Exploring Everyday Cultures of Transport in Chinese Migrant Households in Sydney

Sophie-May Kerr

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Recommended Citation

Kerr, Sophie-May, Exploring Everyday Cultures of Transport in Chinese Migrant Households in Sydney, Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities, University of Wollongong, 2014.
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Abstract
Existing aggregate statistics on transport in Australia have largely reflected the car dependent practices of the dominant Anglo-European Australian population. However, recent quantitative evidence from a survey conducted in Sydney and the Illawarra revealed that ethnic minority migrants own and use cars at statistically significantly lower rates to Anglo-European Australians. These findings highlight the importance of diversifying ethnicity in Australian transport research. The aim of this project is responding to a wider call to better understand the experiences that underpin the everyday mobility patterns of diverse ethnic groups. The focus of this project is on Chinese-Australian migrant householders in Sydney. Building on intersections between mobilities and feminist geographies, the conceptual framework is underpinned by three concepts: habit, discourse and subjectivities. Employing a mixed methods approach, empirical data was sourced through semi-structured interviews, travel dairies and mobile ethnographies. The results presented over three chapters offer insights into everyday cultures of transport. Attention is given to pre-migration norms, experiences and habits – exploring how some are retained while others are lost. The conclusion argues that cultural factors help explain statistical trends for lower levels of car dependence. The findings also point towards the durability of more environmentally sustainable transport choices over the longer-term and suggest that Chinese migrants do not quickly or readily acculturate to patterns of car dependence.

Degree Type
Thesis

Department
Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities

Advisor(s)
Professor Gordon Waitt and Dr Natascha Klocker

Keywords
Mobility, Ethnicity, Sustainability, Migration, Sydney, SGSC

This thesis is available at Research Online: https://ro.uow.edu.au/thss/3
Exploring Everyday Cultures of Transport in Chinese Migrant Households in Sydney

Sophie-May Kerr

A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirement of the requirement of the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science (Advanced) in the Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities 2014
The information in this thesis is entirely the result of investigations conducted by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted in part, or otherwise for any other degree or qualification.

Signed………………………… Dated…………………………

15/10/2014
Abstract

Existing aggregate statistics on transport in Australia have largely reflected the car dependent practices of the dominant Anglo-European Australian population. However, recent quantitative evidence from a survey conducted in Sydney and the Illawarra revealed that ethnic minority migrants own and use cars at statistically significantly lower rates to Anglo-European Australians. These findings highlight the importance of diversifying ethnicity in Australian transport research. The aim of this project is responding to a wider call to better understand the experiences that underpin the everyday mobility patterns of diverse ethnic groups. The focus of this project is on Chinese-Australian migrant householders in Sydney. Building on intersections between mobilities and feminist geographies, the conceptual framework is underpinned by three concepts: habit, discourse and subjectivities. Employing a mixed methods approach, empirical data was sourced through semi-structured interviews, travel dairies and mobile ethnographies. The results presented over three chapters offer insights into everyday cultures of transport. Attention is given to pre-migration norms, experiences and habits – exploring how some are retained while others are lost. The conclusion argues that cultural factors help explain statistical trends for lower levels of car dependence. The findings also point towards the durability of more environmentally sustainable transport choices over the longer-term and suggest that Chinese migrants do not quickly or readily acculturate to patterns of car dependence.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my supervisors Natascha Klocker and Gordon Waitt. Your dedication to the project and guidance throughout this year has been invaluable. I have been continuously inspired by your passion and knowledge and this has helped me grow both as a person and as a researcher over the past 9 months. Thank you for your patience and all the hours you devoted to helping this project come together. Your enthusiasm and excitement has helped to make this a very enjoyable year!

I would like to thank each of the 18 participants who generously donated their time to be involved in this study– without you, this project would not have been possible. I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and interest you have shown. I would like to express a special thank you to those who not only participated in the project, but also helped with recruitment and provided additional cultural insights. I have not only gained insights into transport choices, but into a whole new culture. Thank you for sharing your stories with me and opening my eyes to new experiences. I hope to get the chance to travel to China, Hong Kong and Taiwan one day and experience first-hand the environment I have learnt so much about.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to Elyse Stanes who stepped in and provided me with support while Natascha and Gordon were on leave. Thank you for being there to help me practice interview skills, listen to me debrief and for all your guidance and advice. Also thank you to the AUSCCER students and staff who have helped me along the way. A special thanks to Noel Castree who initiated lunchtime soccer games! This gave me a great excuse to get outside and alleviate some stress during a busy day.

Last but not least I would like to thank my incredible family, friends and partner Nick who have supported and encouraged me over the past year. Thank you for being there through all the highs and lows. Deserving of a special mention is my parents, who have been there for me every step of the way and have shaped me into the person I am today. Thank you for the daily phone calls, hours of proofreading, words of encouragement, endless support and for showing so much interested in what I do.
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Chapter 1 - Introduction
1.1 The research impetus

Mobility is central to everyday life – full of meaningful social and cultural practices (Adey et al, 2014). Mobilities research seeks to understand how mobilities are experienced through bodies – accounting for how embedded and embodied mobilities are practiced and felt (Adey et al, 2014). In Australia, as in other western societies, cars are considered essential for an ‘appropriate citizenship of automobility’ (Urry, 2006:18). As a result, much research attention has focused on transport behaviours of those who use cars extensively, with less research attention towards those whose lives do not neatly adhere to the automobility script (Klocker et al, in prep). A recent household sustainability survey conducted in Sydney and the Illawarra found that Australians from ethnic minority backgrounds own and use cars at rates significantly below those of Anglo-Australians (Klocker et al, in prep). In particular, those from a North East (NE) Asian background (of whom the majority were Chinese) were found to be less dependent on private cars and have a greater propensity to use public transport than the broader population. Motivated by concerns over the role of private cars in contributing to climate change, this project seeks to further explore the transport choices of Chinese-Australians from migrant backgrounds – seeking to explore the role cultural factors could play in contributing to a shift away from car dependence.

1.2 Research objective and aims

The aim of this research is to better understand the mobility choices that sustain the everyday lives of Chinese migrants living in Sydney. In doing so, the overarching objective of this thesis is to explore how cultures of transport choice are shaped by ethnicity, alongside other axes of difference.

This thesis responds to four key research questions:

i) What ideas inform Chinese migrants’ mobility choices?

ii) What experiences inform Chinese migrants’ mobility choices?

iii) Does ethnicity play an important role in shaping mobility choices?

iv) What are the implications of these findings for transport-related sustainability objectives?

This chapter sets the context for this project through four sections which explore: trends of automobility in Australia; the environmental implications of car dependence; the status of ethnicity in existing transport research; and, the transport context in China. Throughout this thesis, the term ‘Chinese-Australian’ is used to refer to people of Chinese ancestry who
currently reside in Australia, including overseas-born persons and those born in Australia. The term ‘Chinese migrants’ is used to refer more specifically to overseas-born persons (of Chinese ancestry) who have since settled in Australia.

1.3 Sydney: a city of automobility
Private motor vehicles dominate transport behaviours in Sydney, and in Australia more generally. The prevalence of car use has increased dramatically over recent decades (ABS, 2014a). In 2014, there were 13.3 million passenger vehicles registered in Australia (ABS, 2014a). This figure has grown steadily over time, with just 1.4 million passenger vehicles being registered in 1955, and 11.8 million in 2008 (ABS, 2013). There are currently 756 motor vehicles per 1000 Australian residents, a 12.5 per cent increase from 2009 figures (ABS, 2014a). In Sydney, the population grew by 12 per cent between 2001 and 2011, but the number of private vehicles owned increased at twice that rate (24%) to more than 2.6 million (Bureau of Transport Statistics, 2013). The growth of car use in Australian cities is projected to continue as a result of both population growth and increasing incomes (Gargett and Gafney, 2003). Escalating motor vehicle use is paralleled by declining use of active and public transport options (Toole, 2011). Active transport is defined as ‘walking, jogging or pedal biking for purposes other than enjoyment’ (Adams, 2010:99), whilst public transport involves the use of publically provided services such as buses and trains (Toole, 2011).

Publicly available statistics on motor vehicle use are typically based on the mode of travel to work. In 2012, 71 per cent of the Australian population aged 18 years and over travelled to work or full time study in a motor vehicle, whilst only 16 per cent used public transport (ABS, 2014a). Sydney – the city where the present study was based – is faced with significant transport challenges. Data from the Bureau of Transport Statistics (2013) indicted that in 2011/12, motor vehicles were used for 68.1 per cent of trips in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area. Public transport was used for just 11.8 per cent of trips.

Increased use of the private car is influenced by perceptions of flexibility, reliability, convenience and freedom (Sheller, 2004; Urry, 2004). Car mobility appears to enable individuals to save and control time and to overcome the friction of distance (Shove, 2003a). Cars enable people to seamlessly go about their day-to-day activities and to coordinate complex responsibilities for work, family and social lives (Dowling, 2000; Sheller, 2004; Urry, 2004). Yet the car has arguably contributed to the very spatial and temporal
fragmentation of daily life that it purports to conquer. The perceived benefits of car travel (e.g. convenience, comfort and speed) make public and active modes of transport seem comparatively inflexible, fragmented, slow, inconvenient and at times dangerous (Urry, 2004; Garrard, 2009). For these reasons, attempts to address car dependence have had minimal success, despite widespread recognition and knowledge of the environmental implications of driving.

1.4 Environmental implications of car dependence

Car mobility is an environmentally unsustainable practice. Chester and Horvarth (2009) suggest a lifecycle approach is necessary to demonstrate the full environmental implications of driving. This approach draws attention to the widespread environmental implications of cars throughout their entire lifecycle including: raw materials extraction, manufacturing, construction, operation, maintenance, infrastructure and fuels (Chester and Horvath, 2009). At the same time, the direct carbon emissions associated with car use are also of great concern. In the past two and a half decades (1990 to 2014), emissions from the Australian transport sector have increased by 54.6 per cent (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014). Light vehicles account for the largest share of these emissions (see Figure 1.1). Reliance on the private car is an integral part of the climate change problem (Waitt and Harada, 2012). Emissions from motor vehicles are also a significant source of localised air pollution and petrochemical smog in urban areas (Cosgrove, 2003; Bluett et al, 2008).

In a climate changing world, Australians’ dependence on private motor vehicles creates challenges for policymakers at all tiers of government. Despite research showing high levels of public concern and understanding of climate change, the behavioural response is not that of decreasing car ownership and use (Newman & Kenworthy, 1989; Maxwell, 2001; Miller, 2001; Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002; Waitt and Harada, 2012).
Research into the social and cultural practices that shape everyday transport choices has helped to explain why car dependence is so difficult to undermine. Car dependence has arguably become naturalised in Australia – it is supported by market forces, government regulations, road infrastructure investments, transport and urban planning and social norms (Goodwin, 2010). Yet there is some evidence that more sustainable transport options are beginning to gain some traction (Dowling and Simpson, 2013). Rates of car ownership are declining amongst younger generations, communications technologies can reduce the need for car journeys, and new ways of relating to cars are emerging via car-sharing networks (Goodwin, 2010; Millard-Ball and Shipper, 2011; Dowling and Simpson, 2013). These trends suggest that fissures in the logic of automobility are beginning to appear (Goodwin, 2010; Dowling and Simpson, 2013). In addition, research into ethnically diverse patterns of car use illustrates that car dependence is not uniform across the Australian population (Klocker et al, in prep). Statistical evidence that ethnic minority migrants own and use cars at significantly reduced rates to Anglo-European Australians highlights the importance of diversifying ethnicity in Australian transport research (Klocker et al, in prep).
1.5 Ethnic diversity in transport research

At the 2011 Census, 26 per cent of all Australians were first-generation migrants and a similar proportion had overseas-born parents (ABS, 2014b). Sydney exceeded this with 39 per cent of its residents being born outside Australia (ABS, 2014b). The ethnic mix of the Australian population has also changed substantially over time: by 2011 only 57.7 per cent of residents claimed solely Anglo-Celtic/Saxon ancestry (ABS, 2012). The present study is focused specifically on Chinese migrants. China was the second largest source country of skilled migrants to Australia in 2012/13 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), 2013). At the time of the 2011 Census, four per cent of Sydney’s population was Chinese-born (ABS, 2014b). Chinese migrants were selected as the focus for this study because they are a significant population group, both in terms of size and in terms of their distinctive transport patterns (see Klocker et al, in prep).

Klocker et al (in prep) argued that ethnic diversity is sidelined in Australian transport research. Existing transport studies and aggregate statistics largely reflect the transport practices of the dominant Anglo-European Australian population (Klocker et al, in prep). An exception is the 2011 ABS ‘Migrants, General Social Survey’, which indicated that levels of ‘access to motor vehicles to drive’ were high for both overseas-born and Australian-born persons (81.7% versus 89.3%). However, migrants who arrived between 2006 and 2010; and those with limited English-language proficiency, had markedly lower levels of access to motor vehicles (64.7% and 52.4% respectively; ABS, 2011).

Transport geographers in the United States have paid considerably more attention to ethnic diversity using large-scale travel data and smaller-scale surveys. These studies have consistently found that non-whites in general – and migrants in particular – use public transport more (and private cars less) than whites and native-born populations (Douma, 2004; Bohon et al, 2008; Lovejoy and Handy, 2008; Chatman and Klein, 2009; Tal and Handy, 2010). They also own fewer cars (Uteng, 2006; Grengs, 2010; Tal and Handy, 2010). A key conclusion of such studies has been that (in the US context) ethnic minorities and migrants are often socio-economically disadvantaged, limiting their capacity to be able to afford to purchase and use cars (Valenzuela et al, 2005; Bohon et al, 2008; Lovejoy and Handy, 2008; Grengs, 2010; Golub et al, 2013). However, a small number of studies also point towards the significance of cultural factors and transport preferences, shaped by experiences in countries of origin (Douma, 2004; Chatman and Klein, 2009). Specifically, migrants from regions in
which public or shared modes of transport are widely used, often report lower rates of private car use after arriving in their new country of residence (Chatman and Klein, 2009). Of particular relevance for the present study, Tal and Handy (2010) reported that East Asian migrants living in the US were more likely to use public transit and travelled fewer vehicle miles per person than other migrant groups and the general population, even after controlling for household size and income. While migrants’ transport behaviours become similar to those of native-born populations over time, groups with a cultural preference for social types of travel may sustain high rates of public transport use over the longer term (Douma, 2004, Tal and Handy, 2010).

In the Australian context, Klocker et al (in prep) conducted a survey of Sydney and Wollongong residents in 2012. The survey targeted householders from diverse ethnic backgrounds. NE Asian respondents were found to have distinct – and less car dependent – transport patterns than Anglo-Australians, with findings showing NE Asian respondents were significantly more likely to use public transport whenever possible than the broader population. These differences remained significant after controlling for gender, generation, income, employment status, presence of dependent children and place of residence (in Sydney or Wollongong).

Given the quantitative nature of Klocker et al’s (in prep) study, they were unable to explain the reasons for these trends, and the ideas and experiences that shape NE Asians’ distinct transport behaviours. They concluded that qualitative research would be necessary to understand the experiences that underpin these unique mobility patterns. The present study addresses this gap in knowledge. In further exploring these ideas, this project differs from existing international research in the field of transport geography which (as noted above) has generally focused on socio-economically disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrants. Chinese-Australians are, by and large, not a socio-economically disadvantaged group (Klocker et al, in prep, ABS, 2011). This is likely due to the prioritisation of skilled migration by successive Federal Governments (DIaC, 2013). By focusing on a group that is not socio-economically disadvantaged – but which nonetheless displays low rates of car ownership and use in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area– the present study aims to gain greater insight into the cultural factors that shape everyday transport choices.
1.6 A brief overview of transport in China
Prior to exploring Chinese migrants’ transport choices and experiences in Australia, it is important to acknowledge the attributes of transport in China. As demonstrated in Section 1.3, Australia is a car dependent nation. In comparison, public transport remains dominant in mainland China. In 2010, only 10 per cent of trips were made by car (Ng et al., 2010). Public transport and active transport accounted for the majority of trips (50 per cent and 40 per cent respectively) (Ng et al., 2010). Private vehicle ownership rates in mainland China are far below western averages. The total number of private cars owned in China in 2002/03 was 6.69 million (Schipper and Ng, 2004). This equals approximately eight motor vehicles per 1000 resident population. As with any nation, there is great diversity in car ownership levels in different regions. To give an example, in Beijing, China’s capital city, car ownership is considerably higher at 100 cars per 1000 people (Schipper and Ng, 2004). These numbers are still significantly lower than those reported in Australia. China’s travel patterns are undergoing significant changes (Schipper and Ng, 2004; He et al., 2005; Ng et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2012). Over the past two and a half decades, car ownership in China has increased rapidly (He et al., 2005). Growth has primarily been concentrated in cities (Ng et al., 2010). This rapid motorization is manifest in congestion, air pollution, road accidents and social inequity (Schipper and Ng, 2004). Despite this trend towards car ownership, He et al. (2005:1502) argued that ‘effective mass public transport systems will continue to remain the main choice for Chinese citizens in the foreseeable future’. For overseas born participants car dependence was not the norm (see Chapters 4 and 5).

1.7 Thesis outline
The research aims are addressed across the six remaining chapters of this thesis. Chapter 2 brings together existing literature on bodies, modes of transport and ethnicity. The chapter concludes by drawing together strands of thought from mobilities research and feminist geographies to provide a conceptual framework for this thesis. Chapter 3 outlines and evaluates the research methods and discusses the merits of a qualitative mixed methods approach.

The results are presented in three interrelated chapters, each of which corresponds with the project aims. Chapters 4 and 5, focus on habits that have been retained by Chinese migrants post-migration. Chapter 4 explores the Chinese migrant participants’ preference for public transport. It discusses how these patterns are related to participants’ life histories, their
thresholds and competencies for public transport use, and their strategic decisions to orient their lives around public transport. Chapter 5 explores participants’ relationships and experiences with cars, based on feelings of ambivalence, discomfort and hostility. The findings of this chapter suggest that current notions of Australians’ ‘love affair’ with the car are informed by a limited perspective, based on Anglo-European Australian norms.

Chapter 6 focuses on habits that have been transformed post migration. This chapter explores three disruptions that may cause migrants’ mobility habits to transform: gradual frustrations, cultural shifts and major life events. While the overseas born research participants had changed their transport choices post-migration, many practices remained intact. Taken together with the other results chapters, these findings emphasise the complexity of everyday transport choices. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by addressing the project aims. It also considers the policy implications of this study and suggests directions for future research.
Chapter 2 - Literature review and Conceptual framework
2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, the chapter identifies the key themes and approaches used to study mobilities. The chapter also provides an overview of the small number of existing studies exploring ethnically diverse mobilities. Second, the chapter offers a conceptual framework for this thesis by bringing together mobilities and feminist geographies. This approach is attentive to embodied habits and also how ethnic identities are lived in and through mobile bodies. The conclusion justifies the research by pointing towards a knowledge gap around ethnically diverse mobilities, particularly in the Australian literature. The parameters of this literature review are important to note. With consideration of the scope of an Honours thesis, it is restricted to publications written in English. The researcher was unable to engage with insights offered by publications written in Chinese.

2.2 The mobilities paradigm

A review of existing literature within geography and cognate disciplines revealed a range of literature analysing transport modes, patterns and experiences of travel. The so called, ‘new mobilities’ paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006:208) or ‘mobility turn’ (Hannam et al, 2006:1), brings together a range of theories to transcend the dichotomy between transport research and the social sciences (Hannam et al, 2006). Mobilities studies move beyond measuring and modeling movement, focusing instead on investigating the meanings and power dynamics of movement (Cresswell, 2011). With a focus on meanings, experiences and social power, mobilities studies bring into play the relationship between bodies and place (Laurier, 2004; Laurier et al, 2008; Hanson, 2010). This thesis adopts Cresswell and Uteng’s (2008:2) definition of mobility as:

Observable physical movement, the meanings that such movements are encoded with, the experience of practicing these movements and the potential for undertaking these movements.

