball method to reach potential participants (details will be provided in the 'recruitment' section), I was introduced to my informants by their friends, colleagues, neighbours or other acquaintances.

However, I was only introduced to individuals rather than families. A person's acceptance of taking part in the research did not mean that all of his or her family members agreed with my visit. Therefore, during the fieldwork, some of the proposed informants refused to participate in my research in the end because they could not persuade their family members to take part in the research as well. For example, once Xiao Xiao's mother introduced my research to her neighbour Li, a man about 35 years old, he expressed his willingness to engage in the research. But after he explained his decision of taking part in household-based research to his wife and mother-in-law, he finally decided against participating in this research, as these two ladies neither wanted strangers to take part in their family life or to be researched.

The second problem of access is related to Chinese traditions. My fieldwork was interrupted twice: the first interruption was during the celebration of Chinese New Year (from 31 January to 14 February 2014); whilst the second was during the national holidays around Qingming Day (also known as Tomb-sweeping Day, 4 or 5 April every year). According to Chinese tradition, the celebration of Chinese New Year is the most important family-based activity for Chinese people, and Qingming Day is considered to be for family-based gatherings for ancestor worship. Therefore, as a person who is neither a relative/family member nor a friend with a long-term relationship with the family, I was not allowed to access family spaces during these days.

Recruitment

Two techniques were applied to recruit the informants in this research. One is snowball sampling. Most of the informants were recruited through this snowball method. Snowball sampling relies on and takes part in the dynamics of social networks, and helps researchers to find 'hidden' informants. Through the procedure of snowball sampling, the researcher accesses informants who are provided by other informants. This process is repetitive: 'informants refer the researcher to other informants, who are contacted by the researcher and then refer her or him to yet other informants, and so on' (Noy, 2008, p. 330).

In various social science studies, snowball sampling is used as an effective research

method when researchers are trying to obtain information on and access to 'hidden populations' who are hard to reach by researchers (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Examples include female sex workers (e.g. Hubbard, 1999), HIV carriers (e.g. Magnani et al., 2005; Myers, 2010), ex-smokers (e.g. Thompson et al., 2009), homosexuals (e.g. Browne, 2005), and sometimes high-status social elites (e.g. Moyser & Wagstaffe, 1987). In home studies, although informants are not always people who suffer from stigmas and marginalisation or who exclude themselves from the public, they can be difficult to reach because they are hiding in their private spaces. Therefore, snowball sampling is a widely employed recruitment method in studies related to home cultures (see, for example, Huang & Yeoh, 1996; Kobayashi et al., 2011; Starkweather, 2012).

In this research, the snowball process started with the pilot work. In the pilot research, I selected two middle-level households (Qi's family and Xiao Mi's family) with people I am familiar with to be the first two research households. At the beginning of the fieldwork, I asked the informants who had taken part in the pilot work to introduce my research and me to their acquaintances who were living in families with similar structures to theirs. Once the new informants agreed to participate in my research, I visited their homes and began the second round of the snowball process. However, not everyone in the snowball process tended to get involved in the research. When the proposed informants refused to allow me into their homes, I gave them the option of taking part in the research through being interviewed about their family life and familial food practices outside their homes. In so doing, the ratio of refusal declined.

The other method of recruitment was recruiting informants through a gatekeeper. This alternative recruitment method was launched when the snowball process could not be carried out. This recruitment was carried out with the assistance of a residential committee officer working in an institutional community. Recruiting participants through gatekeepers has been applied successfully in some studies on children (Morrow, 2008) and older people (Tarrant, 2013b) by feminist researchers, since mediation by a person who is familiar with the informants is helpful to the research process. The gatekeeper in my research played an important role as mediator between

myself and the research informants. In China, the residential committee is an autonomous residential institution in each community. Therefore, the committee officer who acts as a gatekeeper in this research is not only an administrative staff member in the institutional community, but also a resident who is familiar with other residents in that community.

The research process with a gatekeeper is quite different from that using the snowball sampling method. The first step of this method is explaining the research generally to the gatekeeper. Then, I asked the gatekeeper to contact the potential informants, and give them a brief introduction of my research and me. Once the potential informants agreed to take part in my research, I arranged meetings for all of us – the gatekeeper, the informants and me – inside the informants' homes. In these meetings, I explained the details of my research to my informants and collected data from them. After that, I asked the informants for their contact information for two reasons: arranging the second visit if the first one had provided not enough data for the research; and making the informants into the potential beginnings of new rounds of snowball sampling.

These two recruitment methods were not used separately. Instead, they were interdependent during my fieldwork, to guarantee the quantity of informants within the limited time available.

Sample

27 households[17] took part in this research (table 3.1). Except for household 6, which is located in a suburban area (Huadu district), all of the households are situated in urban Guangzhou. Most of these households are located in high-rise apartment buildings in two kinds of communities where I conducted the fieldwork: sixteen of them live in long-term in gated communities as owners; and eight of them are located in institutional housing areas without ownership (two of which are living in institutional accommodations but have purchased their own flats in gated communities). People who are living in the flats they have purchased are free to design

[17] The number of households includes two households from the pilot research.

and decorate their domestic spaces, however, those who are living in institutional houses are not allowed to change their home structures and redesign their homes. However, there are three other housing types in this research: Qi's family is living in a flat with limited property rights[18]; Mang Guo's family was temporarily living in a rented apartment in a non-gated community as their previous house was under demolition by the local government during the period of my fieldwork; and although Xiao Bei's family lives in a flat within an institutional community, this flat was purchased by Xiao Bei's parents, rather than supplied by their employers. Moreover, four of these households live in more than one home, in order to guarantee the work/life balance of the dual-career parents whose workplaces are distant from each other or for children's educational reasons[19].

To protect the personal information of the informants, all names shown in this research are pseudonyms. These pseudonyms are all based on the informants' children's childhood names according to the idiomatic in China – people tend to use the format of 'a child's name add kinship term(s)' to address their relatives (see also, Shen, 2013), except those of household 23. The adults from this household did not want the child's name to be used in the thesis. Alternatively, they asked me to use the mother's maiden name, Xue, to make the pseudonyms of other family members.

Table 3.1 Demographic summary

	Household members*	**Dwelling types and housing tenure**
Household 1	Qi, his maternal grandparents (temporary residents) and parents	limited property rights house
Household 2	Xiao Mi, her paternal grandparents (temporary residents) and parents	gated community
Household 3	Xiao Tian and her parents	gated community
Household 4	Guo Guo, his paternal grandparents (temporary residents) and parents	gated community/ institutional housing
Household 5	Mei Mei, her maternal grandparents (temporary residents) and parents	gated community/ institutional housing

[18] A limited property house is a special housing type in China. It refers to a house built in collectively owned land and then sold by individuals. Such housing was considered illegally by officials. However, as the price of limited property houses is far lower than the real estate market price level, many urban residents choose to buy such limited property houses. In this research, the residents in household 1 do not have property ownership even though they have purchased the rights to use their apartment.

[19] Parents tend to live in the home which is closer to their children's kindergarten or school.

Household 6	Xiao Mu and his parents	gated community
Household 7	Mang Guo (temporary resident), his paternal grand-grandmother, his paternal grandparents**, and parents (temporary residents)	rented commercial residential building (non-gated community)/ gated community (owned by Mang Guo's parents)
Household 8	Xiao Niu (temporary resident), his paternal grandparents** and parents (temporary residents)	gated community
Household 9	Yan (temporary resident), her paternal grandparents**, parents (temporary residents), and her uncle (her father's brother, temporary resident)	gated community
Household 10	Mei Yang Yang, her parents, and a nanny	institutional housing/ gated community
Household 11	Jie, her paternal grandmother (temporary resident) and parents	gated community
Household 12	Zhuang, his paternal grandmother (temporary resident) and parents	institutional housing
Household 13	Ding and her parents	institutional housing
Household 14	Zhao's parents***	institutional housing
Household 15	Jing and her parents	gated community
Household 16	Xi Xi and her parents, and an hourly employed female domestic servant	gated community
Household 17	Xiao Bei and his parents, and an hourly employed female domestic servant	institutional housing with ownership
Household 18	Xiao Xiao, his paternal grandparents (temporary residents) and parents	gated community
Household 19	Gan and her parents	institutional housing
Household 20	Peng and his parents	institutional housing/ gated community
Household 21	Ming, his paternal grandfather (temporary resident), aunt (his father's sister, temporary resident) and parents	institutional housing
Household 22	Dou Dou and his parents	gated community
Household 23	Xue, her husband and son, and a female au pair	gated community
Household 24	Dao Dao and his parents and aunt (his father's cousin, temporary resident)	gated community
Household 25	Xia and her parents	institutional community
Household 26	Yu and his paternal grandmother (temporary resident) and parents	gated community
Household 27	Xiao Xi, her paternal grandmother (temporary resident) and parents, and a nanny	gated community

Notes:

*: household members refer to the co-residing family members when I visited the households.

**: in this household, all of the household members were living in the grandparent's home when I was doing the research.

***: the child was temporarily moving to his grandparents' home and living with them.

In addition, under the strict one-child policy[20] in urban China, all of the children in this research are the only children of their families, and about half of the researched parents (25 parents) are the only children of their parents.

Collecting household data

Research path 1: household-based ethnographies

Ethnographies appreciate the embodied nature of knowledge which provides a way to understand in depth 'real' life in domestic spaces, as the core of ethnographic research is 'first-hand participation in some initially unfamiliar social world and the production of written accounts of that world by drawing upon such participation' (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 27). In ethnographic studies on the senses and meanings of place, people and experiences, embodied ethnographic 'tours' in certain places are highlighted. This ethnographic work not only underscores the importance of doing with the participants, but also concerns the human senses. According to Pink (2009), the combination of human senses and ethnographies engenders sensory ethnography, which

> *not only attend[s] to the senses in ethnographic research and representation, but reaches out towards an altogether more sophisticated set of ideas through which to understand what ethnography itself entails (p. 10).*

This combination of senses and ethnographies is often employed in studies on people-place relations, especially on people's emplacement and the processes of place-making. For example, in Law's (2001) exploration of Filipino women's senses in Hong Kong, she examines her informants' experiences and practices in Little Manila (a community with a large Filipino immigrant population in Hong Kong), in domestic spaces (the workplaces for the female informants), and urban areas in Hong Kong through verbal narrations and shared eating experiences with her informants in public spaces. Her insights about sensorial (olfactory and taste) culture provide new ways to map people and places in the city. In his research on music and homemaking, Anderson

[20] Also known as family planning policy, is a population control policy of PRC. This policy was established in 1981 by the central government of PRC. According this policy, each urban couple can give birth to only one child; otherwise, the couple should be fined by the local Population and Family Planning Commissions.

(2005) conducted home tours along with individual and group interviews, observant participation and listening diaries. In this case, the acoustic modality in the domestic value-making process is used to examine how music is practiced in everyday domestic life, and how the practice of judging music recreates family lives. All of these studies have highlighted the significances of reflexive human senses in creating ethnographical, geographical and cultural knowledge and interpreting people's living, inhabiting and moving trajectories.

To understand people's social relations with home, things and other people through the lens of food practices, this research applies sensory ethnographies to explore domestic lives in Guangzhou. The major task for a sensory ethnographer is accessing other people's multisensory experiences, knowing, practices, memories and imaginations through participatory observation, interviews, visual methodologies and other embodied ways (Pink, 2009). In the fieldwork, I collected household data through guided home tours, shared cooking and eating experiences, and 'food stories' in my informants' homes, in order to explore people's sensory experiences with food and food culture.

The home tours were held using two methods. One was 'exploring' the informants' homes, especially their kitchens and the dining areas, with their guidance. During the tour, I asked the informants to tell me their everyday food stories about purchasing, food production, cooking, eating, entertaining, hospitalising and waste within these spaces. At this stage, the conversations between the researcher and the researched were taken down as memos (sometimes, these conversations were recorded when informants gave their agreement), and the photos of the things or food practices either the researcher or the informants felt were important were taken with permission[21]. The other method was sharing familial food practices, including going food shopping, and sharing cooking and eating experiences with the informants in and beyond their

[21] I first planed to use participant-directed photography approaches to collect interior visual materials on things in the pilot research period. However, the informants were always very nervous about taking photos without the researcher and were anxious about the quality of the photos they took. Therefore, I asked them to show me the important food-related things in their home spaces and take photos of these things myself during the home tours in the fieldwork.

domestic spaces. During these shared experiences, I observed the process of the informants' 'real' food practices in their daily lives, took part in these practices, and talked about people's ideas, senses, feelings and emotions during these practices. Each observation was recorded as a brief memo. After each piece of household research, I created detailed field notes by collating the memos.

After each tour, an in-depth interview about the meanings and imaginations of home and family, everyday food consumption/activities, food habits, family relations and brief biographies of the family was conducted alongside existing photos or videos of family meals or celebrations. Such interviews always took place in the living room or at the dining table after family meals (as I always had meals with the family after the guided home tour) with all the family members. In this way, I collected data on different family members' ideas of home and family relations, as interviews with family groupings can 'produce "family stories" that gloss over individual differences, obscuring tensions between mothers-fathers, parents-children and siblings' (Gabb, 2008, p. 27). All of the interviews were record by a digital recorder with permission. What the recorder could not capture, including informants' facial expression, motions and interactions with each other, was written down as field notes. After each piece of ethnographic research, the field notes were then organised into a field diary.

Research path 2: Interviews with visual materials

This research path is an alternative method for the research. Only three households were researched through this method, as they or their family members refused to allow me to conduct home tours or join their family-based food practices, but still wanted to take part in the research. These interviews took place in the informants' workplaces, a cafe and a restaurant, respectively. Topics such as home design, everyday food activities and family relations were discussed during the interviews. Because all of the interviewees who chose this research path were young couples, the data collected from this research path is limited to the couples' interpretation of home and family. In order to explore the real relations between everyday food practices and the home/family-making process, both existing family

pictures and participant-directed photographs about things and family activities were discussed during the interviews.

Discussing existing family photos

Discussing existing family photos plays an important part in this research path to illustrate the informants' family-based food practices visually. Before each interview, I told the informants that I would like to talk about their family photos or family albums, and asked them to select some photos, especially those about food-related activities which they felt appropriate to show me. Along with the descriptions of the family photos, family biographies (which include the histories of their families and their current and past homes) were also gathered. The conversations between the interviewees and me can be divided into the following three themes:

(1) The fundamental information of the photos: when did you take these photos? Who took them? Who is in the photos? Where did it take place? What were the photographed people doing? Why take such photos?

(2) People's feelings of the photos: what do you think about the photos? What do you remember when you see these photos?

(3) How important the photos are: why did you select these photos to show me? Do these photos record some important moments in your family?

During each discussion, a digital recorder was used to record people's conversations with permission. Also field notes were taken about what cannot be recorded (including people's body language, facial expressions and body movements) by the machine.

Talking about participant-directed photography

The other visual method used in this research path was participant-directed photography, which means discussing the meaning of the informants' important things in relation to food together with photos of these things that they have taken. This research path combines participant-directed photography with interviews, in order to get more information of the informants' domestic lives. Before each interview, the interviewees were asked to use their digital cameras or smartphones to take some

photos of things in relation to food, which they regard as important to themselves and/or their family and their domestic food spaces (e.g. the kitchen, the tearoom and dining areas). Together with these photos, interviewees' everyday food practices and stories of the photographed things and family relations were discussed. The conversations were recorded with permission and field notes were taken about the informants' expressions, emotions and body movements. After that, the participant-directed photographs discussed in the interviews were sent to the researcher in digital forms. A field diary of aggregated field notes was organised after each interview.

Positionality/subjectivity and reflexivity

Fieldwork is an 'engagement' (Massey, 2003, p. 86), a 'co-fabrication' or a way of '"working together" with those whom we are researching' (Whatmore, 2003, p. 90). When doing fieldwork, the field becomes a space where the researcher and the researched interact and are entangled. Therefore, it is important for researchers to be reflexive and be aware of their identity positions and the ways that their research methods can affect their studies. As McDowell (1992) suggests, researchers should recognise and take account of their position and their informants' during the fieldwork, and write this into their research practice. Concerning the encounters between the researcher and the researched in the field, this section explains how to negotiate identity positions and deal with the complicated relationships between the researcher and the participants in my fieldwork in Guangzhou.

How to handle differences in the field is a continuous question for human geographers – not only about something they are researching, but also about their own research experience. In feminist research, 'reflexivity has often implied analyses of how the production of ethnographic knowledge is shaped by the shifting, contextual, and relational contours of the researchers' social *identity* and her social situatedness or *positionality*, (in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality and other axes of social difference), with respect to her subjects' (Richa & Geiger, 2007, p. 2, italics in origin).

Because 'we are differently positioned subjects with different biographies, we are not dematerialized, disembodied entities' (England, 1994, p. 92) and the subjectivity of the researcher and other participants in the research does influence the research; and a growth in the literature on positionality/subjectivity and reflexivity reflects this (Rose, 1997; Mullings, 1999; Valentine, 2003; Hopkins, 2007; Tarrant, 2013b).

The standpoint of subjectivity and reflexivity refers to the fact that the researcher is influenced by his/her biography (experiences, age, gender, race, class and so on) and this influences his/her fieldwork which is dynamic and relational depending on the research context (Bennett, 2002). It highlights 'the role of the researcher and the researched (and the relationship between the two)' (Ekinsmyth, 2001b, p. 177). For example, Mullings (1999) points out that identifying the differences (of gender, class, race) and dynamic power relations (she feels a disempowered outsider sometimes, but acts as an authority when she interprets the data she collects) between researchers and the researched is important in the field. She suggests that researchers should recognise and name these uncertainties, in order to produce valid accounts of spaces and displace the indomitable authority of researchers; this draws on her interviews in a cross-cultural setting (information processing companies in Jamaica). This approach has also been applied by home studies. I use two examples of home studies to explain how scholars work with their positionality and reflexivity in different contexts. The first example is Tarrant's (2013b) recent research which concerns age differences and intergenerational relations. In this research, Tarrant explores the multiple positionalities that were negotiated during interviews she conducted with British grandfathers as a young female researcher. Drawing on her interview experience, she indicates that it is impossible to separate the influence of age-based power when doing the research older people and youth. In her fieldwork, she shifts her identities between researcher and granddaughter to vary her understandings of aging, gender and place, and make her research valid. The differences between the researched and the researcher can sometimes be reduced with the help of research assistants who share similarities with both the researcher and the researched. The second example is

Brickell's (2008) research in Cambodia. This research was mainly conducted with 'a 25 year-old male graduate, who had prior research training on gender and development issues in Cambodia' and 'a female research assistant, which gave women the option to be interviewed' by this Cambodian woman, in order to make both her informants and herself feel comfortable during the research. In her research, 'women appeared happy to discuss their lives with the male research assistant, and equally, as a young, British woman interviewing Cambodian men', she 'felt a personal sense of safety, even legitimacy, being accompanied by a male assistant'. Simultaneously, her 'otherness' meant her female informants 'felt greater liberty to express their opinions given the frequency with which I was described as a "modern lady" not confined to traditional custom or rhetoric' (2008, p. 1670). Therefore, considering positionality issues in the field is unavoidable for researchers who use qualitative methods with other human participants.

In my fieldwork, I used multi-participatory research methods to research people's real domestic lives. Most of my informants were adults who play the role of parents and/or grandparents and some of them were young children aged between one to eight years old. In the ethnographic settings, my identities were always complex and fluid: when I was doing research with the parents and grandparents, I was on the one hand a single female researcher or a strange visitor to their homes; while on the other hand, I was their friends' or acquaintances' friend. When I talked with the children, I was an adult who cared about their daily dietary routines, and at the same time, I was a stranger they had not met before. These multi-identities sometimes made both the informants and I embarrassed. As a visitor, I was invited in to others' homes, therefore, I should not ask so many questions about the hosts' private life, according to common practice in Chinese society; but as a researcher who was doing research on domestic spaces and everyday food practices, I should observe and talk about very domestic and private trivialities with people in their private spaces. For the informants, they were on the one hand the hosts and hostesses who should provide warm hospitality to a visitor through special ways (such as cleaning and tidying their home before the visit, and

offering tea, fruits, snacks and a hearty meal), according to Chinese culture; however, on the other hand, they were participants and interviewees in an academic study who were asked to maintain their habits and daily situations in their home. To reduce the awkward situations in the research field, I expanded the length of time with each researched household, and sometimes paid a second visit to the same household. In so doing, both of us got more familiar with each other, and became less nervous about the research process.

What makes my positions and identities more complicated is that my fieldwork usually takes place in a crowd of people from three generations. During the research, the social differences between us play a productive role in knowledge interpretation. The grandparents' generation do not like to express their ideas in front of strangers; the parents who are in a similar generation to me, are likely to say everything on behalf of other family members; while the children are sometimes excluded from the interviews by their parents and/or grandparents. As a researcher, I have tried my best to include all of the household members in my research, but as a visitor, I cannot suggest to them what they should and should not do. Therefore, I organised the interviews and ethnographies informally, and encouraged everyone to express their identities and ideas during the informal conversations during meals and other shared food practices, rather than forcing them to answer all the questions seriously during the interviews.

Additionally, as I am neither a parent/grandparent nor a wife who shares the same family role as most of the informants, I sometimes cannot get clear answers of the questions in relation to caring/feeding the family. For example, Xi Xi's parents guided me in exploring their kitchen, dining area and living room. They always used 'you will know the answer when you get married' or 'you will understand it when you have a child' to answer my questions. To get more information, I kept on asking the same question until they provided a clearer answer:

Chen: You have a big fridge! Why you decided to buy such a big one?

Xi Xi's father: You will know the answer when you get married and have your own

baby. Haha…

Xi Xi's mother: Yes, when you have your own family, you will know why we buy a big fridge.

Chen: Emm, I still want to know that, because in my home, we never have such a big fridge.

Xi Xi's father: You know, we are not very local people, our parents and other relatives would bring some food to us when they visit us. This is one reason. The other reason is, we don't want to buy food every day, but want to have different kinds of food. So, we need a big fridge…When you get married and have your child you would find that things in your home increased suddenly [quoted from recorded conversations with Xi Xi's parents during a home tour, 18 February 2014].

On the other hand, in fieldwork, the researcher should consider not only the differences but also the similarities between themselves and their informants (Hopkins, 2007). In this research, I am both an outsider and an insider to family life in Guangzhou. Although remarkable differences of social identities can be found between me and the informants, we share the same or similar cultural background: both of us have lived in urban Canton areas[22] for a long time and come from a Xiaokang household. As I have been living in Foshan, a city adjoining Guangzhou, for more than 15 years and studying at South China Normal University in Guangzhou for 4 years, I am very familiar with the daily culture and places in Guangzhou. For instance, when I talk about food consumption with Xiao Mu's mother, I can understand the information explicitly in spite of her ambiguous words:

Xiao Mu's mother: You are living in Guangzhou, right?

Chen: No, I'm living in Foshan.

Xiao Mu's mother: That's the same. I've been in Guangzhou for very long time. More than 10 years. My eating habits change a lot. I like local dishes in Guangzhou.

Chen: The local food, emm, something like light food, seafood, soup?

Xiao Mu's mother: Bingo! I like soup and like cooking soup now [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Mu's parents, 13 December 2013].

[22] Canton areas refer to the residential areas for Han Chinese who speak Cantonese, including cities located in the Pearl River Delta (Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Zhuhai, Huizhou, Jiangmen, and Zhaoqing), Hong Kong and Macau.

Ethical dilemmas

Thinking about how researchers do their research ethically is also important for researchers to consider, rather than merely focusing on their fluid positions (Hopkins, 2007). The word 'ethics' applied in the research process means 'the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair' (Sieber, 1993, p. 14, quoted from Morrow, 2008, p. 51). When we choose the proper research methods in empirical research, the ethical issues involved in these methods should be taken into consideration as well. In other words, all acts and behaviours during fieldwork should affirm that they do no physical and mental harm to either the researcher or the informants, and should be ethical activities.

When doing research, the researcher(s) should be sensitive to learn the contextual knowledge about appropriate ethics in the field (Hopkins, 2007). As this research aims to explore real domestic life, I need to 'intrude' on the informants' domestic spaces, which might interrupt the informants' ordinary life and unveil private secrets that people do not want others to know. In these circumstances, I need to think about how to act ethically while also collecting adequate information. Based on the ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association (BSA), Gabb identifies four key ethical concerns in family-based studies: 'disclosure of private affairs, divergence among "related" stories, confidentiality and the degree to which anonymity can be assured' (2008, p. 26). In short, how to protect the informants from harm and the possible negative effects of the research on their private world should be taken into consideration in the field.

Good preparation is significant to reducing the tensions between the researcher and the researched and avoiding potential non-ethical occurrences. Before my visit to each household, I sent an outline of my research process to the informants and told them what they should prepare for the research (e.g. asking for the preparation of existing family photos and taking participant-directed photos) via email. In so doing,

the participants could be sure that they were engaged in empirical research, rather than being asked about private issues.

During the fieldwork, I took my informants' (particularly the children's) perception of ethics into consideration. Morrow (2008) has concluded four ethical guidelines apply to child participants. Firstly, recognising the social differences, including culture, age, gender, ethnic, personal characteristics and so on. Secondly, considering that adults are privileged compared to children and should take responsibility towards children. Thirdly, considering various power relations in practice, explicitly children's social status and structural positioning, in suitable ways. Finally, accessing children via adult gatekeepers and asking for these adults' consent. Applying these ethical considerations, I conducted interviews with four children over the age of six years with the help and observation of their parents and/or grandparents. When interviewing these children, I avoided asking too many why-questions or asking them to state a food story. Instead, I tried to discuss their favourite food and whose recipes they prefer, and asked them to show me their favourite food or favourite restaurants with the assistance of an Internet-connected iPad. Other related materials created by children were also collected as data. For example, as Xia said that she is good at drawing pictures and showed me her design of a menu, I asked her to draw her view of family meals and her favourite food in a notebook with the help of her mother. These drawings are collected as part of the field materials with the permission of both Xia and her parents.

Moreover, I was cautious about conversations about family conflicts when I conducted interviews with my informants. Shen (2013) explained her ethical puzzle during her interviews. When she talked about sensitive topics (for example, sexual life, marital betrayal and family conflicts), her informants did not want to tell her the truth behind these family affairs. Similarly in this research, most of my informants avoided these topics deliberately in the interviews. However, as they have the right to choose what they want to talk about, I did not force them to answer the questions on such sensitive issues. Instead, I only asked my informants to describe the interpersonal

relationships in their families. Whether they expressed positive or negative evaluations on the interpersonal relations, I asked them to give me more details about their judgements. If they did not want to say more about these topics, I would move on to other questions. But some of my informants tended to focus on these sensitive topics, for example, during the interview with Yan's parents, Yan's mother complained about her mother-in-law for several minutes. To make sure that her complaining words could be used in my thesis and its related publications, I asked her after the interview 'can I transcript your complaints and quote them in my thesis chapter and other related articles for publication?'. Therefore, all the conversations about family conflicts quoted in this research are done so with consent from the informants.

Apart from interviews with people in different life courses, the ethnographic and visual approaches in this research raise the ethical question of anonymity as well. According to Johnsen et al. (2008), all contributions of researched participants should be anonymised for security and ethical reasons. All of the names used in this research are pseudonyms (details have provided in the 'demographic statistics' section) and all of the photos were taken without people's faces. In addition, most of my informants tend to be absent from the photos, whether these photos would be published or not. They never provided photos including their family members or themselves. Additionally, to eliminate informants' tension about the visual materials collected during the research, I handed them over to informants so they could view them, in order to make sure that I could use these materials in my presentations, thesis, articles and other outcomes of this research.

Organisation of data

In order to interpret the whole experience of my fieldwork and make the qualitative data into a systematic analysis of food and home/family-making, all of the qualitative data from the field, including both the visual materials and texts (researcher's diaries, the pre-existing texts for context analysis and the transcriptions

of the interviews), were analysed with qualitative data analysis computer software, NVIVO 10, allowing a rigorous coding process.

Analysis is about building a theory through collected data. It is not about 'holding up a mirror to give a "true picture"', but 'a practical action of describing and relating things to answer specific needs and questions' that combine, recombine, decontextualise and recontextualise things in new ways (Crang, 2003b, pp. 133, 143). To transfer the collected data into theoretical texts, I accomplished my analysis based on grounded theory. Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1968) as a special methodology for the purpose of building theory from qualitative data which is then illustrated by characteristic examples of data, that is, 'a way of thinking about and conceptualising data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 275)'. This theory features four properties: first, '*fitness*' which means that the theory should fit the research area; second, '*understandable*' which means that the grounded substantive theory must correspond closely to the reality; third, '*general*' which means the generated theories should not be too abstract but should be abstract enough to make the theories general guides to everyday situations; and fourth, '*controllable*' which means that the grounded theory must enable the people who use it to have enough control in ever-change daily situations, in order to make it worth trying (Glaser & Strauss, 1968, pp. 237-249, italics in origin). The coding process in this research, therefore, is applied to help build fitness, understandable, general and controllable theories grounded on the qualitative data.

During the coding process in the analysis, I first discovered knowledge from the raw data by asking key questions about the data – a useful analytic tool at the beginning of analysis (Emerson et al., 1995; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), as questions can 'raise some profound issues about what kind of knowledge is possible and desirable, and how it is to be achieved' (Rose, 2003b, p. 9).

For the contextual analysis, I have considered relations between changing families, home cultures and food/food-related consumption in Guangzhou. Context is a set of conditions ranging from the most micro to the macro that give rise to problems or circumstances to which individuals respond by means of actions, interactions and

emotions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 229). The questions that come up in this research include: How do Chinese people understand home and family along with social change? What is Xiaokang life like in contemporary Guangzhou? What are the characteristics of daily (food/food-related) consumption in Guangzhou? And how can this research explore home and family in Guangzhou through everyday food practices?

In visual analysis, questions about the representation and practices of images and taking photos are considered. According to Cook and Crang (1995), there are three main ways to deal with visual materials: first, concentrating on the characteristics of the contents of the images; second, treating the images as texts, then focusing on their symbolic meanings which are connected to the social context; third, communicative analysis on images, which regards image-making as a social process. It is evident that these three ways can be divided into two parts: (con)textual and practical analysis. Therefore, in this research, I am concerned about the meanings and practices behind the images along two axes. The first axis is about the meanings of the photos. During the analysis process, the researcher depicted each photo with the following explanations: (1) the people, things and places in the photos; (2) the scenes and settings in the photos; (3) events or activities in the photos; (4) the importance of these photos. The second axis concerns the practice of photography, and tries to answer the following questions: (1) who takes/keeps/displays the photos; (2) why these photos were taken or displayed; (3) how the photographers managed the photography process with the photographed people.

For the textual analysis of transcriptions and other texts collected from the fieldwork, the main themes, concepts, dimensions and categories are concentrated in the very first point of coding. Textual analysis is 'a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world' (McKee, 2003, p. 1) through interpreting existing texts. Before the analysis process, I have asked who the interviewer/author is, when he or she says/writes these words about what, why and how he or she does it, and what the consequences are. These questions are the basis of the coding process.

Then, in the analysis of data, all of these questions have been coded and memoed with five steps:

(1) Open coding. Open coding is breaking data apart and delineating concepts in to blocks of raw material (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 198). I have transformed the interviewee's words into simple words or phrases through *in vivo* codes (the codes which are taken directly from interviewees' words) and descriptive codes (the codes which are made by summarising interviewees' words). These codes are organised as open codes. Using the 'Nodes' tab of NVIVO 10, the open codes were created and inserted in the original texts for further analysis.

(2) Initial memoing. This analytic step requires the researcher to 'step back from the field setting to identify, develop, and modify broader analytic themes and arguments' (Emersonet al., 1995, p. 157). To expand upon the initial memos, I use the 'annotation' function of NVIVO 10 to attach the initial memos as descriptions of the open codes. Different from the open codes, these memos are based on the context of each field rather than the codes for the contents.

(3) Focus coding. Focus coding aims to develop open codes into subthemes and detailed concepts (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 160). At this stage, I organised and codified the similar open codes into a subcategory or category by summarising the shared characteristics of these similar open codes. Assisted by NVIVO 10, focus codes are codified via the aggregation of relevant open codes.

(4) Writing integrative memos. After encoding all of the raw materials, the categories are developed into themes and detailed concepts. These themes and concepts are then combined into integrative memos. The integrative memos are the concluding points of the coding processes and the initial memos. In these memos, the preliminary grounded theories constructed by the codes were marked down. I wrote the integrative memos in separate documents, then, used the 'memo links' function of NVIVO 10 to attach these memos to the coded materials.

(5) Flip-flop process. As grounded theory involves a two-way dialectical process or 'flip-flop' between data and the researcher's conceptualisations (Schiellerup, 2008, p.

169), I have run two cycles of coding for the raw materials. In the first cycle, I created focus codes based on the open coding system. While in the second cycle, I rethought the relations between open codes, focus codes, categories and the constructed themes/concepts, then recoded and de-coded the codes to build up a clearer system of codes.

After this coding process, I used these themes and concepts engendered from the raw materials to structure this thesis. All of the codes and memos are written in Chinese, in order to ensure that the codes have the same meanings and expressions as the original words of the informants and the researcher. Only the texts used as quotations in the empirical chapters were then translated from Chinese into English.

In the writing up practice, this thesis constructs and interprets the collected data through household-based food stories. Writing styles do matter in the process of structuring an academic work, as 'the meaning of what you are saying is intimately connected to how you are saying it' (Cloke et al., 2004, p. 344). Much of the literature on home-based consumption has employed a writing style of case analysis to represent their works in the domestic context, in order to theorise their qualitative data (see, for example, Valentine, 1999; Gregson, 2007; Miller, 2008; Meah & Jackson, 2013). These works made strong connections between people, things and the space of home through particular stories of individuals and made the readers see the importance of the everyday consumption in the real domestic life. Because the main purpose of this thesis is to understand how people in Guangzhou create their own geographies of food in the domestic context, rather than summarise a qualitative overview of consumer culture of food in Guangzhou from individual stories, I used the food stories of particular households to construct the data into texts.

Conclusion

This methodology chapter explains the research methods which are employed to collected first-hand and secondary data of everyday food practices in contemporary

Guangzhou. Working with 27 Xiaokang households, people's understanding of home, family-based food practices and social relations are recorded through household-based ethnographies, interviews and visual technologies. Then, this data was analysed using grounded theory with the assistance of NVIVO 10.

This ethnography-based methodology contributes to qualitative research on home and family in the Chinese context. Although there is a qualitative trend in the research methods on the Chinese family and home studies, ethnography, especially home-based ethnography, is generally overlooked. As mentioned above, Chinese scholars often apply interviews (including semi-structured, in-depth and life history interviews) to understand the complex relations between home, family and wider society (Li & Zheng, 2009; Shen, 2013; Feng et al., 2014). These empirical studies depend on individuals' interpretations or narratives based on their understandings of home and/or family life, but how these individuals practice their family life and home culture with their family members and others is neglected. This lacuna can be filled through the ethnography approach in this research which requires that the researcher becomes a participant in the researched people's family life in real home spaces.

Also, the two-path research procedure might be seen as a general contribution to social studies on private issues. When researching the private sphere of life through the ethnography approach, the ratio of refusal might be high, as many people (at least for this research) are not willing to be 'observed' by others in their daily life. Therefore, providing them two options of research path – being interviewed or taking part in ethnographic research – might make the potential informants more likely to take part in the research, making the recruitment process smoother.

