



林思齊東西學術交流研究所
David C. Lam Institute for East-West Studies (LEWI)

Working Paper Series 研究報告系列

Paper Number: 128
November 2014

**Mobile Young Global Talents:
A Pilot Study of Taiwanese in Singapore and Hong Kong SAR**

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Mobile Young Global Talents: A Pilot Study of Taiwanese in Singapore and Hong Kong SAR

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Abstract

This paper studies young Taiwanese who migrated to Singapore or/and Hong Kong for work, study or family reasons. It is based mainly on 39 in-depth interviews conducted in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in 2011-2014, thus obtaining narratives that contain detailed information to render nuanced understanding of the interviewees and the environment. The paper begins with a review of pertinent literature that includes youth migration and global talent, and the 1.5 generation migrants from Taiwan. It is followed by an analysis of major types of young Taiwanese in Singapore and Hong Kong with regard to: 1) their reasons for moving to Singapore or Hong Kong, 2) the types and trajectories of movement, 3) their social and cultural adaptation, and 4) prospects of returning to Taiwan.

Apart from the higher pay and fringe benefits, both Singapore and Hong Kong provide them with a cosmopolitan environment for global pursuits to which their education applies. However, there are disadvantages of living in Singapore and Hong Kong, such as warmer climate, higher cost of living, social, cultural, and life-style differences. Simply mobile, they have contributed to the pool of global talents that both states compete for, while gaining overseas experiences in enhancing their skills and exposure to new social and cultural environments.

At this juncture, Taiwan's policy to recruit young global talents remain at stake, and the urgent need is to prevent their well educated professionals from leaving, as well as to attract them back with more vigorous/effective policies. Due to the impermanent nature of young Taiwanese on the move, Taiwan may want to tap this human resource as a strategy to compete for global talents, as a critical aspect of population policy and social transformation.

Keywords: young global talent, youth migration, re-migrant, return migrant, Singapore, Hong Kong

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1. Significance and Objectives of this Study

Migration to and from Taiwan in the last half century embrace a plethora of migration patterns that reflect the social, economic and political changes on the island, even though Taiwan was regarded as a “closed system” demographically in the post-war period. While on one hand, Taiwan has rather stringent policies built into the bureaucratic system that discourage massive immigration, emigration is relatively easy and enjoyed by her citizens to leave permanently or temporarily. In most countries in the world, there are relatively less studies on emigration or impermanent moves, as most international migration data system does not support the transnationalism model (Hugo, 2008). Taiwan’s history of population growth, rapid urbanization, and diversity of recent transnational moves deemed more attention from the research community, and comparative studies with some countries in East Asia that have experienced similar patterns of mobility can be accomplished.

My earliest experience of studying emigration have focused on new immigrants to cover issues related to seeking employment (Chiang, 2004; Chiang & Kuo, 2000), residential mobility (Chiang & Hsu, 2005), and astronaut families (Chiang, 2008, 2009), which cover different aspects of the transnationalism model. Research undertaking that was based on statistical data and field research had led to two new foci, earlier migrants who have planted their roots in the host countries on one hand (Chiang, 2013, 2014) and the 1.5 generation migrants who stayed (Chiang & Yang, 2008), or have returned to Taiwan (Chiang, 2011; Chiang & Liao, 2008; Trejos & Chiang, 2012). These studies help me to develop original ideas for further research on current issues, particularly using qualitative methods, in the absence of statistical data. Young educated people who were originally from Taiwan, and have moved to Singapore and Hong Kong constitute the subject of this research. The two vibrant cities are chosen as the destination of aspiring young Taiwanese migrants, in order to incorporate the globalization element which is the main driving force behind individual migration behavior.

The neoclassical economic approach to migration, though popular in the past, has not incorporated the impermanent dimension of international migration, and the complexities due to globalization. No single theory seems able to capture all of its nuances (Weeks, 2012), such as the diversity of mobility occurring at different

times, and in different continents. Students studying abroad constitute impermanent moves, as they can decide to either settle in the receiving country, return to the sending country, or move to another country. They should be targeted as the source of young global talents who respond to the needs of their homeland after receiving their education from abroad. Qualitative methods would be employed to probe into the complexities of young overseas Taiwanese on the move, by exploring reasons, movement patterns, and personal experiences.

2. Review of Pertinent Literature

This section will first review youth migration and global talent, followed by recent studies of young emigrants from Taiwan and reverse migration.

2.1 Youth migration and global talent

Child and youth migration is an emerging area in social science. Laoire et al. (2012) explore migration processes, from the perspectives of migrant children and young people at both global and local scales. They highlight the important roles played by children and young people in global population movements and explore the spatialities of identity, belonging, mobility and settlement. As going abroad to live, work, or study for a period when young has become increasingly widespread, an important aspect of this development is the longer-term consequences for mobility at the individual and population levels, such as traveling back to the place of temporary stay in following years, mainly because of new social ties being formed (Frandsberg, 2013).

It is quite possible that youth migration is related to global talent gain, as the population tend to be well educated, young, fertile, and taxpaying, and have better opportunities for education, as in south-north migration (Beaverstock & Hall, 2012). Yeoh and Lai (2008) stated that the notion of “talent” is vitally connected to international mobility, as they are scarce and in great demand globally, their symbolic value being enhanced by the social-cultural capital of these individuals. The geography of global talent is a complex issue as the direction of flow is no longer limited to “south-north” direction that involves long distances. Mobility of global talent may also be reversed or circulated, and bring benefits of knowledge transfer and economic development to sending countries.

It has been noted by migration researchers on transnational migration that it 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 to their homeland. As noted by Ho and Bedford (2008), return migration or re-emigration of 1.5 generation of immigrants to a third country from New Zealand 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.

Based on emigration data, surveys and in-depth interviews, Hugo (2009) found that many Australian expatriates return at the peak of the career cycle, in their late 30s and 40s. They wanted to return to Australia to be closer to family or for lifestyle reasons, and the intensity of connections maintained with their homeland enabled them to be aware of opportunities in Australia and development within their fields of endeavor. Returning diaspora as an agent of change in their home country needs to be studied and there may be significant policy implications.

Although one can look optimistically at reverse migration of the 1.5 emigrants as a source of “global talent,” one cannot assume that they are making permanent moves, reflecting their young age of return and the forces of globalization, which provided them with opportunities that exist in countries other than their homeland. Their hyper mobility patterns make it more difficult to study the impact on the receiving society, or homeland that they have returned to. Their return does not mean the closure of their moves, due to their global experiences and shrinking economic opportunities in their home country. Otherwise, they may contribute to the pool of global talents overtime in their home country, and their exposure to overseas experiences has also helped to cultivate multi-cultural identity and adaptability.

In the case of Canada, it has been noted that “returnees represent a significant loss of human capital, comprising young and usually bilingual college graduates, and middle-aged businessmen and their families” (Ley, 2010). “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. With both Canadian and East Asian identities, 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). Ley also suggested that this mobility pattern created a serious brain drain removing highly talented young managers and professionals [from Canada]. Canada's inability to retain its largest migrant population would possibly affect its demography and economy, and may be detrimental to the country's development.

2.2 Taiwan young migrants on the move

The 1.5 generation who stayed after immigration, or returned have captured my interests regardless of the destination. In this section, I would like to review findings of my previous studies of 1.5 generation return migrants from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Argentina, focusing on their adaptation in Taiwan.¹ They are often bilingual and find it easier to be assimilated into the local culture and society than their parents 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. 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.