Following Lyons (2014), the terms ‘mobility’ and ‘transport’ are used interchangeably in this thesis when referring to the movement of individuals between different spatial locations.
To date, research on relationships between mobilities, bodies and place has focused on cars (Sheller, 2004; Redshaw, 2006, Edensor, 2008; Merriman, 2011), walking (Wylie, 2005; Lorimer, 2011), trains (Watts, 2008; Bissell, 2010; Symes, 2013) and buses (Wilson, 2011). Studies of cars have been most frequent, likely due to the dominance of car culture (Urry in Adey and Bissell 2010). This literature review focuses on concepts of social and cultural capital and the geographies of mobility, bringing to the fore feminist and more-than-representational perspectives on the spatial imperative of the relationship between mobility and people.

2.2.1 Mobility – social and cultural capital

The reciprocal relationship between people and cars is embedded in western society; so much so that Miller (2001) suggested it is almost impossible to separate being human from car ownership. Miller (2001) referred to the ‘humanity of the car’, and Motavalli (2001) discussed a ‘love affair’ with the car. Sheller and Urry (2000) illustrated this car dependency, suggesting that cars are anthropomorphised when people name them (Sheller and Urry, 2000). ‘The good life’, as constituted by car mobility, is a central theme in the literature (Sheller and Urry, 2000:739). Fashioned as ‘modern’, ‘practical’ and ‘fast’ (Kaufman, 2000:13), cars are often understood as offering ‘freedom’, ‘comfort’ and ‘convenience’, despite the associated monetary costs, increasing congestion and traffic regulations (Thrift, 2008). Equally, drawing on the ideas of Bourdieu, research has shown how driving particular branded or customised cars is a way of accruing social capital along classed, gendered and ethnic lines. For example, Thomas and Butcher (2003) concluded that the young men from Southern and Eastern European and Middle Eastern backgrounds (living in Sydney) customized their cars to achieve social status, symbolic power, self-worth and peer acceptance. This thesis shows that these assertions are not universally applicable. Many of the Chinese migrants involved in this study had a pragmatic approach to cars, viewing them as tools rather than as symbols of social or cultural significance.

2.2.2 Mobility as reciprocal relationship between people and place

Redshaw (2006) and Harada and Waitt (2012) illustrated the spatial imperative of the relationship between cars and people. Redshaw (2006:75) noted the reciprocal relationship between driving, subjectivities and place, arguing that: ‘They [cars] shape not only the way we live but who we are’. Redshaw (2006) has shown how understandings of everyday life are shaped by car mobility, with cars helping to sustain our roles as mothers, fathers and
commuters. Waitt and Harada, (2012:3323) argued that car mobility is ‘integral to how people make and remake understandings of themselves, their families and places to call home, work and nature’. Thinking spatially about this reciprocal relationship between mobility, people and place also raises important questions about the ways mobilities are aged, abled, gendered, classed, and racialised. These issues are given consideration in Chapters 4 to 6, in which the participants described how being ‘Chinese’ or ‘Aussie’ is associated with particular transport practices.

Gender has perhaps been given most attention in the geography literature. For instance, Cresswell and Uteng (2008) explored ways in which mobilities and gender intersect, arguing that all aspects of mobility have histories and geographies of gendered difference. Similarly, drawing on ideas of performativity, Dowling (2000) discussed gendered patterns of driving – exploring cultures of mothering and car-use in Sydney. For the participants in Dowling’s (2000:350) study, car use was not simply a means of managing complex lives as workers, wives and mothers but also enabled the women interviewed to enact their ideals and values of ‘good mothering’. Drawing on feminist perspectives that tap into Probyn’s (2000) concept of the visceral, Harada et al, (under review) explored how visceral registers of sound contribute to how gender is lived in and through the body. They argued that driving less is non-negotiable when balancing the gendered responsibilities of ‘keeping life together’. Driving to music is understood as a therapeutic practice to help alleviate gendered roles and responsibilities. The importance of cars for managing daily routines is apparent in section 6.4 of this thesis, which explores how becoming a parent influenced the transport patterns of several participants in this study.

2.2.3 Mobility and thinking spatially – more-than-representational scholarship

Another important strand of mobilities research draws on Thrift’s (2008:5) ‘non-representational theory’ (or more-than-representational theory). Three themes are drawn out in this literature review and throughout the results chapters of this thesis: the emotions of movement, affective atmosphere and habit.

The study of the emotions of movement brings the corporeal body to the fore. Sheller (2004) suggested that emotions play a key part in determining the relationship between people, machines and spaces of mobility. Sheller and Urry (2006: 216) argued that there is a ‘sensuous relationality between the means of travel and the traveller’ and different modes of
travel provide different ‘experiences, performances and affordances’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006:216). For example, scholars have documented the intimate relationships people have with their cars (Katz, 2000; Kaufman, 2000; Sheller and Urry, 2000; Miller, 2001; Motavalli, 2001; Harada, 2009; Waitt and Harada, 2012). Sheller (2004:222) demonstrated how these relationships are based on ‘feelings’ for, of and within cars. Sheller (2004) argued that feelings about driving are one way in which emotions are embodied in familial relationships. Waitt and Harada (2012) noted that strong emotional attachments such as comfort and safety, offer one explanation as to why people continue to drive even when knowledgeable about the environmental and health benefits of walking. However, as noted in Chapters 4 and 5, positive and intimate feelings about cars did not resonate with the Chinese migrants in this study.

The notion of affective atmospheres is another important theme in more-than-representational scholarship. The study of affective atmospheres pays close attention to the non-cognitive forces that push bodies together, or pull them apart. It is important to consider how these forces operate to connect or disconnect the relationships between people on the move, particularly when travel modes involve traveling alongside others (as on public transport) (Bissell, 2010). Attention has focused on the notion of ‘being with’ moving bodies in different modes of transport. Bissell (2010) argued that different arrangements of travel generate different affective atmospheres. Bissell (2010) has troubled the notion that passengers traveling from A to B on public transport share a common experience, pointing to differences between tired and fresh commuter bodies. He has called for further research to better understand the spaces of public transport and the transient community (Bissell, 2010).

In this thesis, Chapters 4 and 6 expand upon this theme by considering Chinese migrants’ experiences of public transport.

The concept of habit is another theme found within the more-than-representational literature. Scholars concerned with promoting more sustainable transport behaviours have raised the question of habit in transport choices, in order to understand how habits relating to car dependency can be broken and replaced with low carbon habits involving public and active transport (Verplanken et al, 1994; Garling and Axhausen, 2003; Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010; Middleton, 2011; Guell et al, 2012; Schwanen et al, 2012; Watson, 2012). Bissell (2014) argued that such conceptualisations of habit – as a force that stabilises undesirable actions, forming a ‘barrier’ that can only be broken down by deliberative thought – are
common in models of behavioural psychology. Drawing on Manning (2009) and Ravaissseon (2008), Bissell (2013, 2014) argued for a more fluid understanding and less ‘negative evaluations’ of habit (Bissell, 2014:484). For Bissell (2013, 2014), a habit results from the process of repeating a movement, which overtime becomes more precise, prompt and easier. As a movement is repeated, it requires less effort, giving rise to bodily tendencies that lead to habitual embodied movement and skillful bodily performance (Bissell, 2013). However, habit is also a transformative dynamic that emerges from a ‘unitary circuit of body-brain-environment’ (Bissell, 2013:122). That is, the folding together of mind, body and place. In the process of repetition is the possibility for change. In this sense, rather than habits being seen as maintaining a particular social order, the possibility always exists for change, giving the body potential to do other things. Bissell’s (2013) conceptualisation of habit highlights the significance of different milieus and how they can lead to disruptions of bodily habits. Thus, habits cannot be simply broken down or lost, but rather, have potential for becoming different and are held in ‘anticipatory readiness’ for transformation (Bissell, 2013).

Throughout this thesis, the migration process is explored as an example of disruption.

2.2.4 Ethnically diverse mobilities

Some scholars have sought to understand the diverse mobility experiences particular groups may have (Merriman, 2014). However, as Klocker et al (in prep) have argued, ethnic diversity is an area that still requires more attention. In addition to the largely quantitative studies mentioned in section 1.5, ethnicity has been explored in a small number of qualitative studies of car cultures (Miller, 1997; Gilroy, 2001; Young, 2001; Thomas and Butcher, 2003). For instance, Miller (1997) explored how Trinidadian young men customised their cars as expressions of national culture and modernity; Young (2001) described the role of cars in mediating emotional relations between Indigenous Australians and ‘country’; Gilroy (2001) described how African American young men’s flamboyant public use of cars can compensate for ‘feelings of status injury and material deprivation through ‘compensatory prestige’ (Gilroy 2001:94; in Sheller 2004:230); while gendered and raced (white, female) use of SUVs has been associated with the ‘material cultures of suburbia’ and notions of good mothering (Sheller 2004:231). Whilst these studies provide important insights, many aspects of ethnically diverse mobilities require more attention (see section 2.4).
The next section draws on key concepts presented within this literature review to present an embodied conceptual framework used to understand the ideas and experiences that inform Chinese migrants’ everyday mobility choices.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The understanding of mobility adopted throughout this thesis is framed around the concept of embodiment and draws on ideas found in two strands of post-structuralist thinking in the geographical literature: more-than-representational scholarship within the field of mobilities studies; and a visceral approach within feminist geography. There are similarities and differences within these fields of study in regards to how bodies and space are folded together (see Pile, 2010). Both approaches are inspired by the writing of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that brings to the forefront questions about bodies and their capacities to do things. When considering how bodies and spaces are folded together, both approaches draw on assemblage thinking - rethinking the dynamics of social power, not only in terms of how discourses help people make sense of themselves in relation to the world; but also the role of the senses, emotions, and affect. Yet, differences exist between the two approaches. In particular, feminist scholars have suggested that while more-than-representational scholars focus on the body – gendered, classed and ethnic bodily differences are often ignored in their analysis (Bondi, 2005; Pile, 2010). The current study draws on both mobilities and feminist geographies to foreground ethnic differences in the cultures of everyday mobility.

Following, Gregory et al, (2009:684) embodiment is conceived as knowledge that ‘is produced by specific bodies that always leave traces’. To think about embodied mobility this thesis presents a conceptual framework underpinned by three concepts: habit, discourse and subjectivities (figure 2.1).
Figure 2.1 Diagrammatic Representation of the Conceptual Framework.

First, mobility practices and proficiencies of bodies are conceived drawing on Bissell’s (2013, 2014) concept of habit. Mobility skills are made, and remade through everyday practices, such as driving a car or catching a bus. This knowledge becomes embedded in both the body and mind and is reflected through bodily tendencies, habitual movement and skillful performance. In this process, and through repetition, individuals attain embodied dispositions towards or against certain modes of transport. As outlined in section 2.2.3, habit is not conceptualised as fixed or constraining possible mobility choices. Instead, the repetition of particular actions may result in the disruption of particular practices through the build-up of frustrations over time, displacement, or repetitive strains. Bissell’s understanding of habit is used to explore Chinese migrants transport choices in Chapters 4 to 6.

Second, mobility is always conceived in relationship to subjectivities. Following Colls (2012) and Lim (2007, 2010), subjectivities cohere around an assemblage of ideas, bodies, things, affects and emotions. From this perspective, notions of race, gender, ethnicity, class and so forth, are not separate or essentialist categories. Instead, drawing on Valentine’s (2007) concept of ‘intersectionality’, subjectivities are always configured and experienced in relationships between these social categories. Therefore, ethnicity cannot be explored in isolation, rather it must be considered alongside other axes of difference.
Following Paradies *et al* (2009:24), ethnicity is understood as:

A common cultural heritage shared by a particular group...Culture is broadly defined as a common heritage or set of beliefs, norms and values. It refers to the shared, and largely learned, attributes of a group of people...A key aspect of culture is that it is dynamic: culture continually changes and is influenced both by people’s beliefs and the demands of their environment.

Ethnicity is therefore not understood as pre-given but emerges in social practices and interaction. Throughout Chapters 4 to 6, the findings of this study in relation to Chinese migrants are interpreted with awareness of the research participants’ intersecting identities and also of the fluidity of their (post-migration) ethnic identities.

Finally, Foucault’s (1991) notion of discourse and discursive structures is important to the conceptual framework. Ideas about gender, ethnicity, class, commuting, public transport and cars are not free floating. Understandings of subjectivities and mobility choices are shaped by particular sets of ideas. These ideas are not constant, but change as people are exposed to different social groups, individuals and institutions. Important in this project are sets of ideas about cars, walking, trains and buses. Equally important to this project are sets of ideas about what it means to be a commuter, Chinese-Australian, Anglo-Australian, mother, and father.

### 2.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide an outline of the literature on mobilities, bodies and place that has informed this project. Merriman (2014) has argued that scholars have gone beyond Western experiences and paradigms to explore mobilities around the world – however, there has been a lack of studies of diverse ethnic minority groups living in the western world. Furthermore, most existing research on ethnically diverse cultures of mobility has focused on groups for whom cars are symbolically and socially significant. Far less attention has been paid to ethnic groups who are not enamoured by cars. As shown in Chapters 4 to 6, the focus of this study on Chinese migrants (for whom cars invoked pragmatism, ambivalence and even hostility) adds a perspective that has been given minimal attention in existing mobilities scholarship. In the context of policy efforts to reduce car dependence, it may be advantageous to focus greater research efforts on better understanding
the everyday lives of those groups in society who are least ‘attached’ to the notion of automobility.

To explore Chinese migrants’ everyday cultures of transport choice in Sydney, this project builds on intersections between mobilities and feminist geographies. The conceptual framework draws on the notions of ‘habit’ (Bissell, 2013; Bissell, 2014); ‘subjectivities’ (Lim 2007; Lim, 2010; Colls, 2012) and ‘discourse’ (Foucault, 1991). Hence, this study aims to foreground questions about the intersection between ethnic, gendered, aged, parenting and commuting bodies and their capacities to do things.
Chapter 3 - Methodology
3.1 Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to outline and evaluate the research methods used to explore Chinese migrants’ transport choices. To achieve this aim, this chapter is broken into six sections: ethical considerations, positionality, reflexivity and cross-cultural research, recruitment, project design, data analysis and limitations.

3.2 Ethical considerations
Research ethics refer to the conduct of researchers and their responsibilities to research participants (Dowling, 2010). The ethics application submitted to the University of Wollongong’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) identified possible risks and outlined how the project design would ensure privacy, confidentiality and informed consent. Additionally, a formal risk assessment was completed. Approval from the HREC was received on 1st May 2104 (HE14/172; Appendix A).

3.2.1 Privacy and confidentiality
Maintaining confidentiality and privacy was a priority throughout the research process (Dowling, 2010). Participants’ contact details and research data were securely stored on a password-protected computer and were only accessible to the principal researchers. Participants were given the option of a pseudonym being used in published data relating to the project (7 of 18 elected to do so). These choices were adhered to in the preparation of this thesis. If participants had English first names, they were given an English pseudonym, if they had Chinese first names they were given a Chinese pseudonym.

3.2.2 Informed consent
There are two important aspects to informed consent: the participant needs to fully understand what their involvement entails and must give voluntary consent to be involved in the research (Dowling, 2010). Participants were given a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Appendix B) outlining: the aims and methods of the project, what participation involved and how to contact the investigators should they have any questions (Dowling, 2010). After reading the PIS, participants were invited to ask questions of the student researcher. Those who were interested in participating signed a written consent form. So as not to confuse what each stage involved, separate consent forms were issued for each stage of the project (Appendix C, D and E). As all participants were adults, fluent in written and spoken English, they were able to make an informed decision about their participation.
3.2.3 Moving beyond ethical guidelines

Research is a dynamic social process with ongoing ethical dilemmas and considerations. Geographers’ engagements with ethical behaviour go beyond receiving approval from an ethics committee (NHMRC, 2007; Dowling, 2010). Conduct of ethical research requires the researcher to be aware of their unique relationships with research participants and organisations at particular times and places (Dowling, 2010). The following section explores how this cross-cultural project ensured ongoing ethical conduct through critical self-awareness.

3.3 Positionality, Reflexivity and Cross-Cultural research

When we become cross-cultural researchers, we confront the importance of understanding ourselves, our cultural roots, how we live those roots or challenge them, where we are going, and what influences us along the way. Notions of culture thus become intermixed with notions of identity (Linda Miller Cleary, 2013:7).

Acknowledgement of researcher positionality is important in all forms of social and cultural research. Researchers should consider the complexity of their own identity and experiences and how these affect their standpoint (Miller Cleary, 2013). The researchers’ positionality affects his/her understanding of the processes, people and phenomena being researched – and this in turn affects the research process and outcomes (Mansvelt and Berg, 2010). Factors that influence the researcher’s positionality may include class, age, gender, sexuality, upbringing and nationality (Ekinsmyth, 2003). In the present project, the researchers own environmental values and transport behaviours were also significant. This scrutiny of the self is referred to as reflexivity. Reflective thinking is an ongoing process throughout the research, thus the researcher should note changes as the project unfolds (Waitt, 2010; Miller Cleary, 2013). In this project, a research diary and positionality statements were used. Box 3.1 illustrates how the researcher initially positioned themselves in the project. A statement documenting how the project shaped the researcher is included in Chapter 7.
Box 3.1 Researcher positionality statement

**Initial thoughts...how do I shape the project?**

My personal experiences, ethnicity and cultural norms influence how I think about and position this research project. I am a young Caucasian female, born in Australia with a tertiary education.

Given the project involves cross-cultural research it is important to consider my ethnicity. I haven’t had much to do with people of Chinese ethnicity growing up in the Blue Mountains. My only contact with Chinese-Australians prior to this project has been through very stereotypical encounters e.g. Chinese restaurants, specialty food stores, tourists in the Blue Mountains and other non-personal relations/experiences. I’m a bit worried about communication barriers and differences in understanding of social science/human geography concepts.

My initial research into mobilities literature has encouraged me to reflect on my own transport patterns and experiences. I have grown up in an environmentally aware household. Despite our understanding of climate change the negative consequences of driving cars, our family is reliant on the car due to living in a rural area with very limited alternative options. While living in Wollongong for university, I am far less reliant on my car due to the free shuttle bus and living within close proximity to university and the city centre. My transport methods change depending on the activity, e.g. I always drive to the grocery shops, however never drive to uni. My experiences on public transport are shaped by the cultural norms I have grown up with. I am not overly comfortable with being squished up next to other people on the bus but it doesn’t stop me using this mode of transport when needed. Being a young female, safety on public transport at night is a concern and I generally feel safer in the car. I spend a lot of time travelling alone and do prefer the comfort of my car especially for long trips. However, I don’t like city driving and so would generally always opt for public transport if I were going into the CBD. I enjoy walking and riding my bike, but this choice is dependent on how much I have to carry with me at the time.

Reflexivity also involves acknowledging the multiple identities of participants. In cross-cultural research, it is particularly important to be aware of the diversity within groups, as there is a danger of essentialising ethnicity and participants’ identities (Miller Cleary, 2013). In this project, the term ‘Chinese’ refers to participants’ self-defined ethnicity, but to no other fixed qualities of the participants (Levin, 2012). Qualitative methods help unpack the significance of ethnicity and how it interacted with other elements of participants’ identities to influence their transport choices. This is in keeping with the conceptual framework outlined in Section 2.3.

Effective communication is crucial in all forms of research. Cross-cultural communication is about the way people from different cultures communicate and may involve spoken and written language, body language and the language of etiquette and protocol (Hurn and Tomalin, 2013). When conducting cross-cultural research, it is important to be particularly
alert to barriers to communication and to be reflexive about misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Face-to-face communication enables instant feedback and allows the researcher to be aware of misinterpretations and to remedy the situation if necessary (Hurn and Tomalin, 2013).

Language differences are a significant issue in cross-cultural research (Hurn and Tomalin, 2013). When working with research participants for whom English is not a first language, it is important to consider the words used, speed, accent, volume, timing and silence (Hurn and Tomalin, 2013). In order to ensure the language used in this project was culturally appropriate, the researcher conducted pilot interviews with two Chinese-Australian students (DeLyser and Pawson, 2010). Piloting led the researcher to rework the structure, content and phrasing of interview questions. The interview schedule is attached as Appendix F. In order to explore the significance of ethnicity to mobility choices, questions were included that directly asked participants to reflect on this relationship. This was an intentional strategy in order to minimise the potential for the researcher to make inaccurate inferences about the significance (or otherwise) of ethnicity. It offered possibilities to explore how ethnicity works alongside other axes of difference to shape transport choices.

