



Asia Program

SPECIAL REPORT

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Greater China?

Migration and Chinese Transnational Communities

EDITED BY BRYCE WAKEFIELD

ABSTRACT This Special Report examines the history, structure, and dynamics of Chinese transnational communities. **Philip A. Kuhn** provides an overview of migration from China from the 16th century. **Sara L. Friedman** examines marriages between Taiwanese and mainland Chinese spouses in the context of Taiwanese immigration regulations and national identity. **Vanessa L. Fong** presents the results of research on the motivations and expectations of Chinese students who choose to study in developed nations. And **Kenneth J. Guest** shows how New York has become a hub for Chinese immigrants traveling across the United States for work.

INTRODUCTION

BRYCE WAKEFIELD

Significant Chinese migration has occurred in waves over the centuries, and substantial ethnic Chinese communities have long been established outside of China, particularly in areas bordering the Pacific. However, Chinese international migration has increased dramatically in recent decades, following the liberalization of emigration laws in the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the late 1980s. Now, more Chinese are travelling abroad than ever before, with the intention of making new homes at their target destinations. There are currently some 30 million ethnic Chinese living outside of China, more than one-half of this number having left since restrictions on emigration were relaxed.

The sheer volume of new migrants has impacted significantly on long-standing Chinese communi-

ties in other nations, as well as on the way in which other residents view these communities. In the mainstream media of their new home countries, Chinese migrant groups are sometimes depicted as "foreign" and potentially dangerous elements of society, or a problem to be solved. Prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, for example, rallies organized by ethnic Chinese communities generated ample press coverage, by no means completely positive. Reports from North America, Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand focused on acts of intimidation and open violence between pro-China forces and pro-Tibet protesters and human rights campaigners.¹ Indeed, news stories dealing with Chinese transnational communities in these countries commonly focus on illegal immigration or other forms of crime, ethnic tension, and labor issues.²

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While mainstream narratives about Chinese migrants in the societies where they choose to live are not always negative, they still often fail to present fully the views of the migrants themselves. To explore the phenomenon of Chinese migration more deeply, the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars organized a conference on April 14, 2010, co-hosted by the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States. Versions of the papers in this Special Report were originally presented at that event. Two contributions examine the historical factors which have affected Chinese migration patterns, as well as the reasons why Chinese find the prospect of living in other nations attractive, and whether their experiences abroad meet their expectations. Two other essays focus on the experiences of particular Chinese migrant groups—mainland Chinese spouses in Taiwan, and Chinese who move to the United States seeking employment—and the effects these groups have had on economic and social arrangements in their new homes.

As **Philip A. Kuhn**, Francis Lee Higginson Professor of History and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and professor emeritus at Harvard University, notes in his historical overview of Chinese migration, land shortage encouraged members of large Chinese families to seek work outside of traditionally agricultural areas as early as the 16th century. There were no formal restrictions on emigration, but because the Chinese authorities viewed emigrants with suspicion, reentry into China was not permitted until 1754. The arrival of Western imperial powers in Asia encouraged emigration by creating jobs in colonial bureaucracies unattractive to Europeans due to heat, disease, and other averse conditions. However, after 1945, Chinese communities in Southeast Asia faced the

prospect of having to reintegrate into newly independent nations where they no longer had colonial sponsors. This was easier in some nations than others. At the same time, emigration demographics in the homeland changed, as more professional and educated Chinese began to seek employment and education in the United States and Western Europe. While initially the PRC maintained strict controls on overseas travel, the increase in Chinese migration to the West accelerated after the relaxation of Chinese immigration laws mentioned above.

Increased Chinese migration has raised several social issues even in Taiwan, where no language barrier exists for most immigrants, and which the PRC considers its own territory. **Sara L. Friedman**, a recent Wilson Center Fellow and associate professor of anthropology at Indiana University, examines marriages between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese, which made up roughly 20 percent of marriages registered in Taiwan in 2003, and 10 percent in 2009. Contrary to popular assumptions, both Taiwanese whose ancestors have lived in Taiwan for centuries and those who fled to Taiwan at the time of the 1949 communist revolution on the mainland, are significantly represented in the overall number of cross-Strait marriages. Because the Taiwanese government does not recognize spouses from the PRC as either “foreigners” or “citizens,” however, those spouses encounter an immigration regime that treats them differently from all other categories of foreign spouses. Friedman argues that this “tiered immigration structure” replicates and reinforces Taiwan’s own second-class status on the global stage. For example, many mainland spouses who never feel at home in Taiwan turn their thoughts to leaving the island in search of greater opportunity and happiness in the United States and elsewhere.

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Greater opportunities also drive many Chinese to emigrate straight from the mainland to non-Chinese speaking nations. In 1998, **Vanessa L. Fong**, associate professor of education at Harvard University, began a longitudinal study of 2,273 middle class Chinese students. In her essay, which reviews the results of this study, Fong stresses that she never expected many of her subjects to migrate to other countries, but 225 of the 1084 students with whom she remained in touch had spent time living overseas by 2010. Fong finds that the promise of lifestyle improvements is the main reason why Chinese students travel overseas, and visa regulations appear to be the most important factor in their choice of destination. Thirty-eight percent of Fong's sample of transnational students went to Japan, where flexible regulations allow foreigners on student visas to work. Relatively loose visa regulations also made Ireland (14 percent) a popular choice among the transnational students she followed. While the PRC may have relaxed its restrictions on emigration, immigration regulation elsewhere still has a profound effect on the direction Chinese migrants choose to take.

Nevertheless, according to **Kenneth J. Guest**, associate professor of sociology in Baruch College at the City University of New York, a large number of Chinese migrants attempt to circumvent legal restrictions altogether. Many new Chinese immigrants to the United States, for example, pay exorbitant sums to get there. New York is often the first stop, and the standard rate for the "snakeheads" who smuggle Chinese immigrants into the city is around U.S. \$70,000. However, New York is no longer simply a gateway city or a final destination in its own right; it has transformed into the hub of a network of tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants who travel back and forth across the United States to work in low paid jobs, often in Chinese restaurants. With its numerous remittance offices, immigration lawyers, job boards, employment consultants, wedding salons, temples, stores specializing in both fake and legitimate legal documents, and gambling parlors, New York's East Broadway neighborhood, in particular, reflects the complex array of economic activity that caters to Chinese immigrants travelling within the United States.

The essays presented here demonstrate that experiences within Chinese transnational com-

munities, as well as the effects that these communities have on their broader social setting in their lands of settlement, are complex and diverse, differing across time and by geographical location. Colonization, de-colonization, discrimination, and market forces have interacted in ways that have created unique experiences for a wide number of different Chinese migrants. With China's economic expansion meaning that events in Beijing are ever more on the minds of policymakers, journalists, and academics outside of China, overseas Chinese communities are sometimes depicted in local reports as an extension of Beijing's reach. However, to a large extent the essays presented here serve to question simplistic notions of a "Greater China" formed by overseas migrants.

ENDNOTES

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- ² Stephan Caesar, "In Arizona, a Stream of Illegal Immigrants from China," *New York Times*, January 22, 2010, available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/23/us/23smuggle.html>; Fernanda Santos, "A Queens Development Raises Ethnic Tensions," *New York Times*, July 14, 2010, available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/15/nyregion/15flushing.html>; Philip Brator, "Japan welcomes students, but you might end up majoring in crime," *Japan Times*, May 2, 2004, available from <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fd20040502pb.html>; *Toronto Star*, "Exploited Immigrants," July 26, 2010, available from <http://www.thestar.com/article/839580--exploited-immigrants>.

CHINESE MIGRATION HISTORY SINCE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

PHILIP A. KUHN

ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Numerically, Chinese migration overseas has always been a small fraction of domestic migration. Ecological conditions have been the primary incentive for migration at home and abroad. Diminishing arable land per capita was already a serious problem for millions of farmers by the sixteenth century, which also was marked by the arrival, in East Asia, of European colonialism.

Chinese migration, whether domestic or foreign, depends on the structure and resources of the “estate family” (*jia*), into which all wealth flows, and of which all are stakeholders, however far away they be, and for whatever length of time. The *jia* amounts to a “spatially extended family”—a mechanism for spreading labor power efficiently over as much territory as possible. For interior provinces, that “territory” was new land brought under cultivation, or non-agricultural work at some distance from the home base, which Chinese generally sought to preserve in place. For coastal provinces, particularly Fujian in the southeast and Guangdong in the south, spreading labor power meant going to sea as merchants, fishermen, or pirates.

The *jia* as a fundamental component of domestic and overseas migration is the home-end of a cultural corridor which connects the family base with money-earners far away. The maintenance of the corridor is a prerequisite to successful economic survival or expansion for the family. It serves as a remittance channel, as well as a route for chain migration. A migrant in place, whether overseas or in China, is the vital connection for a continued culture of outmigration.

In Guangdong and Fujian, the *jia* was commonly part of a lineage corporation which had

the power and resources to consolidate the wealth of a considerable number of households. Lineage corporations were active in the financing of mari-


Chinese migration, depends on the structure and resources of the “estate family” (*jia*), into which all wealth flows.

time ventures of all sorts, including emigration to Southeast Asia during pre-modern times.

MIGRATION AND THE CHINESE STATE

The Chinese state, including the Ming and Qing dynastic empires, which lasted from 1368 to 1911, never specifically banned emigration. In fact the first outright ban on emigration was that of the Maoist regime from the 1950s to the 1970s. Incidentally, there is no word for “emigration” in Chinese. The concept of leaving home with no intent of coming back (the literal meaning of emigration in English) was unimaginable in pre-modern China, and scarce enough today. What out-migrants thought they were doing, and which was successful up to a point, was “sojourning”—staying for a while overseas making money. What the empire feared was that Chinese might go abroad to trade and become mixed up in anti-dynastic plots of foreign regimes. Hence private trading was forbidden for a time in the early Ming, and allowed

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only intermittently thereafter. Trade was to be the province of “tribute missions” from foreign states, acknowledging China’s suzerainty in the Southeast Asian region. This all began to change by the mid-

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fifteenth century, as powerful local interests in the maritime provinces asserted their strength.

The difficulty was overcome by 1567, when the ban against private trading was repealed by the Ming court, at the instance of the “Maritime Interest” in the coastal provinces. Later, more decisive imperial moves took place in 1683, and again in 1754, when the Maritime Interest persuaded Beijing to repeal all limitations on Chinese going abroad and staying as long as they wished. That pragmatism prevailed over security fears marked a notable milestone in China’s relations with the outer world.

