

Young Global Talents on the Move: Taiwanese in Singapore and Hong Kong

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Received: October 10, 2014; accepted: January 5, 2015.

Abstract

This paper studies young Taiwanese who migrated to Singapore and Hong Kong for work, study or family reasons. It is based mainly on 40 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 climate, social and cultural differences, high cost of living, and quality of life. Being highly educated, 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 remains at stake, and the urgent need is to prevent its well educated professionals from leaving, as well as to attract them back with more vigorous and 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, Singapore, Hong Kong

I. Significance and Objectives of this Study

Migration to and from Taiwan in the last half century has been characterized by 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 systems 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 few studies on emigration or impermanent moves, as most international migration data systems do not support the transnationalism model (Hugo 2008). Taiwan’s history of population growth, rapid urbanization, and diversity of recent transnational moves is deemed to need more attention from the research community, and comparative studies with some countries in East Asia that have experienced similar patterns of mobility are feasible.

The first author’s earliest studies of emigration focused on new immigrants to cover issues related to seeking employment (Chiang 2004; Chiang and Kuo 2000), residential mobility (Chiang and Hsu 2005), and astronaut families (Chiang 2008, 2009), which cover different aspects of the transnationalism model. Research based on statistical data and field research 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 and Yang 2008), or have returned to Taiwan (Chiang 2011; Chiang and Liao 2008). These studies help us 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 states 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, does not incorporate 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 can respond to the needs of their homeland after receiving their education from abroad. This study employs qualitative methods to probe into the complexities of young overseas Taiwanese on the move, by exploring reasons, movement patterns, and personal experiences.

II. 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.

Youth Migration and Global Talent

Child and youth migration is an emerging area in social science. Due to economic and cultural globalization, developed means of communication,

and continuing drifts of societal individualization, living abroad temporarily during early adulthood is in part about developing one's life through geographical mobility, and about the exploration of both personal and professional possibilities (Conradson and Latham 2005; Simpson 2005). A United Nations' annual report (2014) stated that personal considerations, socio-economic circumstances, and the political situation in the origin country may be the main factors behind youth migration. The decision to migrate is often related to important life transitions, such as pursuing higher education, securing employment or getting married. Usually the main driving force is the inequalities in labor market opportunities, income, human rights and living standards between the origin countries and destination. Furthermore, the availability of faster and cheaper means of transportation, and the development of information and communications technology have improved human mobility and played a key role in facilitating the migration of young people (United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs 2014).

Laoire et al. (2012) study 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. Frändberg (2014) stated that going abroad to live, work, or study for a period when young has long been part of the transition to adulthood among certain privileged social groups. 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.

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 and 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 the “south-north” direction that involves long distances. Mobility of global talent may also be reversed or circulated, and brings 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, like their parents who returned to their homeland. Bartley and Spoonley (2008) suggest that the term “1.5 generation” should refer to children, aged between 6 and 18 years, who migrate as part of a family unit, but who have experienced at least some of their formative socialisation in the country of origin. Although definitions with regard to age differ, the concept of the 1.5 generation is used to describe child migrants as being situated between the first and second generations (Park 1999; Rumbaut 1994). 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 (Chiang 2011).

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).

Although one can look optimistically at reverse migration of the 1.5-generation emigrants as a source of “global talent” for the country of origin, 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. As noted by Ho and Bedford (2008), return migration or re-emigration of the 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. Their hyper mobility patterns make it more difficult to study the impact on the receiving society, or the homeland that they have returned to.

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.

Taiwan's young migrants on the move

The 1.5 generation who stayed after immigration or returned have captured our interest regardless of the destination. In this section, we would like to review findings of the first author's studies of 1.5-generation return migrants from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, focusing on their adaptation in Taiwan. 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 than 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, or non-recognition of their former qualifications, the first generation of Taiwanese migrants have 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 Taiwanese, but also subscribed to values that were characteristically traditional, and frequently followed well-accepted Chinese gender lines. Despite receiving a 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 affected 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, Australian and New Zealand job market is not only found by the first generation of Asian immigrants. 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 (Fong 2012; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). 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 returning to Taiwan. Other reasons given are: to learn Chinese and skills, to obtain more personal and life experiences, to get married, or to follow one's spouse, to do graduate work in Taiwan, to contribute to Taiwanese 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 the 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 and Liao 2008). Regardless of where they come back from, negative opinions of the environment as being hot, humid and crowded, with 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.