Despite being mindful of cross-cultural research skills and ensuring the research aims were culturally appropriate, there were occasions when cultural differences led to misunderstandings (Box 3.2). These experiences highlight the importance of ongoing self-critical awareness (Dowling, 2010).
Box 3.2 Extracts from research diary: moments of misunderstanding in a cross-cultural research project

13.5.14 – During recruitment I have had a few experiences over the phone of calling someone and having them answer the phone in Chinese. This immediately leads to me feeling like an outsider, being aware of my ‘whiteness’, and I feel awkward replying ‘hello’, unsure if they speak English. Today I called a Chinese Buddhist temple in Sydney. The woman who answered the phone had limited English and there were misunderstandings as I tried to explain why I was calling…she seemed to think I was trying to sell something or get work at the temple. She responded that all of the staff at the temple were volunteers and that they would not be interested in the project and would not be suitable. I tried again to explain that I would just like to come along to the temple to talk to a few people, however…the woman was convinced that because they weren’t a big company or business it wouldn’t work (I assume still thinking I was trying to sell something). I tried to get an email address to send some more information through, hoping this would clear up the misunderstanding but was unsuccessful. This was the first time that I felt the language barrier had inhibited my project. This is a good example of how face-to-face contact would have been better than over the phone.

20.5.14 – I arrived at a community centre in Penshurst, having arranged on the phone to come and speak at a Chinese mothers’ group about my project. When I entered the room I was met by a Chinese woman who worked there, and she asked me to tell her a little bit more about my project. Everything seemed to be going well and then the woman said – ‘okay I’ll just get the translator’. It wasn't until now (after travelling an hour and a half from Wollongong) that I realised there had been some misunderstanding on the phone and that none of the women in the mothers group could speak English! Knowing I couldn't use a translator for interviews, I asked the woman to make an announcement and see who did speak English – only one person put their hand up. In the end it worked out okay as a volunteer who worked at the centre was also happy to be a participant.

18.6.14 – I arrived at the participant’s house a little early and the couple wasn’t home from work yet. Their elderly mothers, who were visiting from China, met me at the door. This was my first face-to-face cultural barrier as neither of the elderly women spoke a word of English. They answered the door and spoke to me in Chinese to which I awkwardly replied in English ‘hello’, to which they responded in Chinese. I was gestured to take my shoes off at the door and was given a pair of slippers to put on my feet. I noticed that the Chinese women used different slippers for each room and changed back and forth as they went between the kitchen and the lounge room. We smiled and continued trying to communicate with each other, me saying ‘thank you’ as I was given a glass of water, despite having worked out by now that they couldn't understand me. One of the mothers spoke and gestured for me to sit on the lounge. It was funny that whilst we both acknowledged the other couldn't understand us that we were still using words and trying to communicate.
3.4 Recruitment of Participants

Eighteen participants contributed to this study. This study does not aim to be representative of all Chinese migrant households; rather, the emphasis is on the analysis of meanings in specific contexts (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). The following section is divided into three parts discussing participant selection, recruitment methods and participant attributes.

3.4.1 Selection criteria

Participants were chosen via criterion sampling, based on several attributes. Participants had to be adults living in the Sydney Metropolitan Area who used public transport on at least some occasions. They also had to identify as being of Chinese ethnicity and speak English (as translation and interpretation are prohibitively expensive for an Honours project).

Initially the selection criterion ‘Chinese-Australian’ was interpreted broadly, encompassing Australian and overseas-born persons. However, in the initial stages of data collection it became apparent that migration histories played a key role in influencing mobility patterns. The researcher decided to narrow the focus to Chinese-Australians who were born (and/or grew up) in mainland China or affiliated territories (Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan). Therefore, only two research participants were Australian-born, one was born in New Zealand, and one was born in Malaysia but grew up in New Zealand. Whilst these participants were still able to inform the project, the results chapters focus primarily on the 14 participants who were born and/or grew up in China (and affiliated territories) and subsequently migrated to Australia. Whilst the thesis results are based on Chinese migrants, it is important to note that the interview schedule aimed to gain insights into both personal experiences and also wider perceptions on the broader Chinese-Australian community (i.e. discussions were not limited to overseas born Chinese).

3.4.2 Methods of recruitment

Participants were recruited through targeted, opportunistic and snowball sampling (see figure 3.1) (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010). First, seven potential participants were targeted via Klocker’s (2012) *Diverse Cultures, Diverse Households* survey as they had agreed to be contacted for future research. They were contacted by email (Appendix G) but only one chose to participate, likely due to the time lag (the survey was conducted in 2012). The second strategy involved identifying and contacting Chinese community organisations and
social groups by phone and follow up email. Some organisations forwarded project information to group members. In other cases, the researcher was invited to address group meetings about the project, and this proved to be the most successful recruitment strategy. Whilst a total of 16 community organisations and social groups were contacted, many did not respond or were not interested in participating. Nine participants were ultimately recruited via four organisations. The researcher’s personal connections yielded five additional participants; and snowballing through other participants added a further three.

![Figure 3.1 Methods of recruitment](image)

3.4.3 Participant attributes

An effort was made to ensure internal diversity within the study population according to attributes such as age, socioeconomic status and gender. Despite these efforts, 12 of 18 participants were female, and 12 were aged in their 20s or 30s (see Table 3.1). Participants lived across a range of suburbs in Sydney (Appendix H).

Participants spoke about there being distinctive groups within the Chinese-Australian population (see Box 3.3). The participants often discussed transport patterns in terms of an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dualism – with ‘them’ being the less ‘assimilated’ (more ‘traditional’) Chinese-Australians. Most of the study participants perceived themselves as belonging to a culturally ‘assimilated’ group, and the results predominantly reflect their transport choices. Therefore, a significant group of Chinese-Australians (with potentially distinct transport choices) was under-represented in the sample. In part, this discrepancy arose from the need to recruit participants who could communicate using English. The Australian born participants also differentiated themselves from those born overseas. For example, Doreen discussed that whilst she grew up within a Chinese family, aspects of her upbringing were inevitably ‘westernised’, commenting: ‘It is very difficult for me to think like a Chinese’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>Age at time of migration</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>No. of people in household</th>
<th>No. of vehicles owned by household</th>
<th>Mode of transport for work/study</th>
<th>Mode of transport for grocery shopping</th>
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<td>Train and bus</td>
<td>Bus</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Car</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Revesby</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Car</td>
<td>Car</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lei</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>China</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sefton</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Car or train</td>
<td>Car</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Walk</td>
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<td>Train</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Car or train</td>
<td>Car</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 3.3 ‘Us’ and ‘them’ in the Chinese-Australian community

‘Chinese migrants there are two types, one type is like still living a really Chinese way and thinking in Chinese way and other type of migrants adapt to Australian culture more…Chinese migrants live really different lives…for some Chinese people if…they lived in Australia for ten years they might still keep their really Chinese way of living, maybe they don't even speak English *laughs* but…[others] try really actively to mingle with Aussies and to adapt to the lifestyles here’ (Candice).

‘We tend to group ourselves. So you have the people like us that's been here a while…we have this sort of thinking that newly migrant from China, their manner may not be as good, maybe their language. And we say they are very rude, I say ‘oh Chinese people are very rude’ but we are referring to a particular group…and then my husband will say ‘aren’t you Chinese?’ I’m like ‘no, I’m not that!’ So yeah you do group yourselves and you don't even think they are the same nationality as you… So it’s like us against them…us who can speak English and are more adapting the Australian culture and them who are migrants and even they have been here 20 years but their English not very good cause they only stay in their own circle…I have friends who just refuse to speak Chinese to them because they think they are…I wouldn't say lower class, but they think they are less educated, because of their English’ (Chen).

3.5 Project Design

3.5.1 Research rigour and a qualitative mixed-methods approach

A mixed-methods approach is one of the most common ways to enhance rigour in qualitative research (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Rigour refers to the validity, reliability and objectivity within quantitative research (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Rigour is underpinned by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and can be compromised by the researcher’s role in data collection and interpretation (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). See Appendix I for how rigour was achieved in this project.

A qualitative mixed-methods approach was chosen to reveal the complex facets of social and cultural meanings and experiences that inform everyday transport choices (Winchester and Rofe, 2010; Morrison, 2012; Lyons, 2014). A mixed-methods approach is justified given different methods answer different sorts of questions and satisfy diverse purposes (Miller Cleary, 2013). The project was designed around three data collection methods: semi-structured interviews (including a drawing activity), travel diaries and mobile ethnographies. These are well-known methods to mobilities scholars (Shaw and Docherty, 2014). The chosen methods covered the three main types of qualitative research employed in human geography: oral, textual and observational (Winchester and Rofe, 2010).
Despite the mixed-method design, most participants only agreed to take part in one or two of the research activities (see figure 3.2)

3.5.2 Data collection

Figure 3.2 Research flow chart

Semi-structured interviews
Interviews were an important qualitative research method used to understand meanings and experiences, providing insights into participants’ transport choices (Dunn, 2010). Through interviews it was possible to explore connections between everyday life, ethnicity and transport choices. The participants were encouraged to nominate a location for interviews, at a time convenient to them. Interviews were conducted in multiple locations including: cafes, public places, participants’ workplaces and participants’ homes.

The semi-structured interview schedule was designed to gain insights into Chinese-Australian householders’ transport choices and experiences, but maintained flexibility in terms of the way topics were addressed (Dunn, 2010). The questions were based around the aims of the project and explored five themes:

i) Setting the scene: this included questions on participants’ household structure, migration history, residential location and vehicle ownership.

ii) Moving about the place: this explored participants’ transport choices and experiences for different travel purposes (work, shopping, recreation). Participants were also asked about how they make use of and value travel time.

iii) Specific modes of travel: participants were asked about their ideas and experiences of cars, public and active transport.
iv) Pressing issues: this section probed at environmental issues and participants’ thoughts about climate change.

v) Roles, identities and ethnicity: this section explored links between participants’ roles, multiple identities, mobility choices and Chinese ethnicity. Questions aimed to explore if the participants believed their ethnicity affected their transport choices. Participants were also prompted to consider whether Chinese-Australians, in general, have different transport patterns to the broader population.

Open-ended style questions were used to encourage participants to share stories of lived experiences (Dunn, 2010). Questions explored participants’ lived experiences of daily travel as well as their embodied experiences and knowledges relating to different types of travel (Waitt and Harada, 2012). The questions also explored how specific modes of transport have been imbued with socially inscribed meanings (Divall, 2014). The interviews enabled face-to-face interchange between the researcher and participant, allowing the researcher to be reflexive, prompting the participant with follow up questions to gain further insights. This is particularly important in cross-cultural research as instant feedback can be provided if there is any confusion (Miller Cleary, 2013).

During interviews, participants were asked to do a drawing activity showing the places they travel between on an average weekday and the modes of transport used. This exercise allowed the researcher to gain additional insights into participants’ commitments and movement patterns and guided interview questions.

**Travel Diaries**

At the end of the semi-structured interviews, participants were invited to complete a travel diary recording their transport choices, experiences and emotions for seven consecutive days (Appendix J). Diaries offer the opportunity for respondents to define the boundaries of their shared knowledge (Meth, 2003). For each of the seven days, participants completed two activities. The first was a drawing activity including the places visited on this day, the order of travel and the method/s of transport chosen.
The second activity invited participants to fill out a table exploring:

(i) time of travel
(ii) reason for travel
(iii) mode of transport used
(iv) reasons for choosing this mode
(v) experiences and feelings associated with the journey
(vi) additional relevant information and
(vii) activities used to pass travel time.

Participants were encouraged to take photographs but none chose to do so. Travel diaries provided insights into participants’ weekly travel patterns, rhythms, routes and interruptions (see Edensor, 2014). This added an additional layer of detail to the semi-structured interviews, in which the participant talked about their travel choices more broadly. In particular, diaries reflected the participants’ encounters with different sources of ‘friction’, such as weather, traffic, running late and events which led them to travel outside of their usual weekly routine (Cresswell, 2014). A follow-up interview was scheduled for each of the ten participants who completed the diary. The diary became a prompt for the co-production of knowledge exploring particular events, experiences or travel choices.

Participants used their travel diaries in diverse ways. Some contained only brief dot points, while others contained more detail and personal insights (see figure 3.3). This variability is not uncommon and Morrison (2012) reported similar experiences in her research using solicited diaries. Some participants chose to make comments such as ‘same’ – possibly in an effort to save time. Whilst this offers insights into the way participants think about their regular travel (e.g. work commute) as banal and repetitive, it lacks insights into embodied travel experiences.
Figure 3.3 Extract from participants’ travel diary: diverse insights (top image is from Chen’s diary, bottom image is from Lei’s diary)
Mobile ethnography

Research participants were invited to participate in a ‘ride along’: the researcher offered to travel alongside the participant on a regular travel journey. Laurier (2004) championed the ride along in his study of drivers on the motorway. This approach is an example of mobile ethnography – a method used to gain insights into lived experiences that may be not be captured through traditional interview methods (Buscher and Urry, 2009). The ride along method allowed the researcher to observe participants during a trip and to engage them in conversation about these observations. When using mobile ethnography researchers need to remain mindful of their position as ‘partial passengers’ (Watts and Urry, 2008). In some respects, the researcher’s travel experiences during ride alongs were similar to those of the participants. The researcher also had to negotiate the travel experience, buy a ticket and manage the physical demands of travel. However, the researcher’s experience was also influenced by observing, taking notes and asking questions (Watts and Urry, 2008). The participants’ travel experiences were also impacted by the presence of the researcher.

Of the 18 study participants, only two opted to participate in the mobile ethnography, despite the fact that it did not require participants to alter their regular travel routine. The first ride along involved a participant’s daily work commute and the second involved the researcher travelling alongside a participant during their lunch break to the grocery store. Other participants were reluctant to engage in this method because they did not understand its merits. Some made comments along the lines of: ‘all I do is catch the train’, demonstrating that they did not see their travel as ‘interesting’ or informative. On reflection, there are several other factors that may have influenced the lack of interest in this stage of the project. First, participants may feel uncomfortable with the idea of being watched. Second, the project was already time-intensive and given this was the final stage, participants may have decided they had already contributed enough. Third, some participants viewed their travel time as ‘down time’ and may have not wanted the researcher’s presence.

3.6 Data analysis

For each of the three stages of data collection, audio-recorders were used (with permission) to record the conversations between the researcher and participants. The researcher transcribed all recordings verbatim. English was a second language for many of the participants, thus interview transcripts contained ‘mistakes’ in grammar and language. Quotations are presented without modification, as correction was understood as patronising. Although time-
consuming, transcription provided an opportunity to reflect on each interview and to note emerging themes. Transcripts were analysed using a combination of narrative and discourse analysis techniques.

Narrative analysis was an appropriate tool for interpreting and understanding layers of meaning and identifying connections (Wiles et al., 2005). It focuses on the embedded meanings and experiences within a story and pays attention to embodied social contexts (Wiles et al., 2005). Narrative analysis was used to explore embodied and unconscious transport habits, by considering (to the extent possible) how body language, emotions and affect are inscribed into the transcript.

Discourse analysis was appropriate to identify the sets of ideas or discourses that participants use to make sense of the world within particular social and temporal contexts (Waitt, 2010). Discourse analysis was used to identify common themes that emerged from the interviews, and to explore how social realities and life histories shaped participants’ perceptions of transport.

3.7 Limitations
As acknowledged by Lofgren (2008), it is difficult to explore mundane and seemingly eventless aspects of travel. Lofgren (2008:331) argued that many aspects of travel are taken for granted and feel like ‘a boring habit’. The challenge was always to encourage participants to talk about experiences that are considered banal and habitual. Not all participants were able to engage in discussion about their embodied experiences such as touch and smell. Perhaps touch and smell were something that they considered too intimate; alternatively perhaps participants struggled to put these experiences into words. Another major project limitation was the researcher’s inability to speak Cantonese or Mandarin, limiting the project to English-speaking participants.
3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined and evaluated the research methods used to explore Chinese migrants’ transport choices. The project employed a qualitative mixed methods approach. Empirical data was sourced through a combination of semi-structured interviews, travel dairies and ‘ride alongs’. The mixed methods approach enhanced rigour and enabled the researcher to explore culturally specific meanings and experiences informing transport choices from a variety of angles, thus gaining insight into the participants embodied mobility (see section 2.3). The interpretation informed by narrative and discourse analysis is discussed over the following three results chapters.
Chapter 4 - Embodied dispositions towards public transport
4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the mobility experiences of Chinese migrants who were born in mainland China or affiliated territories. Following the conceptual framework outlined in section 2.3, it describes their embodied dispositions towards public transport. This embodied disposition is the result of persistent exposure to public transport prior to migration. This chapter explores public transport habits that have been retained despite the disruption of migration. The chapter contains three sections. The first section explores how everyday transport choices are related to participants’ life histories. The second section discusses participants’ embodied knowledges and thresholds and competencies for negotiating crowded public transport spaces. The third section describes how participants sustain family, social and working lives by intentionally orienting them around public transport.

4.2 Life histories and habits

The findings of this study indicate that embodied transport habits can be sustained across different milieus (following Bissell, 2013) – but only if the new environment is sufficiently conducive. Furthermore, when negotiating transport choices in Australia, Chinese migrants’ past experiences and transport habits in countries of origin appear to foster different expectations of mobility and higher tolerance thresholds for the discomforts and inconveniences of public transport.

Many of the study participants migrated to Australia with embodied dispositions towards using public transport. Of the 14 participants born overseas, only one had used a car as their primary mode of transport pre-migration. Research participants thus described their ongoing use of public transport in Australia in terms of habit, embedded through past experiences. Adapting Weinberger and Goetzke’s (2010) discussion of ‘learned preferences’, participants’ reflections suggested that previous life experiences and patterns influenced their subsequent choices, despite a change in context (Garling and Axhausen, 2003). Thus, for instance, Lei commented:

I probably prefer public transport slightly more than the local [Australian] people…Because I’m more tolerant than others to the crowded people maybe, that’s one reason…I also I used to take a lot of public transportation [in China] and I think it’s like a habit.
Lei described public transport use as a habit (Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010; Bissell, 2013). His tolerance for crowds was also retained post-migration, and this is given greater consideration in Section 4.3. Other participants talked about the ease of moving about Sydney by public transport due to mobility habits obtained pre-migration. Fred commented that in China it is very ‘crowded and inconvenient to drive a car’. As a result, he ‘got used to using public transportation’ and found it easy to ‘adapt to that transportation way in Australia’. Anthony also described maintaining habitual travel practices post-migration. He used subways, trains and light rail in China, thus rail travel became his ‘first choice’ on migrating to Sydney, Australia. Figure 4.1 demonstrates how Candice also views the train as her ‘default choice’ post migration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (start and end of journey)</th>
<th>Reason(s) for journey</th>
<th>Mode of transport used</th>
<th>Reason for choosing this mode</th>
<th>Experiences/feelings associated with travel</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:20 am</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td>Locations are close to work</td>
<td>Trains are default choice of travelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dinner with friends</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 pm</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>train</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1 Extract from Candice’s travel diary: trains as default transport choice

Participants who grew up in Hong Kong and Taiwan shared similar experiences and stories. Linda commented: ‘I just take public transportation because that’s how I used to live back in Taiwan’. Chen noted that transport choices are based on ‘your perception of what you think is more convenient…I think we [Chinese-Australians] still think train is convenient compared to a lot of other Western people think car is convenient’. Chen’s comments drew attention to differing perceptions of ‘convenience’ between Chinese-Australians and ‘Westerners’. This
theme is explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. Habitual public transport use embedded through past experiences, made Chen receptive to the idea that the train is more convenient than the car. Allan made a similar point:

I think Chinese…because they use public transport more in Asian area so I think that would definitely impact the way they choose which mode of transport they use. So if they think public transport is much easier and is as convenient as their hometown then basically I think they will choose public transport more than the Australian [people] where they [Australians] get used to yeah driving cars…

Chen expanded upon this theme and discussed how ideas of ‘normal’ travel and travel habits become embedded in an individual’s mindset:

I think the mindset is different, like if you think something is normal you will do it, but if all of a sudden you asked someone to walk when they are driving it’s very hard.