Overseas trade in the early modern period—indeed, until the early 19th century—was highly profitable, and remained largely in China’s favor. This meant that Chinese luxury goods (porcelains, silks) could be traded overseas in entrepôts such as Manila, from the late 1500s a Spanish colony, for silver, which then nourished a thriving market economy in the southern provinces. Inasmuch as taxes were to be paid in silver, the “Manila galleon trade” was recognized by the Chinese state as an essential element of the economy.

The Southeast Asia trade was also valuable to the colonialists. As it turned out, they found Chinese merchants ideal partners in sustaining the colonial fisc, since taxation of the indigenous population was beyond the power of a small foreign directorate, that is, the colonial government, to operate profitably. Chinese merchants were therefore incorporated into the colonial systems in the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch territories


(Philippines, Malacca, and Batavia respectively—the Dutch also ruled Malacca, having wrested it from Portuguese hands). All these colonial capitals depended on Chinese fiscal administration and, just as important, on the city-building and artisanal skills that Chinese immigrants brought with them.

The late Qing period, beginning in the 1880s, began to bring overseas Chinese merchants into the mainstream of world commerce. In 1893, the emperor issued yet another reassurance that Chinese overseas could, without fear of retribution, return home, no matter how long they had been away. In 1909, all Chinese overseas were classed as “Chinese citizens,” as long as they had Chinese fathers. This turned out to be a mixed blessing for the overseas Chinese, who had trouble convincing their colonial masters that their primary loyalties were directed not at their homeland, but at their adopted lands.

IMPERIALISM AND MASS MIGRATION

Both China and Great Britain expanded their overseas initiatives in the mid-18th century, as China’s commercial energies were encouraged by the new imperial policy toward migration and trade—and Britain’s by the early stages of the Industrial Revolution. In 1786, the British secured the island of Penang, off the northwest coast of the Malay peninsula, and in 1819, Singapore. To both these “free ports” Chinese shippers and workers flocked, and both islands became heavily Chinese in population by the mid-19th century. Meanwhile opium from plantations in northeast India became coin of the realm in Southeast Asia and the China coast.

Disputes over the opium trade led to war in 1839, and a British-led Indian force fought its way up the Yangzi River to Nanjing, where the first of the “unequal treaties” was signed. One provision of those treaties (there soon were many of them) gave foreigners immunity from prosecution by Chinese courts. This gave Westerners the power to recruit laborers from south Chinese harbors, whether by force or fraud, which resulted in a lively trade in “coolie” laborers. The need for additional work-



ers worldwide resulted from the effective end of African slavery (at British insistence) by the 1830s.

The advent of steamships on Pacific waters also enhanced migration, to the underpopulated “settler societies” in North America and Australasia, where gold was discovered in the mid-19th century, attracting many Chinese diggers, alongside other nationalities. Chinese were not well treated by these settler societies and ended up blocked from further entry by rigorous exclusion laws. In the U.S., the first of a string of draconian laws was passed in 1882. Thereafter, Chinese “working class” migrants were singled out as particularly oppressed. Besides rejection at the very gates of the country, those already in the country were denied the right to own land, were hounded out of most manufacturing jobs, and had to cluster together in “Chinatowns” for their physical safety. Chinese women in particular were not welcome, so those Chinese who were able to stay in North America lived in bachelor-like isolation, though most of them had wives back in China.

The plight of Chinese in North America was largely due to the lack of white patrons. In Southeast Asia the colonial governments favored wealthy Chinese as tax farmers, according them, along with their families and clients, second class citizenship (under the Europeans, but above the indigenes). In the United States and Canada, save for the railroad contractors, who hired large numbers of Chinese to clear roadbeds and lay tracks in the western states, nobody took up the Chinese cause as just and necessary. Naturalization was of course completely out of the question—an ironic twist to the Chinese rationale for wanting to immigrate: not to become citizens, but to work for a time and send remittances home.

WAR, POST-COLONIALISM, AND THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

The situation in Southeast Asia became much less favorable to Chinese starting with the Japanese military conquest in 1942. Japan’s rise to a short-lived military supremacy in Asia smashed the mystique of the European colonial regimes. No longer was


it seen as inevitable that European domination was the natural order of things, and that Chinese would always have their patrons to shield them from harm

Throughout Southeast Asia,
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in return for services rendered. With the defeat of Japan, the independence of the indigenous peoples was not long in coming. Independent “new nations” (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, the nations of Indochina) followed, sometimes with dire consequences to the Chinese minorities. How were they now to find a secure place in the societies and economies of “new nations” where they had gained so much power and wealth, and irritated so many natives, in the past?

Throughout Southeast Asia, the Chinese minorities found themselves the targets of scapegoating, violence, and discrimination. Such mistreatment occurred in all Asian states save Thailand, which continued to regard Chinese as Thai citizens. Nor were their prospects much better back in China. The Great Depression had already induced hundreds of thousands of Chinese overseas to turn back to China in a massive reverse flow. The hostility of the new Marxist government in China put a stop to the remittances coming in from overseas Chinese, and treated their home-side relatives with considerable cruelty.

Postcolonial life for the Chinese required that they find a *modus vivendi* with the majority populations, which meant doing their best to remain successful in business, even when they could no longer serve as tax-farmers. Different “new nations” had different ways of responding. Generally speaking, they were unwilling to force the Chinese out, inasmuch as it was through Chinese capital and Chinese business experience that they were going to keep their economies going. Indonesia reached some-



thing of a compromise with the minority Chinese (about 3 percent of the population): an elite group of Indonesian military officers collaborated with a cohort of Chinese businessmen, bringing them under their patronage, and making money as silent partners in Chinese enterprises (the “Ali-baba” or Cucong system, in which Chinese put up the capital and received political cover from their corrupt Indonesian patrons). Chinese culture was suppressed, however, with no Chinese-medium schools allowed to operate. The rank-and-file Chinese were kept in constant terror of physical

A changing world scene following the Second World War heralded a new wave of Chinese migration in North America and Europe.

attacks, which did indeed break out from time to time, killing hundreds of ordinary Chinese.

Malaya, once free from British rule, offered a different case study of Chinese survival as a viable minority. Although a “New Economic Policy” was initiated by the new Malay leadership with a goal of 30 percent of capital equity to be in Malay hands by 1990, the Chinese found ways of keeping their economic dominance safe from in-country quotas. Rich Chinese businessmen diversified their holdings, investing some capital outside the country, and bringing prominent Malays into their boards of directors—a modified Ali-baba system. Culturally, the Malayan (now “Malaysian”) Chinese fought to maintain their Chinese-medium school system in the face of ethnic Malays’ pressure to assimilate to the majority language. In the end, Chinese culture was preserved in Malaysia on the basis of a purely private school system to educate Chinese children. Of course, independent Malaysia could never have gone the way of Indonesia in persecuting and exploiting their Chinese minority. The reason was in numbers: as against the 3 percent of Chinese in


the Indonesian population, Malaysia had 25 percent—a minority people too numerous and too economically productive to force out. Even the expulsion of Singapore in 1965 did not alter the population decisively in favor of ethnic Malays.

Thailand had never been conquered by Europeans, hence the Thai population never developed the kind of humiliated self-denigration that could give rise to anti-Chinese feelings. Ethnicity *per se* was never a primary desideratum for the Thais, who accepted Chinese immigrants as legalized citizens, intermarried with them, and invited them to partake of their (Hinayana) form of Buddhism. Chinese were therefore able to succeed in business ventures without igniting Thai resentment. Most Chinese in Thailand now feel themselves accepted by their host culture—even if they retain command of a Chinese dialect for chatting informally at home.

THE NEW MIGRATION

A changing world scene following the Second World War heralded a new wave of Chinese migration in North America and Europe. In the settler societies, exclusion was on the way out. In 1943, the United States repealed the exclusion laws, though considerable barriers remained in place until decades later. The 1960s saw the end of exclusion in all the settler societies. Both there and in Europe, the welcome mat was gingerly extended to Chinese and other Asians, though mass migration was not immediately indulged. The types of emigrants that came under these new conditions differed substantially from the rural, poorer educated manual laborers of earlier migration waves. Starting in the 1960s, some of the most advanced sectors of China were sending highly educated people abroad.

Then in the late 1970s came the death of Mao, the abandonment of Maoism, and the advent of a wholly new view of China’s world connections—including particularly looking once again to the Chinese overseas as possible investors in China’s march toward modernization.



With the abandonment of the commune system, the internal roads of China were thronged by Chinese farmers who could not support themselves on their old household acreage and were forced to roam as a “floating population” far afield to seek livelihood. Some of this mobile population (estimated at between 80 and 100 million nationwide) were able to get jobs in newly opened industrial plants on the coast, such as at Shenzhen in Guangdong, an industrial city started virtually from scratch, largely by foreign investment, most of it from overseas Chinese. In the interior, whole villages were depopulated, as people flocked to find markets for their labor, or sought to join relatives in Europe or America by illegal immigration. Liberalizing the rules for the commercial economy led to new experiments in marketing among the common people. Some 60,000 people from the area of Wenzhou, a city in Zhejiang, migrated in successive waves to Beijing, where they set up in the national capital a self-contained residential and industrial area that came to be called “Zhejiang Village.” Their specialties were low-end garments, for which they became virtually monopoly suppliers for North China, and even into the Russian territory outside the international boundary. Space does not permit a full account of how this movement got started, protected itself against attack from the Beijing police, and became a model for energetic and aggressive production and marketing, all resting on the nuclear family as primary producers.

Economic strategy in post-Mao China came in fact to depend on in-country migration (for the labor force) and overseas Chinese (for investments). The centers for both migration and investment were the coastal cities designated (by the new Deng Xiaoping leadership) as “Special Economic Zones.” Dependent upon waves of poor migrants from the interior provinces to serve as the industrial workforce, modern factories sprang up to take advantage of Deng-ist ideological support. These Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along the coast were, in effect, “frontier enclaves” where the Chinese government, spurred by Deng Xiaoping’s vision of a strong, modernized China, allowed Chinese and foreigners to do business together, free of bureau-

cratic obstructionism and rent-seeking. These “foreign enclaves” can be visualized as successors to the “Treaty Ports,” but under new (Chinese) management. Peering back further in time, they were the remote descendants of the foreign colonial ports (Manila, Batavia, Malacca, Singapore) where overseas Chinese had in fact operated as trading partners of colonialists since the sixteenth century.