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. 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

¹ The term “1.5 generation” refers to people who immigrate to a new country at a young age. 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.

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 affect their careers after graduation. 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.

Dissatisfaction in the Canadian, New Zealand and Australian job market is not only found by the first generation of Asian immigrants. It has been found that 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, Mainland China, and 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; Fong, 2012). 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 jobs 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 the host countries are the main reasons for return to Taiwan. Other reasons given are: 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, and to be in East Asia.

Studies also show that they met various challenges in their adaptation upon return, made further moves, or intended to go back for their children's education in future. Some find the work culture a big challenge, expressed in terms of "faster pace of life," "frequent overtime work," "lack of work-life balance," emphasis on seniority, importance of *Guanxi* (human relations), and authoritative behavior of the boss (Chiang, 2011). For those who 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 & Liao, 2008). Some find the disadvantage of not being able to speak the local *Minnan* (閩南) dialect. Regardless of where they come back from, negative opinions of the environment as being hot and humid, crowded, and less respect towards privacy are commonly expressed. As Taiwan is much more densely populated than the countries they migrated to, over-crowding in big cities and the chaotic traffic in the eyes of the returnees are hard to adapt to.

3. Research Methodology

In 2011 and 2013, I visited Singapore and Hong Kong respectively for one month for conducting fieldwork. Before this, I reviewed the immigration policies of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan as background information on each country's strategy to recruit young global talents/skilled migrants. Some of the issues that I studied earlier with regard to 1.5 young generations of migrants in Taiwan and abroad shed light on the present study. The issues I pose for this study are: 1) reasons for moving to Singapore or Hong Kong 2) types and trajectories of movement, 3) social and cultural adaptation, and 4) prospects of returning to Taiwan.

My assumption was that higher pay, fringe benefits, and cosmopolitan environment for global pursuits have attracted Taiwanese to go to Singapore and Hong Kong, despite tradeoffs such as climate, cultural difference, high cost of living, and quality of life. Simply mobile, they have contributed to the pool of global talents in Singapore and Hong Kong, and the multi-cultural environment, as a Chinese sub-ethnic group. Due to the lack of statistics and background

information, field research data work constitutes the main source of information on young Taiwanese migrants in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Snowball sampling method is used throughout, starting with introduction to former graduates from National Taiwan University (NTU), now working in Singapore and Hong Kong. Familiarity with the living environment and the local dialect are the advantages of conducting interviews in Hong Kong, while a more relaxing life-style in Singapore allows the interviewee to conduct longer conversations on the phone or face to face interviews than in Hong Kong. I benefitted greatly from connections that spring from the university that I work and the *ren qing wei* (人情味), which is a cultural trait of Taiwanese. Introductions by several key informants were critical in the snowball sampling method.² Combining correspondence by e-mail and face to face interviews in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan enable me to get in-depth information effectively.

With the help of key informants, my fieldwork continues in Taiwan until 2014, as I can meet interviewees who frequently return to Taiwan for business or family visits. This is one reason why I discover more diversity in the types of migrants in Hong Kong than in Singapore.³ The suggestion of studying returnees actually came from earlier interviewees. In total there are 19 and 20 valid samples of Taiwanese in Singapore and Hong Kong respectively, out of 42 interviews in total. I hope that the samples, though limited, provide the reader with a diversity of respondent's backgrounds and mobility patterns.

² A former graduate of our university acted as the chief networker in the Taiwanese community in Hong Kong. She introduced me through facebook, and helped her get in touch with interviewees by e-mail and phone, or meeting in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

³ The original questionnaire targeted interviewees who have studied or immigrated abroad, but upon arrival in Hong Kong, I found that there are actually Taiwanese who went to Hong Kong directly from Taiwan for employment, or to study and stay on for work. To accommodate the growing diversity of migrants during fieldwork, we had to slightly modify the questionnaire, and also designed a new questionnaire to interview two return migrants and one circular migrant in Taiwan.

4. Conceptualizing Types of Migrants by Their Migration Trajectories

As summarized in Tables 1 and 2, a socio-economic profile of the 39 interviewees is presented. They included 11 males and 28 females, 19 in Singapore and 20 in Hong Kong. Twenty-one are married, and 18 are single. Respondents had moved to Singapore or Hong Kong between 2001 and 2013, and ranged between 19 and 54 years of age at the time of their interview. They all belong to the younger, pre-retirement working age group, and are overwhelmingly (36 out of 39) young adults aged between 21 and 40 years old. Among 39 interviewees, 33 of them had studied or worked in another country before moving to Singapore or Hong Kong, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. Some of them even had experience living in at least two overseas countries (Singapore: SG#1, SG#2, SG#3, SG#4, SG#9, SG#10, SG#11, SG#15; Hong Kong: HKY#1, HKY#4).

A diversity of occupations is represented, including finance, accounting, commerce, research and teaching, student, housewife, volunteer, and others. All of them have attained high levels of education (14 Ph.D.s, 3 Ph.D. candidates, 10 Masters, and 12 Bachelors degrees). The reasons for moving to Singapore or Hong Kong are employment and family, or pursuit of tertiary or graduate education. More than half of my interviewees have intention to return to Taiwan in future (21 said ‘Yes’, 10 said “No”, and eight were “Not sure”).

Table 1 Socio-economic Profile of Young Taiwanese Migrants in Singapore

Case No./Name (pseudonym)	Sex/Age/Marital Status	Education/Occupation	Age/Year to Study Abroad	Year of Migration to Singapore	Main reason for Moving to Singapore/Remark	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
SG#1 <u>Priscilla</u>	F/33/ Married	BA (TW), MBA (US)/ Investment professional in a hedge	26/2004	2007 (lived in US, HK)	2-Employment	YES
SG#2 <u>Janet</u>	F/54/ Married	BA(TW), MA (US), PhD (Canada) / Professor	22/1981	2006 (lived in US, Canada)	2-Employment	NO
SG#3 <u>Annie</u>	F/34/ Married	BA (US)/ Housewife, Museum Volunteer	20/1997	2010 (lived in US, HK)	1-Family/ Relocation of husband's work	Not sure
SG#4 <u>Anita</u>	F/24/ Single	BA (TW)/ Finance (Bank)	23/2010	2010 (born in US,	2-Employment	YES

				exchange student in Switzerland)		
SG#5 <u>Lyndon</u>	M/33/ Single	MSc (UK)/ Finance (Wealth Management Associate)	25/200 3	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	NO
SG#6 <u>Eunice</u>	F/42/ Married	BA (TW)/ Housewife, Part time worker	26/199 6	1996	1-Family/ Married to Singaporean	YES
SG#7 <u>Helen</u>	F/39/ Married	BA (TW), MA (TW)/ PhD candidate (TW), Housewife	35/200 8	2008	1-Family/ Husband dispatched employer from Taiwan	YES
SG#8 <u>Cindy</u>	F/36/ Married	BA (TW), MBA (US)/ Housewife (for the first 18 months), Manager (Part time)	26/200 1	2007 (lived in US)	1-Family/ Husband's work; Employed as part-time marketing manager	YES (for retirement)
SG#9 <u>Melissa</u>	F/42/ Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (the Netherlands)/ Full-time Research Fellow	23/199 2	2009 (lived in HK, Philippines, the Netherlands)	2-Employment	YES
SG#10 <u>Minna</u>	F/33/ Married	PhD (France)/ Visiting Research Fellow	23/200 1	2010 (lived in Belgium, France)	2-Employment	Not sure
SG#11 <u>Daisy</u>	F/35/ Single	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD Candidate (Sweden)	2000	2011 (lived in UK study, Ireland NGO, Sweden)	5-Student	NO
SG#12 <u>Charlie</u>	M/39/ Single	BSc (TW), MA (US), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	25/199 7	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
SG#13 <u>Ben</u>	F/35/ Single	BSc (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	28/200 4	2011 (lived in US)	2-Employment	NO
SG#14 <u>Winnie</u>	M/36/ Single	BSc (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	24/199 9	2004 (lived in US)	2-Employment	Not sure
SG#15 <u>Shirlena</u>	F/38/ Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	24/199 5	2006 (lived in US, Canada)	2-Employment	YES
SG#16 <u>Don</u>	M/52/ Married	BA (TW), MBA, MSc, PhD (US)/ Professor	22/199 0	2012 (lived in Canada, HK)	2-Employment	NO
SG#17 <u>Jasmine</u>	F/34/ Married	BBA (Canada)/ Housewife	14/199 3	2013 (lived in Canada)	1-Family/ Relocation of husband's work	NO
SG#18 <u>Nancy</u>	F/36/ Married	BA (TW)/ Housewife, Volunteer	30/200 5	2005	1-Family/ Husband's work	YES
SG#19 <u>Jolin</u>	F/36/ Married	BA (TW), MBA (UK)/	36/200 4	2006	2-Employment	Not sure