Following Schwanen et al (2012), these comments demonstrate how habits may be linked to norms in particular societies and communities. Modes of transport are perceived differently depending on an individual’s experiences and the environment around them. In this case, Chinese migrants arrived in Australia with sets of ideas and experiences that made them receptive to using public transport. Participants associated this mode of travel with convenience and ease, and continued to see it as a practical, convenient and viable transport option post-migration. Conversely, participants described having an embodied disposition against – or sense of ambivalence about the car as they had not become habituated to using cars pre-migration (see Chapter 5). Tolia-Kelly (2006) has discussed how migrants bring foods, scents and sounds, among other things, with them from their place of origin. This aids migrants to reconfigure the place of arrival both figuratively and imaginatively (Tolia-Kelly, 2006). The participants in this study brought transport habits with them, and these afforded a sense of comfort in an unfamiliar environment. As explored in section 2.2.3, skillful bodily tendencies arise through repeated movement, thus becoming habitual and requiring less effort overtime (Bissell, 2013). Based on this understanding, public transport was perceived an easier and more intuitive choice than driving, that is, until the event of disruption (see Chapter 6).
4.3 Thresholds and competencies

Places are filled with bodily co-presence – of people within proximities to each other, doing activities and experiencing moments of physical proximity which impact on the travel experience (Sheller and Urry, 2006 – see also section 2.2 for a discussion on the relationships between bodies and place). While discussing participants’ travel experiences, specific questions were asked to gain an insight into ideas of personal space and tolerance thresholds for being in close proximity to others on public transport. Previous mobilities research has discussed Australians’ love affair with the car (Motavalli, 2001), with Harada (2009:12) describing the driving experience as a ‘micro world of comfort and privacy’. Contrary to this, public transport is described by characteristics such as a lack of privacy and personal space (Kaufman, 2000; Bissell, 2010). Discomfort, and even disgust, at being in close proximity to others can be a powerful deterrent to public transport use (Waitt and Harada, 2012). This notion of ‘being with’ others on public transport is a common theme found within more-than-representational literature (see section 2.2.3) As argued by Bissell (2010), different arrangements of travel generate different affective atmospheres. The findings of this study support Hall et al’s (1968) contention that there are cultural differences in personal space tolerances and understandings, as people from different cultures inhabit different sensory worlds and thus experience the spaces of transport in different ways (see section 2.2). These differences offer one explanation for evidence indicating that NE Asians use public transport at rates significantly above those of Anglo-Australians (Klocker et al, in prep). In doing so, this section demonstrates how mobility is conceived in relation to subjectivities (see section 2.3) – that is, the perceptions, experiences and expectations of Chinese migrants shape their embodied tolerances for public transport.

4.3.1 Coping with crowding

Interview participants were asked to picture a time they had been on a crowded train during peak hour and to describe how bodily ‘touch’ and close proximity made them feel. The aim of these questions was to explore participants’ ideas of socially acceptable body-to-body boundaries (Johnston, 2012). Many participants made comparisons between Australia and densely populated Asian cities such as Beijing:

I feel okay because…comparing from a very crowded country, especially from Beijing, you can imagine it could be in the public transport, the people amount could be double…so I don't think here it's a big problem for me to stand in a very crowded
carriage] or for many Chinese people, cause we used to this crowded …it’s still okay if I have to stand up with a lot of people, it’s okay for me (Anthony).

Anthony described feeling comfortable with crowds on public transport due to past experiences in a far more crowded context. Crowding on public transport in Australia was considered of minor significance. His tolerance thresholds were developed through habitual practices in mainland China.

Bill, who grew up in Hong Kong, reported prioritising ‘necessity’ and ‘convenience’ over personal comfort when on public transport: ‘it's a matter of necessity, necessity comes first and convenience’. When asked about smells on public transport, such as food and body odours, he again focused on necessity: ‘to me it’s…not an issue at all, because…you just need to be there, I am more tolerable [tolerant] in that sense’. Bill noted that this sense of tolerance arose from past experiences with far larger and more tightly packed crowds.

In addition to tolerance thresholds, a number of participants also described bodily proficiencies and strategies for negotiating public transport. For instance, Chen, commented, ‘generally [I] bolt when I finish work so I can catch the earlier train so that way there is not as much people and you can get a seat’. Similarly, having grown up in China, Xia had learnt bodily strategies for negotiating public transport crowds at a young age:

In Australia I feel very good because in China you have to push… I learned how to get on if [the transport is] very crowded, from the side not from in front of the doors, but from the side [laughs], so when I was little we were pushing around, yeah so much fun that time!

Xia referred to bodily proficiencies and skills that help her comfortably negotiate crowds when travelling by public transport. Moreover, she described these experiences as being enjoyable. These findings support Hall et al’s (1968:4) assertion that spatial experiences differ culturally and that there is no ‘universal index of crowding’ for all cultures. Whilst participants conceded that the public transport experience is not always ‘comfortable’, it remained ‘acceptable’ within their tolerance thresholds. Participants also noted a range of strategies for negotiating public transport timetables and routes, and creating seamless trips. Phone apps helped them to plan trips, participants strategically stood at the ends of the
platform where it is typically less crowded, and they also knew which carriage to be in so that they would be in a prime position (near the stairs/exit) when the doors opened.

The mobile ethnography conducted as part of this project allowed the researcher to observe these competencies in action. On one such trip, the researcher accompanied Linda, a mother and part-time employee at the University of New South Wales, on her work commute. Despite having to make multiple connections and use a variety of transport modes, Linda’s strategies made the trip appear effortless and seamless (Box 4.1).

**Box 4.1 Extracts from research diary: riding along with Linda**

…We entered the station and Linda mentioned she never checks the timetable, as she knows she will make one of two express trains if she leaves home by 7am and also beats the peak hour rush…We walked up the stairs to the platform and I stopped at the top. Linda said ‘let’s walk down the end’. I asked Linda about choosing to stand in this spot…she said this means we will be in the first carriage, which stops near the exit stairs at Central [station]… …Linda used her mobile phone to pass the time and also looked out the window and around the carriage. As we approached Central Linda gestured for me to get up and wait near the doors. Being an express train there had only been one other stop before Central and the trip had gone quickly…. Arrived at Central station at approximately 7.30 [am]. As Linda had planned, when the doors opened, our carriage was right in front of the exit stairs. We walked straight down the stairs and the exit to Eddy Ave was right there. The UNSW has a direct bus and we only had to walk 2 minutes to be at the bus stop…

By physically moving alongside the participants, the researcher was able to explore their movements from an embodied perspective, attentive to the ways in which space was negotiated and used in different ways (Bissell, 2009). As evidenced in the diary extract, Linda’s travel routine was made up of habitual practices embedded in bodily movements. She managed a seamless trip through multiple strategies: waking up early, choosing an express train, using her phone to pass the time, knowing where to position herself on the platform and train, and standing up from her seat at just the right time. Through repetition of the same trip, Linda has obtained bodily competencies that reduce the sensation of effort, resulting in her no longer having to cognitively think through these movement decisions (Bissell, 2013). Further to coping with crowding, some participants demonstrated actually enjoying the sociality of public transport (Douma 2004, Tal and Handy 2010). Thus Anthony commented:

I think [public transport] it's a bit of social as well. You get on the train, you see many people. Even if you don't talk to them, but you see them and hear what they’re talking
Anthony described enjoying the social atmosphere of public transport, feeling connected in the moving, physical presence with others (Hannam et al, 2006). In comparison, he described the car as lonely. This contrasts with previous studies that suggest solitude and privacy are valued affordances of car mobility (Waitt and Harada, 2012; Harada et al, under review). Anthony’s comment about the radio provides an interesting counterpoint to Harada et al, (under review), who explored how people cope with the complex juggling act of everyday life by listening to music in the car. Anthony’s reflection demonstrates that the car does not provide the same pleasurable experience for everyone (see section 5.3). Fred, also mentioned enjoying the sociality of public transport: ‘It’s very busy in Sydney and I can have more sense of people and more sense of crowds so it’s like I can maybe experience the busy time…being social’. The participants’ expressed preferences for being with others that went beyond tolerance. Having grown up in crowded environments, they not only coped with crowds, but valued being in close bodily proximity to others.

4.3.2 Making use of travel time

Participants also had strategies to make use of their time on public transport. Time spent travelling is often considered to be economically unproductive and ‘wasted’ time (Lyons and Urry, 2005; Watts and Urry, 2008). However, counteracting this argument, new perspectives on travel time that emanate from mobilities research, seek to explore the lived experiences of the passenger (on public transport) or car-user in more detail, rethinking the value of travel time (Mokhtarian and Salomon, 2001; Lyons and Urry, 2005; Jain and Lyons, 2008; Watts and Urry, 2008). Mobilities scholars have argued travel time is situated in sociomaterial practice, filled with activities and fantasies, including engaging with other passengers, interacting with wireless networks and views out the window (Watts and Urry, 2008). In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher explored participants’ use and value of travel time. For some, travel time provided ‘transition time’ between work life and home life (Watts and Urry, 2008:886; Lyons, 2014). Simon referred to this as being able to ‘cool down a bit after a long day at work’. Travel can be an important time for de-stressing as passengers transition between responsibilities (Watts and Urry 2008). During interviews, the researcher utilised Mokhtarian and Salomon’s ‘teleportation test’ (2001:711). Participants were asked whether
they would like to be able to teleport and instantly reach their destination, or whether they value their travel time. Chen reflected on this question in some detail:

Hmm that's a good question, I never really thought about that… sometimes I thought it would be nice to live next to work so you can go to work really quickly, but then I think I do enjoy that half an hour just do nothing, your brain just sort of wanders and…you get like sort of a break between work and home and home and work cause if you just like [clicks fingers]…you don't have the time to think about what happened during the day or what you need to do at home…I normally look up recipes on the way home so I know what to cook…so yeah I probably wouldn't [teleport].

Chen acknowledged the value of travel time for contemplating and reflecting on the day and planning for future responsibilities (Watts and Urry, 2008). Chen also noted that ‘relaxation’ time is one of the things she values about public transport:

With public transport, especially trains you don't have to think too much you just get on the train, you don't have to think about which route you’re going so for your mind it’s much more relaxing. That's why I like it, you just don't have to think…I don't have to think about where I am going, am I going to crash. So for me it’s more um more relaxing trip and even though sometimes it might take a bit longer on the train it doesn't bother me if I am doing something it doesn’t really matter.

Chen’s comments support Watts and Urry’s (2008) assertion that passengers on public transport may be engaged in a much wider array of activities than drivers. Chen mentioned the importance of ‘doing something’ to pass the time. Other participants also preferred travel time on public transport, over the car, as the time could be used to ‘rest’ or ‘do other things’. Anne used her travel time on the train to ‘think what’s coming next, what should I do next’, and also enjoyed doing Sudoku puzzles to pass the time: ‘If I can’t get a seat I just stand there and do my Sudoku still’. This example demonstrates strategies for filling travel time and bodily proficiencies for doing so – Anne was even able to complete Sudoku puzzles while standing. Lei also described using activities to pass the time:
I came from China, I already got used to it [public transport] maybe and it’s not a very big problem for me and as long as I can maybe read my cell [phone], maybe use my cell to read something or listen to music.

Some participants enjoy their travel time to work so much they reported being disappointed when a journey ends:

I actually enjoy staying in the train…you know especially in the beginning of my work I was like oh it’s gone so quick I’m already here [laughs] I don't want to get off the train! (Candice)

Candice expressed having an embodied disposition towards public transport. This stands in stark contrast to the negative evaluations of public transport offered in many existing studies (Kaufman, 2000; Bissell, 2010; Waitt and Harada, 2012). Crucially, the research participants’ strategies and competencies for negotiating public transport were not limited to the journeys themselves. Many also made deliberate decisions to orient their lives around public transport routes.

**4.4 Orienting lives around public transport**

The Chinese migrant participants intentionally oriented their lives around public transport hubs. As explored in section 2.2.2, there is a reciprocal relationship between people and place within mobilities. This section explores this relationship, demonstrating how participants chose to live in places that facilitate certain transport choices – specifically, increased use of public transport. Participants were asked to explain their main reason for choosing to live in their present suburb. Responses were based around ideas of ‘convenience’, with the leading factor being proximity to transport networks. Lee chose to live in Chatswood as ‘there is a big station, buses goes everywhere…and so close to the city as well’. Linda talked about the ease of living in Sydney without a car because she always chose to live in ‘the place that is close to the train station’. The desire to use public transport for the work commute informed decisions about place of residence. Lei chose to purchase a house in Revesby to take advantage of a free shuttle bus provided by his workplace, the University of Western Sydney, and also to have a train station nearby. Several other participants also noted the importance of living in close proximity to the workplace. Qi moved around a lot in order to be close to work: ‘I always moved to somewhere close to work… I always find a job first and then move
close to the location.’ Being located close to transport and work were clear priorities for the research participants. This mirrors Levin’s (2012) finding that location was the most important factor for Chinese migrants when choosing a house in Melbourne. Living near good educational, transport and shopping services was prioritised over the built form of the house. In the present study, some participants also talked about choosing to live in areas with a high Chinese population for the purpose of convenient shopping. Linda, who lives in Burwood, commented: ‘it’s convenient [laughs] yeah for transport, also it’s like a lot of Chinese lives around here so it’s easy to shop for things that we need’. Chen, shared similar insights:

I know Hurstville is a big Chinese population so… it’s much easier if you have a Chinese community to do the shopping and get the stuff that you need, whereas if I lived in say Mosman, I wouldn't have the Chinese soy sauce I needed.

The importance of cultural identity and proximity to Chinese grocery stores has been acknowledged in previous studies (Levin (2012) in Melbourne and Wang and Lo (2007) in Toronto and Los Angeles). A recent article in ‘Domain’, a newspaper segment on the real estate property market, provided further support for these findings. The article discussed rising property prices in Sydney’s Wolli Creek, a public transport hub with easy access to the city. The journalist interviewed a Chinese-Australian resident of Wolli Creek, who stated, ‘it’s very important for me to live near railway transport…my priorities were firstly, good transport, then price and then a water view’ (Anderson, 2014). One of the participants in this project, Lee, is employed by a real estate agency. Lee shared her understanding and experience of Chinese-Australians’ desire to live close to public transport. Lee attributed statistical evidence of Chinese-Australians’ lower rates of car ownership (Klocker et al, in prep) to choices made about residential locations:

All Chinese people like to live on the train line or where the public transport is, like most convenient locations…near the city and all that, so they don't really need a car, and then they always tend to work within the area where they live, they like to live closer to work so they don't really need a car.

In her experience in real estate, Lee has learned the importance of these factors for Chinese-Australian buyers: ‘you have to really highlight near public transport and near the shopping
centre as well’. Whilst Lee’s comments are arguably generalisations, they are based on her extensive professional experience. When taken together with the other evidence presented throughout this section, her comments further substantiate a cultural trend whereby Chinese-Australians strategically orient their lives around public transport.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter addresses the first two aims of this project (Section 1.2) by exploring the ideas and experiences that inform Chinese migrants’ mobility choices. Building on the conceptual framework set out in Section 2.3 – which brings together mobilities and feminist geographies – this chapter has foregrounded the importance of habit, embodied experiences and bodily capacities to do things. The results demonstrate that Chinese migrants’ embodied dispositions and bodily proficiencies for using public transport are based on past social and cultural habits, practices and experiences. Participants migrated from contexts in which they had persistent exposure to public transport and were thus habituated to using it. The findings demonstrate that despite a significant change in milieu (Bissell, 2013), participants continued to use public transport post-migration as they had developed mobility competencies and thresholds in their country of origin. They also brought with them a cultural preference for orienting lives around public transport hubs. The third thesis aim asks to what extent ethnicity shapes mobility choices. While the participants in this study have a number of intersecting identities (based on age, gender, professional status, family structure and so on); their own narratives underscored the specific and powerful influence of ethnicity and country of birth. The findings presented here offer one explanation for evidence indicating that NE Asians use public transport at rates significantly above those of Anglo-Australians (Klocker et al, in prep).

The main focus of this study is on cultural factors, which appear to be an important driver of these transport behaviours. However, economic factors cannot be excluded from the discussion; that is the financial cost associated with transport choice is itself embedded with meanings. A number of participants reflected on the extent to which financial cost influenced their transport decisions. Most participants appeared to consider the financial cost of transport choice as a secondary issue – generally mentioned as an afterthought or in conjunction with other factors. Whilst the researcher didn't directly ask participants for information on their income or profession, all of the participants appeared to be comfortably middle class (based on discussions and visiting participants homes), almost all were in the paid workforce
(exceptions were a full time mother and retirees), and the majority of participants mentioned having obtained a tertiary education. Therefore, the observations outlined in this study, concur with Klocker et al’s (in prep) research, which found differences between Anglo-Australians and NE Asians’ transport patterns and rates of car ownership and use held true even after controlling for demographic and household characteristics (including income). Both quantitative and qualitative evidence therefore suggest that cultural factors exert an important influence on Chinese migrants’ transport behaviours. While socio-economic factors are also significant, cultural norms appear to be paramount.

In response to the fourth project aim, these findings are of critical importance given the environmental implications of car use. In the context of climate change, it is imperative to pay attention to those ‘who are not yet captives’ (Tal and Handy, 2010:85) of Australia’s car dependent norms. However, it is important to bear in mind that lower rates of car ownership and use amongst Chinese migrants do not appear to be a result of environmental concern. When prompted with questions about climate change, several participants acknowledged the environmental implications of driving and noted that using public transport was more environmentally friendly. However, prior to these discussions none of the study participants mentioned environmental concerns as a motivating factor for choosing public transport. The study participants’ preferences for public transport appeared to be inadvertently, rather than intentionally, ‘green’ (see Hobson, 2008 and Klocker et al, 2012 for further discussions on inadvertent environmentalism). These issues are explored in greater detail in Chapter 7. The following chapter supplements the findings already presented by exploring Chinese migrants’ embodied dispositions against cars.
Chapter 5 - Ambivalence, pragmatism and embodied dispositions against the car
5.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the ways in which the overseas born study participants described their relationships with cars. Their feelings ranged from pragmatism and ambivalence to discomfort and outright hostility. These feelings are conceived as embodied dispositions against the private car. As was discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to public transport, participants’ embodied dispositions are influenced by life histories and experiences in countries of origin. Previous experiences also affect auto-ownership, such that groups who do not have social models for living without cars have high levels of auto-ownership and may not even consider other options (Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010). This is the case for many Anglo-European Australians, who use cars for all trips including short distances (Dowling, 2000; Harada et al, under review, Klocker et al, in prep – see also section 1.3). In contrast, people who have had minimal previous exposure to cars will be less inclined to see this mode of transport as the only option (Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010). The results of this study support this claim. The findings presented throughout this chapter run counter to the tendency (in western policy and research) to identify the car as a highly valued mode of transport and object of desire. The car is widely perceived as being essential for ‘an appropriate citizenship of mobility’ (Urry, 2006:18) and for the enactment of valued identities and social roles (Dowling, 2000; Redshaw, 2006; Waitt and Harada, 2012; Dowling and Simpson, 2013). This was not the case for most of the Chinese migrants who participated in this study. The chapter argues that the Chinese migrant participants have very different experiences of the car and car mobility.

This chapter is structured into two sections. The first section explores diverse cultures of driving, comparing social and cultural norms in Australia and China – as articulated by the research participants. The second section demonstrates how the meanings and emotions surrounding the car are culturally specific. The chapter concludes that notions of Australians’ ‘love affair’ with the car are informed by a limited perspective, based on Anglo-European Australian norms.

5.2 Making sense of diverse driving practices and cultures
Australia has been described as a car nation (ABS, 2013). Lifestyles are built around using private cars and for many households the car is seen as integral to everyday life (Waitt and Harada, 2012; Klocker et al, in prep). In societies of automobility, the private motor vehicle is entangled with national identities. It is part of the ‘way things are’, becoming ‘second
nature’ (Edensor, 2004:102-103). Australians’ ‘love affair’ with the car has been attributed to ideas of embodied comfort, solitude, relaxation, speed freedom, safety, convenience and efficiency (Thrift, 2004, Waitt and Harada, 2012:3317). Whilst the car is undoubtedly linked to the identity of many Australians, Klocker et al (in prep) have argued that this may not be the case for Australians from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds. This chapter explores Chinese-Australian migrants’ ideas and experiences of private cars, demonstrating how experiences with cars in countries of origin (or lack thereof) shaped their transport choices post-migration.