CHINESE MIGRATION IN PERSPECTIVE

By the turn of the second millenium, Chinese migration had apparently succeeded in resuscitating the Chinese economy, which had nearly strangled in its own ideological trappings during the early years of the PRC. The enserfment of the Chinese farmer in his collective unit, the almost complete dismemberment of the system of by-employments that those farmers had devised in late imperial times to make up for an agricultural shortfall due to overpopulation, and the squeezing of the rural populace to provide cheap grain to feed the urban workforce: all these policies had been abandoned. From the 1980s onward, free markets were back again in most farm communities. The Chinese farmer was once again free to seek by-employments to make up the difference between what his scanty plot would provide and the food needs of his family.

By-employments, however, were not a sufficient answer for the twenty-first century Chinese family. For many of those 50 percent of farm workers who were not needed on farms, the answer was long-distance migration. Those who could not find jobs in the coastal factories could try their luck overseas, and many a poor Fujianese or Guangdongese family sent their work-age children abroad, most likely illegally. Migration, whether domestic or foreign, had indeed become not merely a possible solution to an economy of scarcity, but for many families the only solution.

MARRIAGE MIGRATION ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

SARA L. FRIEDMAN

Marriages between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese do not make big headlines in the United States or even in China, but they do in Taiwan.¹ In 2003, one in five marriages registered in Taiwan involved a mainland Chinese spouse; by 2009 that figure was holding steady at roughly one in ten marriages. Given the contested nature of relations across the Strait, the influx of several hundred thousand mainland Chinese, mostly women, has provoked considerable debate in Taiwan about how best to integrate these women and their “foreign” (Southeast Asian) counterparts. Although the number of marriages with mainland Chinese and foreign spouses has declined over the past few years, cross-border

Historically, migration from the mainland to Taiwan was viewed as internal movement to a frontier or border region.

unions continue to transform Taiwan from an immigrant-sending society to an immigration destination in its own right.

In this article I examine cross-Strait marriages through two related lenses. First, I ask how marital migration across the Strait relates to other contemporary forms of marital outmigration from the mainland as well as to broader Chinese migration patterns both domestic and international. Second, I show how cross-Strait unions have been shaped by contentious mainland-Taiwan ties and Taiwan’s uncertain standing in the international commu-

nity. Because mainland spouses in Taiwan come to stand in for the state of cross-Strait relations more generally, they are treated differently from all other marital immigrants, thereby creating a tiered immigration and citizenship structure that replicates and, one might argue, reinforces Taiwan’s own second-class status on the global stage.

Historically, migration from the mainland to Taiwan was viewed as internal movement to a frontier or border region, and most migrants hailed from Fujian and Guangdong on China’s southeast coast (Kuhn 2008). This picture changed when the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang*, or KMT) retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after being defeated in China’s Civil War, bringing with it soldiers and civilians from all over China. This group came to constitute what are termed in Taiwan, “mainlanders” (*waishengren*), in contrast to the more long-standing Chinese population of Taiwanese (*benshengren*, both Hoklo and Hakka) whose roots on the island date as far back as the 17th century. Contrary to popular assumptions, it is not only mainlanders or their descendants who are marrying mainland Chinese today, but considerable numbers of Taiwanese as well.

The recent wave of cross-Strait marriages began in 1987 with the renewal of ties across the Strait and the opening up of travel from Taiwan to the mainland. Cross-Strait unions build on a growing trend of domestic migration to China’s inland cities and coastal areas, as well as reform-era changes in marriage and family practices that have led to rising divorce rates and changing marital expectations across the country. Cross-Strait marital migration also resembles other Chinese migration trajectories in that it is generally not imagined as a finite path from home to destination, but as the ability to maintain and even enhance ties across the Strait

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and, in some cases, to enable subsequent migratory circuits beyond the region (Chu forthcoming; Kuhn 2008).

A brief encounter that took place during my 2007–08 fieldwork in Taiwan sheds light on some of these linkages and shared migration histories.

I had met Zhao Cuiping [a pseudonym] at the offices of a Taipei NGO that provides services and classes for mainland spouses. We spent a fall afternoon in 2007 wandering through the botanical garden that abutted an art museum when, tired from the heat, we decided to rest in a small pavilion conveniently decorated with a stone table and chairs. Zhao had been telling me about her past life in a major city in China's interior and how she had come to marry her elderly veteran husband, a former resident of the city who was nearly thirty years her senior. Born in 1960, Zhao had graduated from high school and then worked for many years in a state metallurgy company before resigning in the late nineties to start her own tailoring business. Her first marriage ended after her husband had an affair, and her 23-year-old daughter was now studying for a Ph.D. in the United States. Zhao met her second husband in their shared hometown in China where he had recently purchased an apartment. She assumed they would reside there after marrying in 2004. But conflicts with her husband's brother and his family soon intensified, and her husband decided that they should move back to Taiwan. As a result, Zhao found herself living in one of Taipei's poorest districts and spending most of her time caring for her husband. She occasionally worked as a janitor on the weekends, but her husband resisted any suggestion that she take on full-time employment. As a result, they got by on the meager monthly stipend he received from the Veterans Affairs Commission, and she confessed to feeling guilty and anxious about her inability to support her daughter during her studies.

As we continued chatting in the pavilion, an older, well-dressed gentleman approached us and struck up a conversation with me in stilted English. He explained that he had lived in Canada for six years after emigrating there with his daughter, who had married a very wealthy man in Taiwan. As the conversation quickly moved beyond his English ability, he switched to Mandarin and Zhao invited him to join us. Intrigued by Zhao's accent, he told us that he was originally from Shandong province and had come to Taiwan when his high school picked up and moved across the Strait in 1949. After gradu-

ation he passed the air force examination, enabling him to enter elite military service. He had married another mainland woman fifteen years his junior and they had three children.

Although this man's life trajectory resembled in certain ways that of Zhao's husband, critical distinctions led to very different fates by that fall afternoon. This man had come to Taiwan as a student and had obviously done very well for himself in the air force, enough so that he could marry another mainland woman and build a family in Taiwan. Zhao's husband, by contrast, had arrived as a poor soldier and had never married until he met Zhao decades later. Whereas this man now claimed both Taiwanese and Canadian citizenship (the latter thanks to his wealthy son-in-law), Zhao faced another four or five years before she would be eligible for Taiwanese citizenship, and she was far from certain she wanted it. Nor could

Who moves and who does not depends in large part on the education and employment status of both spouses, together with where and how they first met one another.

she imagine spending the rest of her life in Taiwan, especially once her husband died. Ironically, in this way Zhao and the elderly gentleman faced similar citizenship dilemmas, although neither recognized it at the time. After confirming that Zhao was not yet a citizen, he turned to me and explained, "they [Chinese spouses] want to get Taiwan citizenship. At that time [referring to the late 1940s and early 1950s], we didn't." Regardless of whether Zhao in the end seeks Taiwan citizenship, she might very well, as she later confessed to me, move to live with her daughter, wherever the latter settles down. Despite the parallels and divergences in their expe-

riences in Taiwan, what Zhao and this man might share in the end is not merely long-term residence in Taiwan and past histories in the mainland, but also a portion of their lives spent further abroad in North America.

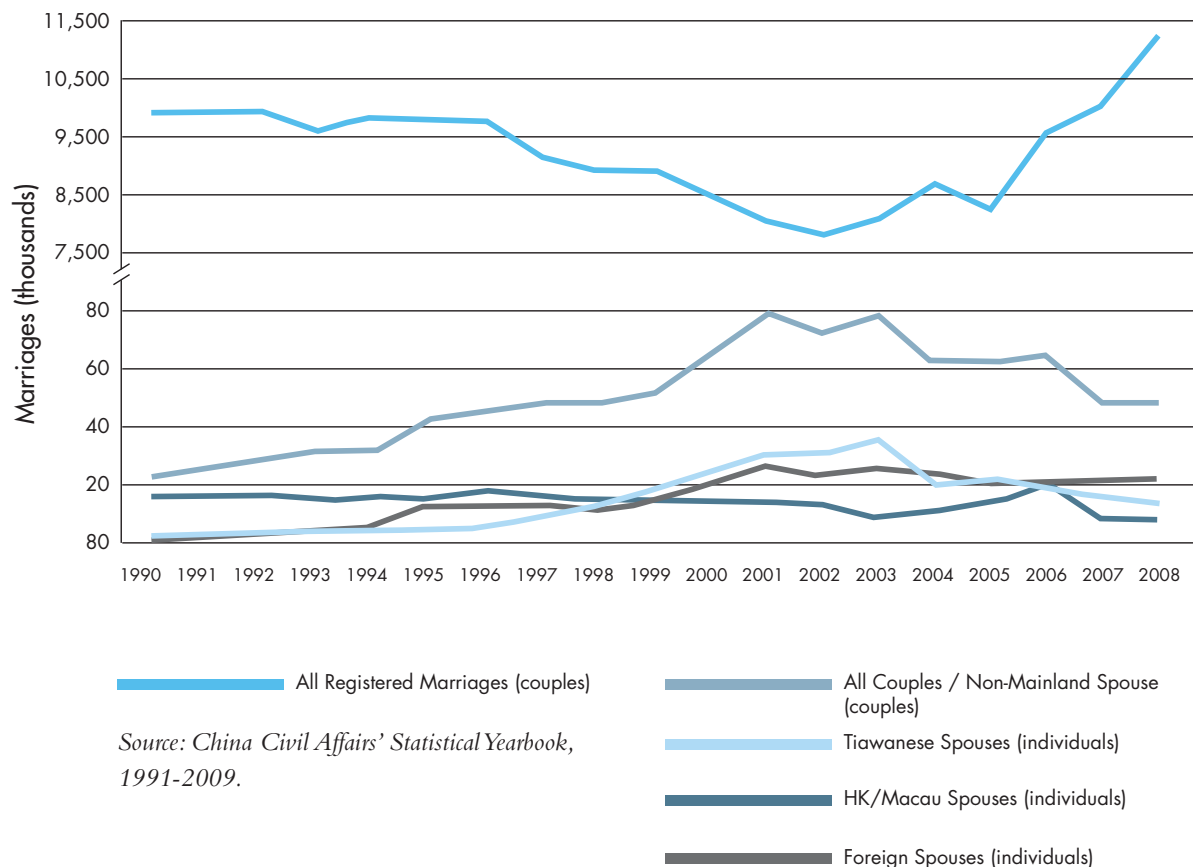
MARITAL MIGRATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE


Cross-Strait marriages are part of a larger marital landscape in China that includes a growing number of unions across vast geographical distances within the mainland, marriages with Hong Kong and Macau residents, and unions with foreigners, co-ethnics, and overseas Chinese (Constable 2003; Fan and Huang 1998; Farrer 2008; Freeman 2005; Newendorp 2008; Schein 2005). In the 1980s and

1990s, marriage with a non-mainland Chinese was seen as one of the major means to gain access to modern lifestyles and mobility beyond China proper. This vision has changed for some in the 2000s, as growing numbers of more elite couples choose to reside in China because of work opportunities and improved standards of living (Farrer 2008). Who moves and who does not depends in large part on the education and employment status of both spouses, together with where and how they first met one another.