Chapter 4

Accommodating food into the ideal home

Homemaking is both a social practice and home-based consumption that is immersed in the complex relations between people, things and home (Miller, 1998a; 2001; 2002; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007). In his edited book *Home Possessions* (2001), Daniel Miller highlights the importance of material cultures in shaping the home's social relationships and practices. For him, home is a dynamic place which is made through socio-material encounters and a process that engenders the everyday practices of people and things. In other words, home both helps to make us and is made by us. The home interior, in this sense, becomes a mode of self-expression and a builder of social relations. Later, Miller (2002) develops his understanding of the social relations between home, home interiors and the people who dwell within the home with the concept of 'accommodating'. The term 'accommodating' speaks to the need have a structure of being at home 'in the sense of a place to live'; involves a constant reciprocal process 'in the sense of an appropriation of the home by its inhabitants and of the inhabitants by the home'; and the expression of 'a sense of willing' and 'an agreement to compromise on behalf of the other' (p. 115). It not only means finding or creating a place to live, but also refers to the practice of home-based consumption that involves the objectification of the temporal and spatial interrelationships between the material home, people and things. Thus, through the process of accommodating, the accommodation becomes the home – a place for both people and things that are always making.

This concept was then defined as the centre of dwelling by Nicky Gregson. For Gregson (2007), dwelling is about 'inhabitation, cohabitation and the practices of habitation' which is 'fundamentally and simultaneously about accommodation and accommodating' and 'achieved through an ongoing flow of appropriation and divestment; through acquisition, holding, keeping, storing and indeed ridding' (p. 21). In this sense, dwelling, as a concept in relation to being or feeling at home, is

accomplished through 'living amongst certain things and doing things with and to these things' and 'what is done with and to ordinary everyday consumer objects' (Gregson, 2007, p. 177). It emphasises the importance of home-based consumption, and highlights that the materialised practices of both appropriation and inappropriation maintain dwelling (being or feeling at home) and make it geographically more extensive and mobile in the contemporary world.

Employing the concept of 'accommodating', this chapter focuses on the process of homemaking with food and food-related things. Tracking Xiaokang people's everyday food practices including designing/decorating, cooking, eating, storing, growing food and wasting, this chapter aims to build up a geography of making 'ideal' homes. The questions of how the process of accommodating is accomplished through everyday food practices and how the social relations between home, food-related things and people are shaped by and shaping the accommodating process will be discussed though five food stories. The main argument of this chapter makes a strong link between everyday food practices and accommodating in urban Guangzhou.

Home culture in contemporary Guangzhou

To begin with, I provide a brief overview of the imaginations of the 'ideal home' in Guangzhou, based on in-depth interviews. According to Clarke (2001), home is a site of aspiration and a way of self-expression. The imaginations of the 'ideal home' are 'not just trivial fantasies about a perceived aesthetic style or associated social aspiration, rather they offer an idealized notion of "quality of life" and an idealized form of sociality' (p. 28). In practice, home carries 'the burden of the discrepancies between its actual state at a given time and a wide range of aspirational "ideal homes" that are generated out of much wider ideals that a household might have for itself' (Miller, 2001, p. 7). Based on these discussions on aspiration and home imagination, I illuminate Xiaokang people's understanding of 'ideal homes' in this section, and then examine how these aspirations are carried out in their real homes (especially cooking and eating

areas).

In recent years, although commercial houses with fine decor have become popular among urban middle-level consumers in Guangzhou, many of them are still keen on redesigning and/or redecorating their homes in order to express their individual tastes (Guangzhou Daily, 2009). According to Elfick's (2011) research on the consumer culture of the urban middle classes in Shenzhen (the second largest city in Guangdong province), nowadays Chinese Xiaokang people invest a lot of time and money on the decoration of their homes as a way to express their cultural tastes and identity:

> *Consumers buy an empty concrete shell without floors, internal walls, electrical wiring, plumbing or fittings. Contractors are hired to come and install these services and features. Consumers spend an additional 20-50 per cent of the original price to make the apartment habitable and to furnish it… The interior decoration industry grew rapidly, and a plethora of home decoration magazines appeared to meet the needs of this new market (p. 201).*

In this research, the majority of the participants tend to use their home interiors to express their own aesthetics and understanding of the meanings of home. Under the commodification of home and domestic life, the preference of the global, modern, stylish and personalised home design, which can express their tastes and personal aesthetics, has become the dominant home culture in urban China (Elfick, 2011; Yu, 2014). Such personal aesthetics are often intertwined with people's understandings of modernity. The term 'modernisation' or 'modernity' in contemporary Chinese contexts can refer to 'a marriage between Oriental and Occidental civilisations in the age of globalisation' (Cui, 2012, p. 15). For example global or international home cultures are embraced by Xiao Mi's parents through the medium of IKEA home design and furnishings. Xiao Mi's parents expressed their preference for IKEA products. For them, the products from IKEA are modern, stylish and pragmatic with reasonable prices:

> *Xiao Mi's father: most of our home interiors are purchased from IKEA.*
>
> *Chen: why choose IKEA?*
>
> *Xiao Mi's father: the products in IKEA fit our styles. The IKEA style is modern and simple which fit young people's tastes and aesthetics. And the price (of IKEA*

products) is affordable for us. I like the stylish, comfortable and cheap things for IKEA.

Xiao Mi's mother: and their design is pragmatic. You see, this table is easy to assemble and useful [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Mi's parents, 30 June 2013].

In short, according to Xiao Mi's parents, IKEA is both modern but also pragmatic. The ideal domestic life for their generation means adopting international ways of life which make their life convenient, and which help them to express their aesthetics and interests.

Apart from expressing cultural taste and identity at home, many informants also used the word 'comfort' (*shushi*, or *shufu* in Chinese) to describe their ideal homes. This extends the emphasis placed on practicality by Xiao Mi's parents in the quote above into a broader and more complex affective response. Comfort was important to feeling at home. For some, this requires that modern domestic spaces and furnishings engage with traditional Chinese views on domestic space. For example, Xiao Mi's father combines the traditional idea of *feng shui* (Chinese geomancy) into his redesign of his new home in order to make it comfortable (I will discuss further details of this case in the 'creating the dining area' section later in the chapter). More generally, the idea of 'comfort', according to the households that I researched, often referred to the colour, shape, size and 'textures' of the home and its interiors. For example, Xiao Tian's parents link their longing for a comfortable home to the feel of both the furnishings and home technologies:

Xiao Tian's mother: (our consideration of home design is) how to make our home comfortable. Hence, we didn't buy a wooden or leather sofa, instead, we bought a fabric sofa, as the texture of fabric is softer and makes us feel comfortable. We also bought the lights with softer lights in both dining room and living room. Also, all of the furnishings and paints are environment friendly, because we want a safe living environment …

Xiao Tian's father: and because we planned to have a baby when we purchased this flat, we designed our home with more colours and painted some cartoon figures on the wall. These make our home warmer [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's parents, 30 November 2013].

That is, for Xiao Tian's parents, comfort is at the core of their home design and their consumption of home interiors. This idea of comfort is a means to accommodate their imagination of an ideal home in their real home. In turn, it ensures that their home performs the family relationships they value, in particular their care and love for their daughter.

Overall, my broader argument is that Xiaokang people in Guangzhou portray their imagination of an ideal home through combining the ideas of comfort and modernity. In the following sections, I turn to discuss the ways in which these ideas of the ideal home are achieved through the process of accommodating food and food practices within their real, actual homes, drawing on the data collected from five home tours.

(Re)designing the cooking space

Design plays a fundamental role in the process of consumers' endless pursuit of new things, and actually modifies consumers' preferences, aesthetics and practices (Miles, 1998, pp. 49-50). Consumption scholars have shown a particular interest in kitchen design. The kitchen is the site where domestic cooking – the most important part of household food work – takes place and where the social relations between people, kitchen possessions and everyday practices are formed (Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007), see details in Chapter 2). Everyday food work in the kitchen is 'organised by, through, and around a physical landscape of material possibilities' (Shove et al., 2007, p. 37). Kitchen design is concerned with those material possibilities. In order to explore how people design their ideal kitchens in contemporary Guangzhou, I use an account of 'open' kitchen design in Xi Xi's home, illustrating how the kitchen design intersects with the social, cultural and economic domestic life of Xi Xi's family.

The kitchen has become more and more important for Chinese families. In urban China, the kitchen space has expanded during the past 60 years: in the 1950s to 1970s, the average area of the domestic kitchen was less than two square metres; it has increased to more than eight square metres since 2006 (Zhou & Lin, 2010). Moreover,

the establishment of the new *Fundamental Parameters for Kitchens and Related Equipment in Housing* (*Zhuzhai Chufang ji Xingguan Shebei Jiben Canshu*) in 2008 promotes the simple, multifunctional, safe and accessible kitchen[23], designed to make cooking a relaxed and pleasant task for urban families. Under this scheme, the open or semi-open kitchen with modern and advanced equipment has become the most popular new kitchen design in urban China; it meets official standards in maintaining the emphasis on a multifunctional space and enables intra-familial communication during cooking (Zhou & Lin, 2010). However, the open kitchen was not a common kitchen form among the researched households (only three households adopted the open kitchen design): in part because not many had recently remodelled their kitchens; in part because an open design was seen as having drawbacks, in particular with regard to cooking smells spreading around the home. Nonetheless, the majority of informants still recognised the open-plan kitchen as a modern and fashionable home design. Xi Xi's family moved in to their new home before Chinese New Year's Day in 2014. Because this new home was a second-hand flat, Xi Xi's parents refurbished the entire flat once they decided to move in, as they wanted to make it their own new home with their design.

The first and most important consideration during the process of home-based consumption is the finances of the family. Although Xi Xi's parents crave a completely new home with new furnishings, equipment and other things, they cannot realise their dream because of their finances:

> *My first consideration is 'does the kitchen need to be refurbished'. You know, the cupboards are new. So, we only replaced the old appliances. Secondly, I have considered our financial condition at that time. You know, we bought this apartment with a mortgage. Refurbishment needs a lot of money as well. If we spend too much on the apartment, how can we go annual traveling? And how can we afford for our daughter's education? … And finally, I have thought about the question of 'do we really need a completely new kitchen'. So, we didn't build a new kitchen, instead, we only renewed it … we don't plan to upgrade it in these five years, but maybe (do this) later, if we have enough money. And this depends on the kitchen itself. If we kept it well, we won't upgrade it [quoted from a recorded interview with Xi Xi's father, 18*

[23] The accessible kitchen refers to a kitchen for all age groups and for both healthy and disabled people.

February 2014].

With the limited budget, Xi Xi's parents accommodated their understanding of modern domestic life into their new kitchen, as far as possible. For Xi Xi's parents, the design of the open kitchen represents their aspiration of a new modern home (Figure 4.1):

> *Xi Xi's mother: we want to add some modern elements in our apartment. As this flat is second-hand, before we moved in, we had redesigned the rooms. You see, we bought the new dining table and chairs, and repainted the wall. I think these new things and colours may make my home more modern.*
>
> *Chen: what do you mean by 'modern'?*
>
> *Xi Xi's mother: I think it means stylish and up to date. I think a modern home should have stylish designs and high-tech appliances.*
>
> *Xi Xi's father: I think our open kitchen is a modern design. Originally, the kitchen was closed, but the previous owner of this flat broke one of the walls around the kitchen to make the space of the flat look bigger.*
>
> *Xi Xi's mother: this design is smart! I never feel lonely when I cook. I can watch TV in the kitchen, and talk to my husband when I am in the kitchen, as it is open! The only problem is that the open kitchen may make the cooking smell diffuse everywhere in our flat. So to maintain the open kitchen, we replaced the old kitchen ventilator with a more effective one [quoted from recorded interviews with Xi Xi's parents, 18 February 2014].*

It is evident in this quotation that for Xi Xi's parents keeping and upgrading the open kitchen not only expresses their understanding and aspiration of modernity, but also helps to transform the boring and stressful work of cooking into more joyful family activities.

More specifically, Xi Xi's parents tend to connect their understanding of the modern home with new technologies. Technology plays an important role as a liberating force in the experience of contemporary consumption and triggers social change (Miles, 1998, pp. 70-72). The everyday practices of and with such food technologies are important ways of making and changing the modern home (Shove, 2003; Shove et al., 2007). In Xi Xi's home, both ventilation and cooking technology were adapted to make their open kitchen function better:

> *We use …… technologies to prevent its disadvantages. We installed a high-power ventilator in the kitchen to reduce the cooking smell, and upgraded the gas stove, in order to reduce the smoke [quoted from a recorded interview with Xi Xi's father, 18 February 2014]*

The other technology that helps to make Xi Xi's parents' understanding of an 'ideal home' is the water supply system. Xi Xi's father showed me the water purifier and double-tap sink during the home tour (Figure 4.2). According to Xi Xi's father, this water system enables his family to consume clean and healthy water. The left tap is connected to the water pipe, while the right one is connected to the water purifier. Under this design, a new kitchen convention is regulated: the water from the left tap is used to wash dishes or clean the kitchen, whereas the water from the right one is for drinking and cooking. But why has this family decided to make their kitchen work more complicated? The answer is simple: to save money, since 'changing the filter of the purifier is expensive, and washing and cleaning do not require pure water' (Xi Xi's father, quoted from the field diary, 18 February 2014).

Two-way relations between the family and domestic food technologies are apparent here. On the one hand, Xi Xi's parents sought to achieve their aspiration of an 'ideal home' through designing their open kitchen. On the other hand, in fact they then become 'slaves' to this design, working to accommodate it in their home; they moved things around and worked out solutions to reduce the cooking smell, in order to achieve their ideal of a modern kitchen design. Through their design and redesign, the kitchen in Xi Xi's home becomes temporally and spatially dynamic. These dynamics extend beyond the outline of 'having-doing' dynamics emphasised by Shove et al (2007), which highlight the precarious relations between kitchen possessions and kitchen practices. The dynamics in this kitchen involve complex relations between the material possessions in the kitchen, family practices, its owners' imagination of what a kitchen should be, and their finances (purchasing power). It is these dynamics that the open kitchen, with new ventilation and gas cooker, objectifies.

In addition, the processes of accommodating a kitchen are inevitably intertwined with gender issues. The kitchen has traditionally been cast as a woman's place, a site

for women's unpaid food work (DeVault, 1991) which makes, remakes and subverts women's gender roles (Johnson, 2006a), and which enables women's performance of their oppression and resistance (Bennett, 2006; Supski, 2006). However, in practice, the kitchen is not a place for a single gender or a place made by a single gender, but a place for both mutual support between men and women and the negotiation of gender power (Miller, 2010; Meah & Jackson, 2013). It is not only a place for the representation and performance of women's power, but also a space within which the gender relations between men and women are negotiated and renegotiated. In this case, the remaking of the open kitchen was accomplished through cooperation and negotiation between Xi Xi's parents:

> *Chen: who made the decision of your kitchen design?*
>
> *Xi Xi's father: both of us. She suggested ideas and made plans, and I carried out her plans. For example, she suggested that the kitchen should be repainted, then, she selected a brand [of the paint]. After that, I searched the information on the paint and employed workers to do the repainting works. Also, I was the supervisor of this work.*
>
> *Xi Xi's mother: before the refurbishment, we had a discussion. Sometimes we have different ideas, although I think we have similar aesthetics. For example, I planned to buy a shelf from IKEA, in order to put these bottles [of sauces, oil and seasonings] on the wall. But my husband thought that the kitchen should be designed as a simple place. After that, I gave up my ideas, as I found my thoughts were unrealistic [quoted from recorded interviews with Xi Xi's parents, 18 February 2014].*

On the one hand, without the ideas of how to redecorate the kitchen from Xi Xi's mother, Xi Xi's father could do nothing to change the kitchen and without Xi Xi's father's research and labour, Xi Xi's mother's plan could not be carried out. On the other hand, without their discussions and the coordination and distribution of design work, both of Xi Xi's parents would have been unable to find the best plan for their kitchen refurbishment.

Figure 4.1 & 4.2 From left to right, the open kitchen in Xi Xi's home and the double-tap sink in the kitchen (photograph by the author, 18 February 2014)

Creating the dining area

The making and using of areas for dining are focal points in some kitchen studies. These studies have recognised the dining area as more than an important place for family meals, and instead as a multifunctional domestic space that enables cooking, eating and living in the same place. In her overview of the modern kitchen in the Western world, Johnson (2006a) uses the post-modernity of Australian house design between the 1960s and the 1980s to exemplify the reconfiguration of the Western kitchen. She indicates that the small 'kitchen-meals area' has expanded into a 'kitchen-meals-family-games precinct' where 'most family and entertainment activities' take place (Johnson, 2006a, p. 129). In non-Western societies, the kitchen is also often a multifunctional space where family activities occur and where household social norms and orders are performed. For example, Hammond, L. C. (2004). *This place will become home: refugee repatriation to Ethiopia.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

(1996) points out that the kitchen in Japan is more than a cooking space, but a space of domestic lives and a key connection between the family and the nation state. Drawing on guided tours of Japanese kitchens, she points out that dining tables are not only a site for completing family meals, women's domestic work and children's education, but also the representation of the state's call to combine kitchen-dining-living areas. Buckley views the dining table as a construction made under the

predominantly masculinist principles of gender, family and work in Japanese society. Therefore, whether in Western or non-Western societies, the dining area has been demonstrated to be a multifunctional space where domestic activities – not just eating – take place and where social norms and relations are formed.

Drawing on the ethnographic observations in Xiao Mi's family home, this section underpins the importance of the multifunctional dining area in home design and domestic food practices. Similarly to other dining areas encountered in this research, the dining area in Xiao Mi's home is an open place which not only provides a site for family meals but also connects the domestic with wider social norms. Xiao Mi's family moved to their new flat – a newly built flat in a high-rise residential building located in a gated community in the Baiyun district – in October 2012. According to Xiao Mi's parents, all the flats in their community were built and furnished by the construction company and house builders according to national standards. After they purchased this home, Xiao Mi's parents transformed the separate kitchen, dining room and living room into a more open and fluid cooking-dining-living area:

> *Xiao Mi's father: when we bought this flat, the structure is not like this. There was a wall here, separating the kitchen from the dining area, but we removed the wall, and replaced a door.*
>
> *Xiao Mi's mother: on the right, there was a short corridor for us to enter in the kitchen, but the door of the kitchen was opposite to our bedroom.*
>
> *Xiao Mi's father: that design had bad feng shui which would do harm to my family. We changed the structure: sealing up the old door, and opened a new door here. Therefore, the geomantic omen is better, and it makes a shorter way to enter in the kitchen as well. My wife always has strange ideas about decoration, for example, she likes soft wooden floor, but, you know, it is unreasonable to have such floor in humid summer. We always argue about the decoration, but I would give my way at last. I don't want to fight with my wife. She is the master at home [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Mi's parents, 30 June 2013].*

Thus, whilst the national standards propose separating the dining area and kitchen, the owners – Xiao Mi's parents – challenge this official idea of home design through their own creative homemaking. They do this based on their own aesthetics and knowledge of home, as well as their own sense of their daily food practice routines.

In the process of fashioning a kitchen-dining-living area, they make their home more homely. After changing the house structure, Xiao Mi's parents placed the dining table, tablecloth and chairs within their open dining area (Figure 4.3). The tablecloth was bought from Feng Huang (a Miao[24] county in Hunan province) by Xiao Mi's mother when she went there for a holiday trip:

> *Xiao Mi's mother: I liked the ethnic style several years ago. I bought many tie-dye cloths when I travelled to Feng Huang. I didn't know what these cloths could be used for, until I found we need a tablecloth for the dining table. But now I don't like the texture of this kind of cloth and I am not interested in the ethnic style any longer …… I prefer a minimalist lifestyle.*
>
> *Chen: why not replace this tablecloth and other things with minimalist ones?*
>
> *Xiao Mi's mother: I cannot focus too much on the home design. I should care for my daughter. I don't have enough time to think about it. And, when my parent-in-laws come to live with us, this home is not longer my home, but becomes our home. I don't want to change it only for expressing my aesthetics [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Mi's parents, 30 June 2013].*

This quotation suggests that the dining area, for Xiao Mi's mother, is more than a place for eating, but rather, a place to display her changing cultural tastes and her changing understanding of home. In this case, her aesthetic expression, and its changes over time, is somewhat subordinated to the wider family's needs and desires. Tellingly, the tablecloth that decorates the dining table does not simply express her personal taste but filters this through other domestic dynamics, in particular intergenerational social relations. The 'consumption' undertaken through this space is not that of an individual consumer but a more complicated imbrication of personal biography, family / household social relations and wider cultural discourses and developments.

Additionally, this dining area enables other food practices besides eating and drinking. The dining table also serves as a perfect place for food storage (Figure 4.4). During the guided tour of Xiao Mi's home, Xiao Mi's mother lifted up the tablecloth and showed me the food – including several bags of flour and rice, two large pots of oil and some boxes of dried vegetables – stored there by Xiao Mi's grandparents:

[24] Miao is a minority group of Chinese nationality.

Xiao Mi's mother: my parent-in-laws like to eat food from their hometown. So, they always bring a lot of hometown food to our home. But our kitchen is too small to contain these foods. Therefore, they put them under our dining table.

Xiao Mi's grandfather: we cannot find such things in Guangzhou …… for example, the linseed oil.

Chen: I think you can find this kind of oil in the supermarket.

Xiao Mi's grandfather: But it is too expansive! [It is] 500 ml for more than 100 CNY (from the supermarket)! But in our hometown, 100 CNY can afford for 2 kilograms I brought two plastic pots of oil….. [and] put them under the [dining] table, because oil is easy to keep for long time [quoted from the field diary, 30 June 2014].

Therefore, this dining area is made multifunctional by both Xiao Mi's parents and grandparents, in order to maintain the different food preferences and tastes of these two generations.

Figure 4.3 & 4.4 The dining area in Xiao Mi's home (photographs by the author, 30 June 2013)

Settling culinary cultures in every corner

In many of the researched homes food-related things were found accommodated in the 'wrong' places: a rice cooker was located in the living room beside the entrance door in Zhuang's home; a pile of snacks under a dining table was shown to me by Xiao Mu's father; I even glimpsed a microwave oven in Ding's bedroom. Such 'ad-hoc' accommodating is more common within institutional houses, where residents are not allowed to refurbish or retrofit as these furnished houses are only temporarily rented to their occupiers. Broadening its purview beyond homemaking in institutional houses, this section wants to focus on this issue of 'misplaced' culinary cultures. It does so

through the food stories of Xiao Tian's parents, who in fact are owner-occupiers, in order to explore people's practices with/to food-related things in 'inappropriate' places, even when they are free to do anything in and to their domestic spaces.

Xiao Tian's family lives in a flat in a newly built gated community in the Huangpu district. Different foods and food-related things are deliberately placed in different rooms in Xiao Tian's home. Xiao Tian's mother put her teapots, cups and tea in the cupboard between the living room and the dining area, because she loves to drink tea and likes to buy tea-related things. In contrast to Xiao Tian's mother hiding her collections of tea in the cupboard, Xiao Tian's father displayed his collections of wine and Chinese liquor at the entrance of their home. According to Xiao Tian's father, these bottles of alcohol on the one hand can be home decorations, and on the other hand reflect his taste:

> *I like to collect alcohol. I display my collections on the shelf, although some of them are cheap and common. They are about my taste of life and my hobby. And, the bottles can make the entryway look better. When my friends or my neighbours come, we can talk about my collections and try my collections [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's father, 30 November 2013].*

It is evident that the accommodation of the alcohol collections at the flat entrance reflects their role in relating to absent others – the friends of Xiao Tian's father. These bottles become a decorative materialisation of the hospitality offered to his friends in the home. However, the most treasured alcohol is not put on the wine shelf at the entrance; rather, it is accommodated in Xiao Tian's parents' bedroom. After a brief introduction to wine and liquor knowledge, Xiao Tian's father asked me to come in his bedroom to see a box of Mao-tai (a famous kind of Chinese liquor, Figure 4.5), which he sees as perhaps his most important culinary possession:

> *This box of Mao-tai is my treasure. Because this is for my daughter, I put it in my bedroom. When I was on a business trip to Guizhou (where the distillery of Mao-tai is located), I bought this box of Mao-tai. I want to give it to my daughter as her wedding gift… Our wedding ceremony and the celebration of my daughter's 100 days after birth was in the same day. In the ceremony, my wife and I promised to keep this box of Mao-tai until my daughter's wedding ceremony. In order to guarantee the quality of Mao-tai, I bought it from the Mao-tai distillery in Guizhou province. Each bottle of*

Mao-tai costs me 2,000 CNY. It is expensive, right? But it is worth it! I think this box should stay in my bedroom for more than 20 years (smile) [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's father, 30 November 2013].

Xiao Tian's father 'hides' this box of Mao-tai in his bedroom, in order to express his love and care towards his daughter. The segregated accommodation of alcohol in Xiao Tian's home constructs a boundary between the family and non-family spheres: for Xiao Tian's father, the alcohol displayed on the shelf is for presentation in front of his friends; while the Mao-tai stored in his bedroom is only for his daughter and her future life.

Figure 4.5 A box of Mao-tai with the production date in Xiao Tian's father's bedroom (photograph by the author, 30 November 2013)

Growing food on the roof

Growing food at home is widely acknowledged as an alternative food system, that creates non-industrial sites of food production in home and neighbourhood spaces. It has been seen as giving consumers easy access to fresh and local food (Naylor, 2012), an important way to produce urban spaces (Shillington, 2013), and a significant practice in making and remaking home, home-based identities, familial relations and human-nature relations (Shillington, 2008; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2012; Doody et al., 2014). Home food production is often tied into an idealised view of domestic life somewhat distant from the role of the urban home as a site for consuming industrially produced foods. For Chinese urbanites, growing food at home is not an easy task. Because of the dense population in contemporary China, most urban residents live in

high-rise buildings. It is impossible for most urban Chinese people to have vegetable gardens within their home spaces. However, the roofs of apartment buildings provide one such space. Therefore, some urbanites, in pursuit of an idyllic and pure life, build their own vegetable gardens on the roofs. In the seventh episode (*Our Farm*, *Women de Tianye* in Chinese) of *A Bite of China (Shejian Shang de Zhongguo* in Chinese*)*, a seven-episode documentary made by China's Central Television (CCTV) in 2012, a roof garden in Beijing was screened. The owner of this garden is Gui Chun, a local resident in Beijing. He built his vegetable garden on the roof of his residential building. After Gui Chun's harvest, he invites his neighbours onto his roof garden to make dumplings with his fresh vegetables. Gui Chun's building of a roof garden, growing food in his urban home and celebrating the harvest with his neighbours, are described in the documentary as linked to the cultures of Chinese agricultural civilization: a combination of a deep attachment to the soil and a respect for nature. This documentary thus interprets the making of such a roof garden as a contemporary performance of Chinese culture and Chinese identity.

Of course, growing food on the roof is not merely about attachments to the soil and to Chinese agricultural tradition, but is also part of a modern lifestyle. During my fieldwork, I visited a roof garden owned by Yu's family (Figure 4.6). Yu's father was born in a farmer's family in a small village in Hubei province. Following his college education in Guangzhou, he is now working as an engineer in a local construction company. When he moved in to his new home located on the top floor of a 24-storey residential building in 2010, Yu's father had the idea of building a roof garden:

> *My parents, grandparents and grand-grandparents are farmers. When I was a little boy, I helped my family with agricultural works. It was interesting. You know, when you get the food grown by you, you would feel satisfied and happy. And, you can get the cheapest and freshest organic food from your garden. It is awesome! [quoted from a recorded interview with Yu's family, 7 May 2014]*

For him, growing food at home is both about a healthy lifestyle and a way to practice his nostalgia towards rural life. His agricultural heritage is combined with a contemporary urban taste for organic produce. He is clear that growing food in the city

is not the as same as doing agricultural work in rural areas; he describes it as bittersweet. According to Yu's father, he faced four difficulties during the building of the roof garden.

First, there were issues about the legality of the roof garden. The usage of roofs is not regulated by any rules and/or regulations in Yu's gated community. According to Yu's father, as all of the roofs are accessible, most of the dwellers in his community recognised the roofs as public spaces which can be occupied by everyone. The roofs are commonly used as places for open-air drying of clothes, raising pigeons and planting potted flowers and plants. Since there is neither any official notice, nor any community regulations, that prohibit these activities on the roof, Yu's father finally made the decision to build his vegetable garden on the roof. However, as different residents want to use the roof for different purposes, conflicts often emerge on the roof.

Therefore, how to deal with relations with the neighbours on the roof becomes the second difficulty. During the home tour, Yu's parents guided me to explore the roof on their residential building. Before our visit to their vegetable garden, Yu's mother introduced the major 'functional areas' on the roof:

> *Yu's mother: we can reach this roof from two stairways. So, we regard the segment between these two stairs as the division of the roof. People often bring their airer to air their quilt and duvet or play badminton on the right area. The left area is for plants and pigeons.*
>
> *Chen: who makes the division?*
>
> *Yu's mother: I don't know, but when we moved here, this division had been done. Therefore, my husband built our garden on the corner of this left area. We don't want to take up too much space. It is ordinary to have conflict with others on the roof! Several days ago, the lady who lives downstairs brought her dog to our garden. Her dog bit our pepper seedlings! But she refused to make apologies! She said we occupied a large area so that other people cannot use this corner [quoted from a recorded interview with Yu's family, 7 May, 2014]!*

The third difficulty is the poor conditions for agriculture on the roof. Although Yu's father spends quite a lot of money on fertiliser, an irrigation facility and vegetable seeds, the roof is still not a proper place for agriculture:

Yu's father: I bought the vegetable seeds from my hometown. I asked my mother to bring the seeds to me. I bought the nutrient soil from the flower market nearby. And, I set up the facility for automatic irrigation. But it is still difficult for me to grow vegetables on the roof.

Chen: why?

Yu's father: plants belong to the land. I cannot move the land up to the roof. If I have a garden, these plants can have a better environment [quoted from a recorded interview with Yu's family, 7 May 2014].

Finally, it is not easy to accomplish day-to-day agricultural work on the roof. As Yu's parents are both employed and Yu goes to primary school, most of the agricultural tasks are undertaken by Yu's grandmother. Although this 65-year-old lady has worked as a farmer for more than 50 years, for her, urban horticulture is more difficult than agriculture in rural areas:

I am a farmer. I am familiar with agricultural works. Climbing up to the roof is the most difficult thing, for me. In my village, I don't have to climb up and down. What's more, I cannot do everything I want (on the roof). For example, in our village, we use animal wastes as farmyard manure. I cannot compost animal wastes on the roof, as they are smelly and disgusting. But, you know, using animal wastes can make the vegetables juicier [quoted from a recorded interview with Yu's grandmother, 7 May 2014].

Her children and grandchildren sometimes help her to take care of the vegetables. These younger generations consider growing food as a unique lifestyle, rather than food production work. For Yu's father, growing food can remind him of his pure and carefree childhood in rural areas; for Yu's mother, the food work on the roof makes her life more delightful and more green; while for Yu, a 6-year-old boy, the vegetables on the roof can be his best toys – in his words, he can play with the marrows, talk with the flowers and use the leaves to draw pictures.

After the roof tour, I was invited for dinner with Yu's family. Most of the dishes were made with vegetables grown from the roof garden. After dinner, Yu's parents and grandmother listed the advantages of producing food at home:

Yu's mother: they (the courgettes) are in the right season. You cannot find such fresh vegetables in the market.

Yu's grandmother: and it is cheap! The price of vegetables in Guangzhou is much more expensive than that in the rural area.

Yu's mother: when we have the roof garden, we seldom buy food from the local shops or supermarkets. We never use chemical fertiliser and pesticide to grow vegetables, but the vegetables in the supermarkets are often insecure! You know, the supermarkets even sell genetically modified food[25]!

Yu's father: growing food at home is also a fun family activity. All of us like it. And I can teach my son knowledge of vegetables.

Yu's mother: after we have the vegetable garden, my son understands the importance of treasuring food, as he knows that the vegetables are difficult to produce [quoted from a recorded interview with Yu's family, 7 May 2014].

Therefore, for Yu's family, growing food at home is not only food production work that provides ingredients for their family meals, but also a healthy, interesting and educational family activity and lifestyle that makes the family's life much more valuable.

Figure 4.6 the vegetable garden on the roof of Yu's family (photo provided by Yu's father)

Disposing of food waste

Living with or getting rid of waste is an important part of the process of domestic material accommodation (Gregson, 2007). Food waste is associated with food

[25] Yu's mother regards genetically modified food as poisonous.

production, distribution and consumption practices, and is crucial to understanding our living world and more-than-human matters (Alexander et al., 2013; Evans, 2012; Watson, 2013). In domestic spaces, food waste is not simply a discard that ends its life in the bins, but also an engagement with the broader practices of household food provisioning and consumption. Considering food waste as a result of food over-provisioning during conventional family meals, and as part of the everyday scheduling of domestic food work in the UK, Evans (2012) argues that food waste is both 'a consequence of the domestic practices' which are 'socially and materially organised' (p. 42) and the negotiation of the 'contingencies of everyday life' (p. 53). Watson and Meah (2013) also focus on the relationship between the transformation of food into waste and domestic food practices in UK society. They argue that the policy issue of reducing food waste needs to be rooted in the organisation of the quotidian routines of food practices, and suggest that interventions to reduce food waste can be enhanced by appreciating how food becomes waste through everyday practices. In summary, such studies understand food waste as an important part of the routinised food provisioning and consumption in domestic spaces which are in turn socially, politically and materially organised. Focusing on the divestment and disposal of kitchen waste, this section examines how household food waste becomes the fallout from the everyday doing of family life and how it is engaged with complex networks that include people, food waste, non-human entities, public policies and the space of home. To do this it draws on the food story of Qi's home.

In order to reduce waste disposal costs and to promote an ecological lifestyle, the government of Guangzhou enacted the *Interim Provision of Guangzhou Municipality on the Administration of Urban Household Waste Classification* (*Guangzhou Chengshi Shenghuo Laji Fenlei Guanli Guiding*) in 2011. Since then, the Urban Management Office of Guangzhou began to hand out kitchen waste bins to every household in Guangzhou and set up sortable garbage bins in each community. However, many of the residents in Guangzhou neither received the kitchen waste bins nor could find the sortable bins in their communities. Therefore, instead of disposing household waste according to local

government policy, many of the informants created their own procedures for food waste, guided by their own concerns about thrift and the proper ways to divest themselves of inedible food. Qi's family moved into their current 150-square-meter flat located within a military compound in Haizhu district at the end of 2012. I visited this household twice during the pilot research period. The data about food waste in this section was collected during the first visit. Although Qi's family did not receive the standardised kitchen bin allocated by the local government, people in this family consciously undertake garbage classification. In Qi's home, there are two waste bins: a wastepaper basket in the study room and a big trash bin located inside the kitchen for collecting kitchen waste. Also, Qi's family members put old newspapers, cartons, cans, glass bottles and other recyclable waste on the balcony, waiting for the regular collection by the 'binman'[26]. According to Qi's mother, classifying and reducing household waste is linked with the ideas of thrift and green lifestyles in their household.

