1.5 Generation Migrants from Taiwan

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Summary of Keynote Address

- Recent work on emigrants from Taiwan has focused on understanding the reasons for moving and their adaptation in the host country. Much less studied as the first generation of immigrants are the 1.5 generation of migrants who are people who immigrate to a new country at a young age, usually with at least one parent. They earn the label of “1.5 generation” because they bring with them characteristics from their home country but continue their assimilation and socialization in the new country. They are often bilingual and find it easier to be assimilated into the local culture and society than people who immigrated as adults. Having finished their tertiary education in the destination country, they may have stayed to work, returned to their origin, or re-migrated to a new country.

- I would like to review findings from my previous studies of 1.5 generation return migrants from Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, focusing on their adaptation in Taiwan. Being less influenced by political and economic concerns like their parents, this younger generation of immigrants is a highly mobile group, capable of strategizing and using networks in finding employment and settling down in different parts of the world.
References:


- 2011 Lan-Hung Nora Chiang “Staying or Leaving: Taiwanese-Chinese Making their Homes in New Zealand” In: Manying Ip (ed.) Transmigration and the New Chinese: Theories and Practices from the New Zealand Experience, Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (incorporating the Centre of Asian Studies), The University of Hong Kong, pp. 102-137.

Background to Emigration

Taiwanese who emigrated to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in the early 1980s have striking similarities in their reasons for migration. The wave of emigration from Taiwan in the past three decades has been driven primarily by a fear of political instability, a desire for a global education for children, and an aspiration for a better lifestyle. The circumstances that precipitated emigration from Taiwan in the 1980s include a number of internal factors. Political liberalization in the late 1980s, which started with the lifting of martial law in 1987, was followed by subsequent reforms and social movements of various kinds. The formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986 intensified the political tension between mainland Chinese and native Taiwanese living on the island, especially during the democratic elections that Taiwanese have experienced periodically in the past three decades.
On top of this is the long-standing cross-strait tension, which sped up the decision to migrate in 1996–97. Rapid economic growth also prompted migration, as an upsurge in stock and housing markets enabled the middle class to make a fortune from their investments. Freedom to leave Taiwan as tourists in 1989 triggered an unprecedented surge of emigrants, among whom the middle-class predominated. A rising crime rate, among other social disorders, deterioration of the natural environment that resulted from rapid economic development, and long-standing pressure on children’s education provided the impetus for wealthy people to take flight ahead of others.
Taiwanese participate in a global immigration marketplace where there is competition primarily among Canada, New Zealand and Australia. This is reflected in these countries’ respective business migration policies, which are receptive and welcoming; the commodity offered by these countries is their respective "visa," which reflects the right of immigration to their country and perhaps an eventual citizenship.

Immigration consultants played a decisive role in the process and even steered the direction of emigrants who paid large amounts of fees in processing their applications.
Statistics shows that Canada, New Zealand, and Australia rank second, third and fourth respectively among the top destinations of Taiwanese emigration in the last thirty years.
Background: Chinese Immigrants in Canada

- Migration programs in Canada have successfully attracted immigrants with capital and skills. Since 1967, the universal points system of the Canadian immigration policy has favored applicants who are young and well-educated, who have English/French language proficiency, and who have the occupational skills that are in demand in Canada.
From 2002 to 2006, Canada received the largest number of immigrants in years – out of 1,100,000, 58% came from Asia, and 16% from Europe, and the remaining 26% from elsewhere. The number of foreign-born people has increased between 2001 and 2006, reaching one-fifth of the total population (6,186,950 born overseas), the highest in the last 75 years (Statistics Canada, 2008). Apart from the U.K., China, India, and the Philippines lead as countries sending the most immigrants.
Background: Chinese Immigrants in Canada
(Contd)

- Chinese is spoken by 18.6% of the population. Between the last two censuses (2001, 2006), immigrants from Mainland China grew most rapidly among the three Chinese-speaking groups from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. According to the 2001 Census, more than one million Chinese have immigrated to Canada, forming the largest group of non-European immigrants. Between 1996 and 2006, Mainland Chinese immigrants doubled (from 231,055 to 466,940), while the Hong Kong-born declined from 241,100 to 215,430, and the Taiwan-born, while increasing from 49,000 in 1996 to 70,790 in 2001, dropped to 65,205 in 2006.

- Approximately one-half of the Taiwanese immigrants to Canada in recent years came as business immigrants, while the other half came via the independent skilled worker or family classes.
On average, Chinese immigrants are younger, and, at the time of migration have obtained higher levels of education than Canadians. However, their unemployment rate is twice as high as that of the Canadian-born, due to the employer’s requirement of “Canadian experience” (加拿大经验), the lack of recognition of foreign degrees, and the laborious process of recertification of foreign professional degrees.