Statistically speaking, unions with non-mainland Chinese have not been terribly significant in post-Mao China, accounting for no more than one percent of all annual registered marriages since 1990 (see Figure 1). In the early market reform era, marriages with Hong Kong and Macau residents

MARRIAGES IN CHINA, 1990-2008





dominated marital outmigration flows, a product of geographical proximity and the rapid development of special economic zones along China's southern coast. But these unions also came with a price, because they required long waiting periods of ten years on average before the mainland spouse received a permit from the government of the People's Republic of China to move to Hong Kong (Newendorp 2008). By the mid-1990s, marriages with foreigners (non-ethnic Chinese) increased dramatically, including couples who met in China proper and those who formed relationships via the Internet. Both groups were soon overtaken by cross-Strait unions, however, a trend that continued until 2004-05 when marriages with a Taiwanese declined and unions with foreigners remained constant. The impact of cross-Strait marriages on general patterns of marital outmigration from China was most apparent in 2003-04 when a dramatic drop in cross-Strait marriages following Taiwan's implementation of a border interview system generated a parallel decline in overall marital outmigration.

Who are cross-Strait couples?

Initially many cross-Strait couples looked very much like Zhao Cuiping and her husband. By the 1990s, however, marriages had begun to spread beyond elderly veterans in Taiwan and middle-aged divorced or widowed women in China to encompass other sectors of the population. Framed most broadly, there are three major types of cross-Strait unions: in addition to veterans' marriages, there are those involving younger and middle-aged Taiwanese men of working-class and middle-class status who marry young-to-middle-aged Chinese women from diverse backgrounds, and younger couples of similar ages who share educational and/or employment backgrounds. These are not absolute categories and individual cases might include features from different types. But they do provide a broad-strokes picture of the face of cross-Strait marriages and how they have changed over time.


After ties between Taiwan and China resumed in 1987, an initial group of travelers to the mainland were veterans who had come to Taiwan as rank and file members of the KMT army in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Most were unmarried when

they arrived in Taiwan as young men and regulations in place through the early 1950s prohibited them from marrying while they remained in the military. Even when the official "marriage ban" was lifted, their low salaries and physical separation from civilian communities made it extremely difficult for them to find wives among the local population. Once they left military service, moreover, men like Zhao's husband faced limited marriage prospects as poor, minimally educated mainlanders with no family in Taiwan to vouch for them. Some were able to form unions (formal or otherwise) with local or aboriginal women, but by the final decades of the twentieth century, many found themselves single and facing old age without any-

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one to care for them. When travel from Taiwan to China became possible in 1987, these men jumped at the opportunity to visit family members in their home communities and, in the process, looked for wives willing to return to Taiwan and care for them as they aged. With Taiwan's 1992 passage of the first set of comprehensive policies regulating relations between mainland Chinese and Taiwan, the government opened a channel for mainland spouses to apply for entry to Taiwan.

Women such as Zhao Cuiping who marry veterans tend to be divorced or widowed in China and have teenage or adult children from their previous marriage. They come from veterans' home provinces, such as Hunan, Sichuan, Zhejiang, Henan, Guangdong, Jiangsu, or Hubei, and some from the same communities as veterans' families. These are women who generally came of age prior to or dur-



ing the Cultural Revolution and, as a result, many had their educations cut short by political upheaval. Although some who hail from the countryside previously engaged in agricultural labor, most worked in state-owned or collective enterprises in urban or peri-urban areas. With market reforms, they faced looming employment pressures as workplaces restructured or went under altogether, and their age and educational levels put them at a disadvantage in competing with younger workers. Poor remarriage prospects in China combined with perceptions of greater income-earning possibilities in Taiwan to encourage such women to marry older veterans. This was a risky decision in part because they generally had no independent means to confirm veterans' living conditions or income until after arriving in Taiwan, and many found themselves faced with dismal housing situations and tight budgets as they scrimped to get by on veterans' meager support stipends.²

The second major type of cross-Strait union is marriages between working-class or middle-class Taiwanese men disadvantaged on the domestic marriage market and young-to-middle-aged Chinese women from a range of backgrounds. These are men of both mainlander and Taiwanese origins who might have physical disabilities or poor economic prospects, who might be older and never-married, or divorced or widowed and have children who require care. In some cases they have other family members (such as a parent or sibling) who are ill or disabled and need intensive care. These features make it difficult for the men to find wives in Taiwan and instead they turn to China or Southeast Asia. Their Chinese wives range in age and educational/employment background: some are themselves divorced or widowed with children in China, others are marrying for the first time, although often after having passed their prime marriage years. These couples meet through various channels, ranging from formal marriage brokers to introductions from friends and family, to the Internet or fortuitous meetings when the Taiwan spouse travels to China for work or pleasure. The women hail from across China, from urban as well as rural areas, and younger women often meet their spouses after they have already migrated to the coast or an interior city in search of work, thus

linking domestic migration patterns to cross-border marriages.


The final group, growing in number as more Taiwanese seek employment and education in China, are couples close in age and background who often become acquainted through the workplace, schooling, or through living in the same community. Some of these couples remain in China for work opportunities, whereas others relocate to Taiwan—temporarily or permanently—when they have children or because of the Taiwan spouse's employment. Among this group one also finds some Chinese men married to Taiwanese women (although they exist in the previous category as well), as well as couples who met in a third country when abroad for travel or advanced study.

These diverse categories show that the stereotypical image of the mainland wife as someone looking for a better economic life and the Taiwanese husband as poor or otherwise disadvantaged fails to reflect the complex face of cross-Strait marriages. Marriages with veterans have accounted for roughly 10 percent of all cross-Strait marriages and their numbers will inevitably decline together

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with the veteran population. With over one million Taiwanese now resident in China and the imminent opening up of Taiwanese universities to mainland students, cross-Strait marriages involving younger partners with more similar ages and backgrounds are likely to increase in the future.

Furthermore, Chinese spouses describe multiple reasons for marrying Taiwanese—economic motivations being just one of them—that reflect



the dramatic social and political changes that have swept across reform-era China. In addition to “fate” and “love” are age pressures, few remarriage options following a divorce, the desire for a change of environment after a difficult break-up or a business failure, the search for a companion or caretaker, and aspirations for mobility not available within China because of a limited education or geographic disadvantages. These marital motivations may lead women to marry men who are older and possibly less educated, and it is not uncommon for mainland spouses to experience a decline in living standards after moving to Taiwan. Better educated women are also at a disadvantage in the Taiwanese job market where their job experience in the mainland and, at present, degrees above the high school level, are not recognized. That said, many also acknowledge that in Taiwan they have access to greater welfare resources, opportunities for education, and a more modernized infrastructure system than found in much of China.

Several of these features are found in other types of Chinese marital migration as well. Studies of Hong Kong-mainland marriages have found that it is not uncommon for mainland women to complain about older, crowded living environments after they move into public housing complexes populated by extended families (Newendorp 2008). And elite women more likely to marry foreigners may very well choose men with lower educational levels or less prestigious employment than themselves in exchange for a more egalitarian relationship based on shared emotional ties (Constable 2003). Cross-Strait unions stand out, however, for the range of different backgrounds found among spouses from both locales and the restrictions that mainland spouses face after they relocate to Taiwan.

TAIWAN'S IMMIGRATION REGIMES

The most important difference between cross-Strait unions and all other types of marital immigration from China are distinctive policies that regulate mainland spouses after they move to Taiwan. Although the mainland wives of Hong Kong residents may have to wait for upwards of a decade

to receive permission to relocate to Hong Kong, once there they face the same immigration policy requirements as all other immigrant spouses, seven years of residence before receiving permanent resident status.³ And although Chinese marital immigrants to North America may be subjected to more intensive investigations than spouses from other countries when they first apply for entry, once admitted they, too, fall under the same naturalization trajectory as all other foreign spouses.