		Finance (Bank)				
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Table 2 Socio-economic Profile of Young Taiwanese Migrants in Hong Kong

Case No./ Name (Pseudonym)	Sex/Age/ Marital Status	Education/ Occupation	Age/Year to Study Abroad	Year of Migration to Hong Kong	Main Reason for moving to Hong Kong	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
HKY#1 <u>Venessa</u>	F/50/ Married	BA (Canada)/ Housewife	8/1971	2011 (lived in US, TW, Canada)	1-Family	NO
HKY#2 <u>Albert</u>	M/35/ Married	BA (Canada), MA (US)/ Research Analyst	18/199 4	2007 (lived in Singapore, etc)	3-On-ward migrant (1.5 代海外移 民)	YES (for retirement)
HKY#3 <u>Clarissa</u>	F/34/ Married	BA (TW), MBA (UK)/ Equity analyst	26/200 4	2006 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#4 <u>Susanna</u>	F/34/ Single	BA (TW), MA (US)/ Finance manager	25/200 4	2007 (lived in US, Singapore)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#5 <u>Johnny</u>	F/35/ Single	BA (TW), PhD (the Netherlands)/ Assist. Professor	26/200 4	2009 (lived in the Netherlands)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#6 <u>Miriam</u>	F/36/ Single	BSc (TW)/ Sales Manager	28/200 5	2006	2-Employment	NO
HKY#7 <u>Sean</u>	M/36/ Single	BA (TW), MA (US), PhD (US)/ Assist. Professor	24/200 1	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#8 <u>Cara</u>	F/38/ Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (UK)/ Assist. Professor	23/199 8	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	Not sure
HKY#9 <u>Samuel</u>	M/40/ Married	BA(TW), MA(TW), PhD and post-doc (UK)/ Research Assist. Professor	34/200 7	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#10 <u>Michelle</u>	F/33/ Single	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD (UK)/ Post-doc Researcher	25/200 5	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	Not sure
HKY#11 <u>Sebastian</u>	M/21/ Single	BA (HK)/ Finance	18/201 0	2010	4- Employed after studying in Hong Kong	NO
HKY#12 <u>Olive</u>	F/22/ Single	BA (HK)/ Accountant	18/201 0	2010	4-Employed after studying in Hong Kong	NO
HKY#13 <u>Stuart</u>	M/38/ Single	BA (TW), MSc (US)/ Finance	22/199 7	2013 (lived in Singapore)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#14 <u>Antonia</u>	F/35/ Single	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (HK)/ Consultant	27/200 6	2006	5-Reverse migration	YES
HKY#15 <u>Leo</u>	M/39/ Married	BA (TW), MA (US)/ Finance	26/199 9	2001 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#16 <u>Jo</u>	F/36/ Married	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD candidate (HK)	29/200 7	2011 (lived in UK)	1-Family	YES
HKY#17 <u>Kathleen</u>	F/36/ Married	BA (TW), MA(TW), MA (US)/ Finance	25/200 3	2008 (lived in US)	5-Reverse migration	YES

HKY#18 <u>Yolanda</u>	F/32/ Single	BA (TW)/ Finance	24/200 6	2009 (lived in Shanghai)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#19 <u>Winston</u>	M/21/ Single	Senior student (HK)	14/200 6	2011 (lived in Shanghai)	4-Student	YES
HKY#20 <u>Pat</u>	F/19/ Single	Senior student (HK)	14/200 6	2011 (lived in Shenzhen, Shanghai)	4-Student	NO

The five types of “migrants” identified in my fieldwork are summarized in Table 3.

(1) **The family category** includes five “trailing spouse” in Singapore and one marriage migrant in Hong Kong. Although the women moved because of their husband’s job location, they are highly educated and may engage in part-time work, or volunteer activities.

(2) Those who migrated for **employment** after studying and working abroad constitute the largest group (23 out of 39), with close to equal numbers in Singapore and in Hong Kong. Almost all have received their education abroad.

(3) There is only one person in the **on-ward migrant** category, a 1.5 generation migrant who immigrated to Canada with his parents, and has worked in different countries before coming to Hong Kong and Singapore for work.

(4) Among the five **students** in this category, two finished their tertiary education in Hong Kong and stayed on to work after graduation, while two were undergraduate seniors. One was a Ph.D. candidate doing fieldwork in Singapore.

(5) There are two women in the **reverse migrant** category, both coming back from Hong Kong to Taiwan to get married, while developing their careers.

Several observations can be made, based on the types of young Taiwanese identified in Hong Kong and Singapore. More than half of them were either educated abroad or have working experiences as intern or formal employment, before moving to Hong Kong and Singapore for work. As shown in Table 3, Taiwanese migrants in Hong Kong are more diverse in types, while those who moved with family or for employment make up 17 of the 19 samples in Singapore.

Table 3 A Summary of Types of Young Migrants in Singapore and Hong Kong

Types of Migration	Singapore	Hong Kong
(1) Family: “Trailing spouse” and marriage migrant	5 (SG#3, SG#6, SG#7, SG#17, SG#18)	2 (HKY#1, HKY#16)
(2) Migration for Employment after studying and working abroad	12 (SG#1, SG#2, SG#4, SG#5, SG#8, SG#9, SG#10, SG#12, SG#13, SG#14, SG#15, SG#16)	11 (HKY#3, HKY#4, HKY#5, HKY#6, HKY#7, HKY#8, HKY#9, HKY#10, HKY#13, HKY#15, HKY#18)
(3) On-ward migrant (formerly 1.5 generation immigrant)		1 (HKY#2)
(4) Student	1 (SG#11)	4 (HKY#11, HKY#12, HKY#19, HKY#20) 2 employed after studying in HK; 2 undergraduates
(6) Reverse migrant		2 (HKY#14, HKY#17)
Total	19	20

5. An Analysis of Migration Experiences (Process and Adaptation) by Types

After differentiating migrants by types, the following analysis tries to incorporate issues on: 1. reasons for and processes of emigration, 2. life experiences and challenges of adaptation in Singapore or Hong Kong, and 3. prospects of returning to Taiwan.