Lack of in social networks is particularly serious for the newly arrived Mainland Chinese who have on the average the largest proportion with college education, compared to the Hong Kong and Taiwan-born. Among the ethnic Chinese, Taiwan-born immigrants had the highest unemployment rate in 2001 (14.2%) and 2006 (16.1%).
Background: Taiwanese in New Zealand

- Responding to a proactive immigration policy introduced in 1987, which targeted Asian immigrants for New Zealand economic benefits, Taiwan sent the largest number of migrants. The number reached its peak in 1995-1996, surpassing that of immigrants from China and Hong Kong put together. Highly skilled and educated, with established careers or businesses at home, these Taiwanese entered as “high quality” migrants bringing human capital to New Zealand.

- A reason for choosing New Zealand is the comparatively lower threshold for business investors as required by Australia and Canada, and less stringent demands in obtaining residency by allowing prospective immigrants to delay their arrival for up to two years.
The recent Hong Kong-born and Taiwan-born immigrants to New Zealand, like those who had immigrated to Australia and Canada, were formerly successful middle-class professionals back home. It is therefore not surprising that, on arriving in New Zealand, many had expected to build on their earlier success by finding work in their fields of expertise.

Many immigrants adopted the “astronaut” solution – many of the men returned to Taiwan for business while leaving the family behind in the host country…similar to that of Hong Kong Chinese.
The 2001 census shows that over 81% Taiwan-born Chinese in New Zealand are recent arrivals who came between 1991 and 2001.


New Zealand also attracts immigrants based on its image of being idyllic islands with easy-going and friendly people.

Five factors that led to Taiwanese-Chinese immigration: “beautiful country and scenery”, “good education system” “friendly population”, “no pollution”, and “clean, fresh air”. (Boyer 1995)

38.73% were aged between 15 and 29 years.

27.75% were aged between 45 and 59 years.
Background: Taiwanese in New Zealand (Contd)

- With high levels of university qualifications (31.39 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher qualification in 2006), the Taiwan-born has the lowest rates of labour force participation and lowest levels of personal median income among the ethnic Chinese. However, to this day the home ownership rate among the Taiwan-born remains high.

- Large numbers of Hong Kong-born and Taiwan-born young adults have been returning to their place of origin, some moving to a third country such as Australia and the United States for work or further education.
Australian international migration data allow us to analyse the complexity of movement of Taiwanese to and from Australia. Over the 1993-2011 period, 21,327 Taiwanese have emigrated permanently to Australia but 12,301 have subsequently left, three quarters returning to Taiwan. In fact, since 2002 the number of Taiwanese leaving Australia have outnumbered the number settling in Australia (Fig. 1).

The permanent departures are concentrated in the age groups 25-34 and 45-54 (Fig. 2).

Among those who left for a third country, many are 1.5 generation migrants.
Background: Taiwanese in Australia (Contd)

Fig. 1  Australia: Taiwan-born Settler Arrivals and Permanent Departures, 1993-94 to 2010-11

(Source: DIAC unpublished data) Compiled by Hugo
Fig. 2  Age Distribution of Permanent Departures from Australia, 2005-06 to 2009-10

(Source: DIAC unpublished data) Compiled by Hsu
Research Questions on the 1.5 generation returnees

(1) What factors influence their migration decisions?
(2) Their adaptation at the destination.
(3) What makes them decide to return?
(4) Challenges and adaptation of returnees.
Reasons for returning

- Due to the problems that “new migrants” faced in the host countries, such as language barrier, non-recognition of their former qualifications, Taiwanese migrants found it hard to accept jobs which are not commensurate with their educational and economic background.

- About one-third of the Hong Kong-born arriving in Australia in the early 1990s might have returned to Hong Kong. Some immigrants may have been frustrated in their job search and career development and have therefore chosen temporary or permanent return migration.
This is also true of 1.5 emigrant returnees from Australia, as studied by Chiang and Liao (2008), who found that young Taiwanese returnees from Australia came back mainly to look for better career opportunities. However, the chance of reunion with their families in Taiwan, the search for potential spouses, and their affection toward Taiwan are also important social and cultural factors leading to their reverse migration.

- Ip and Hsu (2006) found that the 1.5 generation immigrants not only asserted their identities as Taiwanese but also subscribed to values that are characteristically traditional and frequently followed well-accepted Chinese gender lines.
Reasons for returning (contd)

- Dissatisfaction in the Canadian, New Zealand and Australian job market.
- Increases in the intensity and frequency of transnational contact between immigrants in Canada and their friends and relatives in their countries of origin, such as Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, have led to the rapid growth of return migration from Canada to Asia, in the first decade of the new century (Ley & Kobayashi 2005).
- Salaff and Greve (2010) suggested that the transnational linkages with their parents and relatives in Hong Kong over the years have strongly affected their desire to return.
Reasons for returning: family

- Family reasons: 1) To be re-unioned with one’s parents; 2) Following the advice of parents [who returned earlier]; 3) helping to take care of family members/matters.