III. Research Methodology

In 2011 and 2013, the first author visited Singapore and Hong Kong respectively for one month each to conduct interviews. Before this, we reviewed the immigration policies of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan as background information on each country’s strategy to recruit young global talents and skilled migrants. Some of the issues that the first author studied earlier with regard to the young 1.5 generation of migrants in Taiwan and abroad shed light on the present study. The questions we 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.

Our assumption was that higher pay, fringe benefits, and a cosmopolitan environment 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. 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, the face-to-face interview constitutes the main source of information on young Taiwanese migrants in Singapore and Hong Kong.

A snowball sampling method is used throughout, starting with introduction to former graduates from National Taiwan University, 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. We benefitted greatly from *ren qing wei* (人情味, human warmth), which is a cultural trait of Taiwanese. Introductions by several key informants were critical in the snowball sampling method.¹

Our fieldwork continued in Hong Kong and Taiwan until 2014, as we were able to meet interviewees who frequently return to Taiwan for business or family visits. This is one reason why we discovered more diversity in the types of migrants in Hong Kong than in Singapore.² In total consists of 19 and 21 valid responses by Taiwanese in Singapore and

1 A former graduate of our university acted as the chief networker in the Taiwanese community in Hong Kong. She introduced the first author through google group “Taiwanese in HK”, and helped her get in touch with interviewees by e-mail and phone, or meeting in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

2 The original questionnaire targeted interviewees who have studied or immigrated abroad for work, but upon arrival in Hong Kong, the first author 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.

Hong Kong respectively, out of 43 interviews in total. We hope that the responses, though limited, provide the reader with a diversity of respondent backgrounds and mobility patterns. It was easier to find interviewees in Hong Kong than in Singapore, as more Taiwanese live there. Being a citizen of Hong Kong, and a repeat visitor to Singapore in recent years, the first author has developed understanding of both states, apart from retrieving information on population and immigration policies from various sources (e.g. Huang 2013).

IV. Conceptualizing Types of Migrants by Their Migration Trajectories

As summarized in Tables 1 and 2, a socio-economic profile of the 40 interviewees is presented. They included 11 males and 29 females, 19 in Singapore and 21 in Hong Kong. Twenty-two 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. Most of them belong to the younger, pre-retirement working age group, and are overwhelmingly (34 out of 40) young adults aged between 21 and 40 years old. Among 40 interviewees, 28 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, SG#16; Hong Kong: HKY#1, HKY#2, HKY#4).

A diversity of occupations is represented, including finance, accounting, commerce, sales, research and teaching, student, housewife,

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of young Taiwanese migrants in Singapore

Case No./Name (Pseudonym)	Sex/Age/Marital Status	Education/Occupation	Age/Year of departure to study abroad	Year of Migration to Singapore	Main reason for moving to Singapore/Remark	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
SG#1 Priscilla	F/33/Married	BA (TW), MBA (US)/ Investment professional in a hedge	26/2004	2007 (lived in US, HK)	2-Employment	YES
SG#2 Janet	F/54/Married	BA(TW), MA (US), PhD (Canada)/Professor	22/1981	2006 (lived in US, Canada)	2-Employment	NO
SG#3 Annie	F/34/Married	BA (US)/Housewife, Museum Volunteer	20/1997	2010 (lived in US, HK)	1-Family/ Husband's work	Not sure
SG#4 Anita	F/24/Single	BA (TW)/Finance (Bank)	23/2010	2010 (born in US, exchange student in Switzerland)	2-Employment	YES
SG#5 Lyndon	M/33/Single	MSc (UK)/Finance (Wealth Management Associate)	25/2003	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	NO
SG#6 Eunice	F/42/Married	BA (TW)/Housewife, Part-time worker	26/1996	1996	1-Family/Married to Singaporean	YES
SG#7 Helen	F/39/Married	BA (TW), MA (TW)/PhD candidate (TW), Housewife	35/2008	2008	1-Family/ Husband's work	YES
SG#8 Cindy	F/36/Married	BA (TW), MBA (US)/ Housewife, Manager (Part time)	26/2001	2007 (lived in US)	1-Family/ Husband's work	YES (for retirement)
SG#9 Melissa	F/42/Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (the Netherlands)/Full-time Research Fellow	23/1992	2009 (lived in HK, Philippines, the Netherlands)	2-Employment	YES
SG#10 Minna	F/33/Married	PhD (France)/Visiting Research Fellow	23/2001	2010 (lived in Belgium, France)	2-Employment	Not sure