Type 1 The “Trailing spouse”

Eunice (SG#6, 32, housewife and part-time worker) met her Singaporean husband in Taiwan. He is a cosmopolitan scholar who spent 15 years in Canada, five years in Taiwan and 16 years in Singapore. They moved back to Singapore from Taiwan when their son was one year old. Adaptation for her was not easy, especially at the beginning:

“Even to this day, I cannot adapt to Singapore. I feel ‘cheated’ by my husband who said that he would continue to work in Taiwan when we were married. As English is regarded as a ‘superior’ language compared to Chinese by Singaporeans, people looked down on those who spoke Chinese...English is used by all the government officials. Five years ago, when China got wealthy, people valued the Chinese language more. However, Mainland Chinese are looked down by locals for their behavior, such as speaking loudly in public.”

She decided not to hire a maid like a lot of Singaporean mothers do, to take care of her son, and chose to be a full-time housewife, while working part-time to coach other children in school work. She is also active in church, where we met for the first time.

Well trained in social science and humanities, Melissa (SG#9, 42, research fellow) is sensitive towards social issues in Singapore. After finishing her tertiary education in Taiwan, she worked for four years in Hong Kong, one year in a S.E. Asian country, and studied for her Ph.D. in an European country, where she met her husband. Melissa hoped to find a teaching job in Taiwan, after finishing her two year contract in Singapore, although she realized that it would be hard for her husband to get a job in Taiwan. Both of them wanted to leave Singapore because they “dislike working in a highly pressured environment with social control.” They also hope to adopt a child in Taiwan.

Helen (SG#7, 39, housewife) whom I met in a church, had lived in Singapore for already three and a half years. She blended her two roles very well: a “trailing spouse” with two small children, and a Ph.D. candidate supported with scholarship by the Taiwan government. As her husband is a dispatched employee from Taiwan in the IC industry, they live with higher pay than in Taiwan, apart from housing and education allowance for children, and eligibility for residents in four year’s time. While she met challenges of various kinds as a mother, her husband did not have any problems adapting to Singapore, and hoped to stay on. One reason is that he finds it cheaper to play golf in Singapore than in Taiwan.

Helen is ambiguous about remaining in Singapore. Being away from her parents and her primary school teaching job is one thing, the better quality of life in Taiwan is another. She is not used to the high powered education system and the

Kiasu culture⁴ in Singapore, where young children are sent to supplementary schools in Chinese, Arithmetic and Science from very early age. She also finds it hard to make friends with parents of her age, as they are all very busy. She seeks solace in the church and was baptized, while her children pick up English quickly, and keep up with the demand of school work.

Venessa (HKY#1, 50, housewife) responded promptly by e-mail several times before I met her in Hong Kong. With a combination of identities (gay, spouse of same sex marriage, hybrid identity), she is ‘unique’ among my interviewees. She moved at the age of eight from Taiwan, leaving her grandparents in Taiwan for Canada where her father worked, and stayed there for 18 years. She then returned to Taiwan to live with her grandparents for another ten years, met her partner in Taiwan and lived in the US for 10 years before they moved to Hong Kong. She has recently obtained HK citizenship as a Hong Kong-born.

She is well supported financially by her partner who works in a bank in Hong Kong. Her job as a housewife includes taking care of their dog which moved with them from Taiwan to the US and to Hong Kong. She feels comfortable living in a district with friendly neighbors, and thinks that Hong Kong is a place that accepts same sex marriage better than other Asian countries. She never had any problems looking for work: In Taiwan, she worked as a translator, an assistant/secretary at import/export company, and an English tutor. In Canada, she learned her Mandarin at the university, was part of Student Women’s Committee, organized guest lectures, and informal get-togethers, etc. She has once played an active role to organize the LGBT conference in Taiwan. She participated in many kinds of sports, and always had a lot of friends.

As an easy-going person, Venessa recalls no discrimination of any kind in any of the places she has lived in terms of her gender (lesbian), and someone who does not speak Cantonese in Hong Kong. As a Canadian citizen, she can only live for three months every time when she goes to the US where her partner lives. She is waiting for the US supreme court to pass the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) that recognizes same sex marriage, so that she can live in the US as long as she needs to.

⁴ It is a Hokkien, Singlish and Manglish word that means scared of losing, comes from Hokkien word “驚輸”.

Type 2 Immigration for employment

With the exception of HKY#6 and HKY#18, a majority of the employed (21 out of 23) have studied abroad after finishing tertiary education in Taiwan, while two were employed after finishing tertiary education in Hong Kong (HKY#11 and HKY#12).

Priscilla (SG#1, 33, investment professional) was graduated from Finance in a National university in 1998. Before going to the US to obtain a master's degree, she worked for four years in the financial sector in Taiwan. After graduation from the US, she went straight to Hong Kong to get a job because she was once an intern there, and found a job through contacts from her alumni data base in the US. She met her husband in Hong Kong, and went back to Singapore with him.

“With regard to tax, pay, and job opportunities, Taiwan is less favorable as a place for work [than Singapore]. I always think that my university classmates from Taiwan have no problem to compete well in getting employment. However, Taiwanese students do not speak English well enough, and they are not aggressive enough due to their upbringing. Here in Singapore, people actually may not speak English that well, because they are from different countries.

The experience of Priscilla is echoed by the experience of Clarissa, her former classmate who works in Hong Kong. Clarissa (HKY#3, 34, equity research analyst) who was seven months pregnant when I interviewed her, was planning to return to Taiwan to give birth to her child. Before coming to Hong Kong, she studied for one year in the UK to get a MBA, while having two jobs as intern and part-time researcher. She said that her training in business school as an undergraduate in Taiwan was “solid”. She mentions that women were doing very well at her university in Taiwan, and a lot studied abroad to obtain international experience. Both Priscilla and Clarissa have similar views about Taiwanese being “too kind and not aggressive enough in the workplace.” She noted the difference between Hongkongers and Mainland Chinese at work: “Hong Kong people are the most serious workers, while Mainland Chinese are the most aggressive of all, as some moved when they discover a better offer somewhere else.” As to where she wants to live in future, she said:

“We go where we can find work. I like my work and was promoted to head of Transportation Infrastructure. I miss Taiwan—it is still my first home; but I cannot go back, as I don’t have the same job opportunity in Taiwan.”

It took her only three months to get used to Hong Kong, when she first arrived in 2006. Speaking on rude behavior of taxi and minibus drivers, and people working in cafeteria and sales, she explained that these people have anger in their hearts due to the pressure of living in a competitive environment with high cost of living. Susanna (HKY#4, 34, finance manager) used the word “national ethos” (「國情」) to refer to poor urban service quality in Hong Kong where is high, air quality is poor, and more crowded than Singapore. She noted that Singapore is less crowded than Hong Kong. Comparing the two States, life in the former is more family oriented, while the latter is really more suitable for single people, who can handle a faster pace of life.

Yolanda (HKY#18, 32, finance) also worked in Singapore before going to Hong Kong, where she has lived for 7 years (since 2007). She remembers making a taxi driver angry as she was waving on the wrong side of the road. She also had experiences of people rolling their hand luggage over her feet without apologizing. Due to air pollution, she got eye infection upon arrival in Hong Kong. She found that people in Hong Kong are impatient, walk fast, spoke directly and to the point, and seldom say “please”, while Taiwanese “speak in circles” (廢話多), and use the term “I beg your pardon” (不好意思) more frequently than Hongkongers:

“Taiwan life is much slower. I can feel it when the plane lands, and people are not rushing to get off. I feel more comfortable in Taiwan, where the air is cleaner and there is more space. My Hong Kong colleagues like to visit Taiwan as tourists, and some of them talk about immigrating. I feel proud to hear them say it.”