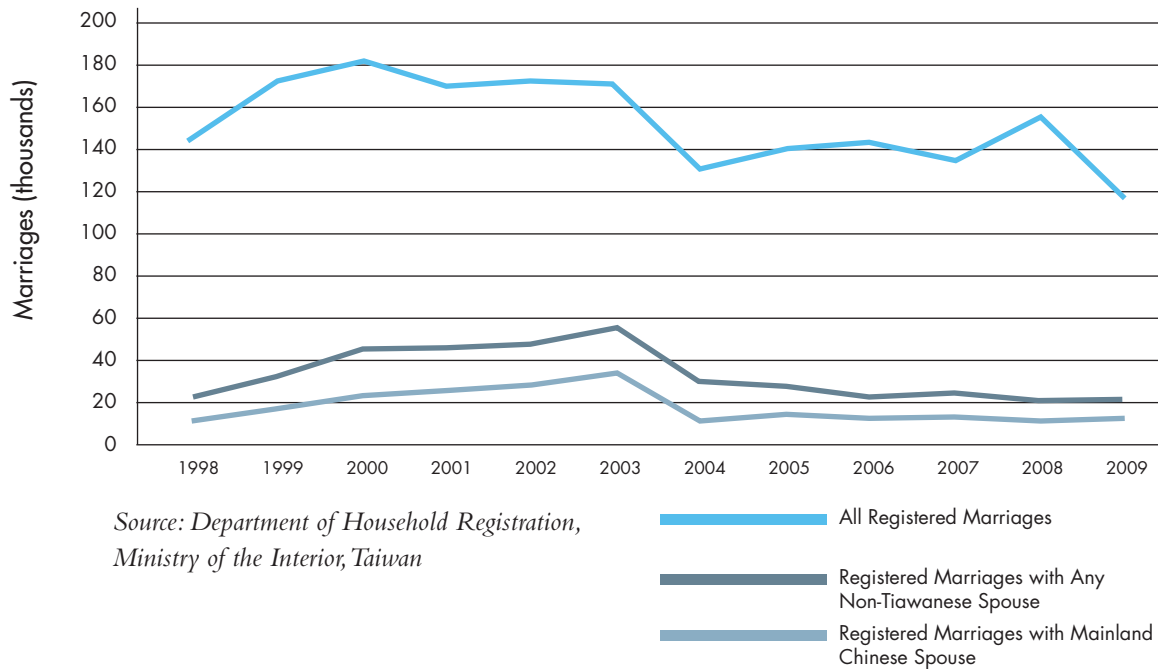
Mainland spouses in Taiwan, however, encounter an immigration regime that treats them differently from all other categories of foreign spouses. This difference arises from the ambiguous status of mainland Chinese in Taiwan as neither foreigners nor citizens; they constitute an in-between, exceptional category that subjects them to different kinds of regulatory practices, laws, and apparatuses than foreigners. This exceptional status is a function of

Studies of Hong Kong-mainland marriages have found that it is not uncommon for mainland women to complain about older, crowded living environments after they move into public housing complexes populated by extended families.

longstanding contentious ties across the Strait that translate into official and societal concerns about mainland spouses' marital motives and their ability to integrate fully into Taiwanese society.

Whereas in mainland China, marital outmigration accounts for such a small percentage of all mar-


MARRIAGES IN TAIWAN, 1998-2009



riages as to attract little governmental attention, in Taiwan the situation is precisely the opposite. Cross-Strait unions (and cross-border marriages more generally) play a much more significant role demographically, socially, and politically. Cross-border marriages in Taiwan rose from roughly 16 percent of all registered marriages in 1998 to a high of 32 percent in 2003, meaning that one in three marriages that year involved a non-Taiwanese spouse (see Figure 2). That proportion has declined since 2003, ranging from 14 percent to 20 percent over the past five years, still roughly one in five to seven marriages. Furthermore, cross-Strait unions represent 50–60 percent of all cross-border marriages and in 2003 they accounted for 20 percent of all registered marriages in Taiwan, a striking figure that has declined since then to roughly one in every ten marriages. These percentages reflect both absolute increases in the numbers of mainland and foreign spouses in Taiwan through 2003–2004, as well as a decline in the total number of registered marriages that began in 2000 and continued throughout the decade. As one might expect, a growing propor-

tion of marital immigrants in Taiwan has aroused concerns about changing demographic profiles in a society that has only recently begun to view itself as an immigration destination and where marriage to a citizen constitutes the only widely available path to naturalized citizenship.

In Taiwan, women marrying in from China resolve some of the problems generated by low domestic marriage rates and declining fertility among local women. Together with their Southeast Asian counterparts, Chinese wives enable men who might otherwise not marry to form families, although not all Chinese marry disadvantaged men. And because younger Chinese women tend to have children, although rarely more than two, they also help offset the low number of births among local women. With Taiwan's total fertility rate at a historic and worldwide low of 1.0 children per woman (Population Reference Bureau 2009), children born to Chinese and Southeast Asian women constitute an ever greater proportion of the population. According to a population white paper, by 2003–2004, roughly 13.5 percent of all births in



Taiwan were to a “foreign” mother, a figure that declined only slightly in the subsequent two years covered in the report, remaining above 12 percent.⁴ From 2004 until 2009, children born to foreign and Chinese spouses grew from 1.6 percent of primary- and middle-school children to 6.1 percent. By 2009, that meant 1 in every 8.4 children in the first year of primary school had a non-Taiwanese parent, and 1 in 24 had a Chinese parent specifically (Lin and Hu 2010).

Despite their growing presence in the population, when Chinese spouses arrive in Taiwan they face an immigration regime that treats them differently and more stringently than all other types of marital immigrants. This regime emerged gradually from 1992 onward, as the government adjusted policies in the face of the growing number, certainly unexpected, of cross-Strait marriages. The 1992 passage of the Act Governing Relations Between Peoples of the Taiwan Area and the mainland Area (*Taiwan diqu yu dalu diqu renmin guanxi tiaoli*, hereafter the Act) made it possible for Taiwan residents to sponsor spouses, parents, and children left behind in the mainland after 1949 and to bring over spouses married after 1987. The Act became the source for all subsequent policies regulating mainland Chinese, in contrast to foreigners who fell under the Entry/Exit and Immigration Law (*ru chu jing ji yiminfa*, 1999) and its legal predecessors. Prior to January 2007 when Taiwan established a National Immigration Agency, the two populations were also managed and policed by different bureaucratic entities.


This immigration regime has developed in a piecemeal fashion over nearly three decades, but can be divided into roughly four major phases. From 1992–1999, mainland spouses faced a three-stage trajectory to citizenship with movement between the stages determined by quotas and length of time. They first entered on a three-month visa to “visit relatives” (*tan qin*) and after three months were required to leave the country and re-apply for entry. During this period spouses awaited access to residency status (*juli*) which granted the right to work and to reside uninterrupted in Taiwan. Residency status was regulated through a quota system, and the annual quota increased from 240 persons in 1992 to 3600 persons by 1999. After two years of

residency, mainland spouses were eligible for citizenship (*dingju*). In 1999, spouses were allowed to extend their visiting relatives visa for an additional three months before being required to leave, and in 2000, an intermediary “reunion” (*tuanju*) stage was introduced between visiting relatives and residency,

Despite their growing presence in the population, when Chinese spouses arrive in Taiwan they face an immigration regime that treats them differently.

which enabled spouses to remain in Taiwan for a full year. As the number of cross-Strait marriages grew dramatically beginning in 1999, the quota wait for residency became untenable. Hence in 2002 a dual-track system was introduced: spouses whose quota wait had exceeded four years and who had resided legally in Taiwan for two years after marriage were granted residency immediately. By this time, most spouses waited on average eight years before obtaining citizenship rights in Taiwan.

In the fall of 2002, the Mainland Affairs Council and Legislative Yuan began to debate a proposed revision to the Act that centered on the extension of the time to citizenship from eight to eleven years. In the end, the proposed extension to eleven years did not pass, in part because of protests by NGOs and Chinese spouses themselves. The stages of immigration were revised significantly, however, in an amended version of the Act implemented on March 1, 2004. The amended sequence eliminated the visiting relatives stage altogether (thus ending the requirement that Chinese spouses leave every six months during their first two years in Taiwan); instead Chinese spouses were immediately granted reunion (*tuanju*) status. After two years of marriage or once the couple had a child, the spouse could apply for “kin-based residence” (*yi qin juli*) and



after another four years, was eligible for “extended residence” (*changqi juliu*). Only with extended residence did mainland spouses automatically obtain the right to work, although under certain conditions they could apply for a work permit at the kin-based residence stage (these conditions expanded over time to include low income status, a disabled or elderly Taiwan spouse, receipt of a protection order in cases of domestic violence, or having minor children). After two years of extended residence, spouses became eligible for citizenship. Two additional hurdles were added at this final stage: the applicant had to demonstrate personal or familial financial resources sufficient for self-support and the government introduced a quota of 6000 persons per year.⁵

In comparison to the provisions for all other categories of foreign spouses, these regulations were indeed lengthy and complex, creating a bureaucratic apparatus that mainland Chinese and Taiwanese alike found difficult to navigate. Other foreign spouses received residency and work rights immediately upon entry and were eligible for naturalization within four years, as compared to the two to six years mainland spouses waited for legal work rights and the typically eight year time frame to citizenship. The quota added at the naturalization stage also began to create a bottleneck by 2007–08 and wait times extended for as long as a year. This longer time frame to citizenship imposed on mainland spouses increased the possibility that something might go awry prior to naturalization or during the quota wait: a citizen-spouse might die, demand a divorce, withhold financial support, or refuse to sponsor the Chinese spouse for residency status or naturalization. Divorce required the Chinese spouse to leave the country unless she could obtain custody of a minor child, and a citizen-spouse’s death also put an end to legal immigration status, unless the Chinese spouse had already reached the extended residence stage or had minor birth children.⁶

The two issues at the heart of these more stringent regulations were work rights and the ability to obtain Taiwanese citizenship. Government officials justified these bureaucratic obstacles in both pragmatic and political terms. On the one hand, they argued that granting Chinese spouses work rights

earlier in the immigration process would simply exacerbate the problem of “sham” marriages contracted merely for access to financial opportunity and intensify growing unemployment through enabling a flood of workers from the mainland. On the other hand, they portrayed the regulations as necessary both to assuage the concerns of pro-independence legislators and their constituencies and to protect Taiwan from greater encroachment by the mainland. Clearly it would be unwise for the Taiwan government to include mainland spouses in the same category as foreign spouses, for to do so would affirm Taiwan’s status as an independent country through defining mainland Chinese as foreigners. But by making this separate bureaucratic structure and its attendant regulations substantially more demanding, officials and policymakers also reaffirmed broader societal doubts about Chinese spouses’ ability to become full members of the Taiwanese nation.