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of young Taiwanese migrants in Singapore (continued)

Case No./Name (Pseudonym)	Sex/Age/Marital Status	Education/Occupation	Age/Year of departure to study abroad	Year of Migration to Singapore	Main reason for moving to Singapore/Remark	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
SG#11 Daisy	F/35/Single	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD Candidate (Sweden)	2000	2011 (lived in UK, Ireland, Sweden)	4-Student	NO
SG#12 Charlie	M/39/Single	BSc (TW), MA (US), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	25/1997	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
SG#13 Ben	F/35/Single	BSc (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/Asst. Professor	28/2004	2011(lived in US)	2-Employment	NO
SG#14 Winnie	M/36/Single	BSc (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/Asst. Professor	24/1999	2004 (lived in US)	2-Employment	Not sure
SG#15 Shirlena	F/38/Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (US)/ Asst. Professor	24/1995	2006 (lived in US, Canada)	2-Employment	YES
SG#16 Don	M/52/Married	BA (TW), MBA, MSc, PhD (US)/Professor	22/1990	2012 (lived in US, Canada, HK)	2-Employment	NO
SG#17 Jasmine	F/34/Married	BBA (Canada)/Housewife	14/1993	2013(lived in Canada)	1-Family/ Husband's work	NO
SG#18 Nancie	F/36/Married	BA (TW)/Housewife, Volunteer	30/2005	2005	1-Family/ Husband's work	YES
SG#19 Jolin	F/36/Married	BA (TW), MBA (UK)/Finance (Bank)	36/2004	2006 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	Not sure

Table 2. Socio-economic profile of young Taiwanese migrants in Hong Kong

Case No./Name (Pseudonym)	Sex/Age/Marital Status	Education/Occupation	Age/Year of departure to study abroad	Year of Migration to Hong Kong	Main Reason for moving to Hong Kong	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
HKY#1 Vanessa	F/50/Married	BA (Canada)/Housewife	8/1971	2011 (lived in US, Canada)	1-Family/Partner's work	NO
HKY#2 Albert	M/35/Married	BA (Canada), MA (US)/Financial Analyst	18/1994	2007 (lived in US, Canada, Singapore)	3-Onward migrant (1.5 generation)	YES (for retirement)
HKY#3 Clarissa	F/34/Married	BA (TW), MBA (UK)/Equity Research Analyst	26/2004	2006 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#4 Susanna	F/34/Single	BA (TW), MA (US)/Finance manager	25/2004	2007 (lived in US, Singapore)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#5 Johnny	F/35/Single	BA (TW), PhD (the Netherlands)/Assist. Professor	26/2004	2009 (lived in the Netherlands)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#6 Miriam	F/36/Single	BSc (TW)/Sales Manager	28/2005	2006	2-Employment	NO
HKY#7 Sean	M/36/Single	BA (TW), MA (US), PhD (US)/Assist. Professor	24/2001	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#8 Cara	F/38/Married	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD (UK)/Assist. Professor	23/1998	2008 (lived in US)	2-Employment	Not sure
HKY#9 Samuel	M/40/Married	BA(TW), MA(TW), PhD and post-doc (UK)/Research Assist. Professor	34/2007	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#10 Michelle	F/33/Single	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD (UK)/Post-doc Researcher	25/2005	2011 (lived in UK)	2-Employment	Not sure
HKY#11 Sebastian	M/21/Single	BA (HK)/Finance	18/2010	2010	4-Student/ Employed after studying in Hong Kong	NO

Table 2. Socio-economic profile of young Taiwanese migrants in Hong Kong (continued)