Apart from the everyday reduction and classification of waste, Qi's father developed a unique way to dispose of the household food waste: composting it. When I asked Qi's father to show me his special or important things related to food, Qi's father pointed to a plant on the balcony:

> *I would like to show you the flowerpots on the windowsill (Figure 4.7). These plants are about my creative use of food waste and reveal my green attitude towards my life… On the bottom of the plant, you can see some peasecod, the skins of fruits and other inedible parts of vegetables. When I put these food wastes in the pots, they become fertilisers. They not only fertilise the plants, but also reduce the kitchen waste! These food wastes become useful things [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 29 July, 2013]!*

However, this kind of food waste disposal sometimes causes family disputes: over the disgusting smell that some waste has as it decomposes and fertilises the plants; and over other hygiene problems resulting from the usage of food waste as fertilisers:

[26] In China, the binman is a person who makes money from buying and selling recyclable waste. The binman buys waste paper, cans, plastic bottles etc. from local communities then sells this waste to the garbage station in order to make a profit.

Qi's father: I think this recycling is good for our environment and it saves money. You know, a huge amount of money was spent to deal with food wastes. However, other people in this family are opposite to my idea! They think this rubbish is unhygienic and disgusting. Anyway, I keep on doing this, because it does more good than harm. Isn't it?

Qi's mother: but it still smells bad and attracts many flies!

Qi's father: not so bad.

Qi's mother: because you never stay around your plants. The only thing you do is put the kitchen waste into your flowerpots.

Qi's father: I put them on the balcony. No one would stay around them all the time! Come on! This is a green idea of food waste disposal [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 29 July, 2013].

Therefore, for Qi's family, food waste disposal not only reflects people's understanding of the relations between food and our living world, but also plays an important role in the doings of family life and family relations. Furthermore, this creative way of dealing with food waste is both a response to the inefficient implementation of the policy on garbage classification in Guangzhou, and also a (contested) performance of people's moral considerations on the environment and other ethical issues.

Figure 4.7 A plant that is fertilised by food waste in Qi's home (photograph by the author, 29 July 2013)

Conclusion

Domestic material culture is central to our daily life and social relationships

(Miller, 2001; 2002; 2008). Tracking the trajectories of accommodating food and food practices in domestic spaces, this chapter used five empirical cases to explore the relations between people, food practices and homemaking in contemporary Guangzhou. The main argument of this chapter is that people's everyday food practices are inscribed in and motivated by material processes of accommodation and homely dwelling. More specifically, it has suggested two things. First, that food is a key aspect of domestic life, implicated in both imaginations of ideal homes and in the practices that perform and reshape these ideals in the material making of real homes. Second, for my respondents, ideals and practices of home often seek to articulate desires for modernity with desires for comfort and harmony. These desires play out through the food-related material fabrics of the home, ranging from the design of the domestic space to the installation and use of food-related appliances, furnishings and decorations, and the production, storage and disposal of food.

To summarise, mid-level households in contemporary Guangzhou accommodate their culinary cultures into their actual domestic spaces to achieve their aspirations of an ideal home and as a form of self-expression. Xi Xi's parents design and redesign their open kitchen to accomplish their modern way of life; Xiao Mi's mother uses the Miao style tablecloth to accommodate her preference of ethnic cultures; Xiao Tian's father uses his alcohol collections to convey his love and his relations with others; Yu's father builds a vegetable garden to seek a green, nostalgic and idyllic life; and Qi's father composts food waste in flowerpots in order to sustain his green lifestyle. However, the process of accommodation is not only about how people use things, but also about how the physical home and its interiors do things to people. The design of the open kitchen necessitates the cost of a high-powered ventilation system that increases the consumption of electricity; Yu's father builds his vegetable garden on the roof; and Qi's father composts food waste in flowerpots because it is impossible to locate gardens within home spaces in their high-rise residential buildings. Also, these processes of homemaking are strongly linked to compromises with visible and invisible others. For example, the roof garden built by Yu's family is always subject to negotiation with their

neighbours. Together, these cases have confirmed the three central arguments about domestic 'accommodation' identified by Miller (2002): home is a place for everyday living; there is a reciprocal relationship between the material home and its inhabitants; and the importance of visible and invisible others in this process of material homemaking.

This chapter also develops Miller's notion of accommodation through exploring the strong link between food cultures and home spaces in Guangzhou's socio-cultural context. Firstly, accommodating, as an everyday practice, is both spatial and temporal. Because we want to use things to narrate our ongoing life and identities (Gregson, 2007), and because the relations between what we have and what we can do are precarious (Shove et al., 2007), the process of homemaking never comes to an end. As shown by the story from Xiao Mi's home, Xiao Mi's mother keeps on changing the home style to better represent her changing aesthetics and identities. Secondly, the practice of accommodating is not only materially, emotionally and socially organised, but also governed by public policies and influenced by wider society. The researched homes in this chapter are not only accomplished and/or obstructed by the relations between home, things and people, but also standardised by national or local policies and influenced by the commercial trends of the housing market in Guangzhou. And finally, accommodating is more than the consumption of goods in order to create home, but also involves forms of creative making and re-building. Of course buying goods for home decoration is one part of the making of a home space; and also, with the development of a capitalist housing market in Guangzhou, housing itself is now a commodity to be bought and sold. But the home is also something that is built, made and produced by its inhabitants. The case of food production on a roof garden by Yu's family is illustrative here, re-confirming the relations between building, living and accommodating (Gregson, 2007) – their practice of growing vegetables requires the consumption of the commercial residential building (the roof), building a garden and living with their horticultural equipment and their neighbours. Therefore, accommodating is an articulation of the material and the practical which shapes and is

shaped by the social, cultural and political relations between people and home interiors, home and the wider society. It is achieved through building, creating, acquiring, designing, positioning, storing and wasting.

The findings also suggest that domestic food practices are not constrained to the kitchen and the dining area, but occur in every corner of the home. Home-based food consumption is not only about cooking and eating, but also about other doings with and to food. Undoubtedly, the kitchen is the most important food space within the home, as the major parts of domestic food work, including cooking, preparing, storing and cleaning up, take place in the kitchen. Due to these practices, the kitchen is both a container for household food work and a site that designs everyday domestic rituals and social relations. However, the material cultures of food in the domestic sphere can also be located in the living room, balcony, bedroom and even outside the home. In short, this exploration of accommodating food cultures has illustrated that the space of home becomes multifunctional and fluid/porous in contemporary Guangzhou.

Furthermore, the accounts developed in this chapter of the process of domestic accommodation of culinary cultures contribute to the understanding of the meanings of modernity in urban China. The term 'modern' in the ideal modern home is not only about the bridge between Western and Chinese cultures (Cui, 2012), but also characterised as the combination of contemporary living with the 'comfort' of caring for others (both of the dearest and nearest family members and the invisible others) and oneself. This modernity is forged under the standardisation of the state council and the influences of commercial trends. However in practice, people's imaginations of the 'ideal home' are carried out or abandoned in their real homes due to the influence of their finances, technologies, house structures and social relations with others who co-reside with them or who are potential visitors.

Chapter 5

Food memories: connecting the past and the present

This chapter explores the connections between food memories of the past and the home/family-making process in the present. There is a powerful link between food and memory (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002; Holtzman, 2006), as the tastes and smells of food are able to trigger our remembrance of people, places and events. In his review of the anthropology of food, Holtzman (2006, p. 364) identifies six key relationships between food and memory: 'embodied memories that are constructed through food; food as a locus for historically constructed identity, ethnic or nationalist; the role of food in various forms of "nostalgia"; dietary change as a socially charged marker of epochal shifts; gender and the agents of memory [seeing gender as a medium for creating feminine forms of food memory]; and contexts of remembering and forgetting through food [referring to the rituals, such as feasts and ceremonies, that can generate the remembrance or forgetting of people and events]'. That is, food can be considered as a vehicle that conveys and constructs individual and collective memory and as an embodied and emotive articulation that ties up social and cultural memories and identities.

Focusing on the connections between food and memory in the domestic sphere, this chapter explores how people embody and materialise their food memories in the processes of homemaking. In so doing, the discussion goes beyond simply considering a taste for foods from the past as a commercial trend in contemporary Chinese urban consumer cultures. Rather, contemporary food consumption is set within the wider dynamics of memory that play out in processes of family and homemaking. The main argument suggests that food memories are key social forces which influence how people currently cook and eat and, in so doing, how they are engaged more broadly with ways of making home and constructing domestic consumer cultures. In this sense,

home becomes an articulation of the past and the present, and a site that is constructed socially, spatially and temporally.

The Taste of Time

The senses of food (in particular the taste), memory and emotion are connected tightly in our personal lives. Before embarking on the examination of how food memories are involved in the process of making homes in contemporary Guangzhou, this section explains how the importance of food memories in the daily experience of home is represented by Chinese popular culture.

In the fourth episode (*The Taste of Time*, *Shijian de Weidao* in Chinese) of *A Bite of China*, stories about how Chinese people deal with time emotionally were presented. This episode explains how Chinese people use traditional technologies to keep food for a long time and explores the memories that are inscribed within the senses (in particular taste and smell) of food, based on several food stories of everyday cooking, eating and producing food in different parts of the country (including the northeast regions, the east coastal areas, Hunan province, Fujian province, Taiwan and Hong Kong). One of the most impressive stories for me concerned the taste of shrimp paste and shrimp sauce in Tai O, Hong Kong. This story takes place in Cheng Cheung Hing, a century-old shrimp shop run by Cheng's family for four generations. Today, the owner of this shop is Gwok Siu Fan, a 76-year-old local woman. Gwok has had experience of making shrimp paste and shrimp sauce for more than 50 years, since she became a daughter-in-law in Cheng's family. For Gwok, making shrimp paste and shrimp sauce is very easy: it involves mixing salt and minced shrimps, then exposing the mixture to the sunshine for several days. Gwok and her husband produced and sold shrimp products daily until her husband's death in 2011. According to Gwok, the taste of salted shrimp is about her family business, her lost husband, and her local place of Tai O. That is:

> *These are tastes of salt, mountain, wind, and sunshine, as well as the tastes of time and emotion. These tastes are blended with homeland, folk cultures, nostalgia, thrift, perseverance, emotions and faith, and are moving between our tongues and hearts.*

We cannot distinguish the taste and the emotion (quoted from the subtitles of A Bite of China, episode 4, translated from Chinese into English by the author).

Therefore, the taste of shrimp products, for Gwok, is an emotional sense that generates embodied memories of her past experiences; evokes her love for her husband and their shared life; and, crucially, forms a sense of home and homeland. Gwok's story provides an illustration of how food can be a vehicle for making memories, and of how the sensuality of food 'transmits powerful mnemonic cues, principally through smells and tastes' (Holtzman, 2006, p. 373). Her story is not unique in China, as every Chinese has his or her own taste of time. Drawing on current studies and wider theories on the connections between everyday food practices and memories, the remaining parts of this chapter use three household-based food stories to illustrate the relations between the senses and experiences of food in the past and current domestic food practices for Xiaokang households in urban Guangzhou.

Food memory and homemaking

Food is an important medium for memory, as the experience of food is not only cognitive but also physical and emotional (Sutton, 2001). Food and memory are intertwined in the process of making and remaking place and space on various geographical scales, from the home to the community, city and nation (Legg, 2007). Empirically, drawing on women's narratives of their everyday food practices including food shopping, cooking, eating and eating out in the suburban village of Clovelly (just east of Sydney, Australia), Jean Duruz (2002) analysed the roles played by food in reworking place-based identities and senses of belonging. In her research, personal food memories were located in home, the street, cafes, bakeries and other food shops. These fragments of memories of food and creative food practices productively rewrite, renegotiate and reshape the meanings of the village. Her argument, then, suggests that memory or nostalgia is a contradictory experience that is attached to both loss and enrichment (or, both good and bad times). These memories are also able to shift tensions of loss and desire into imagining a better future.

The connections between food and memory not only exist at the individual level, but also in a collective way. In Lily Cho's (2010) work on the combination of diasporic experience and food memories, she recognises Chinese food and Chinese restaurants in Canadian literature as a nostalgic form of Chineseness. Drawing on the analysis of Fred Wah's (a Canadian poet) poems on Chinese restaurants, Cho points out that these writings about Chinese food and Chinese restaurants can be considered as producing Chineseness in diaspora through the idea of 'true memory'. For her, the term 'true memory' refers to the 'cultural memory within collective bodies' (p. 148). According Cho's analysis, Wah's Canadian poetry not only reveals the memory and history of Chineseness through the individual and corporeal experience of eating Chinese food, but also creates 'true' or collective memories that transmit between generations and across diaspora communities.

Furthermore, food and memory are intertwined with wider commodity cultures. At the scale of the nation, Peter Jackson and others (Jackson et al., 2009) investigate, for example, how selective remembering and forgetting play key roles in ethical and moral issues in relation to the history of the UK sugar industry. In their case study, sugar beet can recall British farmers' collective memory of their heroic history of protecting domestic consumers from the dangers of wartime naval blockades (that resulted in restricted supplies of imported sugar from sugar cane). In the globalising world, people often hold hybrid identities, fused ethnicities and complex memories in transnational contexts. For instance, in Jean Duruz and her co-authors' work on food and identity, they highlight the connections between transnational commodity culture, place memory and identity (Duruz, 1999; 2004; 2005; Duruz et al., 2011). This work draws on different empirical studies in Australia to show how people construct and negotiate their complex identities through food practices that both return to and pursue the past and shape their bodies and minds in the multicultural and globalised present. These studies have demonstrated that people's place-based identities and geographical imaginations of place are socially constructed by their food memories, which in turn are embedded in transnational commodity cultures.

Turning the focus on to the link between food and memory from the global scale to home, scholars have viewed this link as a way of making the time-space of home. Memory is crucial to people's understanding and imagination of the meanings of the ideal home (Mallett, 2004). Therefore, the space of home can be recognised as a site of memory, which is made and remade through a sense of the past. As argued by Blunt (2005b, p. 14), homes are often located in 'the past rather than the present', in 'imaginative rather than material terms', and as 'points of imagined authenticity rather than as lived experience'. However, memory not only refers to memories or imaginations of the past home, but is also about accommodating the past in the present. According to Tolia-Kelly's (2004a; 2004b) studies that focused on the relations between memory and the domestic cultures of South Asian migrants in the UK, memory is theorised as an important process of placing people and their living environments both geographically and socially. For her, both visual and material cultures within the home are important vehicles for remembering a diasporic social history which forms the sensory and emotional connections between migrants, their past homes and current family lives. Through everyday practices with these visual and material cultures, such as viewing photographs and performing Hindu rituals with shrines, the diasporic history and memory of British Asians is activated through scents, sounds and textures within the home. In this sense, memory is rendered as a site for the emotional, material and social making of home. Home possessions, therefore, become materials that narrate individual and social histories and that activate memories and/or sensory recollections.

Some other work on food, memory and their effects on homemaking concern the combination between the sensory, emotional and social aspects of food memory and domestic/family-related practices. In seeking to explore the relations between food and memory, David Sutton (2005) uses the word 'synesthesia (the union of the senses, or the way that sensory experiences cannot be compartmentalized, but… feed off each other)' (p. 305) to explain how and why food is memorable as both a sensory and a social experience. For him, memory of the past is generally considered as a

multisensory mental activity, which can shape and be shaped by current concerns and has the power to form a 'synaesthetic knot' (Sutton, 2001; 2005; Warin & Dennis, 2005) which refers to 'the way that the different senses elaborate on each other, rather than being considered separate domains of experiences' (Sutton, 2005, p. 312). For example, the expression 'listen to that smell' refers to the odour of food cooking, which is 'often accompanied by a noisy intake of breath through the nose' (p. 313). In this way, the experience of eating with memory becomes a cultural site that symbolises social identities and divisions, as well as creating and recreating the daily rituals and experiences of social wholeness. Moreover, as food/taste is an active agent that stabilises the sense of home and the wholeness of the old way of life, it is able to transform home into the centre of our living world rather than a mere house or flat in which we reside (Petridou, 2001; Sutton, 2005).

Scholars often explore how food, memory and home relations are set in the transnational context. For example, drawing on the everyday food experience of Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong, Law (2001) points out that these domestic workers congregate in public spaces on their days off work, and by sharing 'home food' and through embodied food memories create places that emulate their sense of 'home' in the unfamiliar city. Similarly, in his research on the multisensory food experiences of international students from Singapore who are studying abroad, Abdullah (2010) indicates that, for these temporary migrants, feelings of 'home' are reproduced through the recollections of 'local' food from Singapore. It is evident that both of these studies highlight how the making of homely spaces outside home is accomplished through the connection between multisensory and synesthetic food experiences and place-based memory in the transnational context. In the Chinese context, where intra-national rural to urban migrations are central to contemporary social dynamics (Zhang & Song, 2003; Fan, 2005; 2008), this research can be usefully extended. In part, this involves research in order to use food and its powerful memories as a way to understand the place of intra-national migration in Chinese urban life. In addition, it means engaging with research on the material practices of homemaking, which is the main focus in some

work on home geographies (for example, the aforementioned home studies by Tolia-Kelly, 2004a; 2004b). This chapter looks to bring these concerns together.

To elaborate, this chapter seeks to analyse the ways in which food memories help to make the domestic space homely and how they allow individuals to remember and/or forget their place-based identities in the context of intra-national migration. Drawing on the food stories from three Xiaokang households that have experienced moving home from rural areas to urban Guangzhou, this chapter explores how home and family life is currently practiced and performed through food memories and how these memories affect the home cultures and family-based food consumption. Furthermore, this chapter specifically looks for the everyday food practices and moments that make the connections between the past and present and between the old homes/families and the new ones. As such, although this analysis of the process of homemaking focuses on individual and household food experiences, it connects this personal practice into a broader and collective history and traditions, revealing the relations between domestic food culture changes and wider social shifts in contemporary Guangzhou.

'I only consume peanut oil from my hometown': traveling to the past

Memory is closely related to the emotional dimension of food, as it is often recalled and recollected through the taste, smell and texture of food (Lupton, 2005). Everyday food practice can embody cultures, personalities, social identities and emotions (Lupton, 1996) and has symbolic meanings of the past through which it contributes to social relationships and cultural practices (Lupton, 1994). That is, the sensations of food and our emotions about food (such as the feelings evoked by certain foods) can activate our relationship with the past 'in socially significant ways', and in turn, memory can 'generate a desire for a particular food to relive the emotions of that memory (or indeed, should the eating experience have been negative, a desire to avoid a certain

food)' (Lupton, 2005, p. 320).

Memory is 'stubbornly faithful to the marvellous treasure of childhood flavours' (Giard, 1998, p. 188). The data collected from my fieldwork confirms this strong linkage between the symbolic meanings of food and the sensuous memory of childhood experiences. Many of the informants said that they missed the tastes from their hometowns or their family homes. In particular, one of them (Dao Dao's father) emphasised the influences of food from the past on their present life, saying that 'your current taste is formed by the taste from your parents and the place where you were born' (recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014). Here, I focus on one participant, Xue, whose story exemplifies the ways in which people maintain their old lifestyles through food from the past. Xue was born in a village in the Hakka area (in the northern part of Guangdong province), where the major industry is agriculture. She had never left her village until she was admitted to a tourism college in Guangzhou. After she got married to a local man in 2005, she moved into a second-hand flat located in a gated community where her parent-in-laws reside in the Liwan district of central Guangzhou. Although she has lived in Guangzhou for more than ten years, Xue still has a strong sense of belonging towards her hometown. She travels back to her hometown regularly for traditional festivals and holidays, at least five to six times per year. She takes her son to her hometown to visit her parents every summer. She even delivered her son and spent her post-partum recovery period with her husband in her hometown, as she wanted to experience early motherhood in her most familiar place.

Xue's attachment and longing for her past home are revealed in her food preferences. For her, the food from her hometown is the freshest and healthiest food in China, as people in her hometown tend to use traditional and organic ways to grow food. Since her move to Guangzhou for study, work and then marriage, Xue always tries to find in the city the meat and vegetables that are as fresh as those from her hometown's local markets:

> *When I was a child, I helped my parents with both household works and agricultural works. I know what foods are good while others are not. In the supermarket surround my community, many vegetables and fruits are not as fresh as those from my village.*

But, I can find some fresh foods in the markets. For example, I only buy pork from the 'No.1 Farm Pig' from the market, as it tastes like the meat I ate during my childhood [quoted from a recorded interview with Xue, 27 March 2014].

This quotation suggests that Xue is not only searching for fresh and healthy food in the markets, but is also seeking the taste of her rural childhood.

Food memories are often connected to the mobilities of both food and people. Food sent from the homeland is widely acknowledged as an important material that intertwines memories of the past and present life (see, for example, (Sutton, 2008; Petridou, 2001)). Also, people tend to practice or re-experience their food memories from their far-away homes in their new places, as part of a nostalgic construction of home and homeland (see, for example, Law, 2001; Collins, 2008; Abdullah, 2010; Mannur, 2010). However, for Xue, there is another way to recollect her past – going back to her old home to purchase the food of her childhood. During a shared meal with Xue's family and friends, when I praised the taste and smell of the dishes that they provided, Xue told me that this was due to the fresh ingredients she collected from different places. She bought the venison from Qingyuan (a city in the middle of Guangdong province). While the oil, rice and some of the vegetables were brought from her home village. I supposed that this might be a special meal prepared for my research, but Xue made it clear that it was not exceptional. In particular, she told me about her routine of buying foodstuffs from her hometown:

Xue: I buy this peanut oil and this rice from my village.

Chen: So, these foods are sent from your hometown?

Xue: Actually, I go back to my village routinely to buy peanut oil and rice. It only takes me around two hours from Guangzhou to my hometown. I never buy oil and rice in Guangzhou. For rice, as my company monthly distributes bags of rice to me as a staff benefit, so, I can get free rice. Also, I eat the local rice from my hometown. For oil, I never buy any kinds of oil in Guangzhou. Although my company also distributes oil, I never bring those bottles of oil back home. I have only consumed peanut oil from my hometown since I was born.

Chen: Why?

Xue: On the one hand, I am used to the taste and smell of the peanut oil from my

hometown. In our village, peasants grow peanuts and use traditional ways to extract oil from the peanuts. On the other hand, food from the rural areas should be healthier than that in the urban area. I don't know how the oil in the supermarkets is produced. The taste of the oil in my village never changes. In my memory, it never changes [quoted from a recorded interview with Xue, 27 March 2014].

It is evident that, for Xue, peanut oil and rice are nostalgic foods that remind her of her village life in the past. Nostalgic foods are 'those identified with a particular time and place in one's history. People described such foods as recreating a sense of peace and happiness experienced earlier in their lives, frequently during early childhood' (Locher et al., 2005, p. 280). Nevertheless, urban foods (sold in supermarkets), for Xue, are not trustworthy because she has no knowledge of how these foods are produced and packed. Thus, her choice of buying food from her rural hometown is a form of moral consumption that re-connects the producers, food products and her (the consumer). Producers and consumers are reconnected under the recent promotion of moral economy. In their exploration of the changes in the British food industry through personal and collective memories, Jackson et al. (2009) argue that food commodities are always connected to the moral notions of remembering and forgetting. They draw on several narratives of how sugar is sold with a heroic history (as discussed above), and on how chicken is consumed via the forgetting of its history as a "cottage industry" (where farmers kept a few chickens for egg production and chicken meat was consumed as a luxury on high-days and holidays)' and a nostalgia for the past taste of chicken (Jackson et al., 2009, p. 16). They conclude that the new moral economy which concerns health, well-being, fair trade and the development of food and the notion of trust and responsibility (see also, Morgan et al., 2006) can be expressed through the narrative construction of memory. In this case, Xue connects her moral consideration of health and trust to her remembering of the taste and smell of rural peanut oil and her yearning for this taste of the past. Together, the tastes of the peanut oil and rice are embedded and embodied in her daily routine, and connect her past rural life to her family's present urban life in Guangzhou. In this way, Xue's moral care for her family is maintained through her construction of memory through food from rural areas.

Moreover, the loss of trust in food safety and quality might cause consumer anxiety (Jackson, 2010). For Xue, the division that she makes between the urban immoral food system and the rural moral food system is her response to anxiety about the urban food commodity. This division is made through Xue's trust in her food memories of rural food and her distrust of urban food commodities that are not a part of her memory, for example she 'doesn't know how the oil in the supermarkets is produced'.

In addition, Xue's regular movements between her hometown and current home make her family life one of emotional connections between two different homes – the past home in a Hakka village and the present home in urban Guangzhou. Although Xue cannot identify any significant differences between the food cultures of Guangzhou and those in Hakka areas, she still emphasised that she combines the two cultures through her family food practices:

> *For me, the current family with my husband and son and my original family with my parents and siblings are both important. I try to connect these two families together. I think the foods are the same everywhere, but the people who you eat with are different. I am more respectful to the emotions among people than that with food per se. Eating with different family members in different homes make me enjoyable. That's why I travel back for collecting oil and rice (once Xue goes back to her parents' home, she always has family meals with her parents and sometimes with her siblings. Therefore, going back to Hakka area regularly for her, is not only a means for collecting her familiar food, but also a means of spending time with her dearest parents and sometimes her siblings; notes made by the author) [quoted from a recorded interview with Xue, 27 March 2014].*

Thus, through eating familiar foods with different family members in different places, Xue weaves an emotional web around her families in the past and in the present.

'The organic vegetables … taste like those in my childhood': buying the lost past

Not every informant connects the past and present life through going back to his or her hometown for memorable foods. Instead, some informants keep their relationship with the past through purchasing a substitute food for a 'taste of

childhood'. In order to understand how people create a relationship with the lost past through food shopping in urban Guangzhou, I draw on a case of organic food consumption from Xiao Bei's family. Xiao Bei's family lives in a second-hand flat within an institutional community at South China Normal University, as Xiao Bei's mother works as an administrative staff member in the university and Xiao Bei is enrolled in the attached primary school. Before my visit to Xiao Bei's home, I went food shopping with Xiao Bei's mother in a food market on the university campus. Xiao Bei's mother undertakes the everyday food shopping for her family. Xiao Bei's mother prefers the food market in the university because the market is near her home and it offers all kinds of fresh food – she purchases food three times a week from the market. Although the market is quite big and divided into several departments, including meats and eggs, fruit, vegetables and grocery (such as dried foods, cooked meat, canned goods, sauces, hotpot bases, etc.), Xiao Bei's mother finished her food shopping within half an hour as she is very familiar with the food market and its vendors. During the accompanied shopping trip, all of the vegetables were bought from a small stall with a poster of organic food nearby. According to Xiao Bei's mother, this inconspicuous food stall in the corner plays an important role in her family's food experiences in the past, the present and possibly in the future:

> *As I purchase food from this stall every two days, I give a 500 CNY deposit to the vendors monthly. The food they sell is fresh. I have lived around here about 16 years[27], and purchased vegetables from this stall for nearly 10 years! I think I will continue to be a consumer of this stall. If it closed, I would go to Hua Jing New Town[28] for organic food. [quoted from the field diary, 20 February 2014]*

She selects this food stall for organic vegetables for two reasons. Firstly, she finds the organic food advertising on this food stall attractive; and secondly, her husband suggested that she buy organic food from this food stall as it tastes better than the vegetables sold in other places. As I was curious about why Xiao Bei's father thinks these vegetables are special, once I met him I asked him about the reasons for his

[27] Xiao Bei's mother graduated from South China Normal University. She has lived on campus since she was an undergraduate student.
[28] Hua Jing New Town is the nearest community to South China Normal University.

preference for food from the university market. Like other organic food enthusiasts, Xiao Bei's father first listed the advantages of organic food consumption:

> *I buy, and I advise my wife to buy, organic food because we want to have a safe and healthy life. Also, organic food is the natural food with natural and pure taste. All in all, I think organic food is good for my family and me. [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Bei's father, 20 February 2014]*

Then, he explained how he selects organic food and why he prefers to purchase food from the organic food stall in the university market:

> *In recent years, there can be seen a dramatic change in China: the popularity of the Internet. The Internet broadens Chinese people's horizons and makes us know better our living world. When you read the messages from the Internet, you can find that Chinese people are less and less confident in our food. How can we deal with the problem of food safety? As I told you before, we should spend more money on edible food. I like that stall in the university market because of two reasons. Firstly, I trust the quality of their food, as the owners of that food stall are Buddhists …… I think Buddhists never lie to others. Secondly, the organic vegetables they offer taste like those in my childhood. They are different from other fake organic food and are as good as those in my childhood. [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Bei's father, 20 February 2014]*

His second reason seems less significant to his decision to buy organic food, but in fact, his memory of his lost childhood has been recalled as he mentioned his taste of the past. Xiao Bei's father was born in a small town from Hubei province (located in the middle part of mainland China) in the early 1970s. Based on his recollection of the smell and taste of food in his childhood, he expressed his longing for what he feels to be a pure and secure past:

> *Most of the organic vegetables have the similar soil fragrance and the tastes of real plants, like those in the past. When I was a child, the sky was blue and the rivers were clean. At that time, the concept of 'organic food' wasn't invented, as every food is produced organically. For my family, we grew food and sometimes bought food from the market. I still can remember the fragrance of soil attached to the vegetables. We were not fearful of food safety problems at that time. I want to go back to that time, but it is impossible. [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Bei's father, 20 February 2014]*

It is obvious that, living with food anxiety in contemporary society with perceived

threats to health and well-being (Jackson, 2010), Xiao Bei's father constructs the memory of his childhood not only personally but in relation to the social desire for clean and secure food in urban China. Drawing on Schatzki's (2010) argument about 'practice memory', namely that social or collective memory can exist via shared common narratives and public memorials and Hunt's (1999) discussion on anxiety and social explanation that attributes individual anxieties to social phenomena and aggregates, Jackson et al. (2013) connect individual food anxieties to wider social relations, technologies and practices. According to their work, anxiety is both a subjective experience (which is constructed relationally from personal relationships with other people, things, places, institutions and the discourses or representations created by the mass media) and a collective concern that is constituted and reproduced through social relations. In this case, the current food-related anxiety is not only about Xiao Bei's father's personal experience with organic food from both his rural past and urban present but also the insecure discourse constructed and circulated by the Internet that reflects a wider social fear within China (as discussed earlier). The words from Xiao Bei's father not only represent an anxiety about insecure food in urban China, but also reveal an anxiety of the loss of the pure and safe life in rural areas. Therefore, consuming food with a similar taste to that in his childhood, for Xiao Bei's father, is a way to practice his belonging to this past rural life and a way to relieve food-related anxiety for him and his family in urban Guangzhou.

'I only can … cook Chaoshan cuisine': reconstructing the place-based identity

Food memories are not only responses to food anxieties in contemporary urban China, but also relate to place-based identity. Food is profoundly linked to place and ethnic identity, as it not only reflects the eater's social identity but also can be practiced and performed as a cultural boundary between 'us' and 'others' (Gabaccia, 1998; Ray, 2013). It also can bridge an emotional gap between 'old place' and 'new place'.

Undoubtedly, food often has a symbolic meaning of a 'local' culture and knowledge: Char Kuay Teow is attached to Singapore, kimchi belongs to Korea and sushi is linked to Japan. Consuming such 'local' food in other places might evoke the memory and nostalgia of the 'local'. For example, in Simon Choo's (2004) critical examination of the links between the sensory aspects of food and memory in a transnational context between Malaysia and Australia, he used the tastes, smells, sights, textures and sounds of a Malaysian food – Satay Babi. He used it to navigate and map the histories of migrations; the personal and cultural memories encoded within the production and consumption of food; the transnational movement of ingredients, recipes and utensils used in its production; and the intercultural fabric of Australia. In Choo's opinion, the embodied process of the production of Satay Babi provides sensory connections within a collective and individual web of memories, stories, objects, tastes, processes, people and places that bridge time and space. That is, food has its own agency to motivate place-based memories and identities in a translocalised or transnationalised world.

Nostalgia can be defined as the longing for a home that 'no longer exists' or 'never existed' (Legg, 2007, p. 100). With respect to food research, the concept of nostalgia is often applied, viewing food as a recollection of childhood and family (Holtzman, 2006, p. 367). For example, in Duruz's (1999) study of food as nostalgia in Australia, she points out that the discourses, images and meanings of food in the 1950s and 1960s are available for making memories and identities for the present and the future through analysing iconic images from cookbooks and fragments of women's memories. Also, her research demonstrates that food cultures from the 1950s and 1960s have become imaginary reconstructions and the product of current desires. In other words, food and nostalgia are linked through both remembering the past and the desire to escape from the present. Additionally, food as nostalgia can be inscribed into the process of making the home. As Shampa and Sanjoy Mazumdar (2009; 2012) indicate in their studies on immigrant homemaking, immigrants often grow, buy and cook nostalgic foods, in order to make their new homes familial memorial spaces. Such food practices help immigrants renew their connections both with past experiences and with the new

place/people through the making of the familiar.

However, my research is not set in a transnational context, but in a context of intra-national movement. In this section, I use the food stories from Mei Yangyang's father to exemplify how people reconstruct their place-based identity through home/family-making experiences with food[29].

Mei Yangyang's father was born in the Chaoshan area (the eastern part of Guangdong province). He met Mei Yangyang's mother who is from Jilin (a city in northeast China) in Guangzhou and then married her in 2009. After their marriage, the couple moved into their current home located in an institutional housing community in northern Guangzhou. Although Mei Yangyang's father has been away from his hometown since he entered university (in 1998) and has married a non-Chaoshanese woman, he is still deeply attached to his Chaoshan identity. During the interview, he frequently used phrases such as 'our Chaoshan people do…' or 'our Chaoshan people do not…' to describe his food habits. In his everyday life, Mei Yangyang's father keeps his Chaoshan identity through the symbolic meaning of Chaoshan foods. For example, when I asked Mei Yangyang's father to show me the most important things that related to culinary culture in his home, he pointed to a tea set (Figure 5.1) on the table:

> *This tea set is very important to me. You know, our Chaoshan people like drinking tea. In my memory, there is a tea set that looks like this in everyone's home in my hometown. I bought every part of this tea set in Guangzhou …… Yes, to remind me that I am a Chaoshan person. [quoted from the field diary, 5 January 2014]*

As Tolia-Kelly (2004a; 2004b) indicates, both individual and collective/social memories can be expressed and reproduced through interiors and people's practices with interiors. This quotation suggests that Mei Yangyang's father performs his remembrance of home culture in the Chaoshan area by locating a Chaoshan style tea set in his new home in Guangzhou.

[29] I visited Mei Yangyang's home twice in January 2014 to accomplish my interview and ethnographic work with every family member in this household. When I visited Mei Yangyang's home for the first time, Mei Yangyang's mother was away for a business trip. Thus, I arranged a second visit to interview Mei Yangyang's mother. In this section, all of the data is from my first visit..