Reforms implemented in 2009 have improved the situation of mainland spouses in Taiwan, but they failed to fully equalize treatment with other foreign spouses. In January 2009, the naturalization quota was eliminated, doing away with the extended waiting periods mainland spouses had faced after submitting their application. A more extensive policy revision was carried out in August 2009, partially fulfilling KMT president Ma Ying-jeou’s commitment to improving Taiwan’s human rights record and relations across the Strait. This most recent revision was far-reaching and encompassed a range of issues relevant to mainland spouses, from inheritance rights and property ownership to spouses’ ability to sponsor minor children from previous relationships on the mainland. The revised immigration sequence eliminated the reunion stage altogether: once mainland spouses pass their border interview and enter Taiwan, they are now eligible to apply immediately for kin-based residence status. This change puts even greater pressure on the interview system to distinguish “real” from “sham” marriages, especially because kin-based residence now grants legal work rights to all (Friedman 2010). These reforms thus preserve a longer time-frame to citizenship for mainland spouses, but they resolve many of the inequities that previously defined the pre-citizenship stages.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: BELONGING AND MIGRATORY TRAJECTORIES

The rigorous and lengthy immigration process faced by mainland spouses in Taiwan encourages many to claim that they do not want to become Taiwanese citizens. And yet, in the end, most do apply for citizenship once they are eligible. One reason for this decision is the absence of a secure residency status that would enable them to obtain permanent non-citizen standing in Taiwan and make independent, non-marital claims to belonging. Many Chinese spouses make this decision amidst considerable doubt and anxiety, especially because Taiwan requires them simultaneously to cancel their official mainland residence. Will they become ineligible for pensions and other insurance benefits in the mainland as a result? Might they someday decide to move back to the mainland given its growing economy and potentially more profitable business opportunities? Will they ever feel “at home” in Taiwan, and will giving up their mainland residence status alienate them further from their birthplace? Not all are plagued by these questions, but they emerge on a strikingly regular basis in conversations with mainland spouses from all walks of life. And, as the example of Zhao Cuiping showed, musings on citizenship choices often turn to thoughts of future migratory paths that may link cross-Straits marital trajectories to other Chinese migration patterns.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Newspapers espousing viewpoints across the political spectrum regularly feature stories on mainland spouses, as do major magazines and online news sources. See, for instance, special issues on immigration in (*Tianxia, Commonwealth*), March 15, 2003 and (*Da Di, The Earth*), November 2003.
- ² Cross-Straits couples must first register their marriage in the mainland before they can apply for an entry permit to Taiwan for the

mainland spouse.

- ³ Spouses of other nationalities do not have to wait nearly as long, however, to obtain permission for legal entry to Hong Kong. In contrast to the years of separation experienced by mainland-Hong Kong couples, immigrant spouses of other nationalities wait a mere four to six weeks for their entry visas to be processed (Newendorp 2008: fn.9, 269).

- ⁴ *Renkou zhengce baipishu ji shishi jihua zhi yanjiu: zijihua 3 'wo guo yimin renkou zhengce yanjiu ji yinying duice', qimo baogao* (Population policy white paper and implementation plan research, sub-plan 3, "Taiwan's immigrant population policy research and response measures," final report). Commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior. June, 2007, pp. 13-14.

- ⁵ Initially, the revised Act required applicants to show proof of assets of at least five million New Taiwan dollars. After a public outcry, the Ministry of the Interior first delayed implementation of this requirement until June 1, 2004, and then softened the requirement by adding a new condition that applicants demonstrate for their household an average monthly salary over the past year of at least two times the minimum wage, roughly 380,000 New Taiwan dollars. This requirement has created serious problems for both Chinese and Southeast Asian spouses and became the focus of a series of protests in 2007 organized by an alliance of non-governmental organizations known as the Coalition Against Financial Requirement for Immigrants (*Mei qian mei shenfēn lianmeng*). The Coalition protested that the financial requirement at the time of citizenship did not protect the livelihood of immigrant spouses (as the government claimed) and instead discriminated against the poor. The financial requirement for mainland spouses was eliminated in 2009, but still stands for foreign spouses, although satisfying conditions have expanded over time.
- ⁶ Only in 2008 were revisions passed to existing policies that allowed widowed Chinese spouses without children to apply for citizenship after five years at the extended residency stage (three years longer than usual), assuming they met certain residency requirements and had not

remarried. The 2009 revisions extended this right to those widowed at the kin-based residency stage and reduced the additional wait time to two years.

WHY CHINESE YOUTH STUDY IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

VANESSA L. FONG

Migration between China and other countries has been going on for centuries. However, it is becoming more and more common for young citizens of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to study in developed countries. This paper looks at the reasons Chinese youth choose to study abroad, based on a survey of a statistical sample (N) of 2,273 students age 13–20 in a vocational high school, college prep high school, and junior high school conducted in 1999 in Dalian City, Liaoning Province, China. It also reviews surveys conducted between 2008 and 2010 of 1,320 of the same youth, 32 percent of whom had gone abroad at some point. Research also included over three years of participant observation in Chinese homes, schools, and other social spaces between 1997 and 2010, over a year of participant observation in transnational PRC citizens' homes in Australia, Europe, Japan, and North America between 2003 and 2010, and conversations over email, phone, and instant messenger with transnational PRC citizens in China and abroad from 2000–2010.

DALIAN: PROFILE OF A CITY

Between 1998 and 2000, I worked in Dalian as a volunteer English conversation teacher at a vocational high school, a junior high school, and a college prep high school, and conducted participant observation at those schools.¹ Dalian is a large port city in northeastern China. Its existence as a port city began after Russia acquired the area in 1898. After the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, the area was transferred to Japan. Dalian fell under Soviet control in 1945, and was transferred to the PRC in 1954. The three urban and two semi-urban districts of Dalian had a population of 559,010 residents in

1949, but by 1999 their population consisted of 1,977,214 residents.² Together, the three urban and two semi-urban districts of Dalian occupied 1,062 square kilometers.

In 1999, urban Dalian ranked as the second most populous urban area in Liaoning Province, and the fourteenth most populous urban area in China.³ Dalian was in many ways demographically similar to other large cities on the eastern coast of the PRC. However, because many Dalian families consisted of the children or grandchildren of migrants from poorer and/or more rural areas of

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China, many experienced even more rapid upward mobility than their counterparts in older Chinese cities.

In the 1990s, when the Chinese government started doing away with policies that had protected state enterprises from global market forces, many cities—particularly those in the northern industrial areas—began to suffer unemployment. Geographically and economically part of this area, Dalian was not spared the blows of economic restructuring; 34 percent of the respondents to my

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survey indicated that they had at least one parent who was laid off or retired.⁴ Still, as a port city with pleasant parks and beaches, strong trade networks, a well-developed transportation infrastructure, and ambitious, progressive officials, Dalian weathered these blows better than most of its inland counterparts.

PROFILE OF THE STUDY

Throughout my time in Dalian, I sat in homerooms, observing students' activities throughout the day, and also visited the homes of some of the students. These students introduced me to their friends and family members, who in turn introduced me to other families among which I could do participant observation. In 1999, I conducted a survey of most of the homerooms in grades 10–11 at the vocational high school, and all of the homerooms in grades 8–9 at the junior high school and grades 10–12 at the college prep high school. All respondents to my 1999 survey were between the ages of 13 and 20. Ninety-four percent of them had no siblings,⁵ 5 percent had one sibling,⁶ and 98 percent were Han,⁷ the ethnic group that comprised 92 percent of the Chinese population⁸ and 84 percent of Liaoning Province⁹ in 2000. The average age of survey respondents was 16.¹⁰ The average age of survey respondents' mothers was 43,¹¹ and the average age of their fathers was 45.¹² Each school contributed about a third of the respondents to my survey.¹³ The junior high school and college prep high school had fairly balanced gender ratios, while respondents from the vocational high school were 71 percent female because their school specialized in female-dominated majors such as accounting, tourism, finance, and public relations.¹⁴ My 1999 survey sample was 58 percent female.¹⁵

I selected the schools where I conducted my survey and participant observation partly because they were very average schools. The junior high school was widely regarded by teachers, parents, students, alumni, and education professors in Dalian as close to Dalian's average in terms of the socioeconomic statuses and academic aptitudes of the students enrolled. Like all public junior high schools in Dalian, this junior high school accepted

all students in its district without regard to their previous academic aptitude, and charged the same fees as all other public junior high schools. Because it was not selective or unusually expensive, the school enrolled students of a wide variety of socioeconomic statuses and academic aptitudes.

On the high school application form for 1999 graduates, school types were ranked by selectivity in the following order: 1) top-ranked college prep high schools (*zhongdian gaozhong*); 2) ordinary college prep high schools (*putong gaozhong*); 3) private college prep high schools (*minban gaozhong*); and 4) professional high schools (*zhongdeng zhuanye xuexiao*), vocational high schools, adult education professional high schools (*zhiye gaozhong*, *zhiye zhongzhuan*, *chengren zhongzhuan*) and technical high schools (*jigong xuexiao*). I conducted participant observation and my 1999 survey at an ordinary college prep high school (tier 2) and a vocational high school (tier 5).

After I stopped teaching at their schools in 2000 and returned to the United States to finish my dissertation and begin my academic career, I kept in touch with some of my survey sample and their families, returning to Dalian almost every summer to revisit them, and following some of them and their friends and relatives to other countries where they were studying abroad. I also kept in regular contact with them via phone, email, and instant messenger while I was living in the United States during the academic year.

In the summer of 2008, I began trying to re-survey all 2,273 alumni of the schools where I conducted participant observation between 1998 and 2000, who had filled out my survey in 1999. I started by asking those with whom I was still in touch to help me find those with whom I was no longer in touch. Most of the students who had filled out my survey in 1999 had given me their home phone numbers. My research assistants and I called those phone numbers to try to reach those for whom I did not have updated contact info. Of the 924 whose 1999 phone numbers we called by May 2010, only 35 percent were still being used by the respondent or the respondent's family member. We asked those we were able to reach to give us the updated contact information of those whose

phone numbers from 1999 had stopped working.

Using the contact information I had collected, I organized class reunion lunches and dinners (one meal per homeroom of 40–60 students) in Dalian for all my respondents from 1999 in May–July 2009 and June–July 2010, and asked respondents to fill out surveys at these reunions. Those who were unable to come to the reunions were asked to fill out surveys via email or instant messenger. My research assistants and I also conducted phone

Most of the transnational PRC citizens in my study are the first in their families to go abroad.

surveys in 2010, getting responses to a few key questions about whether respondents had studied abroad, where they had lived for at least six months, when they first left mainland China, how long they had spent abroad, whether they had married, and whether they had children. By July 2010, I had resurveyed 1,320 of the original 2,273 respondents to the survey I conducted in 1999 at the vocational high school, college prep high school, and junior high school where I did my initial research.

WHY CHINESE YOUTH STUDY IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In the past only those Chinese people with unusually high levels of wealth, academic ability, and/or transnational family connections were able to go to other countries. Most transnational PRC citizens that I met in Dalian, however, went abroad even though they were not particularly wealthy, and did not have strong transnational social networks or scholarships. Among the 1,320 respondents I resurveyed in 2008–2010, 32 percent indicated that they had gone abroad at some point, living in a wide variety of countries (see Table 1).