Case No./Name (Pseudonym)	Sex/Age/Marital Status	Education/Occupation	Age/Year of departure to study abroad	Year of Migration to Hong Kong	Main Reason for moving to Hong Kong	Planning to Return to Taiwan?
HKY#12 Olive	F/22/Single	BA (HK)/Accountant	18/2010	2010	4-Student/ Employed after studying in Hong Kong	NO
HKY#13 Stuart	M/38/Single	BA (TW), MSc (US)/Finance	22/1997	2013 (lived in Singapore)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#14 Antonia	F/35/Single	BA (TW), MA (TW), PhD(HK)/Consultant	27/2006	2006	5-Reverse migration	YES
HKY#15 Leo	M/39/Married	BA (TW), MA (US)/Finance	26/1999	2001 (lived in US)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#16 Jo	F/36/Married	BA (TW), MA (UK), PhD candidate (HK)	29/2007	2011 (lived in UK)	1-Family/ Husband's work	YES
HKY#17 Kathleen	F/36/Married	BA (TW), MA(TW), MA (US)/Finance	25/2003	2008 (lived in US)	5-Reverse migration	YES
HKY#18 Yolanda	F/32/Single	BA (TW)/Finance	24/2006	2009 (lived in Shanghai)	2-Employment	YES
HKY#19 Winston	M/21/Single	Senior student (HK)	14/2006	2011 (lived in Shanghai)	4-Student	YES
HKY#20 Pat	F/19/Single	Senior student (HK)	14/2006	2011 (lived in Shenzhen, Shanghai)	4-Student	NO
HKY#21 Alison	F/34/Married	BA (TW)/Management	32/2012	2012	1-Family/Married to Hongkonger	YES

volunteer, and others. All of them have attained high levels of education (14 Ph.D.s, 3 Ph.D. candidates, 10 Masters, and 13 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 our interviewees have intention to return to Taiwan in future (23 said “Yes”, 11 said “No”, and six were “Not sure”).

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

- (1) **The family** category includes six women who moved to Singapore and three who moved to Hong Kong respectively with their husbands.
- (2) Those who migrated for **employment** after studying and working abroad constitute the largest group (23 out of 40), 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 **onward migrant** category, a 1.5

Table 3. A summary of types of young migrants in Singapore and Hong Kong

Types of Migration	Singapore	Hong Kong
(1) Family	6 (SG#3, SG#6, SG#7, SG#8, SG#17, SG#18)	3 (HKY#1, HKY#16, HKY#21)
(2) Migration for Employment after studying and working abroad	12 (SG#1, SG#2, SG#4, SG#5, SG#9, SG#10, SG#12, SG#13, SG#14, SG#15, SG#16, SG#19)	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 Hong Kong; 2 undergraduates
(5) Reverse migrant		2 (HKY#14, HKY#17)
Total	19	21

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 migrants identified in Singapore and Hong Kong. More than half of them were either educated abroad or have working experiences as an intern or formal employment, before moving to Singapore and Hong Kong for work. As shown in Table 3, Taiwanese migrants in Hong Kong are more diverse in type, while those who moved with family or for employment make up 18 of the 19 respondents in Singapore.

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

Having spoken to or been in contact with 40 interviewees, it is necessary to divide them into types, as their experiences do not overlap in most cases, or are even unique for some. Face-to-face interviews enable us to retrieve information apart from the structured and unstructured parts of the questionnaire or even the open questions. The following analysis tries to incorporate narratives to address 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: Family

Among the nine women who migrated to Singapore and Hong Kong, their movement patterns differ. Only two are marriage migrants (SG#6 and HKY#21), and the rest moved with their husbands because of the latter's job re-location. Although the term "trailing spouse" in general refers to associate movers like wives, they are not always full-time homemakers. Most of them in our sample engage in full- or part-time work or study, or participate in volunteer activities. They are also highly educated, and five have obtained their university degrees abroad (SG#3, SG#8, SG#17, HKY#1, and HKY#16).

Eunice (SG#6, age 42) 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 has not been 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.

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 the first author met her for the first time.

Helen (SG#7, age 39) 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, receiving housing and education allowance for children, while being eligible to be residents in four year’s time. 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, and the better quality of life in Taiwan is another. She is not used to the high-powered education system and the *Kiasu* culture³ in Singapore, where young children are sent to supplementary schools in Chinese, arithmetic and science from a 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.