5.2.1 Patterns of car use in China, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong

The Chinese migrants involved in this study grew up in contexts where private car ownership was atypical and cars were not perceived as necessary for everyday life (Cullinane, 2002; Cullinane, 2003; see also section 1.6). Many of the interviewees indicated that obtaining a driver’s license at a young age was not the social norm and that many residents of mainland China and affiliated territories never obtain a driver’s license. Of the 14 overseas-born participants, only seven had obtained their driver’s license pre-migration. Despite having a license, many of these participants did not own a car and had no intention of driving before arriving in Australia. Only one of the aforementioned seven interviewees had used the car as a primary mode of transport in Hong Kong (alongside the MTR – Hong Kong’s metro system). Fred, who obtained a license in China, commented that it was ‘quite rare to drive a car… maybe once a year or once every two years’. Participants explained that the process of gaining a license in China differs to that in Australia. Driving schools are ‘closed off’ areas, thus learners do not learn to drive ‘on the real street’ (Lei). The experience of going to a driving school in China or Hong Kong was described as a ‘fun’ thing to do, rather than serving a practical purpose. Qi stated:

Yeah I got it [driver’s license] when I was in China… but I didn't own a car… actually it was quite popular at that time for young people my age in China and after graduate from uni…get driver’s license.

Qi did not drive in China. Shantelle told a story about her father getting his license in Hong Kong for ‘fun’, despite having no need for or intention of driving:
My dad got his license for fun, and I understand that's the same case for my uncle, so he has his license also for fun, they don't own a car and they don't drive... maybe it's a guy thing [laughs]. He wanted to learn to drive but there was no need whatsoever in his work in Hong Kong and he never drove in Hong Kong.

Amongst many of the participants interviewed, obtaining a license was merely seen as ‘something to do’ as young adults. It was not linked to the desire to own or use a car (Cullinane, 2003). This contrasts with the Australian setting. For many young Australian’s obtaining a license is regarded as a rite of passage into adulthood, alongside being deemed essential for everyday life (Harada, 2009). When prompted to further discuss why participants rarely used cars in China, Qi talked about having ‘lots of choice’ making it ‘very easy for people to take the public transport’. Qi also felt that car use was more time-consuming in China:

It [public transport] doesn't take people too much time...probably take much less time by public transport...because [when people] drive by themselves they end up lots of traffic on the road and also they end up taking too much time looking for the parking spots.

Due to the nature of traffic in large cities in China and Hong Kong, Qi described public transport as a far more desirable option than the car. These findings support Cullinane’s (2003) research in Hong Kong that revealed few respondents owned cars despite having driver’s licenses. Cullinane (2003) found that obtaining a driver’s license in Hong Kong was understood as a practical skill to put on one’s CV. In the present study, Anthony mentioned that obtaining a driver’s license may also be a way of preparing for the future:

People attend driving classes for obtaining a license if they think driving skills are necessary for their future job...I have to think that in the future if I have to drive a car or my next job require me to drive every day, meeting clients or go somewhere I have to prepare a car ahead and practice my driving skills, otherwise I may not be eligible to do that job.

Anthony understood driving as an important professional skill. Gender is also significant for understanding patterns of car use in China – highlighting the importance of intersecting
identities to studies of transport. Participants noted that Chinese females are less likely to drive than Chinese males. The average number of female drivers in most cities in China is approximately 15.8 percent of the total number of registered drivers (Schipper and Ng, 2004). These observations highlight the importance of understanding how ethnicity intersects with other factors to influence diverse driving cultures.

5.2.2 Chinese migrants patterns of car use post-migration

In Chapter 4, participants’ embodied dispositions towards public transport were attributed to persistent exposure to public transport in countries of birth. In contrast, most participants had little experience of driving in their countries of origin – particularly on real streets, and in real traffic. Thus, they arrived with embodied dispositions against the car. This was reflected in ambivalent, uncomfortable and even hostile reactions to driving after arriving in Australia. This disinclination to drive can be attributed to several factors.

Life histories play an important role in influencing subsequent choices (Garling and Axhausen, 2003). Participants were less inclined to use cars in Australia (than the broader populace) due to having little or no experience driving in their country of origin (Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010). Almost all of the overseas-born study participants (13 of 14) had purchased a car after arriving in Australia (for reasons discussed in Chapter 6). While they acknowledged the convenience of cars in Australia, many participants continued to use public transport as their primary mobility choice. Lei commented that his car is ‘not very important’ due to living close to public transport options which he viewed as a ‘very easy’ way of travelling suited to his movement patterns. Linda expressed ambivalence towards her car stating: ‘I don't really care too much about car because I still go to work by train, by public transport’. Candice shared similar thoughts, commenting that because she mainly uses public and active transport, her car is ‘actually useless…kind of like a waste’. By retaining habitual practices of public transport use, many participants expressed ambivalence towards the car. Having grown up in non-car-dependent contexts, they did not view the car as a necessity for every – or most – journeys.

Gender was an important component of participants’ narratives of car use in Australia. Post-migration, Chinese females remained less likely to drive than Chinese males and the broader ‘local’ Australian population. Participants suggested that this was due to ‘cultural reasons’, with safety concerns and anxiety about negotiating the unfamiliar. Lei commented:
For Chinese group, especially for female, not many can drive and don't have license and the population the rates of license holder is less than for local people I think…especially for females they uh they don't drive in China and they think driving is a very dangerous and harder to learn, something like that, so not like Australia…almost everyone know how to drive but not for Chinese.

Lei noted a difference between males and females, and also between Chinese and Australian-born people. Other participants made similar distinctions – based on the interplay between gender and culture. For instance, Candice commented, ‘yeah I think it’s because of the culture, cultural reasons or something. But here [in Australia], it’s like there is no difference between boys or girls’. Participants also identified a range of other factors that influence lower rates of car use amongst Chinese-Australians. These included: age (older Chinese migrants rarely obtain a license); financial constraints (the cost of purchasing and operating a car is more expensive than public transport); and language barriers (being unable to read signs). Whilst participants mentioned these factors, they were given far less attention than life experiences and patterns of car use in countries of origin. As shown in the preceding quotes, the study participants regularly contrasted their own lack of car dependence with their perceptions of (broader) Australian cultural norms. Klocker et al’s (in prep) study provided quantitative evidence that NE Asians’ transport behaviours diverge from those of Anglo-Australians. The participants in this study were aware of the distinctiveness of their behaviours and preferences in an Australian context.

5.2.3 Chinese migrants’ perceptions of ‘Australian’ driving cultures

Participants regularly contrasted their own driving experiences – and norms in countries of origin – with their perceptions of the Australian context. Their observations reflect the ABS Census data presented in section 1.3, and also the findings of previous studies into western driving cultures (Katz, 2000; Kaufman, 2000; Sheller and Urry, 2000; Miller, 2001; Motavalli, 2001; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Waitt and Harada, 2012). Many Australian-born people (particularly those from Anglo-European backgrounds) have grown up and been socialised in a car-dominated culture. This has resulted in high exposure to private motor vehicles and less experience using public transport. Participants in this study reflected on ‘Australians’ patterns of car use and identified Australia as a car dependent nation. They noted that – for many Australians – the car is seen as a ‘necessity’. Participants also provided
insights into their perceptions of Anglo-Australians’ negative attitudes towards using public transport. Chen told a story about her Anglo-Australian stepfather:

So everywhere he goes he has to drive, he will refuse to use public transport, like literally if you ask him to catch a train and tell him it’s quicker he will not do it.

Chen’s stepfather’s perceptions demonstrate that he is habituated to being ‘a driver’. This example highlights how habits of car dependency can become embedded - fueled by dominant perceptions - preventing other options from even being considered (Kaufman, 2000; Weinberger and Goetzke, 2010). Kaufman (2000:14) referred to people who never use public transport, based on their prejudices against it, as ‘exclusive motorists’. Chen described a broader cultural trend whereby ‘Aussies’ prefer the car over public transport: ‘A lot of my other Aussie friends they are the same, they tell me in ten years I haven’t touched a train ticket… oh my god, terrible’. Chen was not the only participant to comment that all her ‘Aussie’ friends drive, with other participants linking ideas of ‘being Australian’ to driving. Lee made a clear distinction between Australian-born and overseas-born people: ‘All the friends that were born in Australia has their license…they got their license really early…but people who weren’t born in Australia doesn't have their license’. Lee shared her observations based on her own circle of friends and linked this into broader discourses according to which all ‘Australians’ are assumed to drive. When discussing the process of obtaining a license, Shantelle also compared her Australian-born and Chinese-born friends:

All of my Chinese friends who were born and raised here [in Australia] they have all got their license and would drive, depends on like when they moved, when they have started living in Australia …some of my friends they moved during primary school, so they’ve, just basically same as the Aussies…gotten their Ls at 16 and gotten their Ps at 17, 18.

These findings concur with Harada (2009) who described how getting a license at a young age is embedded into Australian culture as a coming-of-age ritual (see also Redshaw, 2006). Merriman (2014) suggested that for many Western teenagers, a desire for convenient movement is reproduced as a desire to learn to drive or to own a motor car. Shantelle’s example of her Australian-born Chinese friends – who have adopted ‘Aussie’ norms - demonstrates the importance of life histories and past experiences in determining travel
patterns. It also highlights that ethnicity cannot be explored in isolation. Many aspects of a person’s identity must be taken into account when seeking to understand their driving cultures, including country of birth, gender and age at the time of migration.

5.3 Contrasting relationships – feelings and meanings associated with the car

People in different countries use and relate to cars in diverse ways due to the existence of distinctive national cultures of automobility (Sheller, 2004). These distinctive national cultures come together in ethnically diverse countries (such as Australia) as a result of migration (Klocker et al, in prep). While automobility is dominant in Australia, the notion of the ubiquitous ‘car nation’ does not adequately capture the experiences of all Australians.

Sheller (2004) argued that emotions and senses are crucial to sustaining dominant cultures of automobility. Car ownership and use is not simply based on rational choice, rather, car-driving decisions are also influenced by aesthetic, emotional and sensory responses to driving (Sheller, 2004). The role of emotions, senses and lived experiences is vital for understanding ‘societies of automobility’ (Sheller, 2004:221). Research attention has focused on ‘automotive emotions’, driving cultures and associated driving ‘feelings’ (Sheller, 2004). However, the emotions and relationships explored in existing studies have generally been positive (see Motavalli, 2001 and Waitt and Harada, 2012). The focus has generally been on those who use cars extensively – that is, on people who live up to the notion of having a ‘love affair’ with the car. The following section will demonstrate that such strong emotional attachments to cars were absent from the Chinese migrant participants’ reflections.

5.3.1 Pragmatism: the car as a ‘tool’

Harada (2009:12) explored driving as a cultural activity, suggesting it is impossible to separate car bodies from human bodies as people have ‘intimate relationships’ with their cars. Many people are emotionally invested in their automobiles (Sheller, 2004). In Sydney’s Burraneer Bay, Waitt and Harada (2012:3317) found that Anglo-Australians expressed ‘passionate attachments’ to their cars. In contrast, the Chinese migrants in the present study were much more pragmatic. This suggests that emotional geographies of car use differ across diverse cultural backgrounds: not all Australians feel the same embodied ‘love’ for the car.
Participants in this study did not express a sense of emotional attachment to their cars. They also did not express a desire to spend time in their cars. Xia compared her feelings toward driving the car to her memories of riding a bicycle in Taiwan, commenting, ‘I had a lot of fun when I drive [ride] the bicycle... all the memories are so fun...now you sit in the car and don't have that fun anymore’. Driving was rarely perceived to be a pleasurable activity. Several participants talked about the car merely as a ‘tool’ used for getting around: ‘I don't think it’s really a big part of my identity, it’s just a means of getting from A to B’ (Shantelle). Other participants made similar comments. Candice referred to the car as ‘just a transportation, just a vehicle’, and Simon commented, ‘just a car, it’s a mode of transport I guess’. Another participant, Nicole, explained that her car use is not based on a love of driving, ‘some people they like driving but I just use it because it can help me not because I like it...it’s not something I treasure or am proud of’. Nicole, alongside other participants, articulated a pragmatic relationship with her car rather than an intimate one.

In order to prompt some participants to think further about the connections with their cars, the researcher gave the example of some people giving their car a nickname (Harada, 2009). None of the participants had a nickname for their car. This contrasts with Harada’s (2009) study, in which almost half of the (Anglo-Australian) respondents had a nickname for their car. In the present study, Candice laughed when asked this question: ‘I know some people do that, but I won’t do that. I’m not really in love with my car that much’. She went on to say, ‘maybe they [people who name their cars] really love driving and they have deeper feelings for their cars than me’. Candice does not see herself as having a ‘relationship’ with her car. These findings present a stark contrast to those of other studies that have depicted Australians as having strong, intimate attachments to their cars (Harada, 2009; Waitt and Harada, 2012). Multiple driving cultures appear to co-exist in Australia. Notions of Australians’ love affair with the car appear to be based on the Anglo-European Australian ethnic majority. This perspective offers only a partial explanation for Australians ‘feelings’ towards cars (Sheller, 2004:222; Klocker et al, in prep).

5.3.2 Driving feelings: discomfort and fear

As noted by Sheller (2004: 223), ‘feelings about driving are one way in which emotions are embodied in relationships’ between humans and material things. Common feelings associated with the car in existing studies include bodily sensations of comfort and security (Kaufman, 2000; Sheller, 2004; Waitt and Harada, 2012). These sensations contribute to an affective
relationship between bodies and cars (Waitt and Harada, 2012). Through this comfort, car drivers feel a sensual belonging, as the car becomes an extension of the body (Edensor, 2004). Sheller (2004) argued that this sense of comfort helps to explain car dependence, as the car seems to be the instinctive choice. That is, ‘emotional responses to cars and feelings about driving are crucial to the personal investments people have in buying, driving and dwelling with cars’ (Sheller, 2004:224).

Whilst the Anglo-Australian participants in Waitt and Harada’s (2012) study felt a sense of comfort and security in the car, this was not the case for the Chinese migrants in the present study. For many participants their feelings towards the car were that of discomfort and fear – at least initially after settling in Australia. Having had little or no driving experience in their country of birth, participants were apprehensive about driving in Australia and almost all identified safety as a significant concern. Safety concerns deterred Fred from learning to drive in Australia at all: ‘I’m not that good at driving so maybe that's more safe to others if I am not driving …I don't want to make dangerous situations so [I] just catch the train’. Due to a lack of experience, Fred associated driving with fear and discomfort. His decision not to drive could be sustained as he chose to live in the inner city where his needs could be met by walking and using public transport. Another participant, Chen, felt overwhelmed with emotions of fear when driving: ‘I generally don't like driving at all, like every time I drive I think I am going to crash…I just burst into tears every time I had to drive’. Chen’s emotional response against driving was strong – hostile even. She expressed a powerful embodied disposition against the car. When prompted to discuss how these feelings influenced her transport choices, Chen stated:

Public transport is my choice of transportation when it comes to going somewhere because it’s just more convenient for me… I don't have to think about where I am going, am I going to crash.

Fred and Chen’s experiences demonstrate the ‘comfort of familiarity’ (Bissell, 2014:483) afforded through the habitual practice of using public transport. In comparison, they perceived driving to be unfamiliar and associated cars with feelings of discomfort and fear. These findings contradict existing literature suggesting that Australians’ relationships to their cars are characterised by feelings of love, comfort and security.
Figure 5.1 Extract from Anthony’s travel diary: safety concerns

Although the participants expressed feelings of fear (rather than love) towards cars, all except one owned a car at the time of the interview. This is not to say that their emotions of fear, discomfort and/or ambivalence had disappeared (see figure 5.1 for examples from travel diaries on safety concerns). Rather, participants explained that the car was necessary in Australia - in order to fulfill certain aspects of their lives and associated responsibilities - due to the impracticalities of making some journeys by public transport. These ideas are further explored in Chapter 6.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored how Chinese migrants arrived with patterns of car use and driving cultures distinct from those of Anglo-European Australians. Following the conceptual framework set out in Section 2.3, this chapter has explored transport choices at the intersection between habit, ideas and subjectivities. This chapter highlighted the meanings and bodily dimensions of learning to drive and the connections to cars. When commenting on cars and driving, the Chinese migrants’ again foregrounded cultural factors in their discussions, demonstrating that driving cultures and attachments to private motor vehicles are culturally specific. Life histories and past experiences helped shape individuals’ emotions
towards the car, including whether or not they had a desire to drive, felt comfortable driving and whether they valued their car as more than a practical tool. Participants’ perceptions of the ‘Australian way of life’ were associated with an expectation that ‘all Australians drive’. However, the participants’ own experiences demonstrated that this assumption is limited – only reflecting the experiences of some Australians. Car ownership was delayed in Australia until participants felt they ‘had to’ drive or were persuaded to drive by others (see section 6.3.1). The overseas born participants in this study may be described as displaying pragmatism and ambivalence towards cars. In some cases, they even portrayed embodied dispositions against the car. Chinese migrants’ lives do not neatly adhere to the automobility script that frames Australia as a ‘car nation’. Notions of Australians being dependent upon, and enamoured with, their cars offer only a partial (and Anglo-Eurocentric) perspective (Klocker et al, in prep).

In addressing the aims of this project, this chapter has shown that the ethnic diversity of the Australian population contributes to the ‘contestations, contradictions and multiplicities’ that are at play in Australian car cultures (Dowling and Simpson, 2013:426). The findings presented here highlight the importance of exploring ethnically diverse transport patterns in light of transport-related sustainability objectives. This issue is given greater consideration in the conclusion. Although participants generally did not feel positively towards cars, in some instances, transport choices were transformed post-migration as participants adapted to the Australian context. The factors that prompted such shifts, from being solely reliant on public transport, are explored in Chapter 6.
Chapter 6 - Changes following the disruption of migration
6.1 Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to better understand how the transport habits of Chinese migrants – who arrived in Sydney with an embodied disposition towards public transport – changed post-migration. International studies have identified that migrants’ transport patterns gradually move closer to those of the broader population. The ‘tipping point’ is thought to be somewhere between five and ten years, after which the travel patterns of migrant and native-born populations converge (Heisz and Schellenberg, 2004; Blumenberg and Shiki, 2007; Tal and Handy, 2010; Modarres, 2009, 2013). While a number of important changes in participants’ transport choices did occur post-migration, many choices and preferences remained relatively intact (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5). Despite a tendency to adopt some Anglo-European Australian transport norms, the transport practices of Chinese migrants’ (that are inherently environmentally sustainable) remained surprisingly persistent over time. While this chapter considers how migration disrupts mobility habits, the findings do not negate those presented in the previous chapters.

As suggested by Bissell (2013), habits are transformed in the event of disruption. The literature suggests that three factors commonly disrupt habits: gradual frustrations, cultural shifts and major life events (Guell et al., 2012; Bissell, 2013). This chapter is structured around these three events of disruption – although they were not of equal significance for the participants in this study. When taken together with the results presented in Chapters 4 and 5, this chapter demonstrates the complexities of the participants’ travel choices: some participants changed their practices, while others did not; some practices changed for certain trip types, while others proved harder to disrupt.

6.2 Frustrations and the gradual attrition of habits
Bissell (2013:126) referred to the gradual ‘attrition’ of habit – a process whereby habits are worn down through the accumulation of everyday frustrations; that impede the ease, convenience and comfort of a particular transport mode and work against the ‘smooth functioning’ of habitual routines (Bissell, 2013:124). Bissell (2013:126) referred to this disruption to habit as the ‘burnout effect of everyday life’. Similarly, Cresswell (2014) explored friction as a social phenomenon that is central to mobility. Whilst friction makes mobility possible, it can also hinder it, transforming peoples travel patterns as they encounter unexpected forms of ‘stickiness’ that lead them to re-evaluate their travel choices (Cresswell, 2014:107). The practice of waiting in mobilities is often an inevitable part of everyday life –
for example airports, railway stations, traffic lights and bus stops can all be associated with waiting (Bissell, 2007). Participants provided insights into the everyday frustrations of travelling by public transport in an Australian context, including the slow-creep of standing and waiting times. However, despite this acknowledgement, public transport remained the preferred mode of travel for many trip purposes (see Chapter 4). Despite drawing attention to everyday frustrations associated with public transport, many participants tolerated these, and remained remarkably steadfast in their travel behaviours post-migration.