Many of the students mentioned that overseas visa regulations were a major factor in choosing

their destination. Japan, in the early 2000s had a higher visa application approval rate than many of the other countries, and thus attracted more than 38 percent of the transnational PRC citizens in the study. Ireland, despite its relatively distant location, ranked favorably as a destination compared to other English-speaking nations, because of the higher visa approval rate it had in the early 2000s.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF TRANSNATIONAL RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN IN EACH COUNTRY (N = 397).

Country	%
Japan	38%
Ireland	10%
Singapore	9%
Britain	7%
USA	6%
Canada	6%
Australia	6%
New Zealand	5%
Other European country	13%
Other country	18%

**Percentages add up to more than 100 percent because some have been in more than one country.*

Most of the transnational PRC citizens in my study are the first in their families to go abroad. Most transnational PRC citizens surveyed were only-children, born after China's one-child policy began in 1979. They were therefore raised with high ambitions and parental investment, and they saw study abroad as a way to fulfill their potential.

Many students emphasized intangible aspects of their time abroad. They told me that the chance to travel overseas would provide them with a good quality of life that would not be available in China. They sought the environment of developed countries that they saw on TV and in movies, and wanted the easygoing lifestyle. They wanted to be away from the expectations of Chinese friends and family members. They believed they would have more freedom to avoid restrictive social expecta-

tions imposed by their families and social networks, and the complex, instrumental social relationships in the PRC. They also liked international travel for its own sake. They felt that study abroad would enable them to see the world.

However, the students in my study also told me that they had many practical reasons to study in developed countries. They believed that study-

They felt that traveling, living, studying, and working in new environments would help them mature and become more capable.

ing in developed countries could enable them to get a more useful and enjoyable education, more prestigious educational credentials, better jobs (in China and/or abroad), and more spending power. They also believed that studying abroad would help them to become more cosmopolitan and self-reliant, giving them more rights to travel anywhere in the world. Experience abroad made it more likely that they would be able to get visas to go abroad in the future.

They also wanted to go abroad to develop new abilities. They felt that traveling, living, studying, and working in new environments would help them mature and become more capable. Some applied for and were accepted into foreign colleges before they even graduated from high school. Some were unable to get into any college program at all in the PRC. Some students who had been offered admission by four-year universities in China chose to decline those offers so that they could attend universities in developed countries instead, partly because they believed that degrees from universities in developed countries would be considered more prestigious by future employers than comparably ranked universities in China. Some also believed that university admissions standards abroad were

less competitive than those in the PRC, and thus that they would be able to get into college abroad more easily than they could in China.

Some Chinese youth in my study also believed that higher education in developed countries could teach them more and better knowledge and skills, in a more interesting way, than higher education in the PRC. They believed that they would have more freedom abroad to choose classes they enjoyed and were good at abroad than they could in China. Others just wanted to attend foreign language classes and immerse themselves in a foreign language environment so that they could attain enough foreign language proficiency so as to get a better job in the PRC than they would have if they had not studied abroad. Some who had work, business, tourist, family visit, or immigration visas spent their time abroad working full-time while attending foreign language classes or job training classes.

Most of the Chinese youth in my study did find some of what they were looking for once they were studying abroad. For instance, many of those surveyed told me that the content of their higher education was indeed better than what they had learned in their high schools in the PRC. But many were also disappointed that conditions abroad were not as good as they had imagined they would be. Many of them also found that their expectations changed; while the conditions they had found abroad met their expectations, these conditions were not necessarily enough to make them happy. Some even found that conditions abroad were very different from what they imagined, and were disappointed.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Vanessa L. Fong, *Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004).
- ² This figure includes the populations of Zhongshan District, Xigang District, Shahekou District, Ganjingzi District, and Lushunkou District. Dalian Shi Shi Zhi Bangongshi (Dalian City Archives Office), *Dalian Nianjian* (Dalian Yearbook), 1987-1989. (Dalian: Dalian Chubanshe [Dalian Publisher], 1990); Dalian Shi Shi Zhi Bangongshi (Dalian City Archives Office), *Dalian Nianjian* (Dalian Yearbook), 1999. (Dalian: Dalian Chubanshe [Dalian Publisher], 2000).
- ³ According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, urban Dalian's 1999 population size ranking was based on a population estimate of 2,624,000 people. Guojia Tongji Ju Chengshi Shehui Jingji Diaocha Zongdui (National Bureau of Statistics Urban Society and Economy Research Team), *Zhongguo Chengshi Tongji Nianjian* (Urban Statistical

Yearbook of China, 1999). (Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe [China Statistical Press], 2000). Because China's National Bureau of Statistics and Dalian City's Archives Office used different criteria for determining which parts of the Dalian area were urban, the former's estimate of urban Dalian's population differed slightly from that provided by Dalian City's Archives Office. Dalian Shi Shi Zhi Bangongshi (Dalian City Archives Office), *Dalian Nianjian* (Dalian Yearbook), 1987-1989. (Dalian: Dalian Chubanshe [Dalian Publisher], 1990); Dalian Shi Shi Zhi Bangongshi (Dalian City Archives Office), *Dalian Nianjian* (Dalian Yearbook), 1999. (Dalian: Dalian Chubanshe [Dalian Publisher],

2000).

- ⁴ $N = 2,169$.
- ⁵ $N = 2,167$.
- ⁶ $N = 2,167$. Some respondents' parents had more than one child because they gave birth to all their children before the one-child policy began in 1979, because they had multiple births from one pregnancy, because they violated the one-child policy, or because they qualified for exemptions. A couple was allowed to have two children if both husband and wife were singletons or ethnic minorities, or if their first child was disabled. Students were also likely to have siblings if they were born in rural areas where officials started enforcing the one-child policy later or more laxly than urban Dalian officials did.
- ⁷ $N = 2,171$.
- ⁸ $N = 1,265,830,000$ Guojia Tongji Ju (National Bureau of Statistics). 2001. *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian* (China Statistical Yearbook). (Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe [China Statistics Press], 2001).
- ⁹ $N = 42,380,000$
- ¹⁰ $N = 2,253$.
- ¹¹ $N = 2,125$.
- ¹² $N = 2,128$.
- ¹³ Of the 2,273 respondents, 738 (33 percent) were from the junior high school, 753 (33 percent) were from the vocational high school, and 782 (34 percent) were from the college prep high school.
- ¹⁴ $N = 752$.
- ¹⁵ $N = 2,267$.

CHINESE TRANSNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION: TO CHINATOWN AND BEYOND!

KENNETH J. GUEST

For much of the 20th century, New York's Chinatown has served as a primary gateway for working class Chinese immigrants arriving in the United States. Wave after wave of Chinese men and women have found work in New York's laundries, restaurants, garment shops, and construction, trades, and tourist industries. Since the early 1980s, this influx of labor migrants has been dominated by newcomers from southeast China's Fujian Province. This paper explores the transformation of New York's Chinatown from immigrant gateway to hub of a labor migration circuit that moves low-wage workers through a network of Chinese take-out restaurants and all-you-can-eat buffets

Chinatown became a safe haven for Chinese, especially Chinese men, who faced discrimination in wider American society.

spreading across the United States. At the heart of this expansion is a dynamic migration industry that has emerged along Chinatown's East Broadway that expands our understanding of Chinese transnationalism as it pulls new immigrants from rural China and circulates them to jobs in a national U.S. ethnic restaurant economy.

CHINATOWN AS IMMIGRANT GATEWAY


The first Chinese immigrants arrived in New York City in the 1790s as sailors and stewards on clipper

ships plying the trade routes between Guangzhou, London, and New York City. The New York City port received a steady stream of porcelains, silks, and other luxury goods from China and sent back ship-loads of silver and ginseng, which grew wild up and down the U.S. eastern seaboard. The seeds of Chinatown were planted by Chinese sailors and dockworkers on the East River piers who lived together in small boarding houses in the Five Points district of New York's Lower East Side. The Chinese restaurant industry emerged from these boarding houses as Chinese began cooking for themselves, other immigrant workers, and eventually New York tourists who adventured into the area (Tchen 1999).

New York's Chinatown grew slowly through the 19th century, inhibited by limited transportation routes until the transcontinental railroad opened in 1869 and later by Chinese Exclusion Acts, which severely limited most Chinese immigration between 1882 and 1943. Nonetheless, Chinatown became a safe haven for Chinese, especially Chinese men, who faced discrimination in wider American society and intense competition for work from other European labor immigrants. In Chinatown they were able to mobilize social and financial capital to develop niches in the U.S. economy, particularly in laundries and in restaurants.

Despite restrictive immigration laws and limited global transportation networks, Chinese immigrant laborers in the United States were able to establish and maintain ongoing transnational ties and connections. Chinese companies called *jinshan-zhuang* emerged in the 19th century as immigration service providers, not only brokering transportation, but also facilitating ongoing contact. Services included writing and transporting letters as well as transferring remittances back to families

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in China. General stores in Chinatown provided the local contact point for receiving mail, writing return letters, saving and remitting money, accessing imported Chinese medicines and dry goods for a population of labor migrants that was constantly on the move from one job to another or circulating out of Chinatown to work in laundries across the city. These businesses enabled participation in a transnational flow of goods, ideas, money, and people even when individual workers could not continue to move back and forth across national boundaries because of restrictive immigration policies. The vast majority of Chinese immigrants in these earlier waves arrived from southern China's Guangzhou (Canton) Province (Hsu 2000).

CHINATOWN AS ETHNIC ENCLAVE

New York's Chinatown grew slowly but steadily until after World War II, when easing of immigration restrictions opened the way for increasing numbers of Chinese to enter, particularly from Hong Kong and refugees from mainland China. The trend increased dramatically with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationalities Act. The Chinese population of New York City and the flow of Chinese through New York as a gateway city have increased rapidly since.