Vanessa (HKY#1, age 50) responded promptly by e-mail several times before the first author met her in Hong Kong. With a combination of identities (lesbian, spouse of same sex marriage, hybrid identity), she is “unique” among our interviewees. Born in Hong Kong, 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.

3 A Hokkien, Singlish and Manglish word that means scared of losing, and comes from the Hokkien word “驚輸”.

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 18-year-old dog, which “migrated” 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, a secretary at an 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 an LGBT conference in Taiwan. She participated in many kinds of sports, and always had a lot of friends. As an easy-going person, Vanessa recalls no discrimination of any kind in any of the places she has lived in terms of either her sexual orientation (lesbian), or someone who does not speak Cantonese in Hong Kong.

The adaptation patterns among our interviewees in this group vary greatly. Alison (HKY#21, age 34) met her husband when he went to organize an exhibition on jewelry in Taiwan, got married after seven years, and entered Hong Kong with a dependent visa (受養人簽證). After graduating from the university, she worked full-time in Taiwan in the IC industry and joined her husband’s business in Hong Kong. After living in Hong Kong for two years, she has learned to speak Cantonese well. She hopes to return to Taiwan where her parents live, and her husband agrees to do so, as he and his family visited Taiwan frequently and like the place.

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, age 33, investment professional) majored in Finance at a national university in Taiwan in 1998, and worked for four years in the financial sector, before going to the US to obtain a master's degree. She went straight from the US to work in Hong Kong 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. She commented that:

Taiwan is less favorable as a place for work (than Singapore) with regard to tax, pay, and job opportunities. I always think that my university classmates from Taiwan have no problem in competing to get employment abroad. 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 (HKY#3), who works as an equity research specialist in Hong Kong. Clarissa (HKY#3, age 34, equity research analyst), seven months pregnant when the first author interviewed her, was planning to return to Taiwan to give birth to her first child. Before coming to Hong Kong, she studied for one year in the UK to get an MBA, while having two jobs as intern and part-time researcher. She mentioned that training in business school at her university was "solid," and a lot of her classmates studied abroad to obtain international experience. 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 to where she wants to live in the 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 there.

It took her only three months to get used to Hong Kong, when she first arrived in 2006. Speaking on the rude behavior of taxi and minibus drivers, and people working in cafeteria and sales, she explained that these people had anger in their hearts due to the pressure of living in a competitive environment with a high cost of living. Susanna (HKY#4, age 34, finance manager) even used the word “national ethos” (國情) to refer to the poor urban service quality in Hong Kong. Comparing the two states, she noted that Hong Kong is small, rent is high, and air quality is poor. She noted that Singapore is less crowded than Hong Kong, 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, age 32, finance) also worked in Singapore before going to Hong Kong, where she has lived for 7 years (since 2007). Due to air pollution, she got an eye infection upon arrival in Hong Kong. She found that people in Hong Kong are impatient, walk fast, speak 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:

Taiwanese 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.

However, she feels that she has assimilated in Hong Kong over time, and is not sure if she wants to come back to Taiwan. Apart from Mandarin and *Minnan*, which are her mother tongues, 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* 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, age 36, finance), whom the first author met in Singapore, was interviewed again in Taiwan when she was on work leave. She worked in Taiwan for four years after graduation from finance, and went to the UK to get a Master's degree in one year, enabling her to find work quite easily in Singapore. She recalled:

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, became a Singaporean citizen, and had given up Taiwan citizenship. It took her close to one year to get used to the work culture of Singapore. She articulated:

As a Singaporean, one speaks rather directly. If one asks for a raise or for promotion, she/he talks 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 one's 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 Indicator) by the employer to evaluate employees quantitatively. She also finds it hard to mingle with Singaporeans, as her colleagues' conversations dwell on housing and complaints about maids. Jo is happy to live in a three-generation family with her parents-in-law, develop a career, and visit her mother in Taiwan several times a year. When asked if she will return to Taiwan in the future, her answer is: "*one never knows what will happen*" (以後的事情很難預料).