Central to this discussion is the concept of convenience. Shove (2003a, 2003b) argued that ‘convenient’ choices are those that enhance people’s control of the scheduling of an activity. One of the key aspects of convenience is its relation to time. That is, a convenient arrangement, device or service is one that helps to save time or shift time (Shove, 2003a). In the context of increasingly fragmented and busy lives, individuals face the challenge of juggling multiple roles and responsibilities in their attempts to balance work, family and social lives. Routines and habits are often based around the pursuit of convenience (Shove, 2003b). For many Australians, the car is often deemed the most convenient mode of transport based on notions of freedom, flexibility and convenience (Redshaw, 2006; Waitt and Harada, 2012; Dowling and Simpson, 2013). However, for the Chinese migrants in this study, the car was not understood as the most convenient transport option for all trips, with public transport being considered more convenient for many travel purposes. This supports the findings of Kaufman (2000) who argued that transport choices are based on lifestyles, and that each mode of transport defines available combinations of activities in time and space.

The findings presented below demonstrate how the mode of transport deemed ‘most convenient’ for the study participants differed depending on trip purpose. Their transport decisions were context specific. The following discussion considers two trip purposes which demonstrate the study participants’ shifting understandings of convenient transport: the work commute and social and recreational activities.
6.2.1 The work commute

Statistics indicate that most Australians depend heavily on the car for the journey to and from work (see section 1.3). In contrast, for the Chinese migrants in this study, the car was not the primary mode used for the work commute. This is in keeping with Klocker et al.’s (in prep) quantitative study which found that NE Asian respondents were significantly less likely than Anglo-Australians to be car dependent for the work/study trip. Twelve of the overseas-born participants in this study were employed outside of the home. Only three participants were solely reliant on the car for the work trip and a further two participants ‘sometimes’ used the car. Despite the fact that many participants acknowledged the gradual frustrations of public transport in an Australian context, seven participants relied solely on public and active transport for travelling to and from work.

Standing on public transport during peak hour is one example of how tired commuting bodies can experience gradual frustration. Participants who travelled on public transport during peak hour acknowledged that finding a seat is often a problem. Despite demonstrating learned capacities and bodily proficiencies for travelling on public transport (see section 4.3), several participants talked about the discomfort associated with having to stand. For example, Candice said: ‘it’s exhausting to stand all the way back [home]’. Likewise, Allan commented:

Before I would travel to work for 45 minutes [speaking about an old job]… if you don't get a seat, you stand for 45 minutes and it can get tiring and you can’t do anything else other than just watching other people’s facing [faces] or try to look out the window.

Standing brings attention to the tired commuting body and wasted time. Allan’s comments illustrate the slow-creep of frustration. According to Bissell’s (2013) gradual attrition of habit, these frustrations could lead to Allan become lured towards the ideas of comfort and control that frame automobility in popular imaginings. However, in Allan’s situation, whilst the train was associated with frustrations, he still chose it and commented that he had no other choice. Given that Allan owned a car, the researcher prompted him to explain why the car was not even considered as an option for the work commute, given the frustrations of the train. Allan responded:
I don't want to get stuck in the traffic especially in peak hours so train would be the only way for me to travel to work… parking would be an issue if I drive but mainly [I] would not be inclined to drive to work because I would be stuck in traffic so yeah parking and traffic would be the reasons I choose public transport

This example shows that whilst the daily work commute on public transport is associated with discomfort and frustration, it is still deemed more desirable than being stuck in traffic in the car. Thus, the gradual frustrations of public transport use must be weighed up against the frustrations of car use in coming to terms with participants’ transport choices.

In addition to tired bodies, participants drew attention to how the slow-creep of ‘waiting’ time may create frustrations that can ultimately transform mobility habits. Waiting time is an example of Cresswell’s (2011) assertion that mobilities need moorings; that is stable points such as bus stops and train stations that facilitate movement. Moorings draw our attention to how moments of relative stillness, slowness, waiting and pauses are all part of the wider sensuous geography of movement (Sheller, 2014). In this study, Candice spoke about the relative slowness of her bus trips into the city to work during her commute:

That’s one of the reason[s] I moved out because I don't like to live in somewhere with only buses, because there are delays, traffic jams, so it’s annoying and sometimes the buses would be late for 7 minutes and drives me nuts in the morning.

Anticipating a seamless journey to work, waiting times became a source of annoyance. In Candice’s words, delays drive her ‘nits’. Her intolerance towards unforeseen delays is illustrative of a situation where mobility habits demand attention. To reduce the friction and frustration of not experiencing a seamless daily commute, Candice opted to move to a suburb that facilitated her desire to be closer to a railway station. This highlights an interesting finding. The gradual frustration of waiting did cause Candice’s habitual routine to transform. However, she did not abandon public transport. Instead Candice changed other things in her life (her place of residence) to make it possible to continue to use public transport.

Linda also drew attention to the frustration of stillness, specifically when waiting at bus stops for longer than anticipated: ‘sometimes you spend more time on waiting than the actual time travelling, that's why I hate it’. Linda, like Candice, hated repeatedly having to wait for buses.
Nonetheless, Linda continued to perceive public transport as more convenient than the car. While she hated waiting, Linda valued the time spent on public transport as a time to ‘rest’ (see section 4.3.2).

The unforeseen stillness of waiting time imposed by trackwork and delays of trains, were also discussed by participants - as a source of annoyance that brought into question mobility habits. Examples of unforeseen increases in waiting time were captured in the participants’ travel diaries. For example, Allan recorded that he felt bored when his train trip home from work was delayed by ten minutes (see figure 6.1). In the follow up interview, Allan was prompted to explain this event further, commenting:

It’s just an incident that happened, before our station I think so that's the reason why that delay it’s not track work, it’s not planned at all… it’s frustrated but it’s kind of like well what can you do, it's one of those moment when you just have to wait and wait for the train to arrive and things.

Allan was frustrated at the unforeseen delay. However, he also demonstrated tolerance and acceptance that this is just a part of the travel experience. Such frustrations did not cause Allan to reevaluate his preference for public transport and as seen in figure 6.1, despite the waiting time, Allan still perceived this trip to be quick and comfortable. The examples presented in this section demonstrate participants’ tolerances towards these frustrations during the work commute. Despite this, public transport was still deemed more convenient than the car. However, the following discussion reveals that the study participants were less forgiving of these frustrations when trips were undertaken for social or recreational purposes.
Figure 6.1 Extract from Allan’s travel diary: unforeseen delays

6.2.2 Social and recreational trips

The findings of Klocker et al (in prep) demonstrated significant differences in the mode of transport used for the work/study trip for NE Asians compared to Anglo-Australians. However, differences in mode of transport were less pronounced and in most instances, non-significant for other trip-types, including social and recreational trips. The participants involved in this study indicated that time may be valued differently (and frustrations may be experienced differently) depending on trip purpose. For instance, Chen noted that whilst the wait ‘is not too bad’ on weekday mornings (for the work commute – in which train services are more regular), on the weekend the wait is perceived as ‘way too long’:

On the weekend time is precious so you don't want to wait in the train station… you always want to do other stuff, other than sit at the train station for 20 minutes each way and then plus the walk 10 minutes each way so an hour gone just on waiting whereas its five minutes when you drive.
Chen’s patience for waiting differs depending on trip purpose. Frustrating delays were not tolerable on weekends, leading Chen and her partner to drive for most social and recreational activities.

Kaufman (2000) suggested that modal choice is related to the spatiality of activity schedules. Some participants felt frustrated over time being constricted by public transport timetables on the weekend and felt that they were unable to fulfill certain aspects of their social lives without the car. For example, Anthony enjoyed playing badminton on weekends, which was often followed by lunch with his friends. Prior to owning a car, Anthony used to catch a train to Burwood and then change to a bus to take him to Five Dock sports centre or alternatively he would ask a friend for a lift. Over time, Anthony felt frustrated and restricted by having to rely on multiple modes of public transport or friends to get to the game, commenting that having to use public transport for this trip is ‘very inconvenient’ and that ‘you can’t always rely on your friend’. Anthony explained purchasing a car as a ‘big compliment’ to his life, commenting:

In the past I just took a train…to Burwood shopping centre or somewhere close to train station, but now I can go anywhere I want. Well maybe not be anywhere, anywhere easy to park! *laughs*

Previous to car ownership, Anthony outlined how his social and recreational activities were restricted. This provides an example of how a gradual frustration, over time, led to the attrition of the habits he had brought with him from mainland China.

This section has drawn attention to the complex, fluid nature of day-to-day transport choices. The findings complicate expectations that gradual frustrations change transport choices. Instead, the participants in this study demonstrated high tolerance for the frustrations of public transport – but only for some trip purposes.
6.3 Cultural shifts

The aim of this section is to explore the transformation of mobility habits that can occur when Chinese migrants are exposed to different sets of ideas about transportation post-migration. These ideas are underpinned by the social norms, rhythms and practices that sustain everyday life in Sydney. During interviews, two themes emerged that illustrate a cultural shift: learning to drive and grocery shopping.

6.3.1 Learning to drive

Due to the spatially and temporally fragmented character of everyday life in Sydney, several participants explained that learning to drive was a ‘necessity’ post-migration, not a ‘choice’:

Actually I didn't want to learn to drive until...I had to. I have no choice because I live in that place because it’s too far from industrial area [workplace], far from everywhere, so difficult, so that's the reason I learn to drive (Xia).

Past mobility habits (being solely reliant on public and active transport) were disrupted because they were not sufficient in Sydney. Xia found reliance on public transport ‘difficult’ in Sydney due to the daily distances she had to travel to work. Other participants made similar observations. Chen, having spent her childhood in mainland China where bike riding and walking were the norm, spoke of her surprise when being told by her mother that driving was an imperative part of living in Australia, ‘in Australia you don’t walk, you don’t bicycle because there is no bicycles’. Despite being warned of the driving imperative in Australia, Chen initially walked to various places:

When I arrived here [Australia] I went to a language school...the walk is probably about 20 minutes and in the beginning maybe we kept doing it for a couple of months, 4-5 months until in the end you find out it is really hard! Uphill, downhill, if there’s rain and there is no shops so actually its very dangerous for two little kids, and actually we got harassed once...so in the end you realise this is not how you do things here. So you learn to catch a bus and wait for a bus and yeah I think a couple of months and then you realise you can’t really do much without a car...

In Chen’s experience, suburban Sydney streets were not conducive to her family’s habitual mobility patterns of walking or bike riding. Disruptions were related to distances, terrain,
aesthetics, safety concerns and racism. Chen was also prompted to change by the realisation that: ‘this is not how you do things here’. An interesting component of Chen’s story was the gradual shift over time – from walking to catching the bus, from catching the bus to driving. Learning to drive was eventually deemed essential for keeping everyday life together in a Sydney suburb.

Migrants’ social networks also created pressure to assimilate to Australia’s car driving norms. Framed within the dominant social norms of convenience, control, independence and freedom – driving became understood as a means to participating in ‘the good life’ (Sheller and Urry, 2000:739). Nicole migrated to Australia eight years ago and lived in Wollongong before moving to Sydney. For the first seven years, Nicole was reliant on public and active transport and on lifts from friends. Nicole described public transport in both Sydney and Wollongong as ‘very convenient’. However, Nicole had recently purchased a car and starting driving. While Nicole had felt some frustration with having to ‘depend on other people’ for lifts, her decision to purchase a car was largely due to outside encouragement:

I have a car because I was pushed by my [church] minister because she said that I should drive to be independent and because it’s kind of life skill that you should have and also get me more to do more things that I want, so I kind got pushed by her so I decided to buy a car and start drive.

The car is widely perceived as a means of achieving independence and leading a richer/busier life (Urry, 2000). Nicole was actively encouraged to learn to drive and purchase a car by a person who was inculcated in these norms. As explored in section 5.3.2, like many participants, Nicole was initially ‘very scared’ of driving. Nicole recalled the first time she drove independently to work:

It [driving] was very very scary and I don't know where to go, I was driving on the road and I don't know when to turn and where to turn…it was so scary.

Nicole’s fear of driving was exacerbated by the unfamiliarity of the surroundings. In further discussion, Nicole talked about becoming more confident through habitual driving practices developed through repetitive driving along familiar roads (Bissell, 2013). When prompted to further discuss her car use Nicole said: ‘I don't really like car I just want to use it cause it is
helpful’. As discussed in section 5.3.1, Nicole did not articulate an emotional attachment to her car. Nonetheless, her transport patterns changed post-migration as she was encouraged by her social network to adopt broader social norms.

Chen faced similar pressures from her Anglo-Australian husband, despite expressing great antagonism towards cars. Chen’s husband was adamant that driving is an integral part of everyday life in Australia. In Chen’s words, he: ‘thinks it’s essential to drive in Australia’. Chen described her husband’s viewpoint: ‘it’s more the idea, like you have to drive, it’s almost like you have to know how to swim’. Here, Chen illustrated how driving was presented to her as an essential life skill necessary to survival in Australia. Learning to drive became a source of conflict between Chen and her then fiancée:

> I fought many times with him, I would be crying, literally crying in the car, so I just refuse to drive and he would drop the bomb and say: ‘If you don't know how to drive I don't really know if I can marry you’. No, and he is really serious about it so that's why I keep on trying and so you just see me crying driving and he was very adamant I had to drive.

Chen’s husband understood driving as essential for a successful heterosexual relationship. Chen went on to explain: ‘he said if we have a family and you’re going to be a stay at home mother, you will be in charge of driving the kids to school’. A clash of social norms surrounding marital relationships was apparent in her narrative, particularly when Chen added, ‘if I had a Chinese husband it could be very different again, my Chinese husband probably wouldn't be making me drive’. As with Nicole, Chen’s transport behaviours changed post-migration, but only because she was pushed to adopt the transport norms of the broader community.

6.3.2 Grocery shopping
Participants revealed that their grocery shopping practices in Sydney differ from those in their countries of origin. Grocery shopping in Sydney prompted important transformations in Chinese migrants’ embodied mobility habits post-migration. Seven of the 14 overseas-born participants described always using the car for grocery shopping in Sydney, and a further two reported ‘sometimes’ using the car alongside public transport and walking. Cars were used to carry groceries and to facilitate bulk purchasing. The car also enabled participants to better
manage the spatially fragmented locations of stores including; Chinese grocers, supermarkets, smaller specialty stores (e.g. fruit shops or butchers) and markets. The car had thus become an integral part of many participants’ weekly grocery shopping patterns post-migration.

While living in China and affiliated territories, most of the interviewees walked to markets with a trolley and purchased only a small amount of food every day. Participants’ daily grocery shopping patterns were linked to ideas of ‘freshness’ (which were aligned with time of day) and ‘convenience’ in terms of proximity. Chen commented that ‘mothers and grandmothers’ in China do their shopping first thing in the morning when the produce is the ‘freshest’. Further, in China, ‘we are so used to shopping every single day, even we just buy a small amount of food’. Chen described Chinese markets in terms of convenience, located ‘close’, ‘downstairs’ from the ‘residential area’. In contrast, Chen discussed how grocery shopping in Sydney challenged her understandings of freshness and convenience:

Coles doesn’t bring out the freshest produce every single day…you have to drive all the way to Woolworths and come back…and you only do the grocery shopping once a week…the living pattern is different.

The car became essential for Chen’s grocery shopping practices in Sydney due to the location of supermarkets and weekly shopping patterns. Furthermore, grocery shopping with a car in Australia provided her with cultural capital that differentiated her from older (more ‘traditional’) Chinese-Australians:

If you go to Hurstville at like 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning, you don't see Aussie people…but you see all these [Chinese] grandmothers with their little trolleys and that's what they do and they do their shopping every single day… they will be picking up stuff and everything has to be really fresh and that's what they do, everyday, just buy little things and next day they come back and buy little more, and that's a separate group because they are not working.

According to Chen, ‘grandmothers’ and ‘people who are retired’ continue to grocery shop on a daily basis in markets despite living in Sydney. In Chen’s words, this older generation has more ‘Chinese tradition’, characterised by the combined mobility habits of walking with
trolley-bags, rather than using cars. Anne, 65 and semi-retired, is illustrative of these ‘traditional’ grocery shopping mobility habits. Anne spoke of shopping daily and combined grocery shopping with her routine yum cha lunch outing to Burwood with her husband:

Usually we go to Burwood, take the bus to Burwood and my husband like yum cha… so yum cha is our lunch and then we…do the shopping, like buy the daily food you know…I prefer to do the shopping every day since we go there every day…I have a trolley but I seldom take the trolley with me but we do have the carrying bag… I just remind my husband…‘we only have two hand okay… so think about that like how many you can lift *laughs*.

Anne demonstrates bodily proficiencies for grocery shopping on a daily basis using public and active transport. But such shopping practices were treated with some disdain by younger participants, who saw these practices as reflective of an older generation that had not adapted to Australian social norms.

Lee’s grocery shopping practices also changed post-migration. She abandoned her daily shopping routine in favour of bulk buying facilitated by the car:

Most people [in Australia] shop once or twice every week and that's it and then you store the food, and you always have a second fridge… Australian always buy in bulk and then they have to have a car to transport them.

Lee went on to state that for those Chinese migrants who continue to shop the ‘Chinese way’ in Australia (like Anne), ‘the car is not essential’ as they ‘only buy little that they can carry onto public transport’ and ‘they always live where the shopping centres [are]’. Like Chen, Lee noted that it is older Chinese-Australians that continue to shop in the ‘traditional Chinese’ way.

Nicole’s shopping patterns changed ‘straight away…with the culture’ in Sydney. For Nicole, like Lee and Chen, driving to do the weekly grocery shopping was a source of cultural capital that differentiated her from older (more ‘traditional’) Chinese-Australians:
The older one, they are reluctant to like accept the new things [driving] even the [Australian] culture, some of them they don't like Western food, they eat Chinese food only, it happen to quiet a lot of the old people, yeah so it depends on the different ages.

Nicole suggested that younger Chinese migrants are more receptive of different ideas, tastes and mobility habits. Xia also described younger migrants as being more open to new routines and practices, including shopping:

They [younger people] learn so quickly to accommodate to the new culture but old people still have a lot of things in the blood they still remembering, like I see a lot of Chinese walking from Penshurst to Hurstville that takes half an hour which they do. But the young people not much, but old people sometimes carry the [grocery] bags I see and think, ‘Oh so heavy’.

Nicole, Chen, Lee and Xia all noted a cultural resistance to accepting new ideas amongst older Chinese migrants (reflected in their daily shopping routines and associated transport choices). In Xia’s words, these routines are ‘in the blood’. For Xia, who has altered her shopping patterns since migrating to Australia, these are not practices of ‘young’ Chinese-Australians who are perceived as more likely to adopt the broader Australian community’s patterns of bulk purchasing and car use.

6.4 Major life events

Major life events constitute moments of disruption. They cause habitual travel practices to be re-evaluated as individuals strive to re-balance their competing responsibilities (Guell et al, 2012; Bissell, 2013). While migration is itself a major life event, it is not considered in this section, as it is the backdrop of the entire project. Here, consideration is given to starting a family. This was a major life event that disrupted the mobility habits of several overseas born study participants post-migration.

Allan and Linda both migrated to Australia separately in their late teens to complete their tertiary education. Linda was born in Malaysia and grew up in Taiwan. Allan was born in Hong Kong and then moved to New Zealand for high school. They were married while living in Australia and started a family. Linda did not have a license before coming to Australia.
After moving to Sydney, Linda found that the train was a convenient and cheaper option than the car, so she rarely drove despite having a license. Allan learned to drive in New Zealand but like Linda, relied upon public transport after migrating to Sydney. It was only after the birth of their first child that Linda and Allan purchased a car:

I don't really care too much about car because I still go to work by train…so the car like we only bought because we got a young kid and sometimes it’s hard to travel around with him by the public transport…(Linda).