- "My parents returned earlier when I was still in school, as they prefer to live in Taiwan where they can visit with relatives. I actually don’t mind working in Australia, after getting my degree in New Zealand. My sister returned earlier, and my parents were worried that I am living by myself in Australia. After several years, I decided to return to Taiwan because my parents are getting older (NZ#4)."
“My mother, [an astronaut wife] stayed with me in Canada when I immigrated at the age of 15, while my father went back to Taiwan to work. After my mother went back, I stayed with the children of her friends at first, and then moved out to live by myself for a few years. When I graduated, many of my friends had returned to Taiwan, and I felt like doing the same.” (CAN#6, female).

“I liked living in Canada, and knew very little of Taiwan. I never expected myself to leave Canada so soon…but my father became seriously ill. I gave up my study in Canada, came to visit my father for two years, and remained to this day.” (CAN#7, female).
Reasons for returning: family (Contd)

- Taiwanese families who have immigrated abroad have kept similar family values as those in Taiwan, such as filial piety towards parents, family obligations as children, choice of field of study, occupation, and even choice of marriage partners. For the 1.5 generation return migrants, family reasons predominate in their reasons for returning.

- Even with different worldviews and a multicultural education compared to that of their parents, they still submit to their parents’ wishes of them marrying a Taiwanese, “or at least [one who] spoke Mandarin.”
Reasons for returning: family (Contd)

- Apart from family reasons that influence decisions of the 1.5 generation in returning, economic restructuring in Canada, Australia and New Zealand has led to limited opportunities for young people to enter the job market. From these previous studies of young return migrants, one would expect this cohort to have an advantage when seeking a job in Taiwan, due to their global education, multi-lingual ability, and adaptability. They have a noticeable advantage for being employed, as Taiwan's private sector and educational institutions are aware of the need to recruit global talents to increase competitiveness.
For some, better employment opportunities in Taiwan, higher salary, and better future prospects, compared to Canada are the main reasons to return to Taiwan:

- “…Since my field is electrical engineering, it may be better for me to look for work in Taiwan.” (CAN#3, female).

A few cases of returnees from New Zealand tell similar stories:

- “I did look for work in New Zealand, but was not that keen. I came back to Taiwan to see what kind of opportunities exist, and apply for my present job from an ad….In the year that I graduated, the unemployment rate is 6%, and many moved to Australia to find work. Only 2 out of 10 Taiwanese immigrants stayed behind to work. I have no problem with Chinese (hearing, reading and speaking), while I also have an advantage of English when I looked for work in Taiwan, and have had this job for the last 8 years.”(NZ#104, male)
“After working in Canada for a while, I have obtained some experiences, but I realize that it is impossible for me to get promoted. Because our family has investments in Taiwan, I come back to take up a job. I also want to have a change in the working environment, while finding out what is going here, and whether there is any opportunity for development” (CAN_#25, male).
Reasons for returning: personal aspirations

- To learn Chinese and skills
- To obtain more personal/life experiences
- To get married, or to follow one’s spouse
- To do graduate work in Taiwan
- To contribute to Taiwan society
- To be in East Asia
Challenges of Adaptation and Identity

As for those who have continued to live in their host countries, a study by Ip and Hsu (2006) found that the 1.5 generation immigrants who remained in Australia not only asserted their identities as Taiwanese, but also subscribed to values that were characteristically traditional, and frequently followed well-accepted Chinese gender lines. Despite receiving multi-cultural education and having different world views from those of their parents, they still submitted to their parent's wishes by marrying Taiwanese or somebody that "at least spoke Mandarin." Similarly, Chiang and Yang (2008) found that families of young immigrants had an influence on their choice of friends and therefore also on their identity. Families also influenced the young immigrants' choice of a university major, which in turn influenced their careers after graduation.
Challenges of Adaptation and Identity (cont’d)

- “Taiwan moves much faster than Canada. Competition is keener in the workplace where one needs to demonstrate their efforts and efficiency. There is a lot more pressure in work than in Canada...When I first got back from Canada, I feel more tense.” (CAN_#3, female)

  “...In Taiwan, one works like two persons. One does a lot of things, and need to be all-rounded in skills. It is quite tiring, but everybody is trained to be very competitive.” (CAN_#7, female)
Challenges of Adaptation and Identity (cont’d)

Different cultural values from locals: Canadians are more friendly and direct in communication.