Overtime, she feels integrated in Hong Kong, and not sure if she wants to come back to Taiwan. Apart from Mandarin and *Minnan* which is her mother tongue, she speaks English and Cantonese fluently. She was impressed by the working style of Hong Kongers—they are efficient, professional, get things done,

and judge matters as they stand (就事論事). Taiwanese, in her view, are too conforming (鄉愿), in order to maintain a good relationship on the surface (以不破壞和諧為原則):

“Although ren qing wei (人情味, human warmth) is better in Taiwan, it is sometimes a burden (好煩)! If I return to work in Taiwan, I would not be used to the Taiwan work culture anymore!”

Jolin (SG#19, 36, finance) whom I met in Singapore was interviewed again in Taiwan when she was on work leave. She started work in Taiwan for four years after graduation from a good university, and went to the UK to get a Master’s degree in one year, enabling her to find work quite easily in Singapore:

“I have a former colleague who is looking for someone to work in Singapore, and I got the job after an interview. The job enables me to take business trips to Taiwan about five times a year, while I can also visit my mother. My aunt also lives in Singapore, which is another reason for me to make the decision to accept the job offer.”

In the last seven years in Singapore, she got married, had a child, had become a Singaporean citizen, and had given up Taiwan citizenship. It took her close to one year to get used to Singapore, as the work culture is quite different from Taiwan’s:

“As a Singaporean, one speaks rather directly. If one asks for a raise or for promotion, she/he talked to the boss. In Taiwan, we work hard quietly, and expect our boss to notice.”

She gave an example to illustrate the lack of feelings (感情) between an employee and his/her boss in the business world. If a section needs to be removed in the company, the staff would be notified in the morning, and expected to leave before 6:00 p.m. She calls this “American style.” Another example is use of KPI (Key Performance Index) by the employer to evaluate employees quantitatively.

She also finds it hard to mingle with Singaporeans, as her colleague's conversation dwell on housing and complaints of maids.

She is unsure about coming back to Taiwan to work, but still hopes to take further studies to obtain certificates, so that she would qualify to give lectures as a practitioner at times. To her, "one never knows what would happen (以後的事情很難預料). She is happy to live in a three generation family with her parents in law, have a career, and visit her mother several times a year.

Johnny (HKY#5, 35, assistant professor) and Sean (HKY#7, 36, assistant professor) were graduated from the same university in Taiwan and started teaching in Hong Kong in 2009 and 2008 respectively. Johnny spent five years for his Ph.D. in economics in Europe and started teaching a prestigious university in Hong Kong three years ago. Being approached by headhunters, he accepted his job because of the higher pay and the cosmopolitan environment in Hong Kong:

"Here, one earns three times, or even up to six times the salary offered by Taiwan universities, where everyone in the same rank is paid the same, regardless of differences in performance. If one returns to Taiwan, one cannot find his 'stage'(舞台), as the system is overwhelmed with rules that impedes free will (管得緊, 防弊). The incentive given to young people who were educated abroad as in the 1970s does not exist anymore. There is no tenure track after the University Law (大學法) was passed in 1994."

"Taiwan has lost the edge in recruiting young global talents. The financial sector is conservative...apart from the low pay. The political sector is disappointing, which says one thing and do something different. Taiwan stays at the very corner of Greater China which everyone is talking about here. When young people are looking for work after their education abroad, their first choice would no longer be Taiwan. Hong Kong is a multicultural society that attracts ambitious people who are competent in English."

Furthermore, in Hong Kong, he only teaches three courses a year, and therefore have a lot of time to do research. He feels that he has a big stage (舞台)for developing his career, a good working environment, and enjoy

better benefits than teaching in Taiwan. If he goes back to Taiwan, he would not be able to buy an apartment. He therefore spoke with pessimism on the idea of returning to Taiwan:

“I do not think I can return anymore (回不去了). I did once think of returning about five years ago (2008-2009). If I return now to Taiwan because of work, it would be a sacrifice. Assistant professors are paid too low in Taiwan. An iPhone would cost NTD 20,000, which would be one-third of the salary of an assistant professor.”

“If I returned, it is due to the better quality of life in Taiwan—the food, the air, and ren qing wei. I can now use the Hong Kong express budget airfare and go back on weekends to visit my parents every two months. It would be just like working in Taipei, while living in Taichung, which is two hours away. Even though it is lonesome to live in Hong Kong, I do not intend to return to Taiwan to work.”

He learned Cantonese in six months, and had not experienced discrimination in Hong Kong. He is accustomed to meeting rude taxi-drivers, and explained that their behavior is due to the high cost of the license plate, and the pressure to do business during their 12 hour shifts. Their salary is not high, and are not organized under big companies as in Taiwan, which helps to build reputation (口碑).

Ren qing wei plays a critical role in my fieldwork, as some of the interviewees sent back their questionnaires to me by e-mail promptly, and accepted an interview in either Hong Kong or Taiwan. Sean (HKY#7, 36) was one of the informants who accepted my interview in Taiwan when he was visiting his mother over one weekend.

He speaks fluent Cantonese as his parents are from Guangdong, although with a slightly different accent from the Hongkongers. After finishing his graduate degrees in the US, he worked in Hong Kong since 2008. He recalled how he missed the opportunity of coming back to teach in Taiwan; simply because his job offer from Hong Kong came much earlier than Taiwan's.

He found his background of participating in social movements in Taiwan hardly useful in Hong Kong, which does not have a democratic ethos. He also found the university not allowing transparency in the promotion system, but only rules for the applicant to adhere. To him, Taiwan is the place to fulfil his dreams.

“Hong Kong is a class-ridden society, depending on where you stand economically. There is a social distance between teachers and students at the university. My colleague wondered why I have meals with my students. The best part of teaching in Hong Kong is its high salary, and everyone is paid differently according to performance. However, pressure from work is high. The minimum wage in Hong Kong is actually lower than Taiwan’s, and the quality of life is poorer. I found myself “being driven around” (被趕來趕去) when I am dining in places outside the university.

Sean has good reasons for returning to Taiwan in future:

I have been away from home for eighteen years. When my father was ill, I returned to Taiwan every week. Now that my mom is getting older, I would like to come back to live in Taiwan.”

Cara (HKY#8, 38, assistant professor) and I met in Taiwan, after sending her questionnaire to me. Her education in Taiwan and the U.S. enabled her to find a good teaching job in Hong Kong, where her husband also found employment. Indeed, the high pay in Hong Kong has attracted quite a number of Taiwanese teachers at the best universities, sometimes through recruitment by head hunters.

She found the academic culture quite different from those of Taiwan and the US. When she showed up at her department office for the first time, introducing herself as a professor (a title used for university teachers in Taiwan), the clerk said to her: “*you are not a professor, you are a doctor.*” She also found that it is necessary to be properly dressed when she teaches, and students never address teachers by first names. To her, it is quite strange that examination papers are not returned to students. There is a senior club at the university, and one’s membership depends on application. In her university office, she is not expected to open her

windows for fresh air. She has other difficulties, such as not being able to speak Cantonese, and living in a small space:

“On the pavement, we need to walk in single file, in order not to block the way for other pedestrians. The air in Hong Kong is seriously polluted these days. Some foreigners are leaving with their families. The pace of living in Hong Kong is really fast. In the cafeteria, the waiter may remove your plate when you are only half-way through eating.”