The decision to purchase a car was made within the social context of the family, not as individual agents (Guell et al, 2012). To the present day, public transport remains suitable for Linda’s travel needs as a worker, but it is insufficient for the travel needs of her family. Linda and Allan described the complexities of negotiating public transport with a young child: trying to negotiate stairs at the railway station with a pram, waiting for multiple buses at peak hour and being restricted to buses with wheelchair and pram access. Before having a car, they had opted to miss social activities rather than brave public transport with a pram: ‘it just took too much time on travelling with the pram’ (Linda). Linda also discussed how negotiating trackwork was difficult with a child, commenting, ‘you have to change stations…and just too time consuming and sometimes [you] just say, ‘oh it’s too much [effort] to go’. Linda and Allan felt that Sydney’s public transport network has been designed to facilitate the lives of commuters journeying to work, but not to meet the needs of parents with young children. Linda underscored the lack of ease and smoothness of travelling with a pram. These restrictions caused Linda and Allan to ‘give up’ on public transport for family travel and ultimately caused them to purchase a car. A desire to gain control over time and be spontaneous as family also influenced this decision:

We want[ed] to go to some places but it’s kind of like it’s an impulse thing so like you want to go now, that's the time when we decide that we want to have a car, is that waiting for public transport (Allan).

Automobility facilitated quality family time for Allan and Linda by enabling them to act on impulse without having to wait for public transport. While public transport was adequate for the purpose of moving Linda and Allan between home and work, the car was regarded as
essential for family life in Sydney. Linda used the car to balance housework, paid work and mothering (see figure 6.2):

Since I need to pick him [her son] up from childcare, I need to drive, so I just put everything in the car that I need to drop [off to the charity box], and then pick up the things I need to get from the shopping centre and then go pick him up on the way back…I can still walk to bring all those clothes [talking about taking unwanted clothes to charity], but I have to probably take two turns, so it’s easier if I have a car, I just put everything in the trunk and drive there and dump *laughs*… yeah without the car I probably need to wait until weekend while Allan is here so he can help me with all those things, but with a car I can do it by myself.

In a busy, fragmented life, which requires balancing multiple responsibilities, time is seen as very valuable. Daly (1996:116) suggested that as a result, ‘family members look for new and more efficient ways to protect, control and manage their time’. Linda explained that the car enables her to use time effectively, ‘holding it together’ and keep on schedule, completing tasks before picking her son up (Dowling 2000; Shove, 2003b:175). Yet Linda and Allan did not abandon the car altogether. On workdays, Linda explained that she gets up early and walks to the train station then takes a train and bus to her workplace. Allan starts work later so he drives the car to childcare, drops their son off and then leaves the car at childcare. He walks to the station and catches the train to work. Linda finishes work earlier than Allan, she catches the bus and train home, walks to the childcare to pick up their son and has a second set of keys for the car to then drive him home. This routine is well planned and demonstrates how parenting responsibilities (for which the car is considered necessary) are shared and combined with work trips (for which public transport is preferred). Car-sharing amongst adults was prevalent amongst the NE Asian participants in Klocker et al’s (in prep) study and also in this study (see table 3.1). By planning their day strategically, Allan and Linda were able to juggle competing responsibilities despite sharing a car.
Linda and Allan’s story is discussed in detail here to highlight how the major event of having a child disrupted some (but not all) dimensions of their habituated mobility patterns. Linda and Allan continued with habitual practices of using public transport for the work journey. However, as parents with a young child, they confronted the shortcomings of a public
transport system designed for commuters, rather than the mobile lives of family units. Their experiences of attempting to negotiate public transport with a young child worked against their understandings of quality family time.

Xia also discussed how the car was the most important mode of transport for her as a mother, commenting, ‘time is so precious for [a] mum. So if we go and get somewhere [by car] it is much easier then public transport’. Xia expressed frustration towards waiting at the station and travel time. Xia used the car to save time when dropping her son to pre-school, commenting:

If I have to bring him to school that's [the car is] very important because the school not close to the station, but close to the bus stop but the bus take a very long time to his pre-school. So if I drive it take 5-10 minutes, if I take the bus it takes about 45 minutes!

This example supports Dowling’s (2000) finding, that if cars are quicker than other transport modes, the valuing of time may cement car use. An Australian-born participant, Shantelle, also provided insights into cultures of mothering and car use, highlighting how having a child can change transport patterns. Shantelle’s parents were both born in Hong Kong and migrated to Australia before she was born. Whilst Shantelle’s father had obtained his license in Hong Kong ‘for fun’ (see section 5.2.1), her mother got her license in Australia when Shantelle was an infant ‘because she saw it as a necessity’ for being a mother in Australia. Shantelle commented, ‘she [her mother] didn't want to catch the bus [to] take me to childcare or preschool which is a nuisance when it's a 5 minute drive’. Shantelle narrated a story her mother had told her about other Chinese women getting their licenses for the purpose of ‘good mothering’. However, for women with an embodied disposition against the car this was a frightening experience (see section 5.3.2):

Some of the other mums at the time they were really terrified because it [driving] was something very foreign… they would rather drive the kid to preschool, sit in the car for like the whole day and then pick up the kid again, so they would do like two less trips of driving. That’s like how foreign it was for them (Shantelle).
This story provides a powerful example of several themes discussed in this thesis. On the one hand it shows how major events bring about changes in behaviours. But on the other hand, it shows that the embodied disposition against cars is powerful and does not simply disappear as a result of these events.

6.5 Conclusion
This chapter has explored the capacity of ideas, experiences and subjectivities to transform post-migration mobility choices. While some habits remained embedded despite migration (see Chapters 4 and 5), disruptions (particularly cultural shifts and major life events) caused other habits to change. The Chinese migrant respondents demonstrated a willingness to tolerate the frustrations of public transport – as long as these did not impinge upon their family lives and recreational time. These findings suggest that time is valued differently depending on the trip purpose. Being exposed to broader Australian cultural norms post-migration was also significant. Despite reporting embodied dispositions against cars, a number of participants narrated events that suggest they were forced to learn to drive in Australia (either as a result of contextual factors, or because members of their social network pushed them to do so). Over time, many came to consider cars a necessity for grocery shopping – although ‘more traditional’ (generally older) members of the Chinese-Australian community retained grocery shopping and transport practices from their countries of birth. Transport practices are thus diverse, even within the Chinese-Australian population. Finally, major life events – particularly having a child – presented a major disruption to transport habits. Public transport in Sydney was perceived as inadequate for the needs of parents with young children. The decision to purchase and use a car was made within the social context of the family, as a way of balancing multiple responsibilities and saving precious time. Crucially, while many of the participants did change their transport choices post-migration – by learning how to drive and owning cars for the first time – they did not abandon public transport entirely. Change did occur but it did not lead to total car-dependence.

The environmental sustainability implications of these findings are positive. Counter to previous studies – that suggest migrants’ transport behaviours merge with those of native-born populations within about ten years post-migration (Heisz and Schellenberg 2004; Blumenberg and Shiki 2007; Tal and Handy 2010; Modarres 2009, 2013) – participants in the study group retained many transport habits and preferences from their countries of birth, despite eight of 14 overseas-born participants living in Australia for ten years or more (with a
further four participants having lived in Australia for five years or more). Although most participants now use cars, they remain reluctant car users and only drive for certain trip purposes. These findings point towards the durability of more environmentally sustainable transport behaviours over the longer-term and suggest that Chinese migrants do not quickly or readily acculturate to patterns of car dependence.
Chapter 7 - Conclusion
To conclude, this chapter discusses the researcher’s changing positionality, revisits the project aims, summarises the key research findings and suggests future research agendas.

Box 7.1 Researcher positionality: looking back

**On reflection… - how has the project shaped me?**

Having finished the data collection I have decided to reflect on how I have changed over the course of the project. The concepts that have emerged in this study have challenged me to rethink my own experiences and choices. The most notable change for me has been my overall awareness of my own mobility and also those around me.

“A driver”- As the project was based in Sydney, I spent a lot of time negotiating city driving. As a driver, I experienced emotions of excitement as I overcame challenges and discovered new places, stress as I got lost and found myself being ‘beeped’ at by other drivers and frustration as I sat in traffic watching the clock. I became aware of how habituated my driving skills are, as I didn't have to think about changing gears, slowing down or speeding up. In saying that – city driving is very different to the open road driving which I am used to. At times I felt nervous changing lanes in such a high volume of traffic and I sympathised with the participants in my study, imagining what it must be like to learn to drive for the first time in such a hectic environment.

“A passenger” – At times I chose to catch the train rather than driving into the city. I found that during the course of the project as I immersed myself further in the study I became aware of the ‘public transport experience’ on a new level. I’ve always enjoyed ‘people watching’, however my interest has increased and I’ve found myself analysing the train carriage – watching how people use their time and what seats people choose. I’m more aware of scents and sounds. I have also become aware that based on my own past experiences, I have a different tolerance for waiting and different ideas of ‘regularity’ of train services. Having grown up in a rural area, trains were always at least an hour apart – therefore, when I am in the city, 20 minute intervals between trains don’t seem too bad. In comparison, participants in this study spoke of a 20 minute wait as ‘frustrating’, perceiving this as a large interval based on their past life histories, of efficient public transport systems in their countries of birth.

“An Anglo-Australian” – As noted in the methods chapter my ‘whiteness’ impacted on the project in terms of recruitment. Despite being an ‘outsider’ in terms of my ethnicity, I was able to bond with participants through other parts of our identities, such as sharing university experiences. I have become so embedded in this project that I can’t help but be more aware of people of Asian appearance on public transport and walking with shopping bags – I often find myself wondering about their mobility patterns.

Over the last few months I have had my eyes opened to a whole new culture, not only in terms of mobility but also in many other aspects. I have tasted new foods (including being offered to stay for a traditional home cooked Chinese dinner after an interview one night) and made new friends. In many instances I was overwhelmed by the kindness of the participants, and the enthusiasm they showed for my project. Whilst there were challenges along the way, I have discovered a passion for cross-cultural research.
7.1 Changing positionality
Following Waitt (2010) and Miller Cleary (2013), the researcher’s ongoing reflections were documented in a research diary. An initial positionality statement – documenting the researcher’s thoughts prior to commencing the fieldwork - was presented in section 3.3. The researcher’s reflections ‘looking back’ on the project are presented in Box 7.1.

7.2 Revisiting the research aims: key findings
The overarching aim of this study was to better understand the mobility choices that sustain the everyday lives of Chinese migrants living in Sydney. A mixed-methods approach achieved a breadth of insight. By utilising semi-structured interviews, travel dairies and mobile ethnographies, the researcher was able to explore lived experiences, embodied aspects of mobility and gain an insight into the complex, fluid nature of everyday travel choices. The project was guided by four key research questions that are revisited in the following sections.

7.2.1 What ideas and experiences inform Chinese migrants’ mobility choices?
Chapters 4 and 5 explored how the ideas shaping study participants’ mobility choices were informed by past experiences. A key theme throughout these two chapters was the importance of life histories and past experiences in participants’ countries of birth. Transport preferences and mobility habits were linked to having grown up in societies where public transport was a social and cultural norm and cars were not perceived as a necessity for everyday life. Participants’ exposure to public transport pre-migration meant that most Chinese migrants preferred to keep using public transport after arriving in Australia. Not only was public transport considered the norm, it was associated with positive experiences, convenience and ease. In addition, having grown up in contexts where private car ownership was atypical, participants had little or no driving experience before arriving in Australia. This too shaped their subsequent transport choices, with participants’ feelings towards the car ranging from pragmatism and ambivalence, to discomfort and in some instances – outright hostility.

As shown in Chapter 5, feelings of pragmatism, ambivalence, discomfort and even hostility were associated with the private car, and were influenced by life histories and experiences in countries of origin. Participants grew up in contexts where the car was not a necessity to everyday life and driving was not a social norm. Their reflections on cars and driving indicated that not all Australians are bound up in the dominant system of automobility.
Migration thus disrupts the logic of car-dependence by bringing diverse national driving cultures into an Australian context. In contrast to the ‘love affair’ Anglo-European Australians have with their cars (see section 2.2.1), the study participants who had migrated to Australia felt no positive emotional attachment to their cars, and did not express a desire to spend time in their cars or to be driving. At best, the car was a tool used for getting from A to B. At worst, it was a source of near debilitating discomfort and fear. Clearly, multiple driving cultures co-exist in Australia; shaped in part by the ethnic diversity of the population. Notions of Australians’ love affair with the car appear to be based on the preferences of the Anglo-European Australian ethnic majority.

This discussion is divided into two sub-sections. The first outlines how ideas informing transport choices in Australia were shaped by experiences pre-migration, and retained post-migration. The second sub-section outlines how experiences post-migration informed new ideas, causing habits to shift.

i) What habits have been retained despite the disruption of migration?

Chapters 4 and 5 explored participants’ embodied dispositions towards public transport and against the car. Participants’ past experiences and transport habits in their countries of birth appeared to foster higher tolerance thresholds and competencies for negotiating public transport. The Chinese migrants involved in this study demonstrated a high tolerance for ‘being with’ others on public transport (Bissell, 2010), due to past experiences in far more crowded contexts. Some participants even expressed feelings of comfort and enjoyment at the sociality of public transport experiences. Even when public transport was associated with discomfort, participants tolerated this because they prioritised necessity and convenience over personal comfort. In addition to competencies for negotiating crowds, participants also demonstrated a range of other skills for negotiating complex and multi-mode trips, and made productive use of travel time. Participants’ habituated and embodied dispositions towards public transport led them to make deliberate and strategic decisions to orient their lives in Sydney around public transport. This strategy enabled many participants to continue to use public transport over the longer-term. It also enabled them to avoid regular car use – a particularly appealing prospect for those who disliked or feared driving.
ii) What habits have changed post-migration?

Chinese migrants’ experiences post-migration informed new ideas, causing some transport choices to shift. While the study participants did not adopt car-dependent values or norms, they came to perceive cars as a necessity for certain aspects of everyday life in Sydney. All participants but one owned a car at the time of the interviews, yet they continued to use public transport whenever feasible. Participants provided insights into the gradual frustrations of travelling by public transport in Sydney, but they were willing to tolerate discomfort and inconveniences for some trip types, particularly the work commute. However, over time, the car came to be regarded as desirable for social and recreational trips, and as a necessity for grocery shopping and good parenting. These changes reflected participants’ own changing ideas over time, as well as the pressure they faced from social networks to adhere to Australian norms. Participants used cars when they had no other choice, not because driving had become an alluring prospect. Their comments indicated that the spatially and temporally fragmented character of everyday life in Sydney can over time push, even the most reluctant car users to drive.

7.2.2 What role does ethnicity play in shaping mobility choices?

This thesis explored how ethnicity, alongside other axes of difference, shapes mobility choices. While it is important not to essentialise ethnicity, the study participants themselves made regular and direct links between their ethnic backgrounds, country of birth and transport choices. Other aspects of participants’ identities were also shown to be significant through their narratives, including their age (at present, and at the time of migration), gender and family composition and roles. A number of participants made it clear that the category ‘Chinese-Australian’ is internally diverse, and drew particular attention to the distinction between older, more ‘traditional’ generations of migrants, and younger migrants who were more willing to adopt Anglo-Australians norms. Klocker et al (in prep) found that NE Asians’ transport behaviours differed significantly from those of Anglo-Australians, even after controlling for socio-economic factors. So too in this study, participants primarily attributed Chinese-Australians’ distinct transport patterns to cultural norms.
7.2.3 What are the implications of these findings for transport-related sustainability objectives?

This study was motivated by concerns over the environmental implications of car dependence. It is important to note that while the overseas born study participants’ reported a preference for less carbon intensive transport modes, they were not primarily motivated by environmental concerns. Previous research has identified groups that favour public transport over the car as ‘civic ecologists’, suggesting these transport choices essentially revolve around the environment (Kaufman, 2000). Contrasting this, this study has shown that preferences for public transport are not always explicitly based on environmental motives. Whilst several participants did acknowledge the environmental implications of car use, this did not have a large influence on their choices. Therefore, their transport actions and preferences were inadvertently ‘green’ (Hobson, 2008 and Klocker et al, 2012).

Klocker et al (in prep) have argued that the focus in policy, planning and academic arenas is often on the most car-dependent groups in Australian society, rather than the least. The Chinese migrant participants in this study demonstrated a cultural preference and embodied disposition towards public transport and against the car. Given the profound environmental implications of car dependence, research attention should arguably focus on better understanding and heralding the practices of groups whose transport choices are already environmentally sustainable. Taking ethnic diversity into account in transport policy and research may also help to ensure that resources are directed towards supporting and sustaining these practices over the longer-term. In addition, there may be potential to learn from the more sustainable transport practices of Chinese-Australians. Their capacities for managing everyday life without being car-dependent could inform strategies to facilitate broader uptake of similar practices.

The study participants reported being unable to rely solely on public transport since moving to Australia – despite articulating a strong preference for this mode of transport. These findings indicate that Sydney’s public transport system currently does not meet the specific needs of ethnic minorities. They also indicate the deep failings of the city’s public transport system, when even the most committed public transport users (and reluctant car drivers) feel compelled to purchase and use cars.
7.3 Future research

This thesis serves as a starting point to address Klocker et al’s (in prep) call for qualitative research to better understand the cultural factors contributing to the transport choices made by ethnic minorities and migrants living in Australia. While the research has undoubtedly provided important insights and findings, further research is necessary – including research with migrants of different ethnicities.

The conceptual framework focused on the intersection between mobilities and feminist geographies, bringing to fore questions of how different gendered, aged and ethnic bodies negotiate everyday mobile transport space. While the thesis obtained some insights into affective and embodied experiences of transport, such observations were limited due to the methodological challenge of having only two participants in the mobile ethnography. Future research could focus on this ride-along method, gaining more insights into the ethnically diverse lived experiences of being a passenger on public transport.

The study participants indicated that there are distinct groups within the Chinese-Australian population: ‘us’ and ‘them’ (see section 3.4.3). Most overseas born participants considered themselves to be part of a younger and more acculturated group of Chinese-Australians. The ‘other’ group was described as leading a more ‘traditional’ lifestyle with even lower rates of car use than the study group. In order to capture the diverse experiences of the Chinese-Australian population, future research should focus on older generations and be inclusive of those who cannot speak English.

As explored in Chapter 6, mobility choices are complex and dynamic – with the preferred mode of transport differing depending on trip purpose. The triangulation of data in this project revealed inconsistencies between the interviews and travel diaries. Whilst the follow up interviews allowed the researcher to explore these differences, an area that could be further investigated is the rhythms of everyday transport. A study utilising travel diaries over a longer period of time could explore if mobility rhythms change seasonally, or are influenced by personal lifestyles. A particular aspect that deserves further attention is research into the motivations for the car being regarded as essential for certain trips. This might lead to better informed public transport policies that could address such travel needs without the car.
Another finding that could be explored further is ‘learning to drive’ (outlined in Chapter 5). Driving (at least initially) was associated with emotions of fear and discomfort. Almost all the participants expressed having safety concerns and many stories were told during the interviews that demonstrated how a lack of driving experience led to dangerous situations on the road. While the research found almost all of the participants drove for certain trips, it would be interesting to map Chinese-Australians routine mobilities, to explore whether driving is restricted to familiar routes and whether people are geographically bound by this fear. Driving beyond these geographical limits may only occur when it is deemed ‘essential’ to do so. Safety concerns were often due to a lack of driving experience. As demonstrated in section 5.2.1 the process of obtaining a license in China is very different to that in Australia – that is, having a driver’s license does not necessarily equate to experience driving on the road. Further research focusing on driving experiences and the process of gaining a license in Australia could inform policies on road safety.

Klocker’s et al (in prep) study found that overseas-born respondents (particularly NE Asian and South and Central Asians) were significantly more likely to share vehicles amongst household members. The findings of this study also revealed that car sharing was prevalent amongst Chinese migrants, with section 6.4 noting how some participants shared a car despite having to manage competing responsibilities. Further research could focus on car sharing, exploring how families balance responsibilities and manage everyday life whilst at the same time negotiating the use of a shared car.