Figure 5.1 A Chaoshan style tea set belonging to Mei Yangyang's father (photograph by the author, 5 January 2014)

Apart from using the symbolic meaning of Chaoshan food, Mei Yangyang's father locates his place identity in his new home through his daily food practices, as well. Indeed, people tend to connect their identity and belonging to place through everyday food practices. Many transnational studies have explained how migrants express and construct their social and place-based identities through everyday food consumption (e.g. Law, 2001; Collins, 2008; Johnston & Longhurst, 2012), and how domestic food work/practices are involved in the process of home/family-making. For example, in their studies on the emotional and affective relations between food and place, Longhurst and her colleagues (Longhurst et al., 2009; Johnston & Longhurst, 2012) explore how migrant women 'do' their identities and transnational lives in Hamilton (a city in New Zealand). They point out that cooking experiences which connect the 'new homes' and the 'old homes' can produce comfortable domestic spaces and bodies and help to resituate and reconstitute the diasporic subjectivity. In short, it is possible for people to share multicultural places through food. These migrants who bring their food from their old homes re-establish the old cuisine in the new world (Duruz, 2011). This body of research on food and migration indicates that the mundane memories and everyday experiences of food practices have the ability to connect different places and establish new senses of comfort and familiarity. Thus, food practices with associated memories can help to confirm and perform both the connections of the past and the present, and to establish the hybrid identities of immigrants. In this research, Mei Yangyang's father performs his Chaoshan identity through cooking Chaoshan cuisine

and teaching his wife to cook Chaoshan cuisine in his new home in Guangzhou:

> *Mei Yangyang's father: I only can cook rice, and the Chaoshan cuisine, such as dried radish omelette and taro rice. These are special cuisine in our Chaoshan area.*
>
> *Chen: does your wife like the Chaoshan cuisine you make?*
>
> *Mei Yangyang's father: absolutely! My wife can understand the essence of Chaoshan food! She learns Chaoshan cuisine as well. She is from northern China, so, when we got married, I taught her how to cook Chaoshan cuisine. I'm really happy that she is interested in my culture [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Yangyang's father, 5 January 2014].*

Moreover, his lifestyle cannot be simply described as performing Chaoshan culture in Guangzhou, but rather as combining Chaoshan foodways and culinary cultures from north China – where his wife comes from:

> *Sometimes at the weekends, my wife or my mother-in-law cooks noodles for us. Therefore, we can taste both southern and northern food[30] in our everyday life. I don't think this is a conflict between culinary cultures in my home, but a kind of cultural integration! It is really good [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Yangyang's father, 5 January 2014]!*

This quotation demonstrates that both Mei Yangyang's parents and her grandmother bring their past foodways from their old homes to the new one. It is not only a way of putting two food cultures together in one place, but also a way of merging two food cultures into a new cultural form. Therefore, on the one hand, similar to the transnational migrants from other studies, Mei Yangyang's father uses Chaoshan food and foodways to make a familiar place in urban Guangzhou. But on the other hand, Mei Yangyang's home is also multicultural. Mei Yangyang's family members bring different cultures from their different family backgrounds and engender their new foodways in this multicultural home in Guangzhou. Therefore, for Mei Yangyang's family, making a new home and family life in Guangzhou means connecting two lifestyles from their past homes in their new home.

[30] In China, people tend to divide the food cultures into rice culture in the southern areas and noodle culture in the northern areas.

Conclusion

Everyday food practices can trigger intense memories both materially and emotionally, and vice versa. Food and foodways can shape and be shaped by people's sense of belonging to places both in the past and the present. Focusing on the relations between food and memory in domestic life, this chapter has scrutinised how everyday food practices bind experiences of the past and present, and how this connection shapes the everyday geographies of home in contemporary Guangzhou. The three empirical examples discussed in this chapter confirm the profound connections between food memory and home/family life.

At the scale of home, practicing and performing food memory is not only a way to combine the past and present, but also a way to construct new homes and family life. People use different food practices to link their sensuous memories and their current home and family lives. In this chapter, Xue insists on going back to her village for peanut oil because of her longing for the tastes of her past and Xiao Bei's father makes his choice to buy organic food seeking tastes from his lost childhood. Also, Mei Yangyang's father accommodates a Chaoshan style tea set in his living room, cooks Chaoshan cuisine and teaches his wife to be a Chaoshan 'chef', in order to link his new life in Guangzhou and his Chaoshan taste. In these ways, new family lives are established: Xue eats with different family members in different homes as she regularly moves between her childhood home in the Hakka area and her current family home in urban Guangzhou; Xiao Bei's father suggests that his wife buy organic food from the university market in order to protect his family from the insecure food environment in urban China by consuming the safe food of his memory; and Mei Yangyang's father tries to make his new family partly Chaoshan. For them, home becomes an important place where old and new lifestyles and family relationships are connected and negotiated.

These family-based practices of food consumption can create a social distinction between the urban and the rural. According to Klein (2013), food consumption reconstructs the meanings of place: food sold by local farmers are always considered as

safe, tasty, healthy and fresh; nevertheless, food from supermarkets under anonymous, government-backed certification schemes or systems of inspection are unsafe, tasteless, unhealthy or not fresh because 'being disconnected from the regional food economy and its seasonal cycle were being reconnected' by these unfamiliar and non-local shoppers and retailers (p. 387). Similarly in this research, Xiaokang consumers reconstruct the meanings of the rural and the urban through their food consumption. Food-related anxiety could be considered as a social force at the scale of household, which is routinized in domestic practices (Jackson et al., 2013). For Xue and Xiao Bei's father, the supermarkets and other food retailers in urban Guangzhou make them anxious about the health and well-being of their family members and make them distrust the urban food commodity. But their memories of rural food relieve their anxiety of food safety problems in urban China. Therefore, they conduct their own forms of moral consumption based on their construction of memories of rural food. In these ways, the social division between a moral rural/agri-food system and an immoral urban/industrial food system is made.

Moreover, the relationship between food and memory and its intersection with the issues of place and identity are inscribed into material home cultures. Rather than discussing the transnational mobilities which are often explored in existing studies, this chapter focuses on rural-urban mobility in Guangzhou. According to Tolia-Kelly (2004a; 2004b), home possessions play an important role in triggering the individual and collective memory of diasporic social history. Through daily domestic practices, a social history and collective memory are activated through sensations within home. In this chapter, the case of Mei Yangyang's family demonstrates the importance of food-related home possessions (e.g. the tea set) in the temporal, social and geographical making of home. This tea set is framed in and helps to perform the narrative of the stories told by Mei Yangyang's father of his childhood in the Chaoshan area and his move from there to Guangzhou, as well as representing the social memory of Chaoshan culture. Additionally, the things with 'Chaoshaness' and the Chaoshan way of cooking and eating in Mei Yangyang's home also narrate how Chaoshan-Guangzhou migrants negotiate

their place attachments to both rural, under-developed Chaoshan and their new urban lives with non-Chaoshan family members in Guangzhou. In this way, home possessions and domestic practices with these things not only make the material home and family relationships through individual and social memories, but also form negotiable place-based identities after immigration. Moreover, as Mei Yangyang's parents come from different parts of China outside Guangzhou, their new home in Guangzhou becomes a place for combining and negotiating two distinct social and cultural memories.

At the scale of home, the connection between food and memory constructs domestic life temporally, geographically and socially, as well as engendering social bonds and divisions at wider scales. Locating food memory in the home, in this sense, not only means cooking and eating in old or traditional ways, but also refers to food memories related to other food practices, such as food shopping and accommodating food-related things, which construct the connections between personal/collective memories and the present.

Chapter 6

Food and intimacy: spousal relationships in family life

This chapter uses the food stories of four couples to investigate how people deal with gender relations in family life in urban Guangzhou. The main focus is on the spousal relations between the parents in my case study households. These are viewed in part through the conceptual lens of work on intimacy. Therefore, by way of introduction, let me begin with that concept of intimacy.

The contemporary narrative of intimacy asserts that personal relationships are dependent on mutual support and disclosure. It often refers to 'a very specific sort of knowing, loving and 'being close to' another person' (Jamieson, 1998, p. 1). Intimacy involves the senses of 'familiarity and comfort', such as friendship, the couple, and family form, which are 'animated by expressive and emancipating kinds of care and love' both emotionally and sexually (Berlant, 1998, p. 281). It is often part of gendered identities and relationships. Influenced by Giddens' (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) research, Holmes suggests that women become 'reflexively aware of their own rights to the pursuit of freedom and happiness' (2004, p.185). Moreover, She points out that different ways of relating might give women different formulations of gender and power, and simultaneously create new gender inequalities. Intimacy also gives a distinctly geographical tint to considerations of gender relations and family life. The geographies of intimacy are complex. Although the meaning of intimacy is often associated with proximity, distance does not necessarily bring an end to an intimate relationship. Rather, distance can be transformed into closeness and engender an 'us' that is necessarily proximal and knowing (Thien, 2007, p. 195). In the context of 'post-Fordist' flexibilisation of the economy and employment, as well as the accentuation of individualism and 'otherness' in postmodernity, social transformations of intimacy emerge. For instance, families constituted by 'living apart together' (Holmes, 2004;

Buzar et al., 2005), which include, for example, commuter couples who cohabit part-time (Anderson & Spruill, 1993; Yeoh & Willis, 2005), cross-border marriages (Lee, 2014) and transnational and/or internal diasporic families (Kwong, 2004; Gaetano, 2008; Valentineet al., 2009). Differing from the intimate relations between individuals who are close to each other, such distant intimate relations are constructed in the dynamic in-between spaces, which are produced by these moving individuals, and traversed by ideologies and practices in different places. New technologies, such as mobile phones, modern transport and the Internet, have facilitated the possibility of maintaining intimate relationships over distance and become important social spaces for building up different intimacies across global spaces (Valentine, 2006; Tarrant, 2010). Such technologies not only provide ways to support intimacy in terms of knowing, loving and caring for each other, but also reconfigure the habits, routines and relations of everyday life (Valentine, 2006). That is, the idea of intimacy is not only an emotionally derived personal relationship that has a distinct socio-spatial character and assumes a distance covered, but also a space traversed to achieve a desired familiarity with others (Jamieson, 1998; Thien, 2007).

Nowadays, intimate relationships have, it is suggested, shifted from relations between proximate others (such as relatives and neighbours) towards 'pure' relationships – personal relationships that are established for their own sake in the pursuit of happiness, personal fulfilment, satisfaction and well-being (Valentine, 2008). In the spousal relations considered in this study, with young children to be cared for, pure and proximate intimacies combine. Food practices are a window on to these intimate relations. This chapter aims to map the gendered relationships between young heterosexual couples (the researched couples are aged between 27 and 42) in the private spheres of Guangzhou. By working with in depth qualitative materials, this chapter is able to outline what are seen as the ideal gender roles and relationships within the family and how people work at these through their daily practices. Moreover, through viewing such matters through the lens of food, this chapter sheds further light on the importance of everyday food practices in the doing of family relationships, in

this case emphasising spousal relationships and gender roles and identities.

An overview of spousal relations in contemporary Guangzhou

During the long history of China's feudal dynasties, patriarchal ideologies were predominant across Chinese society. These patriarchal norms governed both gender relations and intergenerational relations within the family, as well as how the family and its members related to wider society. These traditional gender relations can be characterised as '*nan zhu wai, nü zhu nei*' (men are breadwinners who work outside their homes whereas women are nourishers and housekeepers who take care of family issues inside home) and *'nan zun nü bei'* (men are superior to women). Based on these unconditional gender norms, husbands were regarded as the masters of their families and their wives seen as properly subordinate to their husbands (Shek, 2006).

Such traditional gender norms have shifted to a much more equal gender relationship in contemporary China. Because of the reduction of family size, and the general acceptance of the nuclear family, the husband-wife relationship becomes the most important relationship within the family (Ma et al., 2013). Although gender identities still hinge on the traditional gender norms in most Chinese families (Xu, 2010), many scholars have suggested an emergent egalitarian relationship between husbands and wives. Due to modernisation, the protection of women's rights in new family laws and regulations, and the participation of women in the industrial and post-industrial labour force (Whyte, 2005), in contemporary China most of the household labour is shared between husbands and wives and both have the liberty to make household decisions (Ma et al., 2011; 2013; Xu, 2012). However, domestic food labour is still considered and practiced as women's work in urban China. According to the report of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) on 'harmonious family' (Hong, 2011), an explicit gendered division of labour within modern urban families can be found: food provisioning and other food-related work is allocated to wives, while caring for the elderly and children are tasks shared by both husbands and wives.

The idea of gender equality is widely accepted in urban Guangzhou. Liang and Luo (2010), for example, found in their surveys of family values in Guangzhou that 'young people' (defined as those whose ages range between 18 and 45) prefer a married relationship based on liberty and equality. These family values are widely practiced, as well. Based on statistical data from family surveys in five Chinese cities (Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou, Lanzhou and Harbin) conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2008, in 28% of researched families[31] household labour is equally shared by husbands and wives, and couples from 67.2% families expressed their gratification with their spousal relations. Nevertheless, it is more important to recognise that these quantitative surveys are limited to a summary description of reported views on gender equality issues within the family, and inevitably ignore both the more complex 'doing' of genders and husband-wife relations and how these might vary in different family types (such as commuter families and weekend couples). This chapter responds to and moves beyond those limits. In search of a better understanding of the geographies of gender in Chinese urban families, in this chapter I use qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and household-based ethnographies, to explore in depth the spousal relations of four young couples from different family patterns.

Gendering food practices in the domestic space

As mentioned in Chapter 2, domestic food work, which includes food preparation, storage, cooking, serving, and cleaning up afterwards, is highly gendered. Considering the household division of food labour, the gender identities and power relations within the family have been meticulously portrayed in the burgeoning literature of recent decades. Traditionally, in almost all societies, food provisioning work within the home is considered as women's unpaid domestic labour, and seen to place both a significant workload on women's shoulders and to provide a valued identity or gendered power

[31] The sample size is 800 households.

for women (DeVault, 1991). The division of household labour where men are the providers or breadwinners while women are nourishers who shoulder the burden of feeding the family (Murcott, 1983; Charles & Kerr, 1988; Bell & Valentine, 1997) is widely considered as reflecting proper gender norms in the Western world. However, because of changing normative gender roles, the growth of an egalitarian relationship between men and women, and the rapid growth of dual-earner families in the modern world, the domestic space becomes a more complicated place in which gender powers and relations are re-negotiated. As men tend to engage more frequently in cooking and other domestic works, pre-existing gender cultures are changing. A number of authors have noted, for example, that participating in cooking and food preparation in domestic spaces is, for men, not only about the performance of their personalities, but also an expression of their understanding of the meanings of home and how to be 'proper' fathers and partners (Pink, 2004; Metcalfe et al., 2009). In a British study, Meah and Jackson (2013) argue that men's engagement in domestic food work has facilitated their expression and construction of masculine subjectivities, while creating anxieties for women: kitchens are experienced as uncanny spaces by women as men increasingly assert their presence in this domain. Therefore, the domestic cooking space can inscribe masculine identities and rework gender relations between men and women. On the other hand, whilst noting the trend for men in some places to play more and more active roles in constructing their masculinity through everyday food practices, the traditional gender ideologies of family roles have not simply been overturned: most commentators agree that the kitchen is still a feminised space, because women continue to take primary responsibilities for their household cooking in both the Global North and the Global South (Murcott, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Meah, 2014).

Past research, then, has taken account of the relations between gendered power, identity and the space of home, and has mapped the ways of doing gender via food practices. However, questions about how the gendered nature of domestic food work makes, remakes and unmakes the intimate relations between women and men, and about how this gendered domestic food work is undertaken in families with different

forms of homemaking, are missing in writings on Chinese families. The following sections turn to four empirical accounts in Guangzhou which explore the family geographies of gendered intimacy within different family formations, in order to bridge interests in domestic gender relationships and the notion of intimacy through the lens of food. In the first two families, Dou Dou's parents and Xiao Tian's parents take 'togetherness' and 'closeness' as the main characteristics of the ideal spousal relationship. The third family is a typical commuter family with a commuter husband and a non-commuter wife: Guo Guo's father works and lives in central Guangzhou during weekdays and returns to Huadu (a suburban district of Guangzhou) at weekends, while Guo Guo's mother works and lives in Huadu. The fourth couple (Mei Mei's parents) moves back and forth between Shenzhen and Guangzhou, as they work in Shenzhen but their family home is located in Guangzhou.

Making a family means living together: doing static urban families

The static (heterosexual) family refers to a family characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction, and constituted by co-resident adults of both sexes, who have a sexual relationship, and their children (Musa, 2014). Many of the Chinese studies on improving gender equality and changing gendered subjectivities of domesticity, which I mentioned in the previous section, are conducted in relation to the static family. Focusing on the ideas of 'closeness' and 'togetherness', this section aims to explore the connection between intimacy and gender through understanding how domestic food work is shared between husbands and wives. This section uses two empirical cases, Dou Dou's parents and Xiao Tian's parents, to exemplify how the notion of intimacy as geographical proximity plays a key part in the mundane making of gender in the domestic context.

Dou Dou's parents are both in their early 30s. Dou Dou's father is a high school teacher and his mother is a full-time manager in a local advertising company. This

couple moved to Guangzhou from Beijing in 2011 because of a career transfer for Dou Dou's father. After their move to Guangzhou, Dou Dou's parents purchased a ground-floor flat located near Luo Xi metro station in the Haizhu district. In their opinion, being a couple means that the two of them should live in the same place together. Therefore, after Dou Dou's father made his decision to move to Guangzhou for his new job, Dou Dou's mother quit her job in Beijing and began to look for a new job in Guangzhou. In Dou Dou's family, most of household food works are undertaken by Dou Dou's mother:

> *Chen: who cooks in your family?*
>
> *Dou Dou's mother: I cook. My husband drives my son to and back from the kindergarten and cleans the rooms.*
>
> *Chen: you buy food as well?*
>
> *Dou Dou's mother: yes. I plan, buy, cook and do the cleaning up. Dou Dou's father only buys his favourite food for himself [laugh].*
>
> *……*
>
> *Chen: when Dou Dou's grandparents lived with you, who did the food works?*
>
> *Dou Dou's mother: I did. The grandparents take care of my son during the daytime, and I cook for the whole family in the evening.*
>
> *Dou Dou's father: I sometimes help her with cooking.*
>
> *Dou Dou's mother: he took part in the cooking work at the beginning of our co-habitation, then, gave up [laugh]. But it seems OK to me. For me, cooking is not difficult work. I can do it by myself. And, he [Dou Dou's father] can share other household work with me [quoted from a recorded interview with Dou Dou's parents, 21 March 2014].*

It is evident that Dou Dou's mother undertakes almost all of the domestic food work in her family, even when the grandparents come to help the family with the daily chores. However, Dou Dou's father is not absent from this work. Whilst he 'escapes' the everyday cooking, he plays an active role in more ceremonial occasions. For example, Dou Dou's father often takes part in the preparation of the family dinner on Chinese New Year's Eve:

> *Dou Dou's mother: we cook together on the Chinese New Year's Eve. My husband is*

good at making dumplings!

Dou Dou's father: I think the Chinese New Year is the most important festival for family togetherness. Therefore, I should do something for the family meal. You know, this family meal means the togetherness of a family! And, cooking together means our togetherness [quoted from a recorded interview with Dou Dou's parents, 21 March 2014].

This 'unequal' distribution of domestic labour can also be found in the food shopping. Dou Dou's mother does the everyday food shopping. Although both of Dou Dou's parents' workplaces are far away from their residential community (both of them take the underground train for about half an hour to and from work), it is Dou Dou's mother who takes the initiative to buy ingredients and other groceries after work, as this couple regards such tasks as women's work. For Dou Dou's mother, buying food is not only about purchasing what she wants to eat, but also seeking foods to meet her husband's and son's requirements:

Chen: what are the main factors you consider for when you buy food?

Dou Dou's mother: buy what I want to buy [laugh]!

Dou Dou's father: I think, she likes to buy the food she can cook, and our favourite food.

Dou Dou's mother: yes. My son and husband are 'omnivorous', but I tend to have vegetarian meals. Therefore, two-thirds of the food I buy must be meat. I always take their preference into consideration. When you get married, you should take your husband's interests into consideration, right [quoted from a recorded interview with Dou Dou's parents, 21 March 2014]?

In contrast to this ideal of the woman's sacrifice in Dou Dou's family, the intimacy between Xiao Tian's parents is achieved through the man's concession. Xiao Tian's parents were both born in the late 1970s. Xiao Tian's father is a lecturer, while her mother was an administrative officer in a governmental department from Hunan province before she changed her career to be an administrative staff member in a police station in Guangzhou. In the interview, Xiao Tian's mother used the phrase 'making a family means living together' to explain the reason for her decision to leave her last job in Hunan province and to move to Guangzhou in order to live with her

husband. In her mind, intimacy between husband and wife refers to both physical and emotional proximity. Both of Xiao Tian's parents reported that all of the household tasks are equally shared between them since Xiao Tian's grandmother left their home[32]. Usually, Xiao Tian's mother cooks, while her father cleans the dishes, dining table and the cookware afterwards. In contrast to the predominant opinion that women are the homemakers who sacrifice themselves to their families (Miller, 1998c; 2012), the equality principle in Xiao Tian's family is built upon Xiao Tian's father's 'sacrifice'. Despite his recognition of the traditional gender role that women should take all of the responsibility for household work while men are the breadwinners, Xiao Tian's father embraces the equal allocation of domestic work between his wife and him. During the interview, Xiao Tian's father told me his opinion on the 'proper' division of household labour in a low voice while his wife was putting Xiao Tian to sleep in her bedroom:

> *In my opinion, all of the household work should be undertaken by women. But I found my wife was upset if she did all of these works alone. I understand the feeling of great tiredness after doing household work. I know my involvement within the housework could please her, so, I share her burden of some food tasks. To be honest, I don't want to damage our love and marriage because of my absence in household works. Hence, I never express my real ideas on household works in front of my wife. I don't want to enrage her [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's father, 30 November 2013].*

Also, he regards his family role and masculinity as the mainstay of his family's economy:

> *A man should work hard to earn money for his family while women just work for pocket money. You know, women would never play the provider roles in her family. So, I work hard for my family [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's father, 30 November 2013].*

These words from Xiao Tian's father express a traditional gender norm in Chinese society. In this case, the traditional ideas of family and gender have not been challenged by the promotion of women's social status. Meanwhile, he pointed out a fair principle of

[32] When Xiao Tian's grandmother co-resided with Xiao Tian and her parents, almost all of the household work, including food provisioning work, room cleaning and tidying and caring for Xiao Tian, was done by Xiao Tian's grandmother.

the distribution of household food work in his family, and described this household work as emotional work which results in an enhancement of his wife's well-being involving him providing emotional support. Erickson (1993; 2005) suggests that women tend to recognise the performance of emotional support to their husbands as an integral part of their family work role while, in contrast, men view emotional work as merely part of their interpersonal relationship with their wives, rather than the construction of their masculinity in agentive terms. But in this case, Xiao Tian's father sees himself as increasing his masculine agency through domestic food work. He puts a high value on his emotional work that enhances his wife's feeling of happiness and understands it as a way of expressing his proper masculinity and his leading role within the family.

Xiao Tian's mother also sees food, and especially cooking, as having an important role in the making of intimacy. From her point of view, the enhancement of cooking skills helps in the pursuit of her happiness and is important to sustain a good relationship between husband and wife. In the interview, Xiao Tian's mother reported that she likes to learn new ways and dishes to cook:

> *I like to cook different food, not only for my husband and daughter, but also for myself. I really enjoy cooking. And, you know, eating the same food everyday may make you bored. I never search the Internet for recipes, but learn to cook new dishes in the restaurants. When I go to restaurants, I would pay attention to the taste of the dishes, and try to cook the similar food at home [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's mother, 30 November 2013].*

That is, cooking, for Xiao Tian's mother, is not only domestic work that she has to complete, but also a way to transform that domesticity into intimate spaces for her family through thought, care and creativity. In this case, both of Xiao Tian's parents engage with their gendered identities in their daily domestic food work, in order to express their care and love for each other and Xiao Tian, and to establish their agency in the construction of intimacy at home.

‘A short separation means a better reunion’: making a commuter family

In recent years, in China and other advanced economies, the number of dual-career ‘commuter families’ has been increasing. The dual-career commuter family has two main characteristics: ‘(a) each member of the couple is pursuing a career involving work that requires a high degree of commitment and special training with increasing degrees of responsibility …, and (b) the couple decides to maintain homes in separate geographic locations for the purpose of career advancement for both members of the couple’ (Rhodes, 2002, p. 399). This kind of family not only displays a specific reconciliation of work-life balance (Green et al., 1999), but also involves the production of intimate relations mediated through not only proximity but also distance (Holmes, 2004; 2010). In order to explore the spousal relationship at a distance, this section concentrates on the mundane food practices in Guo Guo’s family – a typical dual-career commuter family. Both of Guo Guo’s parents are less than 30 years old. Guo Guo’s father is a commuter husband, who works in an IT company in central Guangzhou from Monday to Friday and returns to his family home in Huadu district (on the northern outskirts of Guangzhou) on Friday evening. Guo Guo’s mother works as a secretary in an automobile company in Huadu. According to Guo Guo’s mother, they decided to purchase their home in Huadu because of the lower housing prices there:

> *My husband and I graduated from university in the same year. After graduation, I got a job in Huadu, but my husband got two work opportunities: one was in Shenzhen, and the other one was in Guangzhou. But, you know, the housing prices in both Guangzhou and Shenzhen are too high for us. If we purchased a flat in central Guangzhou, we would carry much more mortgage debt. But the housing price in Huadu is much lower than that in central areas. So, we finally decided to buy this flat here in Huadu [quoted from a recorded interview with Guo Guo’s mother, 6 December 2013].*

However, the geographically fragmented nature of their work and residence does not unmake the intimate relations between Guo Guo’s parents. Whilst mobility can bring about a ‘decentring of family’, it may also recentre family (Holdsworth, 2013, p.

9). The geographical distance provides somewhat greater autonomy (Holmes, 2004; 2006) for this young couple and tightens the emotional ties between them: the transient disruption of their togetherness, to a certain extent, enables Guo Guo's parents to appreciate each other more. Guo Guo's mother continues:

> *I like this distance. I believe the saying that, distance makes two hearts closer. If we spend all the time together, we often quarrel. My husband worked in Huadu for nearly one year, and during that period, our relationship was not very intimate, as we often quarrelled over nothing. So, we finally decided to have this distance for maintaining our marriage. Since we have distance, we cherished every minute of our togetherness… both of us are satisfied with our marriage. So far, I am still satisfied with our relationships [quoted from a recorded interview with Guo Guo's mother, 6 December 2013].*

The distance between Guo Guo's parents during the weekdays has not destroyed the intimacy between them; rather, this transitory distance re-connects them emotionally. That is, although face-to-face relating remains central to familial intimacy (Urry, 2002), distanced relationships are also important for making intimate relations between spouses (Holmes, 2004). Turning to food issues, I want to explore how this distanced intimacy is practiced through family meals.

My time spent with Guo Guo's family was on a Friday afternoon. At about five o'clock in the afternoon, Guo Guo's grandmother and mother began to prepare their family dinner for five adults and a weaning child. It was a big meal, consisting of six dishes, a pot of chicken soup, rice, dumplings and a bottle of homemade sweet rice wine. Guo Guo's grandfather reported that they prepared such a big meal once a week in order to welcome Guo Guo's father back to the family home in Huadu.

When Guo Guo's father is away in Guangzhou, Guo Guo's grandparents and Guo Guo have simple lunches with one or two shared dishes; Guo Guo's mother has her lunches in the institutional canteen at her workplace. The family supper always contains two or three dishes with a pot of soup for three adults and a bowl of porridge for Guo Guo. Guo Guo's mother, according to Guo Guo's grandparents, seldom takes part in everyday cooking work, except on Friday evenings. It is evident that for Guo Guo's mother cooking for her husband is an important task and a way to re-establish

intimacy when he returns. Sometimes, Guo Guo's grandparents take Guo Guo back to their hometown in Fujian province, as the living costs in Guangzhou are much higher than those in their hometown and they are still not accustomed to the living environment of Guangzhou. During those days without Guo Guo and his grandparents, only Guo Guo's mother lives in the family home in Huadu during the week. When she lives alone, her meals become much simpler:

> *My life is very simple when my parents-in-laws took Guo Guo back to their hometown. On Sunday evenings, I cook a big pot of sweet soup and make some stewed chicken feet and eggs, and put them in the fridge. During the weekdays, I have lunch in the canteen of my company and eat the cooked food for dinner. Once my husband comes back, my hearty dinners would come back as well [quoted from a recorded interview with Guo Guo's mother, 6 December 2013].*

This Friday meal did not start until Guo Guo's father arrived home. After the family meal, Guo Guo's father cleaned up the table and plates. According to Guo Guo's mother, Guo Guo's father never did any housework when they lived together full-time, as the traditional gender norm that men do not need to do any household work was ingrained in his mind. The commuter lifestyle they have now adopted has a been a stimulus to change the traditional gender roles and relations in Guo Guo's family, as Guo Guo's father also looks to re-establish intimacy through his food practices. Since he became a commuter, Guo Guo's father has begun to engage with some of the domestic food work. According to Guo Guo's father, when he comes back from work for the weekend, he likes to share the dishwashing work, because 'a short separation means a better reunion':

> *In my hometown (a rural area in Fujian province), only women cook. So, I think cooking and other household works are women's work naturally. When I got married, all of the food tasks were allocated to my wife. We always quarrel about this, actually. I know she was unhappy with a husband who never helps her with family works, but I still didn't intend to do such feminine works. But, my idea of this was changed after we made the decision to be a commuter family. As I live alone in an institutional flat, my colleagues sometimes invite me to their homes for dinner. I found the local men in Guangzhou always help their wives with food works. Their families are harmonious without quarrels. Then, I changed. Now, we always do food works together [quoted from a recorded interview with Guo Guo's mother, 6 December 2013].*

This quotation shows that, in Guo Guo's family, the gender roles and norms are

transformed because of the couple's distanced intimacy: cooking and other food work are now not only recognised as Guo Guo's mother's work, but also as an important way for Guo Guo's father to perform his family role as a 'proper' husband who cares for and loves his wife. The distance of weeks away provided Guo Guo's father an opportunity to rethink how he related to his wife through household food tasks, and to learn how to maintain ideal spousal relations and family life from others. In this sense, the geographical distance can, to some extent, reconnect the intimate relations emotionally in Guo Guo's family. Their distanced spousal relationship, therefore, can be considered a social reproduction of intimacy between these dual-career parents.

Commuting between Shenzhen and Guangzhou: managing a family on the move

Mobility is a fundamental geographical facet of existence, central to both the world and our understanding of it (Cresswell, 2006). In the individualised and globalised world, mobility and movement have become central to many people's personal and family lives (Urry, 2007; Holdsworth, 2013; Morgan, 2011). Family, therefore, is also a verb, not just a noun or an adjective, in so far as it 'is about process and doing and … is implied in the idea of family practices' (Morgan, 2011, p. 5). It 'appears to us with the opacity and solidity of a thing, but it is also the product of acts of social production' which reveal 'the quality of familial relationships' (Holdsworth, 2013, p. 13). Far from being a static form, we need to recognise that 'family practices generate mobility and movement at different spatial and temporal scales' (Holdsworth, 2013, p. 64). In this mobilised context, there emerges a highly mobile family model: the diasporic family, which consists of family members scattered globally. The diasporic family is closely related to and sometimes equated to the 'transnational family'. Family mobility and migration is a long-standing interest in food studies. Many transnational studies have explored how migrants make and do their transnational identities through everyday food consumption (e.g. (Law, 2001; Collins, 2008; Johnston & Longhust, 2012), and how

domestic food work / practices are involved in the process of transnational home/family-making (Longhurst et al., 2009). This body of work has highlighted the intersection of transnational mobility and the homemaking process. Transnational mobility enables the dynamic production and reproduction of home and constructs familial intimacy in multiple sites. Therefore, mobility can both challenge and sustain family life and it creates opportunities for both reaffirming and resolving family relationships (Holdsworth, 2013).

Family mobility, in the Chinese context, is not only transnational but also common in relation to long-distance internal migration. The study of Chinese domestic migration is now well-established and has been concerned with a number of important issues including: governmentality, place-making and (re)constructions of social identities (such as gender, class and ethnic) of rural-to-urban migrants with low incomes (Gaetano, 2008; Gaetano & Jacka, 2013); how political and economic issues influence internal immigration (Wang, 2004; Fan, 2005); and the cultural dynamics associated with migrants from minority groups (Iredale et al., 2003)[33]. However, the family mobilities of everyday life, such as traveling to work and/or school and family leisure activities outside the home space, are little researched in the Chinese context. Such scarce studies as there are on everyday family life and mobilities in Chinese urban and suburban areas have simply described home-work segregation, the ways in which Chinese urbanites manage their family leisure activities and the impacts of institutional factors (such as housing reform, affordable housing policy and urban sprawl) on daily mobilities and movements (Chai et al., 2011; Zhang & Chai, 2011). The link between the everyday practice of family-making and daily mobilities, and the latter's influence on family reconfiguration has not been explored.

For a better understanding of family mobility and its engagement with the doings of intimate relationships in everyday life, this section focuses on a family that commutes between Shenzhen and Guangzhou regularly. The couple in this empirical

[33] China consists of fifty-six ethnic groups. The Han Chinese is the major ethnicity in China, which comprises 92 per cent of the total population of mainland China. Therefore the Han culture is the hegemonic culture in mainland China, often cast as superior to the cultures of the other fifty five ethnic groups.

analysis, Mei Mei's parents, are 'sojourners' who work in Shenzhen (the second largest city in Guangdong province) but regularly return to their family home in Guangzhou. Rather than the long-term migration which is studied in the existing literature on family mobilities, the family in this section conducts transitory and frequent movements between two cities. How they transfer their food work and eating out activities between Shenzhen and Guangzhou is the focus in this section, in order to explore the gendered intimacy within such a family model. I conducted my research with this couple in their family home in Guangzhou. Mei Mei's parents were born in the early 1980s. Mei Mei's father works in an automobile company in Shenzen and her mother works for Coca-Cola. The couple own a flat in a gated-community in Guangzhou, as Mei Mei's mother worked in the Guangzhou branch of Coca-Cola until 2011. Therefore, before 2011, Mei Mei's father was the only commuter who regularly travelled between Shenzhen and Guangzhou. In 2011, Mei Mei's mother transferred her work to the Shenzhen branch of Coca-Cola. Since then, the couple have lived together in an institutional house provided by Mei Mei's father's company near the Shenzhen industrial cluster, and move back two to three times a month to their family home in a gated community in the Huangpu district of Guangzhou, where Mei Mei and her grandparents live. Because of the different household structures in their two 'homes', this couple leads two different lifestyles in Shenzhen and Guangzhou.

In Shenzhen, Mei Mei's parents eat breakfast and supper at home while having lunch in institutional canteens. According to Mei Mei's mother, because of the time limitation, she and her husband often have a simple breakfast which is easy to prepare, including pre-packed Dim Sum, steamed corn and/or porridge. Sometimes, they bring cooked food prepared by Mei Mei's grandparents – such as sticky rice cakes, braised pork and beef, and steamed buns and corn – from Guangzhou to Shenzhen as their breakfast. For the family dinner, Mei Mei's mother takes the major responsibility for the food preparation and dishwashing work. Cooking, for her, is not an enjoyable task, as she is not good at cooking and considers cooking as a source of stress and pressure in her life. In contrast to Dou Dou's mother and Xiao Tian's mother who take their family

members' tastes into consideration, Mei Mei's mother likes to cook in a self-centred way:

> *I only cook the dishes which I can cook. But, unfortunately, I don't know much about cooking. When I cook, I only care for my tastes. I think it [the food cooked by me] is not bad! My husband never criticises my cooking skills and the tastes of the food. I think my husband has got used to my tastes [laugh] [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's mother, 7 December 2013].*

Mei Mei's father only shares food-purchasing tasks. As their accommodation is far away from the city centre, Mei Mei's parents only go the supermarket for food shopping once a week. Usually, they spend a whole day, combining shopping for ingredients and groceries with other leisure activities, such as going to the cinema, dining out and excursions. Sometimes, they 'outsource' their family meals in small or fast food restaurants as an alternative way of having family meals at weekends.