Johnny (HKY#5, age 35) and Sean (HKY#7, age 36) are both assistant professors after graduating from the same university, and studied abroad for their Ph.Ds. Approached by headhunters three years ago, Johnny 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 impede 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 also no tenure track after the University Law (大學法) was passed in 1994. At the university, I only teach three courses a year, and therefore have a lot of time to do research. I have a big stage (舞台) for developing my career, a good working environment, and enjoy better benefits. If I return to teach in the university that I graduated from, I cannot afford to buy an apartment in Taipei.

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...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 is no longer Taiwan. Hong Kong is a multicultural society that attracts ambitious people who are competent in English.

He 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 (around 2009). If I return now to Taiwan because of work, it would be a sacrifice. Assistant professors are paid too little in Taiwan. An iPhone would cost NTD 20,000, which would be one-third of the salary of an assistant professor. “If I (ever) returned, it would be 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.

Ren qing wei plays a critical role in the first author's fieldwork, as some of the interviewees sent back their questionnaires to her by e-mail promptly, and accepted an interview in either Hong Kong or Taiwan. Sean (HKY#7, age 36) was one of the informants who accepted the first author's interview in Taiwan when he was visiting his mother over one weekend. He speaks fluent Cantonese, as his parents are from Guangdong. After finishing his graduate degrees in the US, he has 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 that the university lacks transparency in the promotion system, and only has rules for the applicant to adhere to. To him, Taiwan is still 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. To attain a quick turnover in business, customers are given limited time in dining.

Sean has good reasons for returning to Taiwan in the future:

I have been away from home for eighteen years. When my father was

ill, I returned to Taiwan every week before he passed away. Now that my mom is getting older, I would like to come back to live in Taiwan.

Cara (HKY#8, age 38, assistant professor) and the first author met in Taiwan, after sending in her questionnaire. Her education in Taiwan and the US enabled her to find a good teaching job in Hong Kong, where her husband also found employment. 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. She has other difficulties, such as not being able to speak Cantonese, living in a small space with polluted air, and the fast pace of life. 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.

In Singapore, Don (SG#16, age 52, professor), who established a successful career, spoke highly of Singapore with regard to “internationalization,” “professionalism,” and “competitiveness,” while being quite candid about his “not-so-positive” view of Taiwanese 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 have a “Taiwan background” (i.e. have grown up and lived there), or foreigners who want to learn

Chinese culture, or those who have family members or partners there. 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 and international, and believes in competition. The high pay is one thing, but the environment is even more important. In Taiwan, the social infrastructure to attract international students is missing , such as courses taught in English, and aptitude of administrative staff members in English...as a result, it is 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.

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

Students in our national university work very hard and perform well. There is an annual review for every faculty member. There is no automatic tenure. Singapore is an orderly country, and 20% of the 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. 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 left Taiwan a long time ago...

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

My biggest problem is understanding Singlish.⁴ 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 in finance at a university in Taiwan, Anita went abroad as an exchange student in Switzerland and later on obtained a degree in the US. 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:

I started to love Taiwan, only when I went abroad...I will never love

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

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. I hope that I can move around and work in different countries to get more exposure.

Arriving just a few months in Singapore, Lyndon (SG#5, age 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 a 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 a British accent while working in London as a 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 under 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 came 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 procedure. If a bank or high-tech industry wants to recruit new staff, they will consider the needs of the whole family, who are 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#6, age 36, sales manager) and Samuel (HKY#9, age 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 UK 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 has 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 pay very high rent for small space, they found the high monthly rent hard to believe: HKD 15,300 for 600 sq. ft. (equivalent to NTD 60,000 for 17 *ping*),⁵ which is very small for a family by Taiwan’s standard.

Jo 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 ways to do what they like to fulfill their dreams. Unlike most local Hong Kong people, they have never hired any live-in maids, even though she has two children.

5 1 *ping* = 35.58 sq. ft

Her husband Samuel expressed his observations:

Despite the 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 now costs around HKD 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 from Mainland China in just one year.

Samuel shared his observations of other young Taiwanese immigrants as follows:

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. A lot are single and seeking advancement in their careers, particularly in finance. Among the dispatched employees who have children of school age, their wives and children stay back in Taiwan, while the fathers makes weekly or monthly family visits.