Finally, transport behaviours are just one element of everyday life, shaped by cultural norms, with implications for environmental sustainability. In exploring the transport behaviours of Chinese migrants, this thesis has responded to calls to pay greater heed to ethnic diversity within Australian environmental research (Klocker and Head, 2013). Attentiveness to ethnically diverse sustainabilities (whether intentional or inadvertent) may provide fertile ground for re-thinking and re-shaping the ingrained habits of the Anglo-Australian ethnic majority – where these have been found to be environmentally problematic.
Reference list


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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

APPROVAL after review
In reply please quote: HE14/172
Further Enquiries Phone: 4221 3386

2 May 2014

Ms Sophie-May Kerr
6/23 Hillcrest St
Wollongong NSW 2500

Dear Ms Kerr,

Thank you for your letter responding to the HREC review letter. I am pleased to advise that the Human Research Ethics application referred to below has been approved.

Ethics Number: HE14/172
Project Title: Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese-Australian households
Researchers: Ms Sophie-May Kerr, Dr Natascha Klocker, Professor Gordon Waitt
Approval Date: 1 May 2014
Expiry Date: 30 April 2015

The University of Wollongong/Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the National Statement and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document.

A condition of approval by the HREC is the submission of a progress report annually and a final report on completion of your project. The progress report template is available at http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rso/ethics/UOW009385.html. This report must be completed, signed by the appropriate Head of School, and returned to the Research Services Office prior to the expiry date.

As evidence of continuing compliance, the Human Research Ethics Committee also requires that researchers immediately report:

- proposed changes to the protocol including changes to investigators involved
- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants
- unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Ethics Unit, Research Services Office
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
Telephone (02) 4221 3386 Facsimile (02) 4221 4338
Email: rso-ethics@uow.edu.au Web: www.uow.edu.au
Please note that approvals are granted for a twelve month period. Further extension will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to expiry date. If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process, please contact the Ethics Unit on phone 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Professor Kathleen Clapham
Chair, Social Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Dr Natascha Klocker, Professor Gordon Waitt
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE: ‘Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese-Australian households’

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: This project aims to gain an insight into the transport behaviours and experiences of Chinese-Australian households. It will explore the primary modes of transport being used in Chinese-Australian households; the underlying reasons for these transport choices; the attitudes, beliefs and values which shape those transport choices; and Chinese-Australians’ experiences of using different types of transport.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO: If you choose to participate, you will be invited to talk about the daily transport choices that sustain your household. These conversations will occur at a time and location that suits you. Importantly, the level and frequency of your involvement will be tailored to meet your time constraints. We will ask for permission to audio-record the interviews. Consent will be reconfirmed throughout the different stages of the study.

There are three potential stages to this study. Your involvement is voluntary and will depend on how much time you wish to dedicate to the project. You may choose which stages to participate in. If you decide to participate in one interview only, you will not be pressured to participate in other stages of the study.

Stage 1: A semi-structured interview – We will ask you to tell us a bit about your household structure and background; as well as your transport choices and experiences. Questions you will be asked include: What modes of transport are most commonly used in your household? What are the reasons for choosing these modes of transport? What are your experiences of using different modes of transport? What vehicles are owned in your household? If you are a migrant, how have your experiences in your birth country influenced your transport choices in Australia? This interview is expected to be roughly an hour in duration.

Stage 2: A travel diary - You will be invited to complete a travel diary over one week. We will provide you with a diary designed for this purpose. In it, you will record your travel routes, reasons for travel, modes of transport and your experiences. You will also be given a camera to use and asked to include photos in your diary if you wish. A follow-up interview will be scheduled to discuss the travel journal and any photographs you may have taken. This interview will explore your daily transport routes, choices and experiences. This interview will be approximately 30-40 minutes in duration.

Stage 3: An accompanied trip - You will be invited to participate in further research involving the researcher travelling alongside you on ONE regular travel journey (this may be on public transport, in the car, walking or cycling etc.). Conversations will occur during this travel time and with permission will be recorded, to further explore your daily travel experiences.
POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS: Apart from the time taken to participate in this research, we can foresee no inconvenience for you. We will tailor your involvement to suit your availability and needs and you will not be pressured to participate in more activities than you feel comfortable with. The interviews will be conducted professionally and ethically. You will not be pressured to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and your involvement is entirely voluntary. You may halt your participation at any time and withdraw any data you have provided until that point. You can also withdraw any data you have provided up until the end of June 2014. If you decide not to participate, this will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

FUNDING AND BENEFITS: The research will be used to better understand the travel experiences and behaviours of Chinese-Australian householders. It will be become the basis of an honours thesis and may be published in academic journal articles, books, and conference papers. The findings may also be discussed in media interviews. You will be able to choose whether you would prefer to be referred to by your real name in published materials, or whether you would prefer to use a pseudonym (false name). In accordance with the law, all data that we obtain from you will be stored for a minimum of 5 years in locked filing cabinets in Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities and on password protected computers. With approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee, the data may continue to be used by the researchers after the 5 year period in related research and publications.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS: This study was reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted please contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Sophie-May Kerr. Thank you for your interest in this study.

INVESTIGATORS:
Professor Gordon Waitt, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong; gwaitt@uow.edu.au
Sophie-May Kerr (student investigator), Faculty of Social Sciences, smk534@uowmail.edu.au, 0402699488
Dr Natascha Kloc ker, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong; natascha@uow.edu.au
Appendix C: Consent form for semi-structured interviews

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

RESEARCH TITLE: ‘Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese-Australian households’

RESEARCHERS: Natascha Klocker, Gordon Waitt and Sophie-May Kerr
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project ‘Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese-Australian households’. I have discussed the research project with Sophie-May Kerr, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate in interviews. I understand that my participation in additional research activities (travel diary and ride-alongs) is optional. A separate consent form will be provided for those activities. Consent will also be reconfirmed before each interview.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of June 2014.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (42213684). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Participate in an interview
☐ Have an audio-recording of the interview made for the purposes of transcription

In published materials relating to this research, I would like to be referred to by (please tick one):

☐ My real/given name ☐ A pseudonym (false name)

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for an honours thesis and may be used to write academic journal articles, books and conference papers. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Appendix D: Consent form for travel diary

CONSENT FORM FOR TRAVEL DIARY

RESEARCH TITLE: ‘Exploring cultures of transport use in Chinese-Australian households’

RESEARCHERS: Natascha Klocker, Gordon Waitt and Sophie-May Kerr
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project ‘Exploring cultures of transport use in Chinese-Australian households’. I have discussed the research project with Sophie-May Kerr, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate. I understand that my participation in research activities (including interviews, travel diary and ride-alongs) is optional. Consent will be reconfirmed before each stage of the research.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of June 2014.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (4221 3684). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Participate in filling out a travel diary including photographs and sketches
☐ Participate in an interview to discuss the diary entries in more detail
☐ Data being published in academic materials including honours thesis

In published materials relating to this research, I would like to be referred to by (please tick one):

☐ My real/given name ☐ A pseudonym (false name)

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for academic journal articles, books and conferences, as well as an honours thesis. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed: ____________________________ Date: ______________________
Appendix E: Consent form for ‘ride along’

CONSENT FORM FOR MOBILE ETHNOGRAPHY

RESEARCH TITLE: ‘Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese-Australian households’

RESEARCHERS: Natascha Klocker, Gordon Waitt and Sophie-May Kerr
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project ‘Exploring cultures of transport in Chinese- Australian households’. I have discussed the research project with Sophie-May Kerr, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate in interviews. I understand that my participation in the ride-along experience is optional. A separate consent form has been provided for the interviews and travel diary activities.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of June 2014.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (4221 3684). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Having a researcher travel along-side me on a regular travel journey such as the work commute or grocery shopping trip
☐ Have an audio-recording of the ‘ride-along’ made for the purposes of analysis

In published materials relating to this research, I would like to be referred to by (please tick one):

☐ My real/given name  ☐ A pseudonym (false name)

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for academic journal articles, books and conferences, as well as an honours thesis. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Appendix F: Semi-structured interview schedule

The aim of this interview is to gain an insight into householders’ transport choices and experiences. Stories of lived experiences are sought and I am also really interested in learning more about how you feel when using different types of transport. You are encouraged to speak freely rather than provide concise answers.

This interview is broken into five themes. First we will set the scene with some background questions, next we will talk about moving about the place, followed by discussing specific modes of travel, we will then talk about pressing issues. Finally we will explore past and present roles and responsibilities and ethnicity.

1. Setting the scene
To begin with I’d like to find out a bit of background information on your household. Can you tell me;
- How many people live with you
- What is the relationships between householders
- How old are they (broad age bracket is enough)

Were you born in Australia?
If no:
- What country were you born in?
- How long have you lived in Australia? / What age were you when you moved to Australia?
- What was your primary mode of transport you used in your country of origin?

If yes:
- Were your parents or grandparents born overseas?
- In which country?

How long have you lived in current house/apartment/dwelling?
How long have you lived in this suburb?
- What were your reasons for choosing to live in this location?
- Are you within close proximity to public transport
- In your opinion, is it possible to live in this suburb without a car?
- In previous suburbs you’ve lived in, was it easier/harder to live without a car?

What vehicles are owned by people in this household? (may include cars, vans, trucks, bicycles or any others)
- What are the backgrounds/histories of each vehicle? E.g. how long have you owned it, what motivations/considerations were taken into account when purchasing, what do you like/dislike about it?
- What does your car mean to you?
- What vehicle do you use the most and for different purposes?
- In your opinion, does this household have more vehicles than needed, fewer vehicles than needed, or just the right number of vehicles?
- Do you ever share vehicles or travel together for any trips?
- In your household what sorts of arguments may arise over different modes of transport?

2. Moving about the place

Can you tell me about your commitments and reasons for daily movement patterns e.g. children, work, family, responsibilities

I’d like you to draw places you connect on an average weekday showing how you connect these places (what type of transport is used) including how you combine different activities/responsibilities? (Do an example)

How long has this been your regular travel routine? Have you noticed any changes in your weekly patterns of mobility in the last twelve months? What were the main reasons for these changes?

I’d like to further explore your transport choices and experiences for different travel purposes.
First, are you employed outside the home? If yes, let’s talk about the work commute:
- Distance of work from home/time taken to travel/how many days a week
- Did the location of your workplace affect your decision about where to live (or vice versa?) If yes, how?
- What mode (or modes) of travel due you use for the work commute?
- What are the reasons for this choice of transport? / Why does it make sense to do this (insert - drive/catch train or bus/walk/cycle)?
- What makes you feel happy/unhappy whilst ______(insert mode of transport)?
- Do you travel alone to work or with company?
- Do you have any strategies you use to reduce travel?
- Do you have any strategies for making your journey more comfortable?
- Do you have any strategies for making your travel time pass quickly?
- time/avoid traffic or peak hour/find a park/get a certain seat?

I am also interested in different household practices that involve regular travel.
In your household, who is responsible for doing the grocery shopping? (Individual or group activity)
- How regularly do they do the grocery shopping?
- Distance of shops from home/time taken to travel
- How would you describe the food cooked in this household - for instance, do you (or other household members) mostly cook/eat Chinese food?
- Are there specific stores you like to shop at? Why? Where are they?
- Can you buy all of the foods that you like to eat and cook with close to home?
- What mode (or modes) of travel is used for grocery shopping?
- What are the reasons for this choice of transport? / Why does it make sense to do this (insert - drive/catch train or bus/walk/cycle)?
- What makes you feel happy/unhappy whilst ______(insert mode of transport)?

And now, thinking about recreational activities / social activities
- Where do you like to spend time relaxing and socializing?
- Do most of your friends/relatives live nearby?
- What distance do you usually travel for recreational or social activities?
- What mode (or modes) of travel do you use?
- What are the reasons for this choice of transport? / Why does it make sense to do this (insert - drive/catch train or bus/walk/cycle)?

How do you make use of your travel time? E.g. work, reading, listening to music
- How does this differ depending on purpose of trip (work/grocery/social and recreational)?
- What type of music do you like to listen to (if any)?
- Does travel time tend to feel long or short / go quickly?

Does the landscape/view influence your travel choices? E.g. view from train, car or bus
If you were given the ability to instantly get from one place to another (for example from your home straight to work) would you do so? Or is travel time desired for it’s own sake (e.g. time to think, plan, distress, - transition time between responsibilities and social practices)

3. Specific modes of travel
Now I’d like to discuss specific modes of travel and your ideas and experiences of these modes.
Firstly we will discuss the set of ideas you have about cars.

When I mention the word ‘car’, what are the first three words that come to mind?
[And then ask them to expand on these] You can choose to sketch the meaning of the car if you like.

If household does own a car:
- Have you ever lived without a car? When/where/why?
- What would change in your situation now if you didn’t have a car?
- What would you miss the most?
- What would you have to do differently? Do you think you could live without a car? Why?
- Are there some activities or responsibilities that you (or others in this household) would have to give up if you didn't have a car? If yes, how would this make you feel?

Some people see cars as status symbols, what is your opinion on that? How does the type of transport that you use reflect on you as a person?

Thinking about your close friends or family, do you think you are more or less car dependent than they are?

Thinking about other people in your neighborhood, do you think you are more or less car dependent than they are?

There is often a lot of discussion in the media about the rising cost of petrol.
- Are you concerned about the cost of fuel?
- Does this influence your travel decisions/choices?

Now I’d like to talk about your experiences of public transport.

When I mention the word ‘public transport’ (train/bus etc. depending on what they have already mentioned they use), what are the first three words that come to mind? [And then ask them to expand on these] You can choose to sketch the meaning of public transport if you like.

- Why do you use public transport?
- Do you see potential benefits to using public transport?
- Do you see any potential problems using public transport?
- Do you have any strategies for getting on a crowded train (or bus), getting a particular seat etc.
- Think about a time when you’ve been on public transport in peak hour, surrounded by a lot of people in close proximity. What feelings do you associate with this?
- Some people associated certain modes of transport as having certain smells. What smells do you associate with the train/bus?
- Public transport is usually seen as taking more time than driving. Do you agree with this? How do you feel about taking more time to travel?
4. Pressing issues
I am interested in your opinion about what are some of the most important issues facing Australia? These do not have to be directly related to transport.
If mention climate change- I see you mentioned climate change… why are you concerned with climate change? Go on with questions.
If didn’t mention climate change- do you think Climate Change is a pressing issue?
- What do you know about Climate Change?
- What sorts of things have changed in your home/activities because of Climate Change?
- Who is responsible for taking action against climate change?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to change the situation?
- Are you concerned about the environmental impacts of driving?

5. Past and present roles and responsibilities and ethnicity
I’d like to talk a bit about the different roles you take on in your everyday life. (E.g. student, worker, mother, father)
Which role is most important to you?
Which type of transport is most important in helping you to fulfill this role?
How/why?

Do you think there are aspects of your ‘self’/identity that come alive through your transport choices? / Are you able to maintain aspects of your identity through your transport choices?

Do you think your parents have influenced your mobility choices?
- Did your parents have a car when you were growing up?

How important is your Chinese ancestry in your everyday life? (To your sense of ‘self’)
- Are there times and places in which your ethnicity is most important?

In what ways do you think your ethnic background influences the types of transport you choose and your experiences of transport?
Do your choices allow you to maintain aspects of your ethnicity/sustain yourself as a Chinese-Australian? Any examples.

Are there specific transport contexts in which you become aware of your ethnicity?

Do you think that Chinese-Australians in general have different transport patterns to the mainstream population? How so?

Do you think your transport patterns/choices in your country of birth have influenced those in Australia?

Census and survey data tell us that Chinese Australians generally use cars less, and use public transport more, than other groups in the population.

- Have you observed this trend?
- What do you think influences this trend?
- In your experience, thinking about your own household (and your friends and family), do you think cars have a different meaning for Chinese Australians than for other groups in Australian society? How so?

That brings me to the end of the questions I had for you. Are there any other comments you would like to make or is there anything that has come to mind while we were talking?
Appendix G: Email sent to Diverse Cultures Diverse Households Survey participants

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are being contacted as a participant of the Diverse Cultures, Diverse Households Survey which was conducted in 2012.

To refresh your memory this survey was conducted by Dr Natascha Klocker, from the University of Wollongong, and had questions aimed at better understanding household sustainability. At the end of the survey, you provided your contact details and indicated that we could contact you about our future research.

After analysing the results of the 2012 survey we found that there were some interesting transport patterns occurring in Chinese-Australian households. The results showed us that Chinese-Australians are less dependent on private cars and more likely to use public transport than the broader population.

We are interested in doing a follow up study to explore these trends further. The project will explore the primary modes of transport being used in Chinese-Australian households; the underlying reasons for these transport choices; the attitudes, beliefs and values which shape those transport choices; and Chinese-Australians’ experiences of using different types of transport.

We would like to invite you to take part in this research study. If you choose to participate, you will be invited to talk about the daily transport choices that sustain your household. There are three potential stages to this study. Your involvement is voluntary and will depend on how much time you wish to dedicate to the project. You may choose which stages to participate in. If you decide to participate in one interview only, you will not be pressured to participate in other stages of the study.

Stage 1 will involve a semi-structured interview, where you will be asked tell us a bit about your household structure and background. We will then ask you questions relating to your transport choices and experiences. For stage 2 you will be invited to complete a travel diary over one week. In it, you will record your travel routes, reasons for travel, modes of transport and your experiences as well as any photographs you may wish to include. A follow-up interview will be scheduled to discuss the travel journal in more detail. Stage 3 will involve the researcher travelling alongside you on a single regular travel journey (this may be on public transport, in the car, walking or cycling etc.). Conversations will occur during this travel time and with permission will be recorded, to further explore how you negotiate your daily travel experiences and what factors influence the travel choices you make.

If you are interested in this study and would like more information, please contact Sophie-May Kerr on #### or smk534@uowmail.edu.au

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sophie-May Kerr       Natascha Klocker       Gordon Waitt
Appendix H: Map showing suburb distribution of research participants in Sydney
Appendix I: Strategies for ensuring rigour in qualitative research
Table adapted from Baxter and Eyles (1997:512).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Credibility: authenticity of data</th>
<th>Transferability: generate data that fits within contexts outside the study situation</th>
<th>Dependability: minimise researchers impact on the project</th>
<th>Confirmability: acknowledging the role of the researcher in relationship to interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature review: situate project in context and identify the significance of the study</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse recruitment methods</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics: participant information sheets, consent forms, and formal application approved</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording of interviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform symbols and verbatim in interview transcription</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative analysis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation: multiple data sources</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research diary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive positionality statements</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer debriefing: regular meetings with supervisors who provided feedback</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel Diary

Everyday transport choices and experiences of Chinese-Australians
The aim of the travel diary is to gain further insight into your travel experiences.

For each day of the week there is a new double page to be filled out.

The left hand side page is for you to do a drawing activity mapping out the places you connected on this day, your order of travel and the method of transport used.

The right hand side page contains a table for you to complete with information on your travel experiences. Please fill out the tables in as much detail as possible. You may include as much information as you like about your travel experience.

Please see the following page for examples.

If this diary is found please contact Sophie-May Kerr on 0402699488
EXAMPLE

1. Complete the drawing activity to show your daily travel choices. Please include the places you went to this day (black), the order of your travel (blue) and the method of transport chosen (red). A good way of showing this is using different colours as shown below.
EXAMPLE — the following table includes a range of possible answers, you may include as much information as you like and are not restricted to the following examples.

2. Complete the table in as much detail as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (start and end of journey)</th>
<th>Reason(s) for journey</th>
<th>Mode of transport used</th>
<th>Reason for choosing this mode</th>
<th>Experiences/feelings associated with travel</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include start and finish times for each separate journey. e.g. Start work journey at 8:00am → Finish work journey 9:00am</td>
<td>May be one reason or a combination of reasons. e.g. work or education, grocery shopping, recreational or social activities</td>
<td>e.g. Car, Bus, Train, Ferry, Bicycle, Walking, Motor cycle If multiple modes of transport were used, please list all (e.g. walk to bus stop, bus to train station, train to city, walk to work)</td>
<td>What factors influenced you to choose this mode of transport? e.g. time, convenience, comfort, costs, no other option, environmental motives, commitment to family (e.g.child)</td>
<td>What feelings did you experience on this journey and why e.g. stress, relaxation, boredom, happiness, enjoyment, anger or fear). What were your bodily experiences? e.g. smells, movement, sight, touch</td>
<td>May include: - Who you travelled with - Any noticeable events which stood out on your trip - Did you have any safety concerns? - What were you carrying? - What did you do to pass the time? - Any other comments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>