Outside of the university, she knows a lot of expatriates through her participation in the Toastmaster Club. *“This would be an opportunity to introduce Taiwan to my friends!”* She found that the culture of reading is quite different from Taiwan’s. There are lots of “How to...” books in Hong Kong, such as “How to get rich” (如何致富).

The short distance between Taiwan and Hong Kong enables her to come back to Taiwan to visit her parents, and to take a break from the busy life in Hong Kong. She is actually looking for the opportunity to come back to teach in a university.

In Singapore, Don (SG#16, 52, professor), who took a successful career path spoke highly of Singapore with regard to “internationalization,” “professionalism,” and “competitiveness,” while being quite candid about his “not-so-positive” view of Taiwan universities.

“It is not just the salary which makes it difficult for Taiwan to attract talents, with the exception of a small number of industries in the private sector. Taiwan only attract people who has ‘Taiwan background’ (i.e. have grown up and lived there), or foreigners who wants to learn Chinese culture, or those who has family members or partners. Taiwan is too inward-looking with an emphasis on bentuhua (本土化), and does not have an international culture that enables foreigners to survive.”

“In Singapore, no one ask you ‘where are you from?’ The emphasis is on how professional you are. As a small country, she tries to be visible, international, and believes in competition. The high pay is one thing, but the environment is

even more important. In Taiwan, social infrastructure is missing in attracting international students, such as courses taught in English, and aptitude of administrative staff members in English...as a result, it would be hard to attract international applicants. We cannot simply 'close our doors and be happy', since the world outside is changing. More and more people are interested in Mainland China, because they see the future there. Many Chinese scholars are doing well internationally because of their large numbers."

During my interview of Don for close to two hours, I tried to impress him by saying that Taiwan's universities have moved up in the world's ranking of universities. He commented that it had been done in a superficial way:

"What I mean by lacking in professional conduct is that professors there do not distinguish what is one's own and what is public (公私不分), such as treating one's assistant as one's personal secretary. I have seen colleagues who bring their children to their office to do homework, and ask their research assistants to babysit. In Singapore and the west, professors never wear slippers in his/her office! The administrative staff in various departments cannot help with international matters. It would take a long long time for Taiwan to become truly international. Singapore is very cosmopolitan for foreigners to function well. It therefore can attract a large pool of global talent that includes young people from all over the world."

Later on, I confirmed with Janet (SG#2, 54, professor) about the competitiveness of the university working environment in Singapore:

"Students in our university work very hard and perform well. There is an annual review for every faculty member. After working for three years, the person can apply for an extension of her/his contract for another three years, and apply for tenure after six years. There is no automatic tenure."

“Singapore is an orderly country, 20% of people are from abroad. It attracts foreigners and young people because of its English environment – even people of middle and old-age speak English. It is the country’s policy to employ foreigners, either in the labor force, or in the skilled sector. Singapore is capable of competing for foreign workers, as one quarter of the labor force is from outside – Internationalization is a good thing. Singapore has a high living standard, and a higher GNP than many countries in Asia. I cannot compare the academic environment with Taiwan because I have left Taiwan a long time ago...”

On the other hand, Anita (SG#4, 24, financial manager at a bank) expressed her negative views about working in Singapore. After sending back her questionnaire by e-mail, she talked to me for an hour on the phone.

“My biggest problem is understanding Singlish⁵ I do not have a clue of what they are joking about. Because of the priority given to English, Singaporeans look down on people speaking Chinese. People are pragmatic and snobbish...”

Graduated from finance during her tertiary education in Taiwan, Anita went abroad as an exchange student in Switzerland and later on obtained a degree in the United States. It took her almost one whole year to get used to Singapore. She could not get used to the weather, the food, and the attitude of people at first. Getting in and out of air-conditioned rooms, she got very sick at one time. However, she came to Singapore purely for work in a foreign bank, as she would not be able to find the same kind of work and position in Taiwan.

She agrees with her boyfriend who visits from Taiwan from time to time, that “Singapore does not have a soul” She emphasized her dislike [of Singapore] by saying:

⁵ A form of colloquial English which contains Malay words and several Chinese dialects.

“I started to love Taiwan, only when I went abroad...I will never love this country. I keep working until I drop every day and let my time go fast. I will not be here for more than five years...”

Arriving just a few months in Singapore, Lyndon (SG#5, 33, financial analyst), started with a degree in foreign languages in Taiwan, finished a Master’s degree with a scholarship, and worked in London for six years. He worked in the bank after getting a work permit in a short time. For him, the sun in Singapore is strong, but the food is much better than that in London.

He spoke English with an American accent at first and gradually changed to British accent while working in London as certified financial analyst:

“It does not matter where one works, as long as one speaks the language. Among the three cities of London, Singapore and Taipei, London is my favorite.”

“I use skype to talk to my wife in Taiwan every day, and return to Taiwan two times a year. I do not want to find work in Taiwan because of the poor work-life balance there. One often works with great pressure, performing the tasks of two persons. My peers would consider working in Singapore or Hong Kong first, and move to Shanghai as the next step. Before I come back here, my friends told me that Singapore is a place to make money, despite being a boring place.”

His comments with regard to Taiwan’s effort to recruit young talents are as follows:

“If Taiwan wants to attract ‘talents’, we should learn from Singapore. First they have strong economic incentives to attract people, such as high salary and reasonable tax. They have a well-designed recruitment process. If a bank or high-tech industry wants to recruit new staff, they will consider the needs of the whole family, who is invited to come and look around. People want to work in Singapore because they are working with outstanding colleagues in a competitive environment. “

Jo (HKY#16, 36) and Samuel (HKY#9, 40), both medical doctors, got married before going to the UK for further studies. After completing his Ph.D and

post-doc, Samuel went to join a research center, at the invitation of a professor from Hong Kong. Jo also did a Master's degree in the U.K. and was enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Hong Kong. In the meantime, they had two children who were born in Taiwan, where they got help from their parents. Although it had taken Jo less than three months to adapt to Hong Kong, she still has problems speaking Cantonese, as she seldom interacts with neighbors and does not watch TV very often. Like many other Taiwanese who live in small space and pay very high rent, they found the monthly rent they pay hard to believe: HKD15,300 for 600 sq.ft. (equivalent to NTD 60,000 for 17 *ping*), which is very small for a family at Taiwan standard).

She found people in Hong Kong "less courteous, less altruistic, and more utilitarian oriented" than people in Taiwan. For her, Taiwan seems to be more multi-cultural, and young people can find their ways to do what they like to fulfill their dreams. Unlike most of local Hong Kong people, they have never hired any live-in maids.

Her husband Samuel (HKY#9) shared with me his observations:

"Despite government's wish to raise fertility levels, the Hong Kong environment does not encourage families to have children, as rent is high, space is limited, and education is expensive. Only 18% of high school graduates can attend universities, and only those who can afford the high school fees may do so. A report made by the Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre estimated that it would now cost around HK\$5.5 million in total for middle class families to bring up a child from the first day of pregnancy to the age of 22 when the child graduates from a local university. The minimum wage is only HKD 30 per hour, exhibiting a huge income gap that exists in Hong Kong. Taiwan seems to be better in this aspect. Hong Kong is extremely crowded nowadays, as 5,000,000 tourists enter Hong Kong each year, among them 4,000,000 are from Mainland China.

Samuel summarized his observation of Taiwanese immigrants as follows:

"Being attracted by the high salary, exposure to international experiences, and the short distance to Taiwan are major reasons for migrating to Hong Kong for

work. About ninety percent are employed in finance. They stayed on because of much lower pay and absence of similar opportunities back home. Their position in work and the stage in their life decide whether they would stay, such as having a high position in Hong Kong, and not being able to find an equivalent place in Taiwan; being single and seeking advancements in their careers, particularly in finance. Among the dispatched employees who have children of school ages, their wives and children stay back in Taiwan, while the father makes weekly or monthly family visits.