As the first author met Jo and Samuel in Taiwan when they came back to visit their parents in late 2014, they revealed their new plans of coming back to Taiwan for work. They explained that their choice of returning to base would enable their children to avoid in the competitive track for education in Hong Kong. Although staying abroad would mean an international education and becoming “global citizens”, their children would also become alienated from family values while growing up, and lose their Taiwanese identity in the long run.

Like other young Taiwanese who went for employment in Hong Kong, Miriam (HKY#6, age 36, sales manager) adapted well in the first three months by learning Cantonese from watching TV, and meeting Hongkongers. She quickly found that *ren qing wei* is hard to find, and time is always calculated in the Hong Kong culture. Two years after her arrival in 2005, she started a Google group “Taiwanese in HK” with several friends for sharing information on Hong Kong and getting together. She used the Chinese adage “strangers from the same homeland” (人不親土親) to apply to Taiwanese who joined the activities she organized, serving as a balance to the tiring, busy and fast Hong Kong life. She would only return to Taiwan if it is due to personal or family needs, or for finding a suitable job.

Type 3: An onward migrant

Albert (HKY#2, age 35, financial analyst) is the only person who fits the term “onward migrant” as in our 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, the US, UK and Singapore. In fact, he e-mailed the first author a questionnaire from Singapore, was interviewed in Hong Kong a year later, and returned to Singapore in the same year. He provided us 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 the US (2000-2001): Study and work; then the UK (2001-2002): Company relocation; then the US (2002-2005): Company relocation from the UK to the 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. 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. His critical observations of Taiwan are:

I am very disappointed with Taiwan: whoever is the president, it would be the same, as politicians are incompetent and short-sighted. Our President is only interested in Mainland China, while 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 NTD 25,000 a month in Taiwan, compared with NTD 40,000 a month in Singapore.

At the end of the interview, Albert helped us think through our research focus. He thought that youth migration is a great topic to be studied, and

“mobile young global talent” is a very relevant term we use for our study. He commented that “one does not see how Taiwan can attract global talents in the short run.”

Type 4: Students

The youngest of our interviewees include two university graduates from Hong Kong, Sebastian (HKY#11) and Olive (HKY#12), and two students, Winston (HKY#19) and Pat (HKY#20), 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 has mastered Mandarin, English and Cantonese well. Regarding her future plans, she said: “My parents encourage me to work in Asia in the 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 in 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.”

Type 5: Reverse migrants

There are two cases in the reverse migration category, each having different mobility patterns. After finishing university in 2006, Antonia (HKY#14, age 35, consultant) went to Hong Kong for the first time to visit her (former) boyfriend. After earning a Master's degree from Taiwan, she later took up studies for a Ph.D. degree in a Hong Kong University. She returned to Taiwan two years ago, while keeping her consulting job in Guangzhou. She is prepared to commute between Taiwan and Mainland China several times a year.

Having many Hong Kongers as clients or friends, her observations of her Taiwanese peers are as follows:

Most young Taiwanese do not assimilate in Hong Kong, but just stay to earn money. Most of them do not speak Cantonese, as they speak English only at the university, or in the banks or firms that they work at. 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 sound friendly and seldom detour.

Kathleen (HKY#17, age 36) showed up to be interviewed as a reverse migrant in Taiwan. After getting two master's degrees in Taiwan and the US, 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 work in a branch office of a leading bank from Hong Kong.

According to Kathleen, not speaking Cantonese in Hong Kong does

not create any communication problems at work, as everyone there speaks 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 with her. Having been back to Taiwan for over one year, she was able to point out the difference between Hong Kong and Taiwan with first-hand experience:

The pay is much higher in Hong Kong, about 2 to 3 times what one would earn in Taiwan. There are many job opportunities, and a headhunter may approach you to offer you a job. 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 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 on 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 “lady first.”

Most of Kathleen’s friends in Hong Kong are from Taiwan, and she misses the hiking trips 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 in Taiwan, and to see her parents more often and enjoy a better quality of life.