Contrary to this simple way of life in Shenzhen, the couple organises more family activities in Guangzhou. In their family home, both of Mei Mei's parents hardly do any food work, because Mei Mei's maternal grandparents[34] are in charge of all the household labour, including food and grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning and child care. On the day of my household-based research in Mei Mei's family home, Mei Mei's grandparents cooked sweet and sour lamb, fried rice balls, steamed fish and stir-fried swamp cabbage for the family lunch. After the meal, Mei Mei's mother helped her parents to clean up the table and the plates, but she confessed that her husband and she seldom do domestic work when they co-reside with her parents. She described herself and her husband as 'visitors' to their home in Guangzhou:

> *Mei Mei's mother: Mei Mei's grandparents take the responsibility for my daughter's everyday life, including her diet, education and other aspects of her daily life. Frankly speaking, we are the visitors to our home [laugh].*
>
> *Mei Mei's father: we do little household work in Guangzhou.*
>
> *Mei Mei's mother: we take care of my daughter… She doesn't like vegetables. You know, her grandparents adore her and only cook her favourite food for her. So, when we come back here, we force her to eat all kinds of food to keep the nutritious*

[34] Mei Mei's maternal grandparents live in Guangzhou in order to take care of Mei Mei.

balance.

Mei Mei's father: and I sometimes treat Mei Mei and her grandparents in some upscale restaurants, as caring for a little child is really hard work for the old [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's parents, 7 December 2013].

Obviously in this quotation, the family roles of Mei Mei's parents are transformed while in Guangzhou. Mei Mei's mother shifts her role as a proper wife who cares about her husband's diet in Shenzhen towards a mother who only cares about her daughter. Mei Mei's father changes from a man who is always absent from household work into a filial son-in-law. Thus, the mobility between two homes allows two different familial intimacies to be accommodated and nourished: the spousal intimacy between Mei Mei's parents in Shenzhen, and the parental and intergenerational intimacy worked at in Guangzhou. In this case, mobility does not undermine the intimacy in Mei Mei's family, but rather recentres the importance of 'togetherness' in its construction: both of Mei Mei's parents moved to Shenzhen in order to maintain intimate spousal relations through living together, and they regularly travel back to Guangzhou in order to play an important role in the (grand)parenting undertaken there.

Conclusion

Intimacy is central to everyone's – both women's and men's – family life. It is not only achieved through the performance of gender roles and identities but also has gendered consequences. Rather than focusing solely on women's feelings and evaluations of the emotional intimacy at home, this chapter focuses on both men's and women's agency with respect to intimacy, through the lens of food.

The spousal relationship in contemporary Guangzhou is produced and re-produced distinctively, with an evident diversification of Xiaokang household types in terms of both residence and generational make-up. In families with a 'static structure', such as the case of Dou Dou's parents and Xiao Tian's parents, gender identities and relations are practiced through geographical and emotional closeness. The household labours are fairly shared between husbands and wives, at least to a certain extent. In

Guo Guo's commuter family, Guo Guo's father moves between his workplace in central Guangzhou and his home in Huadu. This family has two paths to its foodways: without Guo Guo's father, the family has simple family meals prepared by Guo Guo's grandparents; when Guo Guo's father comes back, the family meals become substantial and are well-prepared by both Guo Guo's grandparents and mother, as a way to mark and establish spousal intimacy. Moreover, the distance between Guo Guo's parents has transformed the predominant gender norms that women should 'work' at home for their husbands. While in Mei Mei's mobile family, Mei Mei's parents are on the move between Shenzhen and Guangzhou routinely and repetitively. In this case, the two young parents shift their gender roles and identities between two homes. In Shenzhen, Mei Mei's parents cohabit in an institutional home without other family members. The gender division of labour here remains traditional: Mei Mei's mother takes the responsibility for the day-to-day cooking and other domestic work related to food preparation, while Mei Mei's father only engages with the tasks of food provisioning. In Guangzhou, where their family home is located, Mei Mei's grandparents replace Mei Mei's mother in undertaking the burden of feeding the family. Therefore, although these families are structured through different patterns, both genders in these families play important roles in the process of maintaining intimacy. In this process, the gendered norms, identities and relationships of heterosexual spousal relationships are transformed in different ways.

Nonetheless, some broader patterns can be suggested. Firstly, domestic food work is still considered as women's / wives' works in contemporary Guangzhou Xiaokang households. However, this labour is not only regarded as a burden to women, but emotional work that expresses their care for the family, and thus a way to practice and construct their family roles as wives and mothers. In this sense, women are both subjected to and empowered by domestic food work. This division of gendered labour might not lead to gender inequality within the family, as husbands are not always absent from domestic food work. In the cases considered here, all four of the husbands share food work with their wives and to a certain extent renegotiate their masculinity

through such food practices. In this way, the chapter portrays an insight into the process of equalisation and democratisation of gender relationships in contemporary Chinese society, even as patriarchal attitudes are still often expressed. Rather than connecting gender equality solely to the improved position of women (Shen, 2011; 2013; Ma et al., 2013), this chapter suggests the importance of men utilising their gendered identities and roles to increase their agency at home. This finding not only demonstrates gender equality in the domestic space of Guangzhou, but also highlights the individualisation processes within family life and spousal relations: both husbands and wives are cast as important individuals who are entitled to take responsibility for or avoid particular food work. In this sense, the home space becomes a place for the negotiation and renegotiation of gender relations and power. As the cases discussed here illustrate, even men holding traditional views on family roles can transform their practices when focused less on their fixed identities and more on forming satisfying relationships with their spouses and other family members.

Secondly, the cases in this chapter have confirmed that relations of 'intimacy' are not merely created by geographies of proximity, but also by geographical distance and mobility. All three of these geographical aspects to intimacy – proximity, distance and mobility – are important to these Xiaokang households and all are implicated in the importance of family meals. Geographical distance and mobility can change the rhythm of everyday foodways. For example, the welcome home dinner in Guo Guo's family is different from daily family meals, but cements the relations between Guo Guo's parents. The two-path character of Mei Mei's parents' foodways enables the intimacy between Mei Mei's parents in Shenzhen and that across three generations in Guangzhou. Distance and mobility do not necessarily destroy the family bond; but rather, through particular food practices, can bind the intimate connections within the family more tightly. Furthermore, whether the family structure is static or fluid, the intimate relations between husband and wife can be sustained through their everyday food practices. Through such food practices, the space of home is no longer a purely feminine space that is made by women and empowers women, but rather, a space in

which masculine identities are reconstructed too, and the relations between men and women are constantly negotiated (Matthee, 2004; Bennett, 2006; Johnson, 2006a).

Chapter 7

Family-based food practices and their intergenerational geographies

With the aim of exploring the intergenerational geographies of Xiaokang family life, this chapter examines how the emotional and social relationships across three generations are constructed and practiced through everyday food activities. It draws on in-depth qualitative research with five case study households, each characterised by a temporary three-generation family structure.

According to Chinese tradition, the ideal family is an extended and joint household consisting of multiple generations. In contemporary China, these traditional values of family have on the one hand dramatically changed, but on the other hand, are also embedded in modern and westernised family life. In his studies on the changes in Chinese families, Shek indicates (1996; 2006; 2010) that in modern Chinese society traditional values and beliefs about family have gradually been replaced by Western patterns, as Chinese families are transformed by the economic developments and cultural globalisation of Chinese society. However, despite the rapid social changes and the growth of individualistic values in contemporary Chinese society (Shen, 2013), the traditional three-generation family and kinship networks still play an important role, through providing reciprocal care and financial and emotional support (Zeng, 1991). That is, although the nuclear family has become the mainstream family type in contemporary China, grandparents and other relatives are still identified as important family members for urban dwellers (Logan et al., 1998; Logan & Bian, 1999; Li & Shin, 2013; Shen, 2013).

Nowadays, the ideal family model in much of China can be characterised as 'two home doors, one pot of soup': parents and their adult children live in different homes but within a short distance, able to share a pot of soup together (Shen, 2013, pp. 66-67). Such family patterns can also be defined as 'networked families' (Wright, 2005, p.

16) and/or the 'nuclear families within kinship networks' (Ma et al., p. 297): families with grandparents living near or actually with their adult children's nuclear families, cooperating in providing financial and/or emotional support. This kind of family structure, to a certain extent at least, has been a response to the problems of both infant/child care and of ageing. It relates in particular to the growing proportion of dual-career couples and the lack of public and/or private caring and nursing institutions for the very young and the very old in China. Female employees also have short maternity leave periods (according to the female interviewees, the average period of maternity leave lasts for 4 to 5 months). Additionally, intergenerational relations in contemporary China have transformed from the previously dominant patriarchal model into what some have termed an 'anti-patriarchal' relationship (e.g. Shen, 2011). This has seen a shift in intergenerational relations: from those characterised by relations between authoritative parents and obedient and filial children/grandchildren, to relations of mutual support between the elder generation and the younger one (Ma et al., 2013). According to Shen, under this 'anti-patriarchal' scheme, grandparents often volunteer to be the 'second wives'[35] in their own children's nuclear family (2011; 2013, pp. 82-89), in order to maintain the dual-career model in such households.

In Guangzhou, high housing prices[36] and the high mobility of the younger generations make the family geography of 'two home doors, one pot of soup' very difficult in practice. Therefore, an alternative family structure for maintaining the intimate relations between generations – what I term the 'temporary three-generation family' – is engendered. In such a temporary three-generation family, one pair (often the paternal grandparents, following the traditional patriarchal norm) or two pairs of grandparents take turns to care for their grandchildren of preschool age, co-residing with their adult children and grandchildren on a temporary basis. After the

[35] As wives traditionally take responsibility for unpaid housework, including cleaning, cooking and child care, in Chinese society, Shen (2013) uses the term 'second wives' to describe the grandparents who undertake their adult children's household labour.

[36] According to the statistical data from the Guangzhou Bureau of Land and Housing Management (2013) and Guangzhou Statistical Bureau (2015), in 2013, the average housing price in urban Guangzhou is 14,957.67 CNY per square meter, while the average per capita income in Guangzhou is 42,049.14 CNY annually

grandchildren grow older, the family separates[37] into two or three nuclear families that dwell in different homes.

Geographies of intergenerationality

In the past two decades, studies of generations and intergenerational relations have been embraced within human geography. For the most part, geographers who are interested in age issues have paid active attention to the 'bookend generations' of the very old and the very young (Hopkins & Pain, 2007; Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine, 2008). According to the existing literature, children's geographies argue that children and childhood are socially constructed in their own lives and worthy of academic attention in their own right (Valentine, 2003; 2008; Holloway & Valentine, 2004). To date, children's geographies not only focus on children's relationships with the physical and built environments (such as home, school and playground), the lived experiences of children and how they understand the world around them (Matthews & Limb, 1999; Holloway & Valentine, 2004), but also shed light on the nature of children's agency in reproducing and deepening the dominant structures of power (political and economic) in the globalising world (Jeffrey, 2010a; 2010b). The 'adult gazes', in these works on children and childhood, are considered to be the social forces which have profound influences on making and remaking space and place for children and their practices/performances. In the literature on geography of old age/ageing, topics such as the construction of space and place for/of old age (Schwanen et al., 2012) and the emotional geographies of later life (Hockey et al., 2007) are frequently discussed. These studies have not only considered ageing as a social and economic chronological descriptor, but also emphasised the importance of space – both the private space of home and the public space of, say, retirement communities – in the constructions and reconstructions of ageing (Hardill, 2009; Zhou et al., 2015).

More recently, it has been increasingly recognised that these foci on different ages

[37] The time of the separation is flexible, and depends on the specific situation in each household. According to my informants, the separation generally happens when the child enters primary school.

and life courses are not compartmentalised; instead, geographers began to think of age or generational issues relationally (Hopkins & Pain, 2007; Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine, 2008; Harker & Martin, 2012). In recent years, there has emerged a burgeoning body of work on the geographies of intergenerationality in both intra- and extra-family spaces. Many works have sought to understand the 'doings' of intergenerational relations in the domestic sphere. These studies have paid active attention to the representation, narration and the performance of age or generational identities and relations (Aitken, 2000; Pahl, 2012; Tarrant, 2013a; Richardson, 2014) and cultural transmissions across generations (Gao, 2000; Rawlins, 2006) in both heterosexual families and queer families (Valentine et al., 2003; Gabb, 2004; Ryan-Flood, 2009). Also, issues of generational segregation and integration have been discussed in relation to the public sphere. As Vanderbeck (2007) points out, space and place can be viewed in terms of the segregation of different ages, as they have their own age identities. Research has considered the degree to which our society should move away from the age-differentiated model (with a high degree of spatial segregation of age groups) towards a generational integration model (according to Riley & Riley, 2000). The spatial and social aspects of the transition from one life course stage to another are also of great interest to some geographers (e.g. Valentine, 2003; Hopkins & Pain, 2007).

The intersection of generational identities with the social differences of gender, class, race and religion and so on has also been an important focus. Two examples illustrate how geographers have taken this 'intersectional' approach to understand the connections between age-related social identities and place. Hopkins and his co-researchers (Hopkins, 2006; Hopkins et al., 2011) explore how geographies of age influence geographies of religion and vice versa, through the analysis of how young Muslims and Christians in Scotland practice their intergenerational relations, understandings of gender and religious identity. Their research demonstrates that young people adopt a range of contradictory subject positions through the negotiation of age, gender and religion in different times and places (such as school, workplace, home and community centre). The second example is Tarrant's work (2010; 2013a) on

'grandfathering' in the domestic context. Drawing on her research on the connection between grandfather identities and domestic carespaces in the UK, she indicates that in later life men construct and negotiate their masculinity spatially and socially through their caring work. For her, focusing on men who are grandfathers from a geographical perspective offers the potential to social scholars to understand the spatio-temporalities of the relations between aging, gender and family life.

Overall, then, there is an emergent body of work that applies a spatialised approach to interpret the emotional, moral and political aspects of intergenerationality, in both public and private spheres. It views intergenerationality as a dynamic that shapes age-related/generational identities. It has recognised how these generational identities and relations are intersected with other social distinctions (of gender, religion, class and so on), and play out in the context of contemporary processes of globalisation, individualisation, detraditionalisation and increased self-reflexivity (Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine, 2008).

However, despite the recognised interest in and social import of both the family and the home, comparatively few geographers have focused on the complex intergenerational relationships in the intra-familial sphere. As Valentine (2008, p. 2101) points out, family relationships beyond the parent-child relationship (such as kinship and intimate relations across more than two generations) are still under-researched by geographers. Applying the relational approach of geographies of family and intergenerationality (Hopkins & Pain, 2007; Vanderbeck, 2007; Harker & Martin, 2012), this chapter aims to illustrate how the 'doing' of intergenerational relations within the temporary three-generation families in contemporary Guangzhou works through everyday food practices. To that end, I outline the family geographies of intergenerational relations from five empirical cases that represent four types of temporary three-generation families: Qi's family with two pairs of moving grandparents; Xiao Xiao's family with two long-term co-resident grandparents; Yan's family and Mang Guo's family that are temporarily located in grandparents' houses; and Dao Dao's family that has been transformed from a three-generation family into a

nuclear family.

Getting together transiently: Qi's family

At the time of my visit, Qi's household included 6 people: Qi (a 7-year-old boy), his retired maternal grandparents, his parents and a cousin (a 5-year-old boy who lived with Qi's family during his summer holidays). In this household, two pairs of grandparents take turns to feed Qi's nuclear family during Qi's winter and summer holidays. The arrangement of which pair of grandparents come to Guangzhou depends on negotiation between the grandparents. Generally, each pair of grandparents comes for one holiday per year. According to Qi's maternal grandfather, he and his wife do not plan to live with their children and grandchildren permanently, because they have their own home in suburban Shijiazhuang (a city in the Hebei province of northern China). They came to Guangzhou only to take care of their grandchildren during the summer holidays, as both of Qi's parents work full-time.

When the three generations co-reside together, Qi's grandparents are the primary carers and domestic workers, taking responsibility for preparing the family meals for the whole family. Qi's grandfather and grandmother positioned themselves in different roles with respect to the food work. Echoing Shen's (2011) finding that the idea that women should be responsible for everyday household work is still an ingrained belief in Chinese grandparents' minds, Qi's grandfather insists that his wife should cook for him and their (grand)children in everyday life, but that he should take the responsibility for food preparation in 'big' events:

> *Qi's grandfather: I go to the food market every day.*
>
> *Chen: to buy food for family meals?*
>
> *Qi's grandfather: yes. But I also buy fruits and snacks in a local supermarket around here, because there are more food choices. I'm old and not important, so, most of the foods are my grandson's or their (Qi's parents') favourite foods.*
>
> *Chen: you buy the ingredients and you cook them?*
>
> *Qi's grandfather: no, my wife (cooks).*

Chen: but you are making dumplings for us today.

Qi's grandfather: because you are a visitor.

Qi's mother: my father never does ordinary cooking at home. But he doesn't think my mother is good at cooking. So, when the traditional festivals come, or when we invite someone for dinner, my father cooks.

Qi's grandfather: I can cook more tasty food than my wife does. They (my children and grandchildren) can enjoy better food on special days [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 29 July 2013]!

This quotation suggests that Qi's grandfather views the practices of food work through an intersectional perspective combining gender and generation: wives should feed their husbands; and grandparents should take responsibility for provisioning and food preparation for their offspring.

Shifting the focus to the shared family meal, the dining area functions as a discursive place for the doing of generational relationships. Following Foucault's concept of 'docile' bodies that serve prevailing relations of domination and subordination (1977, p. 138), Bell and Valentine suggest that home is a place where people are the subject of surveillance (1997, pp. 31-32). The dining area is an important site for the 'socialisation' and 'civilisation' of children (p. 63), through which the bodies of children are under surveillance by their parents and grandparents looking to shape what and how they eat. In Qi's family, the dining area is separated into two parts: one is the dining table, and the other area is located in front of the TV. During the shared family meal with me, Qi's grandmother, Qi and Qi's cousin ate their meals in the living room while watching cartoons, whilst the other family members and I were seated at the dining table next to the kitchen. During the meal, Qi's father told me that the boys like to have meals while watching TV. Both he and his wife do not think that this behaviour is proper table manners, but he cannot stop the boys, as the boys would become angry and noisy if he tries to switch off the TV. Therefore, he asked Qi's grandmother to eat with the boys, in order to keep them eating quickly and quietly and to make sure that there is a proper distance between the boys and the TV set, as the boys often follow their grandmother's suggestions. That is, during the mealtime, the

children's bodies are on the one hand being policed and disciplined under the adults' gaze, but on the other hand are not simply 'docile', even challenging the adults' powers through 'fighting' for their right to eat while watching TV.

At times of the year when the grandparents have departed away from Qi and his parents, the responsibility for feeding the family is handed over to Qi's mother. In contrast to her parents' repetitive and simple recipes, such as stir-fried vegetables and meat, noodles and dumplings, Qi's mother likes to do her cooking in a more creative way. In the interview, Qi's mother explained her cooking habits and plans when the grandparents are absent:

> *I like cooking and like to learn new ways to cook. Because, you know, my husband, my son and I have different tastes on food! So, I should learn [to cook] different dishes for all of us. After I return to the kitchen, I plan to buy an oven. Firstly, because my son likes pizza, I want to make pizza at home. Although we can buy pizzas from Pizza Hut, I still think homemade foods are healthier and more nutritional. Secondly, I want to learn to make bread and cake. I think it (making bread and cake) is interesting [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 29 July 2013].*

Although Qi's grandparents and his mother practice everyday food preparation in different ways, they all seek to constantly renew their food knowledge. Recently, with the proliferation of media in urban China, information about dietary trends and food safety affairs has become easy to acquire. This new mediated food knowledge has challenged grandparents' and parents' common sense about food and changed their food practices. In a conversation about food safety issues, Qi's mother told me:

> *Qi's mother: My father watched a report from CCTV news that some pre-packed frozen dumplings were detected with preservatives exceeding the standard. Since then, we've never bought frozen food.*
>
> *Chen: therefore your parents and you make dumplings yourselves, right?*
>
> *Qi's mother: yes. You know, my parents and I know how to make dumplings, but Qi's father and his parents never made dumplings before we had Qi. When we decided to avoid frozen dumplings, Qi's paternal grandparents began to learn how to make dumplings, as all of us are dumpling fans [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 29 July 2013].*

In another conversation on food knowledge acquisition, Qi's mother emphasised

that she likes to learn recipes for nutritional dishes and desserts online:

> *I like to learn the new cooking skills and recipes online. Usually, I type the words 'how to cook this or that dish' on the search engine, Baidu.com, to find the recipes. It is useful. In this way, I can have more variety in the food I cook. I like this variety, as no one likes to eat similar dishes every day, and no one likes to cook in the same ways for years [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's mother, 10 August 2013]!*

Innovation in the food practices in Qi's family is also driven by Qi's preferences and how his parents and grandparents respond to this. Because of the one-child policy in mainland China, many have argued that these single children are considered beloved 'little emperors' and 'little empresses' in their families, with transformations in everyday food consumption in contemporary China often centred on them (Jing, 2000). In Qi's family, Qi plays a central role in domestic consumption and the household's everyday foodways:

> *Both of my parents and parents-in-law spoil my son and buy everything my son wants for him. For example, because Qi likes sweet corns, my parents begin to add corns into the dumplings' fillings and other fried dishes. Qi loves to eat chips. I have told my parents and parent-in-laws thousands of times that chips are junk snacks. They still like to buy chips for my son, as Qi is the most important person in our family. Sometimes I am the same. I know there is plasticiser in the jelly drops, but when my son asks me to buy him some, I would buy. But, every time I buy him the sweets, I would control the amount he eats. Am I a good mother? I am not sure [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's mother, 29 July 2013].*

Although Qi is treated as a 'little emperor' in his family, he is not spared from kitchen labour. The everyday work of food preparation is not allocated to Qi's grandparents or mother; instead, these tasks are always done by more than one person, shared in some way across the generations. Qi is reported to be a helpful boy by his mother and grandmother, as he likes to help with the cooking in the kitchen (Figure 7.1). In the kitchen, according to Qi's mother, she has taught Qi how to cut up vegetables and fruits and how to prepare simple dishes, such as vegetable salad and cold dishes. He often helps her to do some of the food preparation work, including washing vegetables, peeling beans and beating eggs.

Figure 7.1 Qi, doing some cutting work in kitchen (photo provided by Qi's mother)

As indicated by his mother's pride in Qi's kitchen skills, for Qi's grandparents and parents the domestic food work that they do is not only a fulfilment of their obligation to feed the family, but also an emotional construction of intimacy across generations. When I asked the question of 'what's your favourite food' at the dining table, Qi's grandparents and parents paid keen attention to Qi's answers:

> *Qi: I have many [favourite foods]. I can sort them according to how much I like them. The first is the food cooked by my [paternal] grandparents.*
>
> *Qi's father: the same as me! You are my good son!*
>
> *Qi: the second is the dishes they cook (points to his maternal grandparents).*
>
> *Qi's grandmother: Thank you, my lovely boy!*
>
> *Qi: And then, Pizza Hut! The third is the food served in our school's canteen ……*
>
> *Qi's mother: what about me? You like my food! You remember? I cook the soup with your favourite sweet corns!*
>
> *Qi: OK, your food is in the fourth place.*
>
> *Qi's mother: after the food in your school's canteen! Unbelievable! Chen, I think he loves the food cooked by me! Really! Qi, tell her you were kidding [in a worried voice] [quoted from a recorded interview with Qi's family, 10 August 2013]!*

For Qi's grandparents and parents, Qi's preferences in food relate to his preferences for people. What he eats speaks to the relationships he has. For them, feeding Qi and gaining his favour brings them great happiness.

Living in a family of five: Xiao Xiao's family

In comparison to Qi's family with its two pairs of moving grandparents, Xiao Xiao's family seems somewhat static. Xiao Xiao's family lives in a gated-community in the Tianhe district. Both of Xiao Xiao's parents work in an urban planning company. Since Xiao Xiao was born in 2009, his paternal grandparents have moved to Guangzhou in order to help Xiao Xiao's dual-career parents take care of Xiao Xiao and in order to do other household work.

Xiao Xiao's retired grandparents are the 'second wives' who take responsibility for all the domestic labour, including buying food and other groceries, cooking, cleaning, dropping off and picking up Xiao Xiao from the kindergarten, and feeding him. Before this co-residence of three generations, Xiao Xiao's grandfather had never engaged with domestic food work. However, in the past four years he has taken on new roles: as the purchaser of everyday ingredients and as the 'disposer of leftovers' from the dining table:

> *Our old people are thrifty. We don't want to waste food. But leftovers are unavoidable, as it is difficult to prepare the food to just the right amount ... I am a disposer of leftovers, because these foods are not good for children and young people but still edible [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Xiao's paternal grandfather, 28 February 2014].*

Xiao Xiao's grandmother prepares the everyday meals for the family. Although this old woman is a vegetarian, she separately cooks vegetarian dishes for herself and dishes of both meat and vegetables for the other family members. On the day of my visit, Xiao Xiao's grandmother took nearly two hours to cook the dinner. She first steamed a fish, cooked a pot of marinated chicken wings and stir-fried ribs for her family members and me; and then boiled some Chinese pak-choi with tofu for herself.

Moreover, in Xiao Xiao's grandmother's opinion, family lunch and dinner have different meanings: lunch is a simple meal that is shared between her and her husband, but dinner is for family togetherness. Therefore, she spends most of the day in dinner preparation, but only prepares easy vegetarian food for lunch.

Xiao Xiao's grandmother has changed her ways of cooking since she has lived with her son's family:

> *I used to add dark soy sauce into food, but my daughter-in-law said that the sauce makes the food too ugly, and this soy sauce is unhealthy. So, I have changed to use light soy sauce to cook. You young people always have more scientific food knowledge than us … She doesn't like vegetarian foods, therefore I always cook two non-vegetarian dishes and a vegetarian dish for family dinner. My changes may keep our relations in a harmonious way [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Xiao's paternal grandmother, 28 February 2014].*

This quotation suggests that Xiao Xiao's grandmother has adjusted some of her familiar ways of cooking and changed her tastes in order to cater for her daughter-in-law's preferences, and she has done this in order to keep a good relationship between her and her daughter-in-law. Also, although she may be in part flattering the interviewer, she believes that the ideas from the younger generations are more scientific and up to date and is willing to learn from them.

In terms of eating rather than cooking, the dining area in Xiao Xiao's home is centred on the family dining table: Xiao Xiao's grandmother set Xiao Xiao into a baby chair and fed him on one side of their dining table, while Xiao Xiao's grandfather, parents and I sat on the other side. During the family meal, Xiao Xiao's parents supervised and directed his grandmother's feeding work and Xiao Xiao's behaviours:

> *Xiao Xiao's mother: mum, let him (Xiao Xiao) use the spoon to eat rice by himself. He should learn to eat independently.*
>
> *Xiao Xiao's grandmother: alright (she puts the bowl of rice with a spoon in it in front of Xiao Xiao, and picks up some small pieces of chicken wings and ribs and vegetables and puts them in another bowl in front of him). Good boy! You are good at eating ribs!*
>
> *[Xiao Xiao cried for a toy car, and his grandfather left the dining table to bring him the toy]*

Xiao Xiao's mother: don't give him the car. Xiao Xiao, you cannot play with the car while eating!

Xiao Xiao: no! Grandpa!

Xiao Xiao's mother: you can only play with the car after your meal [quoted from the research diary, 28 February 2014]!

On this occasion, Xiao Xiao's mother is the supervisor who takes the responsibility of disciplining Xiao Xiao, while Xiao Xiao's grandparents are her assistants who help to form Xiao Xiao's table manners. Perhaps this was emphasised for the researcher's benefit, but the ease with which all participants accepted the exchange suggests a desire to show the importance of the parental role in child discipline and development, even within this three-generational family structure. After Xiao Xiao finished his meal, his grandmother began to eat, while his grandfather did the work of cleaning up, again suggesting their adoption of helpful and supportive roles.

In turn, while they need the grandparents' domestic labour to feed their nuclear family, Xiao Xiao's parents support their retired parents both in financial and emotional ways. According to Xiao Xiao's mother, before this co-residence pattern she and her husband never cooked at home; indeed they had not even installed the gas stove and other cookers in their own kitchen. In those days, Xiao Xiao's parents outsourced their family meals to institutional canteens and/or restaurants. Xiao Xiao's grandparents moved to Guangzhou in the eighth month of Xiao Xiao's mother's pregnancy. Since then, Xiao Xiao's parents return home every day for dinner. After Xiao Xiao was born, Xiao Xiao's mother employed a professional confinement-care woman[38] to share the chores with the grandparents, in order to reduce their workload. In that month, the professional confinement-care woman cooked special post-natal meals for Xiao Xiao's mother; Xiao Xiao's mother breastfed Xiao Xiao; while Xiao Xiao's grandmother cooked for the other family members. Xiao Xiao's parents pay his grandparents monthly for the food and other groceries that they purchase, give money and gifts to the grandparents

[38] In China, it is believed that women should recuperate at home during the month of confinement after giving birth to a child, in order to maintain maternal health during lactation. In this context, the professional confinement-care women industry has burgeoned in recent decades, not least as it is seen as conforming to the best scientific practice for maternal care.

on their birthdays and to mark traditional festivals, and treat the grandparents in upscale restaurants regularly.

However, this kind of family of five is not a permanent pattern. As Xiao Xiao's grandmother told me, they plan to leave Guangzhou once Xiao Xiao starts attending primary school, as the need for daily work caring for a young child will be finished then. But she also thinks the separation of the family of five will never break the emotional links among the three generations that have been established, because:

> *If my grandson goes to primary school three years later, by then, we will have lived together for 7 years! We will become interdependent on each other. I think we can still come to Guangzhou, or they can go to Changsha [a city in Hunan province where Xiao Xiao's grandparents come from] to visit us regularly [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Xiao's paternal grandmother, 28 February 2014].*

As seen with Qi's family, it may also be the case that temporary moves during the school holidays continue the three-generation composition of the household.

Dealing with unavoidable conflicts: Yan's family and Mang Guo's family

For human geographers, intergenerationality has been seen as constituting not only cohesion and cooperation but also as having elements of crisis and conflict (Hopkins, 2006; Hopkins & Pain, 2007). Contrary to the cohesive food practices discussed in the previous sections, in what follows I attempt to highlight the familial conflicts between parents and grandparents, drawing on the stories in Yan's family and Mang Guo's family. Both of these families have young babies (about 1 year old when I was doing the fieldwork) and live in properties owned by the paternal grandparents. The intergenerational conflicts on food are apparent in these two cases.

In Yan's family, there was an evident tension between Yan's mother and (paternal) grandmother. The bitter relations between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in Chinese society are frequently described as an unavoidable daily experience, in both historical documents and academic literature (see, for example, Gallin, 1994; Wang,

2011; Song & Zhang, 2012; Kung, 2014). As Yan's parents did not want to express their discontent with the grandparents in front of them, I conducted the interview with the parents outside their home. Because Yan's mother was pregnant before her marriage, she moved into her husband's home so that she could await the birth in a place with familial care[39]. In my interview with Yan's parents, Yan's mother became emotionally upset when we talked about her current position in her parents-in-law's home:

> *Yan's mother: I never take this home as my home. For his (her husband) family, the only thing that changes is my settlement in. But for me, I left from my parents and lived in a strange home [sigh]. I am an example of an old saying that 'following the husband'.*
>
> *Yan's father: so, we are planning to move out. The relation between my mother and my wife is terrible.*
>
> *Yan's mother: I think our relationship seems OK. You know, when I have discontentment with my parent-in-law, I only complain to my husband. I still want to live near my parents-in-law and my parents, as we are a family.*
>
> *Chen: what might make you discontented with your parent-in-laws?*
>
> *Yan's mother: our ideas and habits. When I was pregnant, I asked my mother-in-law about food taboos and how to select health care food. You know how she replied to me? She said, 'pregnancy is natural for women. Don't take it too serious. You see, the peasant women still do farming works when they are pregnant. When I was pregnant, there aren't any milk products or other health care products for expectant mothers'. Can you believe it!*
>
> *Yan's father: but dear, it is true, isn't it [smile]?*
>
> *Yan's mother: I know it is true, but she cannot speak to me like that! And I can't endure the huge family meals as well.*
>
> *Chen: what do you mean?*
>
> *Yan's mother: as both of us are locals, we have lots of relatives living around. His family's tradition is that when one plans to celebrate his or her birthday or traditional festivals, he or she should treat the relatives with a meal. My mother-in-law likes to invite her relatives in! She likes to cook the meals for dozens of relatives by herself! But I don't like such meals. The house is not big enough for so many*

[39] In contemporary Guangzhou, people tend to buy their own properties before they get married. But in this case, as Yan's mother decided to get married after her pregnancy, this new couple had no time to buy a property for a family of three. Moreover, the Chinese tradition of marriage requires women to move to their husband's home after their marriage if the new couple does not have their own property. Considering these issues, Yan's mother finally decided to move to her parents-in-law's home.

people, and I don't like the crowd. Also, I feel embarrassed to face the people I have never met before at the dining table [quoted from a recorded interview with Yan's parents, 28 December 2013].

In Mang Guo's family, the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship is not problematic, with both Mang Guo's mother and grandmother expressing their satisfaction with how they get on. However, the parents and grandparents hold conflicting ideas on Mang Guo's dietary needs, which in turn reflect broader generational differences. Over a decade ago now, the intergenerational conflict in urban China was described as one between the 'corn' of the past versus the 'chocolate' of the present (Jing, 2000, p. 25): the corn representing poverty and lack of food choice, as corn is locally produced and cheap; the chocolate representing the affluence of food choices and a richer life, as chocolate is an expensive, imported food. However, with the dramatic social changes seen in the past decade in urban China, such conflicts also changed, no longer simply being between the ideals of subsistence of the older generation versus the desire for enjoyment of the younger one. In Mang Guo's case, the source of conflict was much more the contrast between the experiential food knowledge of the grandparents and the new or expert food knowledge valued by the parents. Because Mang Guo's grandparents were born in the early 1960s and grew up in the post-Mao period, they have experienced the economic reform which brought forth higher standards of living for many in China (Shek, 2006). Although these grandparents were relatively poor when they were young, they have already accepted the consumerist Chinese society with its high-priced goods, including chocolate and other imported foods. In Mang Guo's family, both the parents and grandparents embrace commodity culture in their food consumption: they all like to buy the advertised food brands in local markets, food shops and supermarkets, like to cook nutritional and varied dishes for family meals, and enjoy Sunday mornings in local tea houses. The only intergenerational conflict in this family lies in the divergent opinions on how to understand the efficacy of food:

Mang Guo's father: we (the grandparents and parents) have similar appetites and tastes. We only hold different food knowledges. In my parents' ideas, some foods are

believed as food taboos for patients, but our new science and knowledge have challenged these ideas. For example, my parents insist on avoiding feeding oranges to my son once he coughs, as they have avoided eating oranges when they caught cold since they were young. But in fact, I've searched how to feed ill children online, and the experts' suggestion indicates that oranges help cure coughs, as oranges are rich in vitamin C and that is good for patients.