As I met Jo and Samuel in Taiwan when they came back to visit their parents in 2014, they revealed their new plans of coming back to Taiwan for work. They explained that their choice of being back to base would enable their children not to be involved in the competitive track for education in Hong Kong, continuing with an international education, becoming “global citizens”, alienated from family values while growing up, and losing their Taiwanese identity in the long run.

Type 3. An on-ward migrant from Canada

Albert (HKY#2, 35, financial analyst) is the only person who fits the term “on-ward migrant” as in my original research design. Leaving for Canada at the age of 18 with his parents, his brother and sister, he attended a community college in Canada because of the difficulty of transferring his high school grades from Taiwan. After graduation, he obtained a Master’s degree in Statistics at a prestigious university in the US. Quite a few of his classmates stayed to work in the US; but due to the difficulty of finding work in Canada, quite a few parents and young migrants have returned to Taiwan.

Before coming to Hong Kong, he worked in Canada, US, UK and Singapore. In fact, he e-mailed me a questionnaire from Singapore, was interviewed in Hong Kong a year later, and returned to Singapore in the same year. He provided me with a summary of his trajectory:

“It is neither return, re-migrating, nor circular, but simply mobile, I am a “trans-border migrant at all times, starting with Canada(1994-1999): Family emigration; continuing with US(2000-2001): Study and work; then UK(2001-2001): Company relocation; then US(2002-2005): Company

relocation from UK to US; then Singapore(2005-2007): found a new job; then HK(2007-2008): company relocation; then Singapore(2008-2011): found a new job; then HK(2011-2013): found a new job; then Singapore(2013-present): transferred from HK; then HK(2013): transferred from Singapore, and finally Singapore(2014): relocated from HK.”

He explained that his frequent re-location of jobs is due to re-location of his boss. While living in Singapore for four and a half years, and then in Hong Kong for another two years, he finally settled down in Singapore, and joined his wife, after accepting an offer as CEO in an investment management company. For over ten years, he had lots of working experiences as accounting clerk, financial planner, investment banker, and investment manager. Comparing the three places he had lived before, he wrote in his questionnaire: *“In New York, one works long hours, with high pressure and in a highly competitive environment. In Hong Kong, as investment manager, working hours are long and pressure is high too. As investment manager in Singapore, one works at a slower pace and enjoys a better life style.”*

Although his parents and his brother have returned to Taiwan from Canada, he is quite determined not to return to Taiwan to work. He would enter Taiwan as a tourist and stay for a maximum of three months; otherwise, he needs to fulfill military service of up to ten months. He stated his observations of Taiwan as follows:

“I am very disappointed with Taiwan: whoever is the president, it would be the same, as politicians are incompetent and short-sighted. Unlike President Ma who is only interested in Mainland China, Singapore builds tax treaties with other countries. Taiwan has an excellent location, but she has lost the edge to be a transport hub [in East Asia]. One can see that the financial sector is marginalized, as talents are leaving for better opportunities somewhere else, and the vicious cycle cannot be reversed...even engineers are leaving Taiwan...movie stars too. “Salary is too low, and the market is too small in Taiwan; I would only return to Taiwan when I retire.”

To give an idea of how low the salary in Taiwan is, Albert said:

“One can look at how much a taxi-driver earns compared to Singapore – less than NTD25,000 a month in Taiwan, compared with NTD40,000 a month in Singapore.”

At the end of the interview, Albert helped me think through my research focus. He thought that youth migration is a great topic to be studied, and “mobile young global talent” is a very relevant term I use for my study. As an insider, he commented that “one does not see how Taiwan can attract global talents in the short run.”

Type 4 Views of Students

The youngest of my interviewees include two students (HKY#11 Sebastian and HKY#12 Olive) who were working right after graduation from a university of Hong Kong, and two students (HKY#19 Winston and HKY#20 Pat) who are in their senior years at another university. Their fields include economics, finance, and international commerce. Pat’s parents were educated in Taiwan and the US, and moved to Mainland China in 2000. Pat lived with them in Shenzhen and Shanghai at different times, until she came to attend a university in Hong Kong. She mentioned that she could not compete with her peers in school, in either Shenzhen or Shanghai, and therefore attended international school there.

Pat can master Mandarin, English and Cantonese well. Regarding her future plans, she said: *“My parents encourage me to work in Asia in future, but not to return to Taiwan.”*

Winston, who moved to Shanghai at the age of 14 in 2006, when his father was dispatched from Taiwan, lived there for five years. He was the head of the student association in Shanghai and adapted well doing various part-time jobs. He came to study in a university in Hong Kong because the Taiwan government does not recognize Mainland Chinese credentials, while the cost of schooling in Hong Kong Universities is quite reasonable. He speaks Cantonese, and is used to the fast pace of life in Hong Kong. He expressed interest in going to Taiwan after

finishing his tertiary education in June 2014: *“I would go back to fulfil military service first, and then look for work.”*

These two students seem to have benefitted from the “two languages and three dialects policy” (二文三語) emphasized in Hong Kong. At the university that she attended, all three dialects are accepted as teaching media. As Hong Kong identity consciousness has risen in recent years, Cantonese as a teaching media is used more and more by instructors.

Type 5 Reverse migrants

There are two samples in the reverse migration category, each having different mobility patterns. After finishing university in 2006, Antonia (HKY#14, 35, consultant) went to Hong Kong for the first time to visit her (former) boyfriend. After earning a Master’s degree from a national university in Taiwan, she later took up studies for a Ph.D. degree in psychology at a university in Hong Kong. She has returned to Taiwan to live in the last two years, but have kept her consulting firm in a city in S. China. She is prepared to commute between Taiwan and Mainland China several times a year.

Having many Hong Kongers as clients or friends, her observations are quite different from other Taiwanese I spoke to earlier:

“Most Taiwanese do not assimilate in Hong Kong, but just stayed to earn money. Most of them do not speak Cantonese, as they speak English only at the university, or in the banks/firms that they work. Seventy to eighty percent do not socialize with HongKongers.”

In Antonia's experience, speaking Cantonese makes it much easier to communicate with taxi drivers in Hong Kong. When the taxi driver knows that she is from Taiwan, they become more friendly, and seldom detour. Antonia finds that Hong Kong people are considerate, and men behave like gentlemen, while people in general follow the oriental tradition of being righteous.

Kathleen (HKY#17, 36) shows up to be interviewed as a reverse migrant in Taiwan. After getting two master’s degrees in Taiwan and US successively, she

worked in New York, but left just in time due to the financial crisis. In 2008, she went to Hong Kong to work in an international firm for four years, came back to Taiwan in 2012 to get married, and found a job in a branch office of a leading bank in Hong Kong. Merging of this leading Hong Kong bank and a local bank in Taiwan was commonly done in north central Taiwan, resulting in a large number of branch offices. She met her husband, a medical doctor, through the introduction of a friend.

According to Kathleen, not speaking Cantonese in Hong Kong does not create any communication problems at work, where everyone spoke English. The older Hongkongers do not speak Mandarin, partly because they dislike Chinese Mainlanders. Those who are below 40 can speak Mandarin, or like to practice Mandarin with her.