This section discusses two major types of migrants, the “trailing spouse” and employed. Like the middle-class married women in Canada (Chiang 2008), the former gave up their careers after migration, and a majority took up part-time work or volunteering (such as SG#3, SG#6,

SG#8, SG#17, and SG#18). Among the 23 employed, 21 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 for 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 or socializing with the local people. Not being able to speak Cantonese does not constitute a problem, nor does it invite discrimination like in the old days in Hong Kong. In fact, speaking proper Mandarin enables them to communicate with Singaporean and Hong Kong people, who have begun to realize the importance of speaking “*Putonghua*,” because of closer relations with Mainland 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 an environment with better *ren qing wei*, 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 countries. Singapore and Hong Kong, the two promising states 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, a young migrant’s outlook on life is transformed, and they 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.

VI. Conclusions

Despite burgeoning literature on transnational migration, much less attention is paid to “passive” movers such as the “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. In this paper, 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 today’s world of globalization, with a 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 study shows that youth migration is a complex phenomenon and their mobility patterns are not easily quantifiable. By using a qualitative method, we identify key issues in an unexplored area of research, and captured both the depth and diversity of youth migration. As most studies of Taiwanese migration follow a “south-north” pattern involving longer distances, the shorter trans-border moves in this study that involve closer ethnic affinity provide a fresh look at migration experiences. The short distance between Taiwan and either Singapore or Hong Kong may 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 a cosmopolitan environment in Singapore and Hong Kong, the potential of attracting some of the young Taiwanese back as reverse migrant is tenable. Getting a better Chinese education for their children, facing less competition to get to schools with good reputations, obtaining good medical services, getting childcare support from parents, and returning to one's comfort zone -- a hospitable environment with a good quality of life -- in Taiwan, have all been part of the decision to stay or leave their host countries or regions. The Taiwanese 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 the driving forces behind both migration and decisions to stay at the destination, or return and reintegrate should be carried out on a larger scale.

Private industries and public universities can capitalize on the impermanent nature of youth migration, and recruit the migrants like head-hunters did in Hong Kong and Singapore. In theory, recruitment across borders (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. Back in 1972, Taiwan was successful in getting many skilled emigrants to 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 remains 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 their global talent pool and ability to attract and retain workers of all nationalities, will continue to be a key factor in their success as world cities in the era of globalization.

Acknowledgements

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. We sincerely thank the interviewees in Hong Kong and Singapore, and various people who introduced them to us for this project. The first author is grateful to National University of Singapore and Hong Kong Baptist University for providing her with research offices and logistical support in 2011 and 2013 respectively. The anonymous reviewers' comments are also deeply appreciated.

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全球青年人才的移動： 以在新加坡與香港的臺灣人為例

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摘要

本文所探討的是工作、求學、或家庭因素遷移到新加坡及香港的臺灣年輕人。以2011-2014年在新加坡、香港及臺灣所進行的40個深度訪談為基礎，進一步獲得對受訪者及當地環境的詳細資訊與深入瞭解。本文首先回顧年輕移民、青年人才、及從臺灣移出的1.5代移民的相關文獻，隨後，本文將新加坡與香港的臺灣年輕人依以下幾個重點分類，並且進行訪談分析：（1）遷移到新加坡或香港的原因、（2）移動類型與移動軌跡、（3）社會與文化適應、（4）返回臺灣的意願。

除了更高的薪資與福利之外，新加坡與香港提供給他們的是一個與全球接軌的國際化環境與個人發展的舞臺。然而，居住在新加坡與香港也有一些缺點，例如：語言、氣候、文化差異、生活成本高、生活品質等。這群臺灣年輕人的流動不僅對新加坡與香港所競逐的全球人才有所貢獻，海外的經驗也有助於他們發展適應不同社會文化環境的能力。

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在這關鍵時刻，臺灣有關招募全球青年人才的政策，仍然處於岌岌可危的情況。我們迫切需要相關政策的制訂，為的是防止接受過良好教育的專業人才離開臺灣，並且透過更完善有效率的政策，吸引這群人才有意願返回臺灣。由於臺灣年輕人在移動上的暫時性質，臺灣政府可以開發這類人力資源，作為競逐全球人才的一種策略，並且作為人口政策與社會轉型的重要一環。

關鍵詞：全球青年人才、年輕移民、再遷移、新加坡、香港