“What people say is not necessarily the same as what they mean” (CAN#39)

Different work culture:

“In New Zealand, to work overtime (jia ben 加班) means that one is not capable of finishing his/her work on time. But in Taiwan, if you work over-time, that means you are very hard-working and devoted [in the eyes of your boss] “(NZ#4, female)

“I prefer ‘hands-off management style’, and a caring and humanistic boss who trusts his/her staff members. Taiwanese bosses tend to be more demanding and calculating regardless of circumstances” (NZ#103, female)
Challenges of Adaptation and Identity (cont’d)

- A big challenge is the work culture, expressed in terms of "faster pace of life," "overtime work," "lack of work-life balance," emphasis on seniority, importance of Guanxi (human relations) and authority of the boss. (Chiang 2011)

- Since they had lived in Australia from 5 to 15 years before returning to Taiwan, they were returning to an unfamiliar environment, particularly because Taiwan had gone through significant cultural, political, and economic changes during their absence. (Chiang and Liao 2008)

- The inability to speak the local Minnan dialect are challenges to their adjustments
Other Challenges of Adaptation and Identity (cont’d)

- Observation of the environment as being hot and humid, the wide use of motorcycles, crowded living space are all the same regardless of where they come back from.
- “Mosquitoes bite hard…Taipei is too hot and humid in the summer. For the first few years, I spent my winter in Taiwan, and summer in Vancouver” (CAN#1, male)
- As Taiwan is much more densely populated than Canada and New Zealand, cities are more crowded, and the traffic is “chaotic” in the eyes of the returnees, as they witness of large amount of motorcycles “racing” on the road along with buses, cars, and even bicycles.
Other Challenges of Adaptation and Identity (cont’d)
Migration patterns

“I would like to go back to New Zealand when my children grow up, and receive their education there. It is a good country to live, with only four million people. New Zealanders are flexible, and has a larger comfort zone than other countries” (NZ#104, male)

“I would like my children to be educated in Canada in future, so that they don’t need to go through Taiwan’s “stuff duck” education” (Can#18, CAN#39)
Migration patterns (Contd)

- In this transnational era, migration is a process, not a single act of leaving, nor easily explained by a single theory. The term "floating population" can be used to describe the 1.5 generation, a highly mobile group, since they may not be settling permanently as their parents who returned.

- It has been shown by studies of the 1.5 generation elsewhere that they prefer to move around the world and work for variable lengths of time in different locations (Ho and Bedford 2008).

- “Young people may stay to find work in the host country (immigrant), return to their home country (return migrant), make a second return to the host country (re-migrant), or move on to other countries (onward migrant).”
Conclusions

- My research shows that for those who returned to Taiwan, one cannot assume that they intended to stay permanently, reflecting their young age of return and the forces of globalization, which provided them with opportunities that exist in countries other than their homeland. Some simply had to leave Taiwan because of being stationed or dispatched abroad, for example to China, Hong Kong, or Singapore, which also offer higher salaries. They contributed to the pool of global talents overtime, and their experiences from re-migration has also helped to cultivate multi-cultural identity and adaptability.
Conclusions (Contd)

- “Returnees represent a significant loss of human capital from Canada, comprising young and usually bilingual college graduates, and middle-aged businessmen and their families (Ley 2010: 248).

- “They are typically part of the 1.5 generation who migrated with family members earlier in their lives, and completed secondary school and university education in Canada. Normally they have secured citizenship and speak excellent English with little or no discernible accent. Their identities are both Canadian and East Asian. Second, they are transnational rather than return migrants and there is no certainty that the trip back to East Asia will be their last move. . . . Armed with this cultural capital, their primary motive for return was job opportunities in East Asia that usually exceeded those in Canada, as they found a better economic yield there for a western education and proficiency in English.” (Ley 2010: 236)
Conclusions (Cont'd)

- Ley suggested this pattern created a serious brain drain removing highly talented young managers and professionals (from Canada). He wrote: “The adult children of immigrant families are Canadian-educated but also see career opportunities as brighter in East Asia.”

- Similarly Salaff et al. (2008) noted, “...Because of all the different opportunities in Hong Kong, it is quite easy for any returnee to find a job, as long as you are not picky.”
Conclusions (Contd)

- As noted by Ho and Bedford (2008) “. . . Return migration or re-emigration to a third country does not necessarily mean permanent relocation to a particular country. Rather, they prefer to move around the world and work for variable lengths of time in different locations, with the intention of returning to New Zealand after some years.”

- New Zealand, like other welcoming countries of immigration, faces the challenge of retaining international talent with a cosmopolitan background.

- There is need to do further studies on those who stayed in the destinations of their initial immigration, and sites of their re-migration. More information on aspirations at the individual level also needs to be obtained.
Thank you for your attention