Like other Taiwanese, she found Hong Kong very crowded and the rent much higher than Taiwan's:

"I can only afford to live in T district, which is quite a distance from Central. I paid HKD12,000 to live in a place of 12 ping (about 427 sq. ft.; 1 ping=35.58 sq. ft). If one lives in Happy Valley, one would pay HKD30,000 for a flat of 30 ping (about 1067 sq. ft). It would mean that the rent is four times that of Taiwan's. My boss from Hong Kong brought all his belonging to Taiwan, and rented out his apartment. He pays NTD50,000 for the big apartment he lives in Taiwan."

She also noticed the big income gap between the rich and the poor in Hong Kong. However, she finds that the housing policy has benefited Hong Kong people a great deal, as 30% of the population lives in public housing, 40% own their apartments, and 30% rented their homes. She also thinks that the ease of hiring live-in maid is of great help to working women in Hong Kong.

Having been back to Taiwan for over one year, she was able to point out the difference between Hong Kong and Taiwan:

"The pay is much higher in Hong Kong, about 2 to 3 times of what one would earn in Taiwan. There are many job opportunities, and the head-hunter may approach you for a job offer. If I stayed to work in Hong Kong, I would be

paid HKD 60,000 per month (about NTD 240,000), and enjoy a low tax rate. I am actually paid less in Taiwan for the same rank, and work for longer hours. After paying for my rent and living expenses in Hong Kong, I can still save a lot. I was using my savings from Hong Kong for down payment of my apartment in Taiwan. Hong Kong is very international and very convenient. I also found that the status of women is higher in Hong Kong. Men are more 'gentlemen', and practice 'ladies first'".

Most of Kathleen's friends in Hong Kong are from Taiwan, and she misses the hiking during the weekends, and big gatherings to celebrate Chinese New Year and the mid-Autumn Festival, etc. At times, she misses her single life, but she is quite happy to be back to Taiwan, be married, and see her parents more often. In future, her child can get into a good school in Taiwan, whereas if she stays in Hong Kong, her child has to compete for admission to a good kindergarten, or even play group, to get on the track of attending a good school later on. In spite of higher pay and her position in Hong Kong, she comes back to enjoy a better quality of life.

This section discusses two major types of migrants, the "trailing spouse" and employed, who form the majority in my sample. Like the middle class married women in Canada (Chiang, 2008), the former gave up their careers after migration, and took up part-time work or volunteering (such as SG#3, SG#6, and SG#18). Whether they would return to Taiwan or not depend on their husband's decision to do so.

Among the employed, 21 out of 23 finished their tertiary education in Taiwan, and went abroad for further education and training, before embarking on their careers in Hong Kong or Singapore. Being employed in prestigious banks and universities in the finance or academic sectors in the two states, they enjoyed higher salary and lower tax than in Taiwan, opportunities to apply their expertise, and chances of promotion, which they cannot find back home. Most adapt quickly in the competitive world of work and city life, even without picking up the local dialect, nor socializing with the local people. Not being able to speak Cantonese does not constitute a problem, nor invite discrimination like in the old days in Hong Kong. In fact, speaking proper Mandarin enable them to communicate with

Singaporean and Hong Kong people who began to realize the importance of speaking Mandarin, because of closer relations with China.

They benefit from working in the Chinese-speaking environment, connections with other young Taiwanese, and short distance to fly back to Taiwan for occasional and frequent visits. The hope of coming back to Taiwan to live in a familiar environment, lead a relaxed life style, meet friends often and care for parents has been frequently brought up; but the reality of not being able to earn a satisfactory income back home comes foremost in their decision to stay in the host country. Singapore and Hong Kong, the two promising cities in Asia, do get the brightest and the best young migrants from Taiwan. Starting from tertiary education in Taiwan, or even earlier in high school, they were the cream of the crop, competent in English, and adapt easily to new competitive environments.

Living in the cosmopolitan environment of Singapore and Hong Kong, young migrant's outlook in life would be transformed, and gradually differentiate themselves from young people who have never worked overseas. It would be quite interesting to assess the extent and impact of brain drain due to emigration, and return migration as both of these phenomena have significant policy implications.

6. Conclusions

Despite burgeoning literature on transnational migration, much less attention is paid to “passive” movers such as “trailing spouse” and young people in the immigrant family. There is a tendency to overlook children's and young people's roles in migration processes and the ways in which such processes shape the spaces and places in which they live. Young migrants are studied as global talents, as they have more chances of obtaining good education, economic success, and cosmopolitan exposure. The challenges they face, their lived experiences, and their contributions to the social and economic fabric of the destination should be better known by the sending and receiving regions, so that better policies can be designed. Global migration study is an extremely important field of research in to-day's world of globalization and diminishing importance of national boundaries. This study is therefore highly current and up to date, and adds one more useful aspect to the growing body of literature on transnational migration.

This pilot study shows that youth migration is a complex phenomenon and their mobility patterns are not easily quantifiable. By using qualitative method, I identify key issues in an unexplored area of research, and captured both depth and diversity of youth migration. As most studies of Taiwanese migration follow a “south-north” pattern involving longer distance, shorter trans-border moves that involve closer ethnic affinity provide a fresh look at migration experiences.

It is noted that the widely cited definition of transnational migration may not apply to the present study of youth migration. In the past, migration would not occur at both destination and origin at nearly the same time, and emigration from a country is harder to estimate statistically with few exceptions such as Australia (Hugo, 2008). The short distance between Taiwan and either Singapore or Hong Kong perhaps have helped to alleviate the difficulty of studying in-and-out moves between countries, even without statistical data.

Setting aside the lure of high pay, job opportunities, and cosmopolitan environment in Singapore and Hong Kong, the potential of attracting some of the young Taiwanese back as reverse migrants are tenable. Getting better Chinese education for their children, facing less competition to get to schools with good reputation, obtaining good medical services, getting childcare support from parents, and back to comfort zone—a hospitable environment with a good quality of life—in Taiwan, have entered the decision of staying or leaving their host countries/regions. The Taiwan government should be aware of this recent new wave of young talent loss, and devise policies to attract them back. A study to probe into driving forces of migration, decisions of staying at the destination, or returning and integration of reverse migrants should be carried out at a larger scale.

Private industries and public universities can capitalize on the impermanent nature of “migration”, and recruit the migrants like what head-hunters did in Hong Kong. In theory, recruitment across border (跨界挖角) could be adopted as a critical strategy used by Taiwan universities to attract some of the “brightest and the best” young Taiwanese back from Singapore or Hong Kong. In 1972, Taiwan has once been successful in getting many skilled emigrants return home to boost its economic development, using formal and informal connections. The Hsinchu

Science-based Industrial park which started in 1980 successfully attracted both high-tech companies and returning migrants (O'Neil, 2003).

At this juncture, Taiwan's policy to recruit young global talents remain at stake, and the urgent need is to prevent her well educated young professionals from leaving, as well as to attract her own young global talents back with more vigorous policies. With lessons from Singapore and Hong Kong, Taiwan may also want to simplify the recruiting process and introduce vigorous and friendly policies to attract global talents from other countries. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's and Singapore's competitiveness which is founded on its global talent pool and ability to attract and retain workers of all nationalities would continue to be a key factor to their success as world cities in the era of globalization.

Acknowledgement

Earlier versions of the article were presented at the Annual Conference of Population Association of Taiwan, April 24-26, 2014, and at the Shanghai Forum, May 25-26, 2014. I sincerely thank the interviewees in Hong Kong and Singapore, and various people who introduced them to me for this project. I am grateful to National University of Singapore and Hong Kong Baptist University for providing me with research offices and logistical support in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

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