Chen: will you communicate your different ideas on food with your parents?

Mang Guo's mother: yes, if we find our ideas are good for my son, or their ideas might do harm to my son, I would say straight to them.

Mang Guo's father: but they often refuse to change. So, we sometimes feed my son in totally different ways, when both of our ideas do no harm to the boy. To be honest, they have rich experience in cooking and selecting the right foods for children. If we cannot reach a consensus, we would give up our ideas. You know, we don't want these disagreements to destroy our relationship [quoted from a recorded interview with Mang Guo's parents, 15 December 2013].

Obviously in this quotation, Mang Guo's grandparents make the judgement of food based on their experiences, while his parents treat food in a more scientific influenced by expert knowledge accessed via the Internet. The example of Mang Guo's family speaks to a wider pattern in my data, namely that the making of a temporary three-generation family often goes hand in hand with some differences between, and some separation of, parental and grandparental routines of eating and child feeding.

We have seen, then, that the sites of family meals can become antagonistic battlefields expressing wider household conflicts (as in Yan's household), or perform milder negotiations of different beliefs and identities (as in Mang Guo's household) (Meah & Jackson, 2013). These two households are both, on the one hand, intergenerational accomplishments and, on the other hand, spaces through which generational differences and conflicts play out. Enhancing the findings from existing research which suggests that intergenerational conflict centres on the negotiation of the old and the new (Gao, 2000) and the different ideas held towards child-caring practice (Jiang et al., 2007), the examples of Yan's family and Mang Guo's family show that intergenerational conflicts can concern the differences of food habits and knowledge. When facing such familial conflicts and differences, the three-generation

households may be unmade to some extent (such as the probability of Yan's family ending up living separately). However, on the whole, what is seen is a commitment to three-generation relations, working around differences through compromise, evasion or giving way in order to establish a temporary form suited to the demands of both early parenthood and career development.

From crowded to empty: Dao Dao's family

The example of Dao Dao's family shows the transformation from a crowded household with a three-generational structure into a nuclear family for three people. In this family, as one of the grandfathers was still working, the other three grandparents had moved in about the time of Dao Dao's birth. When these grandparents stayed with Dao Dao's nuclear family, an unequal system of support existed between the grandparents and parents:

> *Chen: when you lived together with Dao Dao's grandparents, who cooked for your family?*
>
> *Dao Dao's father: my mother and mother-in-law. They completed all of the food work. My father only helps to look after my son. My parents came earlier than my mother-in-law did. In my opinion, they were helping me to cook and take care for my son. Therefore, I should pay for their help. But they refused. Then, when my wife's mother came, I insisted on paying them 1000 CNY monthly for our food and other groceries, or any other things they wanted to buy, but they refused again.*
>
> *Dao Dao's mother: they think we just began to work, thus, we need their help. My mother sometimes sends me money, as she thinks her life is better than ours [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014].*

The grandparents' support was not only expressed financially but also emotionally. According to Dao Dao's parents, the grandparents often bought or cooked their favourite foods for them, and strove to meet their requirements. As described by Dao Dao's father, although he and his wife have grown up, their parents still treated them as lovely children who needed their parents' love and care.

Also, chiming with examples from elsewhere (e.g. Christie, 2006; Meah & Watson,

2011), the domestic kitchen in Dao Dao's home is an important site for intergenerational and intra-generational integration and communication. When Dao Dao's household was in a three-generational structure, the kitchen was crowded. Although the main domestic food work was undertaken by the grandmothers, other family members were not shut out from the kitchen. As Dao Dao's mother explained:

> *Dao Dao's mother: we (she and the grandmothers) sometimes cooked together. Sometimes two of us, sometimes all of us cook. When cooking together, we often expressed our opinions on how to cook the food more delicious and healthier in the kitchen. I think cooking together is a good way to negotiate and discuss our different ideas on food. My mother-in-law was a nutritionist, and my mother and I also have a concern for everyday consumption of nutrition.*
>
> *Chen: have you learned how to manage the everyday diet from your mother-in-law?*
>
> *Dao Dao's mother: absolutely. She imparted me the knowledge on nutrition and dietary management through our shared cooking works in the kitchen. These knowledges and skills are really useful and helpful [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014]!*

This quotation suggests that shared food practices can be considered as a performance of the ideal family life, which enacts intergenerational communication in pursuit of that ideal. However, as this co-residence of people from three generations is temporary, the crowded kitchen, which contains two or three women from two generations, is also made on a temporary basis. Dao Dao's mother continued,

> *Before my pregnancy, my husband and I liked to try new recipes. We tended to cook together in the kitchen [smile]. If one of us was not at home at mealtime, the other one would go out to eat. Nearly every day, we searched the Internet for new recipes. And I ran a blog about our daily meals. And I bought an oven, as we want to learn baking skills. But after the grandparents' arrival, they replaced us in the kitchen. Now, we have reoccupied the kitchen! But because we should care for our son, we cannot spend much time in cooking. Hence, we only cook simple dishes after our parents' departure [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014].*

That is, the domestic kitchen of Dao Dao's family became crowded after the grandparents' arrival, then went back to being a relatively empty space after the grandparents' departure. Also, since the grandparents moved out, the three-generation

domestic space is 'unmade' and transformed into a home for a nuclear family. This separation leads to intergenerational relations in which two doors are kept, but one soup pot rarely shared. However, it is widely acknowledged that grandparents play significant roles in their grandchildren's lives, whether these three generations live together or not (Curtis et al., 2009; Tarrant, 2010). In Dao Dao's case, the grandparents use food to keep the family bond across three generations, even after their departure. Since living apart, the grandparents have sent lots of special local food from their hometown or their own homemade food to Dao Dao's parents, in order to express their love and care. During the home tour with Dao Dao's parents, they showed me some foodstuffs that had been sent by Dao Dao's grandparents:

> *Dao Dao's mother: After my parents and parents-in-law left us, they sometimes send us some special local products in their hometown. [She opens the door of the freezer] These bags of vacuum-packed white yak meat (Figure 7.2) are my favourite meat. My parents sent the meat to us, as yak meat is rarely seen in Guangzhou, but is a common food in Gansu (her hometown). (She grabs a bag of food out from the cupboard) And these are pastries with a sesame topping made by my mother-in-law (Figure7. 3).*
>
> *Chen: the pastry seems not special…*
>
> *Dao Dao's mother: but it is delicious! You can try some! I like these pastries, so I asked her to send us by express! [Picking out a box from the cupboard] and I think these noodles (Figure 7.4) are tasty as well. These noodles are made of potato. I cannot find this kind of noodles outside my hometown. My parents send me these because they know that I like the potato noodles, and know that it is impossible to find such noodles in Guangzhou [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014].*

Figure 7.2, 7.3 & 7.4 the food sent to Dao Dao's parents from his grandparents (from left to right: pre-packed white yak meat, home-made pastries, and a box of potato noodles; photographs by the author)

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the everyday doings of intergenerational relations within Xiaokang families through the analysis of food practices, drawing on the food stories of five temporary three-generation families. It has introduced this household type as an important innovation within Guangzhou's Xiaokang population. Discussing the experiences of this lifestyle, it has drawn out stories from household members. These stories have mapped a geography of temporary three-generation family life in contemporary Guangzhou.

Firstly, then, the discussion above shows how these domestic spaces are both intergenerational accomplishments and the social spaces through which generational differences play out. Gao (2000) has influentially written about a generation gap at Chinese tables, setting out the traditional food cultures of the grandparental generation, the modern and scientific food knowledge of the parental generation, and the consumerist notions of food prevalent among children in Chinese society. This cultural portrait is overly static. In this chapter, I suggest more fluid, complex intergenerational relations of food knowledge transmission, transformation and translation. On the one hand, food knowledge is not only handed down generation by generation (see the example of Dao Dao's family), but also renewed all the time (for example, the influences of media on the transition of dietary knowledge in Qi's family). However, on the other hand, apparent differences still exist across generations, such as the different attitudes towards everyday diet in Mang Guo's family. Such differences are negotiated between generations but, where such negotiations fail, can sometimes result in the 'unmaking' of three-generation households/homes.

Secondly, the empirical cases in this chapter have portrayed a domestic mechanism of labour division and cooperation. Similar to Hopkins et al.'s (2011) argument that intergenerational relationships are dynamic across space and time, the connections between the three generations are dynamic in these temporary three-generation families. Through the analysis of the family-based food practices in this

chapter, the complex roles of each generation in everyday food practice have been outlined. The grandparents not only take the major responsibility for domestic food work and impart their food knowledge and cooking skills to the younger generations, but they also provide emotional, and sometimes financial, support to their children and grandchildren. Parents are the most important and powerful members in the temporary three-generation family. They make the decisions about the diets of the three generations, reconcile intergenerational conflicts, and arrange food activities for different family members. That is, the parents can be considered as junctions for the three generations. While the only child in each family seems the centre of the family, as their requests and needs have key influences on their (grand)parents' food practices, in fact he or she is also often under the surveillance of his or her parents and grandparents. Although people from three generations play distinctive family roles in food practice, they are integrated at the dining table and/or in the kitchen (e.g. Qi's engagement with food preparation work and the crowded kitchen in Dao Dao's family).

Finally, and most importantly, the temporary three-generation family provides a possibility for understanding the everyday mobility of Xiaokang households in urban China. The interplay between family practices and mobility can maintain familial intimacy (Urry, 2002; Holdsworth, 2013). The three-generation families in this chapter are 'on the move' as they are constructed on a temporary basis. These mobilities or potential mobilities in time lead to the unmaking of the three-generation home, engender spatial segregations across generations and transform the domestic foodways. At the same time, the family mobilities at both home and wider geography scales can sustain intimate relations across generations through food. For instance, in Dao Dao's family, although the grandparents no longer co-reside with Dao Dao and his parents, the generational bond is still connected through the food sent by the grandparents.

To sum up, this chapter suggests that the domestic space of Xiaokang households is a significant social space for cultural transmission and transition; a place for emotional communication, reciprocal support, and negotiations across generations; an

important site that segregates and/or integrates generations; and an open and porous geographical scale that enables everyday mobility. Through everyday food practices, dynamic intergenerational relations have produced and reproduced a cohesive, but at the same time fragile, socio-spatial unit: the temporary three-generation family.

Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated the idea that the contemporary Chinese family is positioned in a negotiation between the traditional and the modern (Shek, 2006; Ma et al., 2013; Shen, 2013). The temporary three-generation family is not just an articulation of traditional Chinese 'extended' and modern 'nuclear' family forms; it is a key site in which cultural dynamics play out between traditional and vernacular beliefs, scientific and other expert knowledge, and the market. Additionally, this chapter suggests that the relationships across three generations cannot be simply framed as an 'anti-patriarchal' mode characterised by the power of children, as Shen (2011; 2013) and Ma et al. (2013) have suggested. Rather, this chapter on temporary three-generation families in Guangzhou illustrates that the Chinese family is still structured based on a patriarchal pattern, because most of the families (at least the researched families) depend on paternal grandparents' support. Moreover, this chapter has highlighted the dual roles and identities of the young parents. These parents are both the grown up 'little emperors' who still need the support and help provided by their parents and responsible parents who are held accountable for their children's diets in everyday life.

Chapter 8

Food, domestic hospitality and the 'doing' of kinship and friendship

Moving on from the discussion of the links between food and intra-family relationships developed in the previous chapters, this chapter focuses on how extra-household relationships are shaped or produced through the process of 'gathering meals' with distant relatives and friends in the household's domestic space. A consistent theme of previous chapters has been how home and the domestic are not simply private spaces cut off from wider public dynamics. Chapter 8 is the first of two chapters to focus on empirical materials that bring this issue to the foreground. Its focus on how domestic space can be performed to host wider social relationships with extended family and friends is complemented by Chapter 9's focus on the role of 'eating out' in urban Xiaokang family life. Together, the two chapters respectively explore how domestic life is constituted through food practices that a) bring wider social relations home and b) take home life into the city.

Viewing eating with non-family members[40] as an important family practice and social interaction, this chapter aims to explore the importance of food events to wider kinship and friendship networks. It argues that home entertaining makes connections between family-making and the 'doing' of wider kinship and friendship networks. It examines how home is 'spread' more widely through food based practices of hospitality. It considers the spatial and temporal complexities of domestic space, highlighting the role of home eating in the relational senses of identity and home. More specifically, it teases out different forms of hospitality evidenced in the empirical materials and the different social relationships that hosting food gatherings can faciliatate. Overall, my focus is on the place of hospitality in meanings of home for Xiaokang households in contemporary Guangzhou.

[40] In this chapter, I use the term 'family members' to refer to the close family members who are living in the same household either permanently or on a regular basis.

As Allan indicates, a key change in contemporary social networks is 'the increased flexibility that people have in the organization of their personal relationships' and the overlap in friend and family relationships (2008, pp. 13-14). However, people still have different views of family and friendship networks. For Allan, a family membership is connected to a 'long-term commitment' and obligation that highlights 'reciprocity' and 'exchanges'; while a friendship is a non-hierarchical and equal interpersonal relationship (2008, p. 11). With the growth of electronic communications and geographical mobilities, kinship and friendship networks have dramatically changed during the last two decades for Xiaokang households(more generally see Mason, 2004; Larsen et al., 2006; Allan, 2005; 2008). On the one hand these real and virtual mobilities weaken interpersonal relationships; but, on the other hand, they also construct a powerful 'compulsion to proximity' and a desire to maintain the strong connections between people and places that have become dispersed (Larsen et al., 2006, p. 266). Co-presence and face-to-face visits are still important to establish and sustain social networks (Mason, 2004). In existing studies, these spatially distanced connections to kin and friends are mostly examined in relation to journeys 'back home', often in relation to visiting friends and relatives and receiving hospitality in the context of intra-national or transnational migrations (see, for example Mason, 2004; Jang et al., 2003). When focusing on the social effects of visiting friends and relatives in the Chinese context, scholars often consider these visits as a way to seek financial and emotional support (Huang, 2001) or as a type of leisure tourism (Jang et al., 2003; Keating & Kriz, 2008; Guo et al., 2006). These studies apply quantitative data to analyse the characteristics of Chinese people's domestic or international travelling behaviours, but overlook the question of how these travellers are given hospitality by their relatives and friends in their tourist destinations. Filling this lacuna, this chapter discusses the connections between domestic hospitality and the 'doing' of friendship and kinship from a Chinese perspective.

In so doing it draws in part on wider debates on the spaces and ethics of hospitality. Let me introduce these briefly. Hospitality is a social and cultural process

regarding the duties, obligations and moral virtues involved in the relationship between the host and the guest (Lynch et al., 2011). In practice, providing hospitality for others not only refers to an idealised ethic of unconditional or pure ways to encounter strangers through providing accommodation and food to the unexpected guest or stranger, but also involves conditional relations with invited people whose identity is already attributed (Lynch et al., 2011; Derrida, 2000). Based on the work on ethical responsibility to the Other by Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, Barnett (2005) establishes a model of relational subjectivity to understand hospitality. According to him, subjectivity is constructed by 'opening up towards otherness in a relation of welcome' and in 'a radically passive relation of hospitality towards the Other' (Barnett, 2005, p. 8). In this sense, the ethics of hospitality refers to a process of being responsible for both proximate people (e.g. family members) and distant others (e.g. animals, things and strangers), which in turn is implicated in the social relations with different others. Therefore, hospitality is about the way of encountering and managing differences between social groups, as critical studies of the hospitality industry have shown more generally and in less abstract ways (Lynch et al., 2011; Lugosi, 2009). This chapter focuses more narrowly on how households practice hospitality in relation to various groups of 'Others' (in particular friends and extended family), and the role of food in this practice. Focusing on the different ways of being hospitable to relatives and friends, the empirical sections of the chapter will discuss the questions of how people in contemporary Guangzhou practice their extra-household social relations though 'gathering meals' at home and how these food practices reconstruct the meanings of the domestic in hospitable forms.

Eating at home with non-family members as a social interaction

Eating together with others, whether at home or away from home, can be considered as a social interaction through which people define and construct their social identities, roles and relationships, because:

> *the participation in a meal creates social boundaries, defining those who belong and those who do not belong, but are guests. The invitation to join a meal becomes evidence of the types of exclusive social bonds that exist between people, and evidence of how social status and its roles are repetitively presented and performed at any eating event (Crowther, 2013, p. 161).*

When discussing meals eaten with non-family members at home, scholars often recognise the home as a place where extended social networks are practised. Food plays an important role in the articulation of multiple social relationships in the domestic sphere. In turn, the nature of these social relationships is important in shaping the character of home life and home space. Understanding home as a site of consumption practices and identity formation over different periods of the life course, Valentine (1999) uses the example of a lesbian woman, Kate, to explain the links between friendship, family and home-making. When Kate and her brother Chris lived together, they blurred the boundary between their home and the public realm through their frequent invitations to friends for dinner. After she bought her own flat and moved out of her brother's home, Kate gave up cooking for herself and her friends as her new home was too small. Therefore, this new home became a more private place, because of its physical limitations. But then Kate moved to live with Helen (Kate's ex-partner), and her home changed into an open space for friends again, because Helen preferred to eat with friends in her own home rather than going out to restaurants or other people's homes. In this case, then, Kate's homes shifted between spatial closure and openness through the changing nature of her food consumption and how it was shaped by different relationships and living conditions.

Other studies have highlighted the cultural and social dimensions to this process of relating food, home and friendship. Focusing on the British context, Mellor et al. (2010) undertook research on how friendship and gendered class distinctions are performed through dinner parties. They employed Bourdieu's (1984) conceptual framework of 'taste' to map the mechanisms for 'doing' class in a middle-class dinner party. For them, organising a dinner party is a middle-class social practice/performance of friendship, involving high-value cultural and social exchange, through which cultural capital (e.g.

the knowledge and taste involved in food selection) is renewed, exchanged and gained through the social capital involved in the event (i.e. the selected social groups involved in the dinner party). However, the middle-class friendships formed through the dinner party have a 'darker side' for women, they suggest, because of the responsibility they often bear for successful hospitality: 'while the rewards for a successful performance were high, the depths of the women's fears of failure and public disdain were revealed by the lengths they were prepared to go to in order to ensure success' (Mellor et al., 2010, p. 131).

These gendered aspects to wider social status are present too in Wood's (2005) historical discussion of American Foreign Service wives' political 'careers' in the first half of the twentieth century. She indicates that these women played crucial roles in the conduct of American diplomacy through their gendered roles in managing domestic duties. These wives assisted their husbands in the social arena through hosting pleasant meals, drinks or dinner parties for entertaining their own and their husband's friends. Their friendships in the foreign countries to which they were posted were actively cultivated and maintained through food activities of hospitality. In addition, these social events at home provided opportunities to show off American culture and prosperity in front of foreigners. Such hospitality broke down the distinctions between these women's private lives and public work and transformed the home space into an unofficial political space. In this way, the proper American presence in other countries is established through the women's family roles and social responsibilities as mothers, wives, hostesses and homemakers. What is ostensibly framed as a private matter has public import and shapes wider social relations. There are clearly potential parallels here with wider practices of domestic hospitality that may relate to formal public roles (e.g. hosting colleagues from work at home).

Focusing on transnational migrants, Collins (2008) develops a similar argument about the intersections of private and public, personal and social, in domestic food hospitality. He analysed the everyday meals eaten with friends by South Korean international students in Auckland, New Zealand. Eating with friends at home (their

student accommodation) is a way, he suggests, to construct their collective senses of belonging and place attachment. Based on this research, Collins argues that South Korean students like to live with other South Koreans not only because they want to live with familiarity after migration, but also because they tend to use the home as a social space for sharing Korean food and drinks. Through these eating practices, the home becomes a private form of socialising with friends and classmates with the same culture and nationality. Therefore these food practices, not only maintain friendship in a domestic environment, but also construct a familiar place (the home) where memories of life in South Korea and their new life in Auckland are brought together, creating a way to overcome the (social and cultural) differences between South Korea and Auckland.

Generally, then, a range of research has shown how eating with others at home is often an important practice in the construction and reconstruction of social relationships, including friendship. And conversely, the relationship that is produced and maintained through these eating practices also (re)produces the meaning of home. In this sense, domestic hospitality can be considered as a social practice which transforms the home into an open space that combines family practices and wider social networks. 'Gathering meals' have long played an important role in Chinese society. Such meals are undertaken in order to entertain acquaintances at the times of the birth, marriage or death of a family member, or sometimes also in celebrating various cultural festivals (Simoons, 1991, p. 26). The meals and food practices are varied, of course, but there is usually an emphasis on elaborateness. In recent years, such food activities have often taken place in both the domestic space and in commercial restaurants and/or hotels booked for the purpose. Indeed, for most of my informants, the ideal place to accomplish these unavoidable social gatherings with relatives, friends, associates and other acquaintances is a commercial restaurant. But, this has not meant the end of home entertaining: in fact, most of the studied households commonly invited relatives and friends to join in formal celebrations and commemorations for a family member's 'significant moments' or just for regular home

parties with friends.

In order to better understand the doing of wider social relationships through the lens of eating within the home, the remainder of this chapter analyses how people manage their meals eaten at home with either distant relatives or friends. Specifically, the question of how people socialise their family meals with distant relatives and friends will be explored through household-based case studies to support my argument that home is not simply a container of family practices, but also a 'publicised' private space which enables the construction, reconstruction and deconstruction of wider social networks.

Preparing meals for/with distant relatives: family responsibilities

Kinship is a formal system of 'relationships with regard to alliances of marriage and lines of descent' and 'broad[er] family connections' (McCarthy & Edwards, 2011, p. 126). Kinship is important in forming people's senses of family belonging and identity. Because of the increasing level of mobility in the contemporary world, kinship becomes dispersed over space. Although 'geographical proximity or distance do not correlate straightforwardly with how emotionally close relatives feel to one another, nor indeed with how far relatives will provide support or care of each other' (Mason, 2004, p. 421), visiting relatives over long distances regularly is still an important family practice that maintains strong ties among relatives.

In contemporary China, kinship is considered as one of the most important social relationships. One might argue that a simpler and weaker relationship among relatives has emerged in urban areas. Three aspects of this weakening have been highlighted: firstly, people are liberated from the obligations and responsibilities for taking care of relatives unconditionally[41]; secondly, the intimate relations between close relatives (parents, partners and children) are proportionately more important than in the past;

[41] In traditional Chinese society, it is the social norm that people should support their relatives (including both the close and distant relatives) both instrumentally and emotionally.

and thirdly, in post-patriarchal China, the female partners' relationships with their relatives are considered to be as important as the male partners' kinship relationships (Shen, 2013, pp. 163-164). Symptomatically, because intimate relations among relatives beyond the immediate family are less important than they were in traditional Chinese societies, a clear boundary between immediate family members and more distant relatives has emerged for most of the households I studied (though, importantly, where and how this boundary is drawn varies, as explored earlier in the thesis). However, such changes are far more than a simple reduction in attention paid to wider kinship relations. Traditional values of kinship are still maintained in contemporary Chinese families. According to the household survey in five Chinese cities (Lanzhou, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou and Harbin), Chinese urbanites continue to value the reciprocal and instrumental non-household relationships with their siblings, in-laws and other distant relatives, and intend to support their relatives both financially and emotionally (Ma et al., 2013). In other words, periodic gatherings of the sort explored in this chapter may have a growing role to play in maintaining wider kinship relations.

In the qualitative data generated by my research, most of the informants hold ambivalent attitudes towards entertaining distant relatives through meals at home. They see meals at home with parents, partners and children as ordinary or daily family meals, whereas eating with distant relatives such as adult siblings, cousins and other relatives from the extended family is seen as a form of socialising. In other words, providing hospitality for distant relatives at home is not a recurrent family task, but rather, it is a temporary and notable occasion. Although people tend to describe eating together with relatives as a traditional and beneficial activity which can build up a positive relationship between the host family and their relatives, some of them – particularly the female informants, who almost without exception have to take on the responsibility of preparing meals for the visiting relatives – expressed their feelings of discomfort during meals with unfamiliar relatives. That is, on the one hand, these middle-level people want to gain the benefits from traditional kinship and recognise its importance; but, on the other hand, they are tired of the work of providing hospitality

to these occasional visitors.

In order to explore how kinship is done through this occasional hospitality, the following two sections focus on the process of preparation for and eating with distant relatives via two empirical cases: Ming's family and Xi Xi's family. These two families treat the 'gathering meals' with distant relatives at home as social activities and try to make boundaries between their immediate families and the extended families, but have different attitudes towards such activities. After discussing both these cases, the chapter then turns to discuss the role of meals in friendship networks, using three further case study examples.

'Our home is a restaurant for our distant relatives': Ming's family

For Ming's family, the concept of 'kinship' is strongly related to obligation. In this sense, eating meals with distant relatives is considered as an obligatory food practice that makes the family home less homely for the more immediate family. Ming's family lives in an institutional apartment building in north Guangzhou. As Ming's mother comes from Chongqing (a city in southwest China), while his father is from Wuhan (a city located in the middle part of China), their home often hosts visiting relatives who have travelled to Guangzhou for holidays or business. As Ming's mother expresses with some frustration, they are sometimes used as a 'restaurant' by Ming's distant relatives. This issue came to the fore as it coincided with their involvement in the research. Once the family had accepted my request to be involved in both household-based ethnography and an interview process, Ming's mother phoned me to discuss the details of the research. Over the phone we set the date of my visit as 7 March 2014. However, on 5 March Ming's mother texted me to say that that she wanted to change the promised date, as her family was busy with providing hospitality for distant relatives who had visited them without notice. Although I tried to persuade her to allow me to take part in one of their shared meals with her relatives, Ming's mother rejected my suggestion firmly. She listed two main reasons for her rejection: the first, that she did not see such meals as her everyday food practice as they were happening by chance, and as such she did not feel that they fell within the remit of the research as I had

explained it to her; and, the second, that her immediate family members and the visiting relatives were not very familiar with each other, and thus it would be embarrassing for her to explain that they would be researched during the meal. Of course I understood and accepted her decision. Because of this issue, we postponed my visit and the interview to the following Sunday (16 March), with the plan being for me to come for lunch. Unfortunately, this second appointment had to be changed because Ming's relatives came again to have lunch at Ming's home on that day. Finally, we came to an agreement for me to visit on the same day after this gathering. Although we finally had an agreement of the date and time, Ming's mother emphasised that I must phone her before my visit, as she was still not sure exactly when her relatives would finish their shared lunch and leave.

When I arrived at Ming's home at around a quarter past three, Ming's grandfather and paternal aunt were still cleaning up the remains of the meal in the kitchen. A two-room apartment shared by four adults (Ming's parents, grandfather and parental aunt[42]) and a child, this home seemed a little bit crowded. At first glance, I found it hard to believe that this apartment had enough room for sharing meals with more people. There was only a medium-sized dining table with four chairs located outside the kitchen door. As Ming's grandfather placed the leftovers on four large plates onto the dining table, it looked even smaller. When I asked about how they accommodated meals with relatives in such a small apartment, Ming's grandfather showed me the way in which he creates a bigger eating area when the relatives visit:

> *You see, we can join these two tables [one was located next to the kitchen, whereas the other one was moved from one of the bedrooms] here [the living room], and move the tea table and sofas to the corner, in order to make the dining area bigger. Once our relatives come here to have meals, we would move the chairs from the rooms to the living room as well. But this apartment is too small. So, if more than three relatives visit Guangzhou, we would not sit together at the table … some of us might take seats on the sofa [quoted from a recorded interview with Ming's family, 16 March 2014].*

[42] Ming's paternal aunt is a housewife. She was temporarily living with Ming's immediate family in order to share the responsibility of taking care of Ming, an 18-month-old boy, as Ming's grandmother was ill at that time.

It is not only in terms of the arrangement of furniture that such 'gathering meals' differ from everyday family meals. As Ming's mother told me, their normal family meals often consist of three dishes, rice and a pot of soup, while the occasional hospitality for distant relatives usually consists of five or six dishes served in larger plates, as well as rice and soup, and alcohol. Although Ming's grandfather took charge of preparing the food for the relatives, other adult household members did not escape from the labour of hospitality. According to Ming's mother, eating with distant relatives and talking with them are part of the work that hospitality requires:

> *To be honest, I am tired with hosting the unfamiliar distant relatives. They sometimes come here without invitation. But you know, it is common in China. In spite that they never live with us when they come to Guangzhou, and I don't need to cook for them, it is difficult to please them. We have to eat with them, talk with them and give them some tips for travelling in Guangzhou. Sometimes, we should travel around Guangzhou with them. Their visits disrupt our family life. You can see, this apartment is very small. And, we are not that familiar. They are only my or my husband's relatives. But, we have to host them and provide them fine meals. It is the tradition. My husband's sister helps us to take care of my son. Relatives should support each other. If we don't treat relatives well, they will not help us in the future [quoted from a recorded interview with Ming's family, 16 March 2014].*

Obviously, for Ming's mother, the relationship between her and her distant relatives is both instrumental and reciprocal. Although Ming's mother is not keen to host these unexpected and unfamiliar relatives in her private home, she has to do so for two reasons: an adherence to the traditional principle of reciprocity with extended family; and to exchange the meals for the relatives' potential assistance in the future. For Ming's immediate family, preparing meals for people with genetic connections or affinity relations at home is not only a way of undertaking proper relations among relatives, but it is also a way of establishing positive relations with people who can provide potential support for the family in the future. In so doing, the kinship between Ming's immediate family members and the visitors is built up, but at the same time the boundaries between these two groups are further drawn.

‘Inviting relatives to our new home makes it more like a home’: Xi Xi’s family

In contrast to the somewhat instrumental relations between Ming’s immediate family and his distant relatives, the kinship between Xi Xi’s immediate family and the extended one seems to be more intimate and mutual. Both of Xi Xi’s parents are from the Chaoshan area and they have frequent contact with their relatives there. Xi Xi’s parents moved into their new home around Chinese New Year’s Day of 2014[43]. To mark the occasion, Xi Xi’s parents invited their parents and other relatives to celebrate the Chinese New Year in their new flat, as in their opinion, relatives’ visits would help to make their new home more homely. I came into Xi Xi’s home, in a gated community in the Tianhe district, on 18 January 2014, two days after the departure of Xi Xi’s grandparents and other distant relatives.

During this period of family gathering not every meal was shared at Xi Xi’s home – some of the meals were located in restaurants – but a significant amount of home cooking and eating was undertaken. Although Xi Xi’s parents were the hosts of the New Year gathering meals, all of the participants took part in the preparation of the food. During the home tour, Xi Xi’s father showed me the ‘leftovers’ of their New Year’s meals – beef balls and goose feet – in the freezer and told me that these foodstuffs were brought from the Chaoshan area by his relatives. These invited relatives not only received hospitality from Xi Xi’s parents, but also took part in the cooking work for the New Year’s meals:

> *Chen: who cooked for your New Year meals?*
>
> *Xi Xi’s mother: all of us [smile].*
>
> *Chen: you did the food preparation together [with your relatives]?*
>
> *Xi Xi’s mother: not absolutely. Sometimes my husband and I cooked, sometimes my parents or parents-in-law did the cooking, and sometimes other relatives shared the cooking works. Actually, no one escaped from the food preparation during the New Year celebration [quoted from a recorded interview with Xi Xi’s parents, 18 January*

[43] The date of Chinese New Year Day is based on the lunar calendar. In 2014, the Chinese New Year Day was 31 January. The traditional celebration of Chinese New Year lasts for 15 days, but in contemporary China the national holiday for the New Year only contains 7 days.

2014].

This reasonably equal sharing of labour suggests something of the mutuality and intimacy of the kinship relations being established. It is a temporal and spatial togetherness which not only forges and maintains the intimate kinship between Xi Xi's immediate family and the extended one, but also confirms openness over closure as a guiding ideology of their family home.

However, simultaneously, these meals also involved a separation of Xi Xi's family home into two independent parts: a private space for Xi Xi's immediate family; and a less private space for the shared meals. According to Xi Xi's mother, only her parents and parent-in-laws lived in her family home, whereas other relatives stayed in hotels during their visits. Similar to the structure of modern Western homes described by Crang, where 'the spaces of display to visitors, "front rooms" and the best furnishings, are separated from those of everyday life and rest – the bedrooms' (1998, p. 29), Xi Xi's family home was divided into two separate areas for private and public activities. The dining area, kitchen and living room are the place for visitors; while the bedrooms are only for the household's own everyday life or for use by the very nearest and dearest others (for example, Xi Xi's grandparents). Although there is, then, an apparent boundary between Xi Xi's immediate family members and her more distant relatives, this is not a boundary of exclusion but one that is central to the performance of hospitality. As suggested by Derrida (2000) more generally, 'the complete erasure of boundaries would efface the threshold across which relating is made possible' (p. 65); and the responsible action of hospitality 'lies in the divisibility of borders and the finitude of boundaries, but not their erasure' (Barnett, 2005, p. 16). In the case of Xi Xi's family, the boundaries are flexible temporally and spatially: during the New Year's meals, the boundaries are erased as everyone – both the hosts and the guests – participates in the preparation work and the eating together; while after the meals, the physical and social boundaries between the host and the guest are rebuilt. Through these dynamics, hospitable kinship relations of mutuality are practised.

Happy meals with friends: beneficial and emotive social networking

The next sections of the chapter shift the focus from family relationships to friendships. Rather than an 'obligatory' and 'ascribed' kinship, friendship is a 'voluntary' and 'achieved' social relationship (Jamieson, 1998, p. 75). It can be regarded as 'belonging to the realm of informal and personal relationships' (Allan, 2005, p. 189) and 'meeting the particular emotional or practical needs of individuals rather than families' (Gabb, 2008, p. 113). It is also often strongly associated with modern notions of personal freedom and democracy (Jamieson, 1998). That is, friendship is an ideal model of the good or pure relationship which can bring a pure happiness and mutual interpersonal support in modern society. In my own research findings, in contrast to the somewhat ambivalent views on forced meals with distant relatives, many participants described eating meals with friends as happy and freeing.

Geography plays important roles in the 'making, maintenance and dissolution of friendships, as well as in the types of friends that are important within particular space-time settings' (Bunnell et al., 2012, p. 490). In turn, friendship is important in making and unmaking social and cultural life both geographically and temporally. In order to discuss how friendship is formed and maintained in home spaces, and how the meanings of home and family are forged through the 'doing' of friendship, this section uses the lens of food to discover the relations between home and friendship. Some argue that the boundaries between the domains of family and friendship have become less firm, with friendships now more important to people's construction of their family and social networks (Allan, 2005). Friends play significant parts in the 'doing' of people's family lives. Home is increasingly open to being a space for leisure activities with non-family members (Allan, 2005; 2008). Ideals of home are now often presented with the doors open to friends, embracing them as a part of the family's most important social network. Although most of the participants of this research emphasised that they prefer eating with friends outside of their home, in fact they often invite their best

friends to join in their family meals. For them, not only their best friends, but also their colleagues and classmates who have or had been working or studying with them for long time, can be invited to the sorts of family meals that mark an occasion: at the time of moving into in a new home, or the celebration of a family member's birthday. Moreover, some participants told me that they like to host dinner gatherings for two or three families routinely, in order to keep good relationships between these families.

In the following two sections, I will look at how the private home spaces of some of my informants were opened to outsiders (friends), drawing on the empirical evidence from three families[44]. In all of these families, eating with friends at home is a common food practice. However, these families hold different opinions on the sharing of eating in with friends: for Xue's family, eating with friends at home is a way of managing an instrumental friendship; but for Dao Dao's family and Jing's family, their shared meals and mutual invitations are ways of maintaining an equal and pure relationship between Dao Dao's parents and Jing's parents.

'Sharing food together (with friends) makes us happy': Xue's family

Entertaining friends at home confirms the openness of the home space. According to Ben Jelloun (1999, pp. 1-2), providing hospitality involves 'an action (a welcome), an attitude (the opening of oneself to the face of another […] and the opening of one's door and the offering of the space of one's house to a stranger), and a principle (disinterestedness)' (quoted from Lynch et al., 2011, p. 10). For Xue, her hospitality to friends means a social act of opening her home door for others who are potentially beneficial to her family.

Xue likes to invite her friends, including her college classmates, company colleagues and hometown friends, to her home for meals and drinks. Xue is always the host who takes charge of preparing the drinks (tea and wine), while the domestic worker employed by Xue's family is in charge of the preparation of meals for these

[44] Although some households sometimes host children's birthday parties at home for children and their friends, this chapter is focused on domestic hospitality and adult friendship. Hosting gathering meals with/for adult friends are more normal for my informants, because the average age of the researched children is around 3 years old.

gatherings. For Xue, such gathering meals are meaningful, as these meals can not only provide occasions for information exchange and building up cooperative relations for her and her husband's career, but also opportunities to spend happy times together with family members and friends:

> *[During these shared meals]… we often talk about everyone's current life, people's insights of life, share each other's happiness and ideas, and help each other. For example, several days ago, I invited some of my friends to afternoon tea in my home. One of them said that she was planning to begin her own online business. She shared her ideas and understandings of e-commerce and asked us to give her some suggestions. Although we cannot understand her idea very well, most of us tend to support her financially, as we are friends. These meals can help people. Moreover, we can share fine food, as well. When I bought luxury foodstuffs, such as wild fungus and imported wine, I would ask my friends to my home for tasting with my family. Sharing food together makes us happy [quoted from a recorded interview with Xue and her husband, 27 March 2014]!*

I had the opportunity to take part in one such gathering with Xue, her husband, sister and colleagues during lunchtime on 27 March 2014. This meal took place in Xue's second home in a high-rise apartment building in Yuexiu district (one of the central districts of Guangzhou), near her and her husband's workplaces. Xue and her husband bought this property because it not only has investment value but also has a good location that allows Xue and her husband to have a quick lunch in a homely space during workdays. Furthermore, this second home provides an ideal place to locate Xue's social gatherings:

> *Xue: This apartment is more like a place for gathering together with friends. Actually, this building is not a residential building; a part of the apartments in this building are used as offices. Therefore, it is a building that everyone can get access into. And, as we don't use this apartment as a living place, our friends feel freer in this place. They can have a short rest in the rooms of this apartment. You see, we bought a big round table and many chairs for big meals.*
>
> *Xue's husband: yes. This apartment is a place for informal meetings with friends and family members. But our home in Liwan district is only for our (nuclear) family, parents and siblings [quoted from a recorded interview with Xue and her husband, 27 March 2014].*

During my visit our shared lunch was prepared by the domestic worker. When I

arrived at Xue's apartment, the domestic worker was washing the vegetables in the kitchen. Once I told her I was invited to have lunch with Xue's family, the domestic worker made a cup of oolong tea for me and asked me to wait in the living room. After waiting for about a quarter of an hour, Xue's family and other guests arrived. Before the meal, Xue introduced me to her friends and her husband. At around one o'clock, the lunch was served. The lunch included stir-fried mustard leaves, quick fried venison, steamed eggs, boiled broccoli, rib stew, two dishes brought by Xue's sister (fried rice noodles and stewed chicken wings) and a big pot of Four Combination Soup (a medicinal soup cooked with four Chinese medicines – Dong Quai, Rhizoma Chuanxiong, Chinese herbaceous peony and Rehmannia Glutinosa).

When the dishes were set on the table, Xue recommended the venison and asked the domestic worker to serve the dishes to everyone. Although Xue said the venison had a fantastic taste, not everyone liked it: Xue's husband, sister and one of Xue's colleagues preferred the taste of venison, while I and the other colleague of Xue felt the taste of venison was nothing special – it just tasted like beef. The other food recommended by Xue – the Four Combination Soup – was highly acclaimed by everyone. Xue told us that she learned the soup's recipe of from a website about Chinese medicine. According to her, this soup is good for women's health (it helps regulate menstruation and smooth skin) with a light medicinal taste. As most of the female guests were interested in the recipe, Xue sent them a link of that website via WeChat. After the meal, we moved from the dining table to the living room for tea and fruit. Conversations about interpersonal relationships, work, children, family news and travel plans for holidays were randomly covered. Overall, the social exchanges after the meal were characterised by free-flowing conversations among friends and family members.

This event that I attended seemed to be a typical version of the social eating organised by Xue: for preparation, the domestic worker cooks some of the dishes and friends and/or relatives bring the others; during the meal, people talk about food and their lives; after the meal, both the hosts and the guests continue to talk about

anecdotes, while the domestic worker does the work of cleaning up. According to Xue, such food activities make the relations between her and her friends better and bring her more ideas about cooking, her job, child education and lifestyles. These ideas keep her energetic and in a good mood every day. Other participants also get benefits from these food activities. As one of Xue's colleagues told me after the meal, she had taken part in Xue's dinner or lunch meetings several times. These food activities let her escape from the stresses of work and keep pure and happy relationships with her friends. For Xue's husband, such food activities with Xue's friends never made him feel alienated, but allowed him to expand his social networks and know his wife better.

Therefore, on the one hand, Xue's family and domestic life is enmeshed with her friendships and adult relations with non-familial others. On the other hand, the physical and social borders of Xue's family can be intensified through these food activities with friends. Since Xue's family invested in their second home in the Yuexiu district, most of the meal gatherings have taken place in this apartment, thus confirming the different functions of Xue's two homes: the family home in the Liwan district is a private space for family life; while the second home in the Yuexiu district is a more open space for spending happy times with friends.

'We like to exchange our food with each other': Dao Dao's family and Jing's family

According to Anthony Giddens, 'people seek to maintain happiness and stability through discrete, one-to-one, good relationships rather than integration into a cohesive interconnected moral and social world' (Giddens, 1992, cited from Jamieson, 1998, p. 79). Dao Dao's parents and Jing's parents use sociable meals to maintain the 'good relationship' between them. For these two couples, this social exchange is centred on mutual domestic hospitality. Eating with friends at home involves a social and cultural exchange between the host and the guest (Mellor et al., 2010), including 'sharing and exchanging the fruits of labour, together with mutuality and reciprocity, associated originally with hunting and gathering food' which 'are at the heart of collective organization and communality' (Lashley, 2000, p. 4).

I was introduced to Dao Dao's family by Jing's mother. These two families have known each other for a long time: Dao Dao's mother and Jing's mother work in the same unit, while Dao Dao's father and Jing's father were college classmates who lived in the same student accommodation during their undergraduate studies. As an example of snowball sampling, this also speaks to the closeness of their relationship, once Jing's mother had agreed to participate in the research she promised to get Dao Dao's family to participate in my research because she was sure that Dao Dao's family would never refuse her request. Moreover, she gave me a suggestion that I could spend lunchtime with her family then eat dinner with Dao Dao's family, and conduct interviews with both families between the meals. However, this plan of researching two families in the same day was not possible because Dao Dao's family was busy hosting distant relatives when Jing's parents were free to take part in the research. Therefore, this section draws on separate interviews and research sessions with Jing's family and Dao Dao's family.

According to Jing's parents, the sharing of meals by these two families is part of their regular food activities. However, these meals do not always involve every family member:

> *Jing's father: when my parents come to Guangzhou, we sometimes call Dao Dao's parents to join our family meals.*
>
> *Jing's mother: for his family [the original family of Jing's father], the only culture is eating! Meeting with friends means eating with friends, visiting children's home means eating with children [laugh].*
>
> *Jing's father: they [my parents] often bring special food from my hometown. We like to share these foods with our best friends.*
>
> *Jing's mother: but we like to have meals with them [Dao Dao's parents] without our parents and children. Children are too noisy [laugh] …… and when sitting with the parents, we cannot talk about everything we want to talk about, you know, we don't want them to know everything about us [quoted from a recorded interview with Jing's parents, 18 January 2014].*

That is, such 'gathering meals' are regular social activities for maintaining the friendship between Dao Dao's parents and Jing's parents, but sometimes at the expense of breaking down the intergenerational ties in these two families, at least for a short

time. Because, in general, friendship emphasises equality, balance and reciprocity (Allan, 2005), these meals do not always take place in Jing's family home. When Dao Dao's grandparents send specialities from their hometowns, Dao Dao's family would ask Jing's family to share the food in their home. Regardless of the location, the meals are always cooked by both the hosts and the guests:

> *Chen: when you eat together, who prepares the food?*
>
> *Dao Dao's mother: all of us share the work of cooking. Sometimes, when we arrived at her (refers to Jing's mother) home, her parents or parent-in-laws have already finished cooking for us. But most of the time, the food work is shared by everyone equally.*
>
> *Dao Dao's father: that is, when we are invited to their home, we are cooking and eating in their home. Nothing different from that in our own home ……*
>
> *Dao Dao's mother: the only different thing is, we don't need to buy food. When they are invited to our home, we prepare food together [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014].*

Therefore, the meals for these two families are prepared and accomplished by every participant from each family, irrespective of which home this activity takes place in. These shared food practices make each home a social space in which the friendship between Jing's parents and Dao Dao's parents is sustained and strengthened.

Furthermore, such shared meals do not only promote the emotional communication between the two families, but it also brings them new tastes. As Jing's parents are both from Guangdong province but Dao Dao's parents come from Northern China, they have different tastes for food: Jing's parents like boiled or steamed food with a mild taste, whereas Dao Dao's parents prefer oily, salty and spicy food. For these two couples, occasionally trying food which is different from what they eat every day not only means tasting new things and enjoying the diversity of life, but also becomes a way in which they can understand each other better. According to Dao Dao's mother:

> *Actually, trying different tastes, for me, is a fantastic experience. Although we have different tastes than them (Jing's parents), I like the dishes they cooked for us. I think, for me, eating with them helps me to know them better, their life and their culture. Knowing each other better might keep our relationship longer. And, doing things*

together might make our relations better as well [quoted from a recorded interview with Dao Dao's parents, 20 April 2014].

In this case, such food activities are not just processes of homemaking but a way of making home with friends.

Conclusion

As discussed in other family studies, the negotiation of the blurred and fluid boundaries between the wider society and the domestic have to be taken into careful consideration, because 'family practices are part of a much wider and larger set of complex social practices' (Morgan, 2011, p. 89; see also Wasoff & Cunningham-Burley, 2005; Gabb, 2008). Providing four empirical cases of home-based 'gathering meals' with both distant relatives and friends, this chapter demonstrates the fluid and flexible boundaries of the home in contemporary Guangzhou. The main findings of this chapter argue that hospitality in the domestic sphere can be considered as a family practice that opens up the home spatially, at the same time as recognising differences between close and distant kin or family members and friends. Through domestic hospitality, wider social relationships of kinship and friendship are negotiated in the home.

The findings have thus also affirmed that both friendship and kinship are important in people's everyday life and have significant social effects on family life in contemporary Guangzhou. Others have argued (Ma et al., 2006; Shen, 2013) that kinship is still one of the most important social relationships in China. In this chapter, the cases of Ming's family and Xi Xi's family demonstrated that entertaining distant relatives is evaluated as a family duty and responsibility, though one that may also have instrumental benefits of future support or reciprocity. Friendship is also an important social relationship that influences family life. As shown in the previous sections, Xue's family organises shared meals with friends both for their social pleasures and to establish supportive relationships with friends. These friendly food activities, in turn, have positive impacts on Xue's family relationship. And Dao Dao's family and Jing's family are bonded through eating together in each other's family homes.

The act of hospitality is a way to deconstruct the binary concepts of inside/outside, proximity/distance and inclusion/exclusion in the formation of social identities and relationships (Barnett, 2005). Through social meals at home, a connection between family and the wider society is established, but one that still recognises distinctions between private and public and the household and external settings. On the one hand, the host family often set a distinction of 'us' and 'them' when organising meal gatherings. For example, Ming's mother thinks her relationship with her distant relatives is a forced one rather than a close or intimate one, therefore, she considers her preparation for receiving such outsiders as a burden. Also, when eating together with distant relatives during the Chinese New Year holidays, the boundary between the public and the private was confirmed in Xi Xi's family home – her home is divided into a public part for sharing meals with relatives and a private one for closer family. However, on the other hand, when cooking or eating together, the boundaries are blurred. For instance, during the family meetings of Dao Dao's family and Jing's family, their homes become an articulation for two separate families. My overall argument, then, is that whilst the boundaries between public and private domains are still important in people's understandings and constructions of the meanings of family and home, such boundaries become more dynamic through practices of hospitality.

Finally, the practices of hospitality discussed above illustrate different ways of relating to others. Teller (2000, p. 42) identifies three types of hospitality in the private realm: the 'appropriate motive', that ranges from 'pleasing others to being dutiful'; the 'reciprocal motives', which include both 'giving and getting pleasure as well as hoping to have the hospitality returned'; and the 'non-reciprocal motives', through which 'the host seeks to benefit in some way'. In this chapter, these three relational dynamics have overlapped in each case, but in varying ways. Although all of the families consider hospitality at home as an appropriate way to configure their social networks, they practice it differently as they establish different identities and relationships with different social groups. In each case though, the family practice of hospitality produces the home space as a site for encountering difference and relating to the world.

Chapter 9

Eating out and urban family life

This final empirical chapter turns to a discussion about the public settings of family-based eating. In other words, having considered how wider social networks are brought into and performed through the home in Chapter 8, in Chapter 9 I address how domestic life extends into the wider world of urban public space. My specific focus is on practices of 'eating out'. Drawing on data from the China Statistical Yearbook 1992 and 2000, Ma and his co-researchers (Ma et al., 2006) point out that in urban China in the 1990s the share of meals taken at home decreased while, simultaneously, household expenditure on food away from home increased because of the growth of household income and numbers of restaurants. As Klein (2007) indicates in his research on contemporary developments in commercial cuisines in urban Guangzhou, the relationship between domestic and commercial foodscapes is an important area for food studies. With the aim of exploring some of the relations between family-based food practices and wider consumer cultures in urban Guangzhou, this chapter examines how people 'make' and 'do' their families through public eating in different urban food spaces, including local and international restaurants and street vendors.

Guangzhou has a reputation for its culinary culture within China. Since the time of the Republic of China (1912-1949), there has been a folk adage of the ideal life in China: being born in Suzhou (famed for its prosperity), living in Hangzhou (famed for its beautiful scenery), eating in Guangzhou (renowned for its cooking skills and abundant restaurants), and dying in Liuzhou (well-known for being a coffin manufacturing area). Indeed, the association of Guangzhou and good eating can be dated back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) (Chen, 1994); that is, Guangzhou has been famous for its 'good' food for over a thousand years. Nowadays, people in China 'regard Cantonese (the regional cuisine in Guangdong province) as one of the nation's best regional cuisines, and even as its premier cuisine' (Simoons 1991: 513).

In contemporary Guangzhou, consuming food outside the home is a popular and

growing trend for its urban residents. After the establishment of the New China (the PRC), the local government established the phrase 'eating in Guangzhou' as the brand of Guangzhou, actively encouraged the development of Cantonese cuisine and local restaurants (Cai et al., 2006; Yan et al., 2011; Zheng, 2011). It also strengthened the supervision and regulation of local catering enterprises (Yan et al., 2011) in order to better protect consumer rights and health. Since the 1990s, Chinese urban consumer cultures have seen a growing desire for dining out experiences due to overall income growth, consumer preference shifts and the transitioning economic environment in China's cities (Ma et al., 2006). Recent studies on culinary cultures in urban Guangzhou have reflected this trend and sought to map various facets of it.

A key theme has been the trend towards the cultural diversification of the restaurant sector in Guangzhou, in part related to the increasing population of domestic migrants in recent years (SBGZ, 2011). Although the local cuisine in Guangzhou is Cantonese cuisine, restaurants from other Chinese cuisines and with 'exotic' food from other countries are widely distributed in the city centre. These restaurants encode food with regional, ethnic or global cultures from different places and create encounters with different people and culinary cultures through consumption. According to Cai et al. (2004), there are three main characteristics to restaurant location in Guangzhou: first, most of the restaurants are located in the Central Business District (CBD); second, most of the restaurants which sell Cantonese cuisine are located in the CBD and central area, while most of the restaurants providing Hunan and Sichuan cuisine are located in the east and west ends of the central areas; and third, the restaurants selling Northeast cuisine and Western food are scattered across Guangzhou. Because of this cultural diversity, the local cuisine has also begun to incorporate new tastes as a way of attracting more consumers. As Klein (2007) indicates, this innovation of Cantonese cuisine with the help of 'outside' tastes is not only a culinary matter – combining the traditional (light and mild) flavours of Cantonese food with the heavier flavours produced by cooking with chillies and other spices – but also a cultural articulation of historic local tastes and transformative

transregional forces. This articulation can be expressed in other ways too. For instance, there is a nostalgic/traditional trend in Guangzhou's restaurant scene, targeting the city's growing middle-class consumers (Klein, 2009). Here, restaurants and food shops decorate the physical food space in 'the "antique style" (*fanggu*)' and label their dishes and snacks as 'traditional Guangzhou style' (p. 46-47). Therefore, in contemporary Guangzhou, consumers can eat both 'local' and 'outside' cuisines in different commercial food spaces; and they can do so in ways that are associated with ideals of both the 'traditional' and the 'modern'.

The proliferation of commercial food spaces, in particular restaurants, in urban Guangzhou has influenced local residents' family lives, especially Xioakang households oriented to contemporary trends in local consumer culture. For the families that I researched, eating out is one of the most common family leisure activities in public space. As mentioned in passing in the previous chapters, eating out is a way to celebrate special days (for example, family members' birthdays and traditional festivals) and more generally to express love and care for each other (being cast as something of a 'treat'). In order to provide a snapshot of the relations between family and public eating cultures, this chapter focuses on eating out as a familial and, in that sense, also a 'domestic' practice. Substantively, the interpretation draws on 'ethnographic' eating-out trips and in-depth interviews with three of the case-study families, focusing on three different types and spaces of public eating. Conceptually, I draw on wider theorisations of the relations between eating out and family life, in particular those developed within British social science (Warde & Martens 2000). The main argument of this chapter indicates that, in the social and cultural context of urban Guangzhou, eating out in different food spaces is a way of making family values and a way of establishing family responsibilities and relationships. As existing theories and empirical accounts of eating out are overwhelming constructed from the Western perspective, this chapter can be considered as a contribution to the wider literature on eating out through mapping the relations between public eating and private life in a non-Western context.

Eating out as a way of family-making

Food consumption has provided an entry point for many geographers concerned with understanding the spaces and scales of consumer cultures in the contemporary world. Consumption refers to the 'selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair, and disposal of goods and services' (Leslie, 2009, p. 269). Consumption has its own geographies that blur the boundaries between local and global, work and leisure, and public and private domains (Crang, 1998; Miller et al., 1998). Food consumption in the public sphere is an important component of contemporary consumer society. Urban commodity spaces, such as supermarkets, shopping malls and restaurants, often 'provide culinary temptations to urbanites' and 'forge the rituals and rhymes of city living' (Bell & Valentine, 1997, p. 121). When food is being consumed, it goes through a process of 'becoming' through the encounters it stages between producers, retailers and consumers (Brembeck, 2013). Food consumption provides a lens to represent and construct the meanings of place and identity (Crang, 1998). For example, in Jon May's (1996a; 1996b) research on food consumption in the transnational/global context of London, he points out that what we eat is always also a way of proclaiming our understanding of ourselves and our social status. Specifically, he indicates that in globalised London the new cultural class – professionals and managers who are employed in the 'cultural' or 'caring' professions, education, the media and so on – tend to use their consumption of 'exotic' food to sustain their class position. In so doing, they also often help to reproduce a set of racist imaginative geographies associated with long-standing cultural repertoires of exoticism. For May, the new cultural class is, on the one hand, keen on constructing an image of essential 'Englishness' in London while, on the other hand, expresses a desire for cultural diversity and difference in their neighbourhoods. The broader argument, then, is that their eating out is bound up with a wider cultural politics of class and ethnicity in which their own and others' identities are in play.

The relations between food consumption and identity are not limited to questions

of class and ethnicity. In their research on young women's leisure life in Beijing, Jin and Whitson (2014) illustrate how these women negotiate gender norms through food and drinks consumption in clubs, bars, restaurants and coffee shops with their friends and strangers. On the one hand, these gender negotiations reinforce the hegemonic masculinity of public spaces of Beijing (e.g. when eating out, men are always in charge of ordering food and paying the bills). On the other hand, young women's food and drink consumption can also challenge gender norms (e.g. women should protect their husbands social reputation in public spaces). Therefore, food consumption is not just an individual act related to specific food commodities, but a broader suite of socio-cultural processes that reproduce and reconstruct the social aspects of urban life.

Eating out is one of the major forms of food consumption in urban areas. As I have shown throughout this thesis, eating is not merely a practice undertaken in order to fulfil functional needs such as nourishment and satiating hunger, but also operates as a practice that ranges from the sensory and personal levels to the social and cultural ones with implications for subjectivities (Meah, 2013; Giard, 1998). Eating out, based on this definition of eating, is a food practice that engages in public eating spaces which encode multiple cultural and social meanings. When we eat out, we unavoidably encounter other people, and we frequently encounter foods with different cultural meanings and from different places. Combined processes of household transformation and the growth of mass consumer cultures during the twentieth century, saw some functions within the home that require time and labour (such as food preparation) being 'moved into the industrial landscape in public spheres, such as restaurants and institutional catering,' freeing household members, especially women, from daily unpaid food work (Julier, 2013, p. 344). This, of course, was not a complete process but it led to public systems of food preparation/delivery becoming one of the options for domestic food practice. In multiple consumer cultures, eating out for pleasure has become an increasingly popular leisure activity. In turn, like other aspects of consumer culture, this practice intersects with the reconfiguration of social identity, in particular gender identity and ethnic/national identity (Collins, 2008; Jin & Whitson, 2014) and social distinction and

interactions (Warde & Martens, 2000; Crowther, 2013). That is, eating out is one of the significant constitutions of modern life in urban areas of the Western metropolis, and an important part of urban foodscapes (Bell & Valentine, 1997).

The approach I take to this public eating culture follows that of Warde and Martens (2000), viewing it in terms of a 'domestic' practice of 'eating out'. Eating out, I suggest, is not an entirely separate form of consumption to 'eating in', but embedded in social and moral concerns towards family members. Although the increasing popularity of eating out has been associated with worries about the decline of family meals and hence family values, in reality, the relationship between domestic and public foodscapes is more complex. Eating in and eating out are not a binary opposition; instead, they are interdependent. As Warde and Martens (2000, p. 102-105) indicate, the social and cultural meanings of everyday domestic organisation inform and shape practices of eating out. For them, how people understand eating out is not only about considering its attributed cultural meanings, but also those attached to eating in. Thus understandings of proper family meals can be recognised as compelling forces in decisions on eating out, as people always situate them in relation to the contradictions of modern living that aspire to both 'proper' family food provision and the convenience of commercial food services. Moreover, Warde and Martens argue that eating out may strengthen rather than corrode family bonds, for three reasons: firstly, eating out is often done in the company of family members and thus performs family relationships in a new setting; secondly, eating out can relieve household members from domestic chores and eliminate the servile aspects of domestic food provision; and, finally, commercial food venues (such as restaurants) can provide a more conducive environment that frees people from the table manners and family obligations which are attached to domestic meals. In this sense, eating out should be considered as an important family event that reconfigures everyday family life and socially reconstructs and maintains the family relationship. Public cultures of eating out are not simply threats to family life, but rather part of the social practice of family life and a commodification of family experiences (Warde & Martens, 2000; Murcott, 2012; Julier,

2013).

During the experience of family-based eating out, the meanings of family and family identities are recreated by the time and space of public eating. For example, drawing on the Foucauldian notion of surveillance and governmentality, Fox et al (2009) see pregnant women's eating and breastfeeding in public spaces as a way of doing pregnancy and motherhood under a form of moral obligation and neoliberal governance. Discussing the stories of two women – one of them received a suggestion to order a soft drink instead of wine in a restaurant when she was about five months pregnant; and the other woman discussed her friend's embarrassing experience of breastfeeding in the corner of a fish and chips café – they develop a wider argument about how eating and feeding are caught up in wider dynamics of neoliberal self-governance under forms of public surveillance. In her studies of public eating in Bangkok (the capital city of Thailand), Yasmeen (1996; 2000) establishes a tight relationship between the public space and private life. She points out that the trend towards dual-career families is the major influence on the increase of eating out in Bangkok, because both men and women have no time to cook. But this trend does not threaten the value of family meals, as most of the family dinners still take places at home although the food for these family dinners is frequently prepared food from small food shops. Her arguments also highlight the importance of changing gender roles in the combination of the public and the private in Bangkok's foodscapes. For her, public eating changes the traditional family role – that women should stay in the back areas of the kitchen and take responsibility for preparing family meals – and at the same time reproduces it (for example, women are not allowed to drink alcohol in public eating spaces). In these ways, public food spaces become the products of urbanisation and industrialisation through providing a public environment for the gathering and equal relations between both genders, at the same time, reproducing traditional gender relations and norms. Therefore, family-based eating out – in both Western and Asian contexts – not only commercialises family meals, but also recreates the meanings of public eating spaces and individuals' family roles.

Inspired by this work on the relations between eating out and the making of family life, this chapter aims to uncover how family-based food practices in public spaces remap the meanings of urban food spaces, and in turn, how different commercial food spaces relate to the 'doing' of families through food. I use three examples of eating out in different commercial food venues – a local restaurant which sells both Cantonese cuisine and cuisines from other places within or beyond China; international fast food restaurants (McDonald's and KFC); and street food stalls – to discuss how these food consumptions (re)produce family identities, forge family relations through the meanings of commercial food spaces, and make and blur the distinction between the domestic and the public.

Family meals in mid-range and upscale restaurants

This section begins to explore these relations between eating out experiences and family-making based on an interview with Xiao Tian's parents and my shared dinner with their family in the Yuan Hua restaurant (a local restaurant of mid-price range, near Xiao Tian's home). According to statistical data from dianping.com[45], as of February 2015 there were 68,307 restaurants in Guangzhou. Among these restaurants, the mid-range and upscale restaurants selling any type of cuisine (such as Yuan Hua) were a common preference amongst the researched families. They were seen as ideal places for family meals away from home, because these restaurants are clean, comfortable and able to provide a range of tasty food for varied tastes, all with good service.

The reasons for eating out together in restaurants vary from family to family. According to Xiao Tian's parents, a number of factors lead them to eat out on a regular basis, including a desire to experience different culinary cultures, escape from the stresses of domestic food work, and treat themselves and their dearest family members. Immediate family relations are important here, particularly the parent-child relationship (see also Lozada, 2000). For Xiao Tian's parents, eating out is an

[45] Dianping.com is a nationwide website which releases crowd-sourced reviews (dianping means review in Chinese) on local businesses (e.g. restaurants, cinemas, pubs, cafes and department stores) in multiple cities across China.

alternative way to accomplish their family relationship with their child. According to Xiao Tian's father, Xiao Tian is always the decision maker with respect to the location of their family meals:

> *Chen: how do you make the decision of where to have your family meals?*
>
> *Xiao Tian's father: it depends on my daughter's ideas. The restaurant where we have dinner tonight is her favourite restaurant. Normally, we have our dinner in this restaurant twice or three times a week. So, the waiters and waitresses are familiar with us. You saw how they took my daughter to play in the garden when we arrived the restaurant. I think my daughter likes this restaurant because she can find people to play with her (laugh)! And she likes Pizza Hut as well.*
>
> *Chen: she likes pizza?*
>
> *Xiao Tian's father: pizza and fried rice.*
>
> *Xiao Tian's mother: in effect, we follow our daughter to have meals [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's parents, 30 November 2013]!*

As Xiao Tian likes eating out, having family meals in restaurants has become a routinised family activity. Her preferences are vital, both because these meals are a treat for Xiao Tian and because if she is relaxed this makes the experience easier for her parents too. Eating out in a few, favourite locations allows the public reproduction of domestic ease and familiarity. During such family meals in restaurants, Xiao Tian's parents often play different roles at the dining table. Take my eating experience with Xiao Tian's family in Yuan Hua restaurant, for example: Xiao Tian's mother took care of Xiao Tian's food choices while Xiao Tian's father educated Xiao Tian on how to be polite in front of a guest. Our dinner was located in a private room[46] on the fifth floor of Yuan Hua restaurant. As Xiao Tian's family goes to this restaurant frequently, all three family members were familiar with the eating environment and serving staff of the restaurant. Before our dinner, a waitress served us a plate of fried peanuts as an appetizer. When Xiao Tian saw it, she grabbed a handful of peanuts into her bowl. However, her mother

[46] It is common in China that restaurants consist of two dining areas: a hall which is crowded with tables; and several private rooms. In each private room there are only one or two tables. The average spend in the private rooms is often higher than that in the hall; in some restaurants, the service charge is a little higher than in the hall; in others there is a minimum charge in the private rooms. As these rooms are separated from the noisy hall, most of my informants liked to locate their family meals, or indeed meals with important people during business meetings, in them.

took most of the peanuts away and prevented her from eating too many fried foods as, in her opinion, children might be made sickly if they consume too much dried and fried food in a dry season (this dinner was taken in winter, the driest season in Guangzhou).

After all the dishes were served, Xiao Tian's father asked Xiao Tian to be polite and to say 'please try the dishes first' to me, as I was a guest at their family meal. During the meal, Xiao Tian refused to stay in her seat – intermittently she ran to the window and played with the curtain or went out of the door to find her familiar waiters/waitresses. Xiao Tian's father did not stop her doing so initially but began to 'discipline' her eating behaviour when she began to make too much noise. In a severe voice, he gave his daughter two options – to finish her meal first then go out to play; or to stop eating entirely and to go out to play straight away. Xiao Tian chose the first option and finished her meal very quickly, then went out to play with her mother. When only Xiao Tian's father and I remained in the room, I expressed my feeling that he had been a little bit too strict in forcing his three-year-old daughter to sit down to eat by herself. Xiao Tian's father told me that being strict is his way of educating Xiao Tan. He said, 'If you don't force her to eat in the right ways (when she is very young), she cannot act in the right way in school and later in society' (quoted from author's research diary, 30 November 2013). It is obvious that, although Xiao Tian's mother and father focused on different parental tasks at the table, both of them took the occasion as one in which they should 'do parenting' with respect to Xiao Tian's food choices and table manners.

My own presence as a researcher may well have been an influence, but not necessarily a misleading one. As an outside observer of their family meal, I intensified a dynamic already present in family eating out: namely, the performing of domestic dynamics in public. In contrast to Warde and Martens' (2000) suggestion that the environments provided by restaurants can make people escape from the 'regulations' adhered to during domestic meals, for Xiao Tian's family, the restaurant environment restages the family obligations and norms of behaviour attached to domestic meals. Xiao Tian's parents cast eating out as an education in public behaviour, whilst at the same time ameliorating the sense of 'being on stage' and 'under surveillance' by eating

in a familiar restaurant and in one of its private rooms. In this way, the restaurant acts as both a public and a domestic dining area in which parental controls over the child take place.

Family meals in restaurants were also important to Xiao Tian's family in building a good relationship between Xiao Tian's parents and grandparents:

> *Xiao Tian's mother: when my parents are living with us, they always join in our eating out. They like to try different dishes in different restaurants. But they sometimes refuse to go out for meals, as they consider dining out as a kind of wasting time and money. Sometimes, my mother said 'the food in restaurants is expensive! If I cook at home, I can spend less money while making more dishes!' [laugh]*
>
> *Xiao Tian's father: although they kept on complaining the food in the restaurants is neither delicious nor worth the money, they were very happy when we took them out to restaurants. I think if I don't treat them in the restaurants anymore, they might be upset.*
>
> *Xiao Tian's mother: yes, in fact, they like to be treated in restaurants by their offspring. They always say they don't like eating out, but still enjoy doing so [quoted from a recorded interview with Xiao Tian's parents, 30 November 2013].*

This quotation suggests that eating in restaurants with grandparents is a way for the younger generation to perform filial piety to the older generation. Once again, the complexities of this intergenerational relationship mark the practice. When eating out with just Xiao Tian (and, on occasion, an accompanying researcher), her parents look to combine an indulgent, expressive love with the work of disciplining their child. When eating out with Xiao Tian's grandparents, there is both a sharing and commonality established – they all eat out together – as well as a recognisable sense of generational difference – with the grandparents signalling their different perceptions of value and household economics. The grandparents' ambivalent attitude – both complaining about the cost of eating out and being pleased to be invited – reflects these two dynamics and how they frame the 'value' of a restaurant meal differently.

Overall, in this first example we have seen a two-way process across the boundaries of private and public space. On the one hand, we have seen how restaurants are domesticated through shared family meals (the public is domesticated). On the

other hand, we have also seen how restaurants provide Xiao Tian's family with public sites for making their ideal family relations outside the home space. For Xiao Tian's family, these dynamics of domestication play out across three generations.

Multi-functional international fast food restaurants

With the globalisation of the urban landscape in contemporary China, international fast food brands, such as McDonald's and KFC, have become common restaurants in urban areas. These restaurants hold interesting meanings for Chinese consumers. According to Yu (2014), Chinese consumers do not view Western fast food restaurants as cheap and fast places to eat; in other words, their 'Western' meanings and practices are not simply imported with them. Instead, they see these places as restaurants with friendly and efficient service, and as offering windows on to the Western world which reflect their 'new' (as in modern and/or westernised) lifestyles and identities. However, for most of my informants, McDonald's and KFC are somewhat differently framed: as restaurants selling unhealthy, but fast and cheap, food. As opposed to the mid-range and upscale restaurants (exemplified by Yuan Hua restaurant in the discussion above), many informants do not recognise these fast food restaurants as proper places for family meals, because of the growing trend of green and healthy consumption in urban China (see details in Chapter 1).

In this section, I use discussions about McDonald's and KFC with Mei Mei's parents and grandparents to illustrate how Guangzhou consumers create the meanings of Western fast food restaurants through their family-based eating out. Mei Mei's parents sometimes have their meals in such fast food restaurants during their leisure activities at weekends, as these places provide fast, cheap and convenient food for a quick lunch break:

> *Mei Mei's father: If we don't go back to Guangzhou [as mentioned in Chapter 6, Mei Mei's parents work and live in Shenzhen, and go back to their family home in Guangzhou regularly twice to three times per month], we would go out for lunches during weekends.*

Mei Mei's mother: we are used to going shopping or to cinemas during the weekends when we stay together without our parents and daughter. We like to eat in McDonald's or KFC.

Chen: you like fast food?

Mei Mei's father: not really. I don't like fried food. If I eat fast food every day I'll die earlier [laugh]. We make our decisions about eating in McDonald's or KFC because the food (in these restaurants) is fast and convenient. We don't like to waste too much time in eating.

Mei Mei's mother: and they're cheap. But the most important reason is (the foods are) fast and convenient. Our weekend activities are not eating fast food, but shopping and films [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's family, 7 December 2013]!

This quotation suggests that international fast food restaurants are seen as proper places for the young couple's quick meals when they are unable to get back home during mealtimes and as a secondary part of leisure time and space devoted to consumption ('shopping and films'). However, in contrast to the findings in earlier work on Western fast food in China (Watson, 1997; Lozada, 2000; Yu, 2014), they are not seen as ideal places for 'treats' when eating out, as the Western style fried foods in McDonald's and KFC are now understood to be unhealthy. Both Mei Mei's parents and grandparents expressed their understanding of KFC as a junk food restaurant and insisted that it is an inappropriate place for children to eat:

Chen: does she [Mei Mei] like McDonald's and KFC?

Mei Mei's father: of course.

Mei Mei's mother: she likes eating in KFC.

Mei Mei's grandmother: fried food is unhealthy. Many foreigners are overweight because they eat too many [junk foods in] McDonald's and KFCs. We don't prohibit her (Mei Mei) from eating junk food, but we don't take her to KFC too much.

Mei Mei's mother: we don't think KFC is the best children's restaurant. But children like fast food. Have you met children who can say no to KFC [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's family, 7 December 2013]?

Obviously in this quotation, there can be seen a distinction between tastes across the generations in the family: the adults do not like the fast food in KFC and consider

such food to be unhealthy but Mei Mei, like many other Chinese children, likes Western fast food. As shown elsewhere, the Western brand fast food restaurants are preferred by Chinese children and influence other generations' decisions about eating out. Lozada (2000) indicates in his research on KFC in Beijing that because children prefer to eat in KFC, their parents often take them to this restaurant in order to show their love and care of the children. In this way, KFC becomes a public place for doing parenting. That is, eating in KFC is important to both children's food consumption and the formation of family relations, particularly parent-child relations, in urban China. In the case of Mei Mei's family, the dynamics are complicated by a (more widely prevalent) parental understanding of Western fast food as both appealing and problematic/ unhealthy. In this context, practising love and care for Mei Mei requires more than just visiting KFC, or indeed banning her from ever eating there. Although these adults take McDonald's and/or KFC as an improper place for children to eat, they still take Mei Mei to this restaurant on occasion, as this five-year-old girl likes to eat and play in a KFC near their home:

> *Mei Mei's grandmother: Have you noticed the KFC outside the main gate [of our gated community]? We take her [Mei Mei] to that KFC, once or twice a month. She (Mei Mei) likes to play on the slide in that KFC while eating there.*
>
> *Mei Mei's mother: I think she prefers the slide to the food there (laugh)! She can't remember what kinds of food is in KFC's menu, but knows there is a slide in that restaurant. [Showing me a picture on her smartphone of Mei Mei playing on the slide in the KFC with a happy facial expression] You can see from it, she's captivated by the slide.*
>
> *Mei Mei's grandmother: I take her there for playing, not for eating. I've mentioned before, fried food is nothing good to children [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's family, 7 December 2013].*

Moreover, taking Mei Mei to KFC, for these adults, is a way to reduce their child caring work and a way to strengthen their controls over the eating behaviour of Mei Mei:

> *Mei Mei's grandmother: when Mei Mei was in our hometown, she always wanted to go out when we fed her. It's not a good behaviour.*

Mei Mei's father: many parents feed their children in the children's playing zone within our community. The children running in front and one parent following him or her. We don't want our kid eating like this.

Mei Mei's mother: we want her to sit down to eat.

Mei Mei's grandmother: she (Mei Mei) can sit down to eat in KFC. That KFC (near our home) has a children's area with a big slide. But food and drinks are not allowed in this area. When I go KFC with her, I force her to play after eating. When she plays with other children, I can take a seat and rest in the restaurant [quoted from a recorded interview with Mei Mei's family, 7 December 2013].

In this sense, this KFC is not recognised solely as a place for fast food, or an eating place with an international/foreign food environment; rather, it is considered to be a children's playground and a place where parental and grandparental surveillance over eating can be enacted. Mei Mei's eating at KFC, much like her parents' frequenting of it during their weekends away from her in Shenzen, is to be understood within the flows of everyday family practices and relations.

'Covertly' eating in the street

Most of the writings on eating out equate public eating to the eating experience in restaurants. This has led to the comparative neglect of the social and cultural roles of street food in the formation of eating practices in the public sphere. Street vending is ubiquitous in most Asian countries. It is defined as a 'person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure from which to sell' (Bhowmik, 2005, p. 1). Although street food has long been associated with the working-class lifestyle, it also provides the middle class a new food opportunity in urban areas (Crowther, 2013). Indeed, some of my informants liked to consume food from street vendors, casting street food as both cheap and tasty.

However, cheap and convenient street food is often associated with hygiene and safety problems. In recent years, food unsafety issues in China have often revolved around street vendors, and have been widely reported by national and local media. For example, in an article published in *People's Daily* (a nationwide newspaper in China),

the vegetables and meat in the spicy soup known as *Malatang* (a popular street food in China) were reported to be unclean and contain excessive heavy metals (People's Daily, 21-06-2013). More recently, in a news report from the *Southern Metropolis Daily* (a local newspaper in Guangzhou), seven patients had been diagnosed with nitrite poisoning after consuming duck feet from a street vendor near Meihua Gang underground station (Kuang et al., 16-09-2014). Because of these disadvantages to street food, most of the informants expressed that they did not buy street food for their family meals, where they were concerned with the safety of others, especially dependents.

However, although street food is often understood to be unsafe, it is also difficult to say no to for many. Dou Dou's mother, for example, is a street food fan, even though she thinks of street vendors' stalls as illegal places that supply unsanitary food. In this section, I want to investigate the relations between eating street food and doing family using the case of street food consumption by Dou Dou's mother. Dou Dou's mother is a full-time manager in a local advertisement company. She takes the main responsibility for food shopping in her family. She usually buys food every other day for her family from the food market and the bakery in her neighbourhood, on her way back home from work. Surrounding the food market there are many street hawkers selling low-price food, accessories and clothing on the sidewalk. After her food shopping tasks, Dou Dou's mother sometimes looks around among these vendors and buys some street food for herself:

> *Dou Dou's mother: I am used to buying some bread and yoghurt from the bakery near the market for my son. And I sometimes buy some snacks around the market for myself, as well.*
>
> *Chen: what kind of snacks?*
>
> *Dou Dou's father: she likes street food [laugh]!*
>
> *Dou Dou's mother: I like the spicy soup. It is tasty [laug]! I can never reject this cheap, spicy and lovely snack [quoted from a recorded interview with Dou Dou's parents, 21 March 2014].*

Although Dou Dou's mother likes eating street food, she considers it to be 'junk

food' that has no advantage to her health. Indeed, influenced by the news coverage on food safety problems from TV, newspapers and the Internet, Dou Dou's mother has begun to be fearful and anxious about the food environment in urban public space. This personal anxiety relates to wider social dynamics (Jackson, 2010). After the interviews with Dou Dou's parents, I stayed at their home for about an hour, as it was raining heavily outside. During that hour, Dou Dou's mother watched TV with me in the living room, while Dou Dou's father was helping Dou Dou with his homework in the bedroom. When we saw the news on a poisonous food accident in a local kindergarten – many children were found poisoned after a child shared some food with his classmate – Dou Dou's mother talked about her fears to me. She told me that she worried about sharing food with others. She said, if someone gets ill after eating Dou Dou's food, everyone would blame him even if his food was safe and clean. Also, she worried about how to explain to her son her fears regarding food shared by others, as she had always told him that sharing food with other children is a good behaviour. Thus this personal anxiety has implications for the negotiation of family identities and relations with the wider society (Jackson, 2010; Gong & Jackson, 2012), in this case, the anxiety of Dou Dou's mother not only influences her parenting but also makes her understand the public as a dangerous space. Going back to the street food discussions, Dou Dou's mother sees her consumption of street food as something done 'covertly' on the street, a practice to which she succumbs but from which she protects her son:

> *I neither buy such food for my son nor eat it in front of my son; otherwise, he should be attracted by it. I think that a little contaminated food does no harm to us adults, but it is a hazard to little children's health, as their immune systems are underdeveloped [quoted from a recorded interview with Dou Dou's parents, 21 March 2014].*

This quotation not only shows that Dou Dou's mother considers street food as improper food for all children, but also expresses her care of her son's health. For her, street food is an option for adults who want to try tasty and cheap food away from home, but dangerous for children because of its poor hygiene and regulation. Therefore, as a woman who likes spicy food, Dou Dou's mother sometimes treats

herself with cheap, spicy soup from street vendors; while, as a mother, she avoids eating the (potentially contaminated) street food in front of her son and does not allow her son to consume such food, in order to keep her son in a healthy and secure food environment.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the process of family-making as it takes place in urban public eating spaces through three empirical cases of family-related eating out in Guangzhou. I have argued that eating out is both a way of doing family relationships and identities and creating family spaces in public settings. This argument has added something new to the existing work conducted in the Western, in particular British, context. When talking about eating in public food spaces, many Anglo-phone works conducted by Western scholars have focused on the social differentiation made by eating out and the social effects of the domestic on the practices of eating out (Warde & Martens, 2000; Julier, 2013; May, 1996a; 1996b). However, the main focal points of this chapter – how the meanings of different public eating spaces are recreated by family-based food practices and how the moral norms (such as taking the singleton child as the family centre) and consumer cultures (e.g. the fear of unsafe street food) in non-Western societies – are under-researched. Therefore, the findings of this chapter have added a new type of family discourse to the Western-dominated studies of eating out.

In the process of family-based eating out, urban food spaces are given new meanings by the researched Xiaokang families. Mid-range and upscale restaurants are considered as proper places for family meals outside the home. International fast food restaurants are thought to be (somewhat unhealthy) places for quick meals within the context of other leisure pursuits. Street foods are thought to be improper for family meals and children but an allowed risk for adults who like cheap but tasty snacks. As a result, the main findings of this chapter have confirmed and developed the emphasis on family as an important context of contemporary consumption (Miller, 1998b; 1998c;

Miller et al., 1998) through the three aspects outlined in the next paragraph.

Firstly, family life in urban Guangzhou has been commoditised through family-based public eating. When eating out, people tend to express love and care for their families and establish their ideal family relationships through consuming particular products from particular places. Therefore, eating out, for them, not only means consuming food away from home, but also refers to a family-based experience and a way of family-making in urban areas. For example, Xiao Tian's parents consider eating in restaurants as one means for constructing their proper family relationships; while Dou Dou's mother keeps street food stalls as a personal indulgence when shopping for her household, in order to protect her children from the disadvantages of such food and food environments. Therefore, eating in public space, for these families, is not only a matter of subsistence, but also a way of making the 'proper' family through food practices outside the home space.

Secondly, the implication of family togetherness in public eating spaces blurs the boundaries between the domestic and the public. Eating together with family members is generally recognised to be a socially significant event (Warde & Martens, 2000), as it can provide opportunities for family communication and cooperation and offer considerable pleasure and conviviality. For Xiao Tian's family, mid-range and/or upscale restaurants are important places for accomplishing intergenerational relationships outside the home. During the eating out experiences in such restaurants, Xiao Tian's parents' roles as filial children and responsible parents are performed. In this way, the restaurants in which this family locate their family meals become family spaces. However, family-based eating out is not always just a matter of eating together in public food spaces; it can also involve eating apart if that activity is also family oriented. In the case of Mei Mei's family, Western fast food chains are considered to be improper places for family meals because these restaurants serve unhealthy food. However, Mei Mei's parents sometimes locate their lunches in such restaurants for quick meals when they spend time without other family members. Dou Dou's mother loves street food but she never brings it home, nor takes her son to eat in the street, so

that she can create a healthy and safe eating environment for her family.

And finally, in contrast to some other studies on the family context of contemporary consumption which have tended to view such consumption as bound up with women's work and as a labour of love (Miller, 1998a; 1998b; Miller et al., 1998; Chen, 2008), the analysis in this chapter also pays attention to men's practices during family-based food consumption in different places. Food consumption is not only inscribed within mothers' love and devotion, but also involved within fathers' practice of their love and care. Although, in these three families, mothers still play important roles in feeding the family, fathers are not absent from family-based food activities. For instance, Xiao Tian's father plays out his fatherhood role of educating Xiao Tian at the dining table in Yuan Hua Restaurant. Therefore, rather than seeing the family practice as a female construction, we should consider family-based food consumption to be accomplished through the doings of every family member in a family unit.

Overall, this chapter has evidenced how, through practices of eating out in the public foodscapes of Guangzhou, people create and recreate the meanings of various urban eating spaces, making distinctions between family and non-family food spaces through their performance of family roles (in particular parenthood and grandparenthood) and family relationships. Consideration of children's interests/tastes, health and well-being takes a central place in family eating more generally. Practices of eating out further construct and confirm this child-centred family pattern.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis is to outline the relations between everyday food consumption and the process of home/family-making in the social and cultural context of contemporary Guangzhou's Xiaokang households. Building on the data collected through in-depth, household-based qualitative research with 27 households, this thesis argues that everyday food consumption is a material and social practice which plays an important role in the (re)configuration of the meanings and senses of home and family both spatially and temporally; and vice versa, that the time-space of home and family provide a constitutive context for daily food practices.

To recap, the six empirical chapters of this thesis are structured and paired on the basis of a threefold framework describing the geographies of home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006): understanding home from the material and imaginative perspective; exploring the relationship between home, power and identity; and analysing the interaction between home and wider geographical scales. In Chapters 4 and 5, I analysed the spatial and temporal making of home as both a material and imaginative process. This interpretation explored how everyday food practice reproduces the spatial and temporal meanings of home and family, both through 'accommodating' ideal future homes and remembering past homes in the here and now. Chapters 6 and 7 discussed gender and intergenerational relations within the family. These two chapters concentrated on how domestic food practices constitute multiple and dynamic family relationships. They also examined how these family relationships involve complex and extended geographies of home, incorporating various mobilities as Xiaokang households develop new forms attuned to the wider social and spatial transformations of contemporary China. Chapters 8 and 9 further explored the articulation of the private space and wider society through family-based food activities. In particular, they analysed how home space is not marked by hard and impervious boundaries, analysing both how the home stages wider social networks in practices of hospitality and how

homeliness is extended into the public sphere in family practices of eating out.

Building on these chapters, the remaining sections have three aims. First, I will revisit the main arguments of the thesis, in relation to the initial objectives set out in Chapter 1. Second, I will highlight the key contributions of the research, sketching out how the findings extend past research and wider literature. The final part of the Conclusion looks at how these arguments and contributions could be extended, setting out thoughts for further research on food consumption and social networks, especially in the Chinese context.

Main arguments

This thesis has portrayed how Xiaokang families and homes are made through domestic food consumption. Food consumption, in this thesis, is understood as a set of practices – including accommodating food cultures in the home, cooking, eating, buying and (sometimes) growing food, and performing social hospitality through food occasions. These practices facilitate and display Xiaokang tastes. According to Bourdieu (1984), our tastes in food are a marker of an individual's social position, formed though their economic, social and cultural capital. He points out that eating habitus are 'associated, through preparation and cooking, with a whole conception of the domestic economy and of the division of labour between the sexes' (p. 185). Food tastes are classified by the distinctive cultural knowledge gained by people from different classes. Moreover, cultural taste is achieved through the 'mediation of the habitus' and the 'distribution of economic and cultural capital' among the members of a certain class (p. 260), corresponding to a particular lifestyle. In short, the taste of food is facilitated through habitus and practices, and accompanies the performance of economic, social and cultural capital. As shown in the empirical chapters, the researched Xiaokang people eat and buy food/food-related things in some places while avoiding others, in order to deploy their Xiaokang identity and position. For example, these Xiaokang people tend to arrange proper family meals at home or in upscale and/or middle-range

restaurants but avoid eating in fast food restaurants and street stalls, because they have knowledge of how to organise proper family meals with proper food in proper places. In their opinion, proper family meals involve immediate family members (including grandparents, parents and children) in a comfortable environment with healthy and safe food. These eating practices seek to demonstrate and maintain Xiaokang people's social and cultural knowledge of food and foodscapes and to distinguish Xiaokang people from other social groups who eat in 'inappropriate' places.

Looking back to the main purpose of this thesis, it is now possible to state that this thesis has crystallised a social and cultural geography in contemporary China through the lens of food consumption. This thesis understands everyday food consumption as a social practice that makes a strong connection between Xiaokang people, food and their social life within and beyond the domestic sphere. Addressing the practice approach in the domestic sphere, this thesis understands everyday food consumption in contemporary Guangzhou as a socio-cultural practice which combines routinized 'doings' with food, food-related things, food knowledges, emotions and social relationships. Rather than the lack of emotional engagement in other works on domestic practices (see, for example, Shove et al., 2007), this research draws out the material ways in which Xiaokang people organise their family life and home, and shows how these practices can also be invested with meaning and emotion. Its prime focus has been on how the practice of homemaking and family-making is both shaped by and shapes food consumption. The thesis has sought to 'open closed doors' and show how homes and families are not entities but practical processes, constantly being made and remade through both material and emotional experiences within and beyond the family sphere.

The result chapters of this thesis are not merely empirical cases about individual behaviours, but rather, these chapters have illustrated how actual food practices in the family realm carry out social standards and norms in contemporary China. That is, the research has not simply focused on 'hidden' domestic spaces, but also argued that understanding domestic food practices provides an important insight into the wider

food system and social developments in contemporary China. Mundane domestic practices, relationships and feelings are implicated in much broader social and cultural developments. Specifically, Chapter 4's account of how food practices are 'accommodated' in the home and relate to ideals of domesticity resonates with wider questions about home cultures and the meanings of modernity in urban China. It suggests that contemporary Chinese modernity should be considered to be a combination of Western and Chinese cultures, given how this combination of ideals is accommodated in practice in homes that embody modernity, comfort and (in some cases) an engagement with urban natures. Chapter 5 sees the present family practices with food as a consequence of both the personal and emotional memories and wider social accounts of food safety and health and emphasises the social distinction between the urban and the rural made within family-based food consumption. In the context of recent and ongoing histories of rural-urban migration, the rural has a powerful place in urban imaginaries. This is apparent not only in the consumer trend in urban China to value 'green', organic and healthy food from rural areas, but also plays out through family relationships and mobilities. Chapter 6 and 7 look for the ways in which the changing understandings, procedures and engagements of family relations that intersect with gender and generational norms are carried out and re-constructed through the convention or contingency of everyday food practices. The practices of gender and generational relationships within the domestic spoke to wider trends of family life in urban China: high mobility, a democratisation between genders and inequality between generations. Chapter 8 understands family meals with 'outsiders' who are not members of the close family as a process of making and remaking the conventional meanings of kinship and friendship at wider societal level. And finally, Chapter 9 locates the family-based food practices in public eating spaces, in order to explore how the shared standard of 'proper family', which is the key value of the whole family practices, is worked out through eating out. Thus, these everyday food practices are not only daily performances that make up the routine of family life, but also components of routinized ways in which bodies are moved and controlled, emotional

works are done, homespaces are made, social relationships are built and re-built and the discourse of home and family are explained and understood.

Contributions of this research

Generally, this research has made contributions to wider literatures on home-based and/or family-based food consumption through empirical studies. It strengthens the ideas that 'the relationship between families and food is socially significant, personally engaging, [and] emotionally charged' (Jackoson, 2009, p. 2) and that home is a place for food consumption and food practice at home is a process of identity formation (Valentine, 1999; Bell & Valentine, 1997). Importantly, this thesis approaches these issues from a non-Western perspective and in relation to the still under-researched context of the growing middle classes in urban China. Specifically, this thesis makes contributions to the wider literature in at least three significant ways.

Firstly, this research has extended the knowledge of home-based food consumption. Here it builds on existing work on home-based food consumption, where foci have included domestic cooking and eating (Petridou, 2001; Sutton, 2008; Abdullah, 2010), food waste (Gregson, 2007; Evans, 2012; Watson & Meah, 2012) and the material cultures of the kitchen (Freeman, 2004; Gregson, 2007; Shove et al., 2007) and kitchen appliances (Watkins, 2006; Hand & Shove, 2007). The focus on middle-class households in contemporary Guangzhou is novel, offering fresh insight on an under-researched social group and type of home space. In addition, whilst previous studies have tended to focus on specific food practices, this research has brought together a wide range of domestic food practices: from the processes of kitchen and dining area design and decoration to food purchasing, food storage, growing food, handling food waste, hosting others and eating out. Through the scrutiny of how Xiaokang people in Guangzhou make their homes and families through food, the research has drawn out a general portrait of the home cultures of this under-researched and growing stratum.

Secondly, this thesis makes a noteworthy contribution to the wider literature which defines home as an open and porous space. Previous studies on family practices have concerned the political, emotional and practical ways of constructing the family identity in and beyond the domestic sphere (DeVault, 1991; Jackoson, 2009; Morgan, 2011). However, these works have paid less attention to the role of 'outsiders' in family-based practices. In this research, both the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to the family are considered as social agents who contribute to the work of family-making. In Chapter 4, for example, I use two examples – Xiao Tian's father intends to show off his alcohol collections in front of absent others (friends and neighbours) and Yu's father negotiates with his neighbours during his horticultural works on the roof – to demonstrate the role of outsiders in the material processes of making a home. And in Chapter 8, I explore the social networks between family members and outsiders through domestic hospitality. The findings of this chapter confirm that eating with outsiders within the home is an important way to create and maintain positive social networks among distant relatives and friends. Both chapters suggest that we should not ignore the role of both the visible and invisible outsiders in the process of home- and family-making.

And thirdly, the arguments of this research contribute to a growing body of work on mobility at micro geographical scales. Morgan (2011) points out that mobilities are ubiquitous within, outside and between different homes. However, when talking about the relations between home and wider geographical scales through the lens of food in the non-Western world, scholars have concentrated on transnational mobility (see details in Chapter 2). Mobilities at smaller scales have been neglected. This research addresses that absence, attending to the mobilities between rural and urban areas in China, as well as the commuting between cities or between city centre and suburbs that have come to characterise many urban Chinese lives. Rather than focusing on transnational mobilities, this research concerns the intra-national and daily mobilities which are more common within China, to depict the geographies of home and family in urban Guangzhou. As these small-scale mobilities are more frequent and regular than many of those that occur in the transnational context, such mobilities make home more

transient and make the family relationship more dynamic. Chapter 6, for example, explored the impact of different domestic mobilities on the gender relations between husbands and wives. And in Chapter 7, the high mobility of grandparents was seen as central to the creation of a new family type which I call the temporary three-generation family. Taken together, these mobilities make the boundaries of home more fluid and make the role of each family member more dynamic.

This research also helps to correct the comparative lack of geographical and non-geographical studies on the everyday experience of domestic and family life in China. It contributes in a number of ways to broader scholarship. Firstly, the research enhances existing work on Chinese internal migration, extending it into the geographical understanding of the connection between homemaking, mobility and consumer cultures in the Chinese context. The evident socio-cultural and economic gap between different regions within China means that numerous works have focused on three types of internal migration. In type one, scholars have studied how low-income migrant workers negotiate their place-based and gender identities in their workplaces and how they manage their mobility between rural homes and urban workplaces (Gaetano, 2008; Gaetano & Jacka, 2013). In type two, research has considered political migrants, forced to move home by state power; for example, housing studies have researched the social conflicts caused by forced residential and neighbourhood demolitions by the government (Shao, 2013; Shin, 2013). Such research has established the power relations existing between the state and ordinary people and how this plays out through the process of home 'unmaking'. And in type three, many works have discussed how migrants from minority groups negotiate their ethnic identity with Han culture (the mainstream ethnic culture in China) (Iredale et al., 2003), and vice versa, how Han Chinese perform their Han identities when they migrate to minority areas (Zhu & Qian, 2015). All these are important phenomena, but they neglect the very ordinary and increasingly prevalent forms of migration associated with the 'middle-level' population: economic migrations in search of urban opportunities and lifestyles that are not associated with socio-economic marginalisation. How such Xiaokang people construct a

distinction between the rural and the urban (see details in Chapter 5), how they negotiate the social norms in rural and urban areas (see details in Chapter 6), and how this works through intergenerational relations (see details in Chapter 7) are themes that have been brought out in this thesis through stories of daily food consumption.

Secondly, this research extends Chinese geographers' knowledge of consumer cultures. For Chinese geographers, urban consumer cultures of food have been equated to restaurant culture (Cai et al., 2004; 2006). Domestic food cultures and their relations to consumption practices have been largely ignored. This thesis corrects that absence. It presents research conducted from an approach that prioritises everyday practices, with the purpose of exploring how people use food to establish their own forms of domestic life. Consumer cultures are recognised as not only located in public spaces; the thesis has explored how consumer cultures are bound up in a two-way relationship with domestic lives and spaces. Concerning the domestic sphere, the ways in which people consume food and food-related things with family and non-family members at home has been drawn out. The thesis also considers how people in part make their family relations through public eating spaces.

Thirdly, the research has contributed to the current studies of home in urban Chinese contexts through its focus on daily family practices. Home and dwelling are important research topics in 'China studies'. Scholars have focused on the economic, social and political aspects of the home. Their research interests include the changing housing market (Pow, 2007a; 2007b; Pow & Kong, 2007; Wu & Webber, 2004) and how this relates to changing housing policy (Zhang, 2010; Deng et al., 2011; Tsang, 2014); social conflicts in the process of urban renewal (Shao, 2013; Shin, 2013); home design and decoration (Davis, 2005; Yu, 2014); and the social distinctions made through housing (Feng et al., 2014). Yet the importance of domestic life, its emotional qualities, and its role in the doing of family identity in urban China have been largely ignored to date. This research fills that lacuna.

The thesis has also added to the limited existing knowledge on the food practices of Chinese families. Such previous work on family-based food consumption tended to

apply a 'child-centred' view in order to understand family identities and relations. In his edited book, *Feeding China's Little Emperors*, Jing (2000) applies the '4-2-1' syndrome, which is a widely acknowledged framework in Chinese social studies, to understand child-centred food practices in urban China. Then, Jiang et al.'s (2006) study focuses on how grandparents' eating behaviours affect those of their young grandchildren. Although this work is completed from an intergenerational perspective, the authors' concentration is still on the children. Undoubtedly, the 'little emperor' phenomenon caused by the one-child policy in China is attractive to social scholars, but other generations and intergenerational relations need attention as well. The research reported in this thesis has focused on three generations – grandparents, parents and children – to portray a more detailed picture of the Chinese family relationship. It is worth noting that about half of the parents who took part in the research are from the 'little emperor' generation described by the previous studies. These 'ever-spoiled little emperors' now become powerful parents who play central roles in their new families. The thesis explores how nowadays these young parents are not only grown-up 'little emperors' who still depend on their parents' care, but also parents of new 'little emperors' of their own.

Finally, this research makes a methodological contribution, providing a more qualitative framework for Chinese social studies of home and family. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, qualitative studies on home and family (Li & Zheng, 2009; Shen, 2013; Feng et al., 2014) in and of China rarely work at ethnographical approaches to understand the lived experiences in the domestic space. While my own research is not ethnography in some traditional anthropological senses, it has a strongly ethnographic orientation, seeking to gain an immersive, nuanced sense of how domestic life is done in practice. Sometimes this orientation was pursued through forms of participant observation – during the fieldwork, I participated in the daily practices of cooking, eating and food shopping with many of the researched households – but it also held true when more dialogic methods such as participant photography were deployed. By opening the closed doors of home, I have observed the daily

practices of the research participants and their domestic interactions with each other. Thus, what I find in this research is not only a public presentation of home and family, but also the real, intimate practices of home- and family-making.

Future directions

As an attempt to open up the closed home doors of contemporary Guangzhou, this research also serves as a base for future social and cultural studies in/of urban China. Generally, this research suggests the potential for 'practice approaches' to understand the consumer cultures and the geographies of home and family in Chinese socio-cultural contexts. China has become a consumer society. Its consumers have become 'super consumers', possessed of strong purchasing power both within and beyond China's local market. In this thesis, I have used food consumption as a lens to see the interactions between urban consumers, food, food-related things and (both domestic and urban) spaces. Future research could usefully focus on other commodities and how they operate at wider geographical scales. The research questions of, for example, how people consume fashion, popular cultural products (music, video games, films, and so on), properties and other goods online and offline; how they use these goods to establish their geographical imaginations of home, city, province, internal regions, other countries/international regions and the global; and how these consumers create their own social networks and social (dis)orders through consumption provide a much broader agenda for the future.

Furthermore, this research has studied the 'doings' of social identity and relationships at the crossing point of the domestic and the public. However, how the gender and intergenerational relations considered at the domestic and familial scales are played out at wider societal levels has been left for future work. For example, there is work to be done on how these social relationships, which I have discussed in the inter-personal domestic context, should be analysed beyond the home space in the future. In other words, there is a need to consider how such domestic and familial

relations play out in terms of the gender and intergenerational relations emergent in wider Chinese society. Specifically, socio-spatial analysis of changes in gender norms, ageing and new generational identities and intergenerational forms of inequity could be focal points for future social and cultural geographical studies in/of China.

Firstly, China is still regarded as a gender-unequal society. While 'it is the same to have a son or a daughter' (*sheng nan sheng nv yiyang hao* in Chinese) is a popular slogan of China's population policy, China is still considered by scholars to be a son preference society (Arnold & Liu, 1986; Chu & Yu, 2010; Shen, 2011). This son preference tradition has been challenged by the result of a recent nationwide survey. According to a marriage survey[47] made by 163.com (a Chinese web portal) in 2008, more than half of participants (66%) expressed their preference of having a daughter. Does this result reflect the fact that China has become a more gender-equal/fair society? Or has China been transformed from a son preference society into a daughter preference one? These questions on social gender norms need further discussion. The research presented in this thesis suggests that while sexist attitudes remain, in practice family life involves subtle negotiations in which both men and women compromise. It would be valuable to know the extent to which such family practices shift, or fail to shift, wider societal attitudes with respect to gender and gender preference.

Secondly, China has become an ageing society. The data of the sixth National Population Census of China show that the population aged 60 and over in China is 177,594,440, which comprises 13.31% of the total population (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). In the future, the ageing population of China will continue to increase. Mai et al. (2013) predict that by the end of 2050 one-fifth to one-third of China's population (more than 400 million) will be aged 65 and over. Geographically, the ageing population in eastern China is larger than that in western China, and rural areas are ageing more rapidly than urban areas (Wang et al., 2005). Under this tendency, how the ageing process might cause new socio-spatial problems and providing care systems for the elderly has recently been a concern for many social

[47] http://lady.163.com/special/00262JBO/boygirl0923.html

scientists (Zhong, 2011; Feng et al., 2012; Zhou et al., 2015). Therefore, for social studies, better understanding the relations between ageing people and the younger generations in their families (and the forms of mutual support offered by such relationships as well as the limits to these) will be an important area for future work.

Thirdly, developing Chinese society continues to engender new generations with new characteristics. According to the recently released official document 'The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee' in 2013, the central government now allows couples to have two children if one of them is a singleton (Xinhua News Agency, 2013). In other words, the family planning policy in China is no longer simply a 'one-child policy'. Many social questions, including how this new generation changes family values and the ways of doing family relations, will be raised due to the arrival of these new Chinese citizens. This policy change also indicates the wider value of looking at how familial processes of child rearing are practised (in this thesis, explored through food) and how these familial processes slot into wider public provision. Extending beyond food provision, there is important work to be done on the provision of children's facilities and spaces for play, socialising and education. Thus, in the future, there is room for a broader interest in 'children's geographies', combined with looking at the intergenerational relationships through which childhoods are formed. Generally, this thesis' approach would suggest that future research should not only focus on this new generation of children, or indeed the elderly, separately; rather, we need to understand the socio-spatial issues of these generations relationally. Scholars should pay more attention to the interrelationships between ageing people, mid-age adults, grown-up 'little emperors' and the new generation, examining how their relations are done, how they intersect with other facets of identity such as gender, class, race and ethnicity, as well as exploring how people transition from one stage of the life course to another within their family lives.

Conclusion

In the conclusion to this final chapter, let me return to the story that I told at the beginning of this thesis. If you recall, many respondents were unsure about whether or how their families and everyday lives might be of interest to a social scientist. During the fieldwork, I kept in my mind the questions they asked about why I planned to do this research and why I designed to do the research in a broadly ethnographic way. At the very end of my writing, I re-read my research diaries, and found some words about my own thoughts on the research:

> *Mei Mei's father asked me about my research purpose. He supposed my research is about summarising the sameness and difference between different families in Guangzhou, in order to build up a (statistical) model of family pattern through the lens of food. When I stated that I only want to use in-depth cases to illuminate the relationship between food and home/family and its social effects, Mei Mei's father gave me a 'comment'. He said that in his understanding, social research is about establishing a theory for understanding the development of a society, rather than seeking the ways in which ordinary people organise their own social lives [quoted from the research diary, 7 December 2013].*
>
> *Mang Guo's father told me a lot about the masterplan of their community and how they can get enough compensation from the government (they moved to a temporary accommodation because their home was under demolition by the local government when I conducted the fieldwork). But when I told him I was not doing research about housing but home and family life, he was surprised about my research, as he never realised that family life could be a PhD research topic [quoted from the research diary, 15 December 2013].*
>
> *When I asked Jie's parents to show me around in the kitchen, Jie's mother thought I wanted to do interdisciplinary research that combines sociology and architecture. When I explained that I'm a geographer who's interested in food and the space of home this couple were surprised and expressed their understanding of geographical research to me. In their imagination, a proper human geography of food is about drawing a map of food (the agri-food system) in a certain region and does not care about the very private ways of eating and cooking [quoted from the research diary, 6 January 2014].*
>
> *As Dao Dao's mother holds a bachelor degree in environment and resource management, she has some knowledge of human geography. But she didn't realize that home can be a geographical scale – in her understanding, this private space is not a 'field' for geographical research, although it is important to everyone [quoted*

from the research diary, 20 April 2014].

At this end point, I am able to confidently answer the question of why my research into everyday food practices is significant for both academic audiences and for those who were researched. This research has mapped the social and spatial relations between (food) consumption and family, which is an important research agenda in recent social and cultural geography. For the participants of this research, they might find that even the most ordinary thing in their everyday life, such as cooking and eating, can be a significant issue for the whole society, after their participation. In talking about food we were also talking about many other things including: how ideas of past/tradition and present/modernity might be negotiated in a presence of rapid change; how intimate family relationships were being maintained and changed in new urban contexts; how intergenerational care is now being practiced when the traditional permanent three-generation household is less common; how public consumer cultures are 'domesticated' and 'accommodated' in differing patterns of family life; how homes are made and how they act as vital bases for social relationships with both kin and friends; how the rapidly growing Xiaokang households of urban China experience their 'small prosperity' and 'make themselves at home' within it. Rethinking the significance of this research, I find it not only opens the closed home doors of Chinese families and portrays the relations between food and home- and family-making, but also provides an opportunity for both the researcher and the researched to consider the meanings of the lived experience of home- and family-making. In other words, this thesis brings taken-for-granted everyday life to the foreground of urban studies in/of China and makes Chinese people re-evaluate their family life – that is why this research matters.

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