Within immigration scholarship (Zhou 1992), Chinatown has often been referred to as a quintessential ethnic enclave. Like other immigrant formations that developed on New York's Lower East Side in the 19th century—Kleindeutschland for German and Eastern European Jews, Little Italy for Italians—Chinatown combined a defined ethnic neighborhood with a dense configuration of ethnic enterprises where new immigrants could find work with their co-ethnics. Portes and others (e.g. Portes and Bach 1985; Portes and Stepick 1993) have noted the importance of successive immigrant waves to the success of the ethnic enclave. An early wave of immigrants brings financial capital or accumulates it in the new host county. A second wave arrives without financial capital but makes their way by finding work in the ethnic enclave in ethnic-owned and operated businesses. Portes attributes this to the forces of ethnic solidarity that allow new immigrants to use their social capital—

language, educational backgrounds, hometown networks—to find better jobs at higher wages in the secondary economy of the ethnic enclave that they would not be able to find if forced to work in the primary economy.

Peter Kwong and I (2000) have written previously suggesting that while these positive aspects of the ethnic enclave in the immigrant experience clearly exist, the full story is more complicated. Ethnic solidarity has often been manufactured within the ethnic enclave as ethnic business owners seek to entice new vulnerable unskilled immigrant laborers to work for them. Jobs promoted for their potential upward mobility and on-the-job training are offered in return for wages and working conditions well below the U.S. legal minimums. Co-ethnic exploitation is common and is, in fact, essential to the success of the ethnic enclave as owners extract surplus value from vulnerable laborers to enhance their business profits.

Today, as we will see, while Chinese labor migration has extended beyond the Chinatown ethnic enclave, the dynamics of the enclave are also being extended to the network of Chinese restaurants expanding across the United States.

THE CHANGING FACE OF CHINATOWN: IMMIGRANTS FROM FUZHOU

If Cantonese comprised the vast majority of immigrants to Chinatown until 1980, the predominant immigrant group since has come from the towns and villages around the city of Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province, in southeast China. As China began to reopen to the West in the Deng Xiaoping era, a human smuggling industry, largely based in Taiwan, began to entice rural Fuzhounese with the prospect of restaurant jobs in New York. Over the past twenty-five years widespread outmigration has drained all but the youngest and the oldest from the areas around Fuzhou as able-bodied men and women have left to seek their fortunes in Australia, Japan, Europe, and particularly New York City. Fuzhounese leave China because of lack of opportunities. Despite economic growth in China, even low paying restaurant jobs in the United States pay many times what a villager would make farming, fishing or working in an export processing fac-

tory. And so, despite smuggling fees that in 2010 have topped \$70,000 per person, outmigration has become almost expected for young people in the Fuzhou area and a way of life for village residents.

Fuzhounese utilize many strategies to launch their transnational migration. Smuggling routes are varied—by boat, plane, and overland, through Europe, Canada, Central and South America—and respond to patterns of border enforcement. In addition to these dangerous but easily accessible human smuggling networks, Fuzhounese successfully utilized the general U.S. amnesty program in the mid-1980s, subsequent amnesties for Chinese after the Tiananmen incident, and special considerations for those claiming asylum from religious persecution and China's one-child-per-family policy to establish a strong foundation of legal migration as well. Legalized immigrants actively utilize family reunification provisions in U.S. immigration law to mobilize a chain of family migration that has led to an expansive legal flow from Fuzhou's towns and villages.

Today Fuzhounese have supplanted Cantonese as the primary Chinese ethnic group in Manhattan's Chinatown as well as the satellite Chinatown in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. While historic Mott Street continues to attract a vibrant tourist trade, East

Ethnic solidarity has often been manufactured within the ethnic enclave as ethnic business owners seek to entice new vulnerable unskilled immigrant laborers.

Broadway, dominated by new immigrants, has emerged as the central Fuzhounese business district in an expanded Chinatown. Mandarin has supplanted Cantonese as the lingua franca of the community. Even the statue of Lin Zexu, a Fuzhounese hero in the Opium Wars with the British in the 1840s, whose likeness was erected in Chatham Square by Fuzhounese associations in the mid-

1990s, stands a head taller than the nearby statue of Confucius erected by Cantonese associations a decade earlier.


FORMATION OF CHINESE TRANSNATIONAL TIES

Fuzhounese immigrants have been actively involved in transnational practices, despite their working class economic position and, for some, an undocumented legal status. Glick-Schiller, et al. (1992) originally conceptualized transnationalism in the post-1965 immigration as the ability to use intensifying transportation and communication networks to actively engage in practices that cross national boundaries without breaking ties between the sending and receiving countries. Transnational immigrants would be able to continue active involvement in a new host country and the home country. Numerous studies have examined the construction of transnational economic activities, flows of remittances and the creation of transnational villages (e.g. Robert Smith 2007).

Aihwa Ong (1997, 1999) has written extensively about Chinese transnational economic elites who build upon co-ethnic relationships to engage in investment and entrepreneurship, particularly around the Pacific Rim. In contrast, my research focuses on the creative strategies employed by labor immigrants who may not have the resources to engage in regular international travel, yet manage to participate in transnational flows of ideas, information, goods, and money through construction of and participation in hometown associations, kinship networks, and religious communities. This is particularly true among the Fuzhounese whose geographical location half way round the world from their sending communities, combined with their economic position and legal status, often does not allow the regular crossing of national boundaries (Guest 2003).

GROWTH OF ETHNIC CHINESE RESTAURANT ECONOMY

The Chinatown restaurant industry expanded dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s to meet the needs of immigrant laborers working long hours in gar-



ment shops and the tourist trade. Chinatown restaurants also served an expanding tourist clientele. Ownership and operation of Chinese restaurants outside Chinatown provided a unique ethnic economic niche and the increasing flow of immigrants from Fuzhou beginning in the 1980s fueled a continuing expansion throughout the New York metropolitan area, into neighboring states and along the northeast corridor (Kwong 1997).

Fuzhounese immigration has continued to swell over the past decade. Today, with the restaurant market saturated between Boston and Washington, D.C., Chinese entrepreneurs are expanding their target areas across the eastern half of the United States. As a result, New York Chinatown's role has been recast from a destination point at one end of transnational flows of people, money, goods, and ideas to a staging platform that now links and extends the transnational circulation of Chinese labor from Chinese farming and fishing villages to take-out restaurants and all-you-can-eat buffets in storefronts, shopping centers, and strip malls across Mainstreet America.

GROWTH OF A MIGRATION INDUSTRY

East Broadway, also known as Little Fuzhou or Fuzhou Street, is the epicenter of Fuzhounese economic activity and the central staging ground for the construction of the expanding national ethnic economy of Chinese restaurants. Along the western five blocks of East Broadway, from Chatham Square to Rutgers Street, a complex array of businesses and organizations supports entrepreneurs as they mobilize the capital, labor, goods, and know-how needed to establish and operate restaurants. Hometown associations, kinship networks and even religious communities provide opportunities to borrow the \$50,000 start-up costs of a new restaurant. Restaurant supply stores provide chopsticks, placemats, serving platters, and teacups. Print shops produce menus, flyers, and posters.

Hernandez-Leon (2008), in his study of Mexican immigration to the United States, describes the emergence of a migration industry that “greases the wheels” of transnational migration flows. This migration industry is “an ensemble of entrepreneurs who, motivated by pursuit of financial gain, pro-

vide a variety of services to facilitate human mobility across international borders.” The Fuzhounese owned and operated businesses along East Broadway are clearly part of such a matrix. Western Union and Moneygram remittance companies, lawyers specializing in immigrant legalization, immigration service centers, travel agents, money lenders, snake-heads (Chinese smugglers), providers of legitimate and false documents, notaries, insurance agencies, driving schools, employment agencies, short-term

Chinese entrepreneurs
are expanding their target
areas across the eastern
half of the United States.

housing, phone card sales booths, doctors, prostitutes, wedding parlors, barber shops, herbal supplies, dozens of hometown associations, temples, and recreational options including video stores, dim sum restaurants, gambling parlors, and buses to Atlantic City and Connecticut casinos. These services on East Broadway combine not only to support the movement of Fuzhounese across international borders but also to facilitate the ongoing movement of Chinese labor migrants beyond Chinatown's ethnic enclave.

CHINATOWN TRANSFORMS FROM GATEWAY TO HUB

At the heart of the Chinatown migration industry are extensive networks of employment agencies and Chinatown buses that provide local and long-distance transportation. Located primarily along East Broadway, two-dozen employment agencies match workers with restaurants across the country. Restaurants list their openings for waiters, chefs, deliverymen and receptionists. Workers circulate among the agencies looking for a job that fits their skills, their desired level of pay and their willingness to travel outside New York. On-site telephone interviews match workers with owners. With a suc-

successful match, the worker pays the agency a \$25 finder's fee and the agency provides information about how to get to the job. This often entails sending the worker to one of the dozen long-distance bus companies that move Fuzhounese workers across the country.

The Chinatown bus industry began as cars and minivans ferrying workers from Chinatown employment agencies to jobs in Connecticut and New Jersey. As the restaurant business continued to grow beyond the metropolitan New York area and attracted more workers, car and van services expanded to Greyhound-style 57 passenger buses running routes to Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Today these original routes, run by Fung Wa, Eastern, Apex, Lucky Rabbit among others, have largely crossed over into the mainstream U.S. transportation industry, carrying students and budget-travelers, and a few Chinese. More recently a second tier of long-distance buses has emerged, run by immigrant Chinese entrepreneurs that are off the transportation grid for everyone except the Chinese restaurant workers who ride them on late night runs to places across the United States. Buses operate along major interstate arteries delivering workers to Maine, Chicago, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Alabama, and Florida. Workers are dropped off at interstate exits to be met by restaurant owners and taken to their new job. Today these buses move tens of thousands of workers in a continuing circuit of labor migration orchestrated by a dynamic Chinese migration industry centered in New York City.


Chinese restaurant work in Minnesota or Tennessee is boring and grueling. Six-day workweeks and fourteen-hour workdays are the norm. Workers live and eat in the restaurant building and only talk with other workers because none of them speak English. The average stay may be only six to eight weeks before a worker quits and re-boards a Chinatown bus bound for East Broadway to meet old friends, send money back home, visit the temple and the hometown association and perhaps go to Atlantic City to gamble. Then after a few days or a week of rest and relaxation, like tens of thousands of other Fuzhounese men and women, they head back to the employment agencies to find the next

job in the next town served by another Chinatown bus.

East Broadway's migration industry, particularly its employment agencies and bus companies, is a key instrument in extending the flow of transnational Chinese labor migration from the rural towns and villages of southeast China to New York City and into a continuous labor migration circuit among a national ethnic restaurant economy. Because of the transnational connections enabled by the migration industry, the Chinese meal you order at the local take-out restaurant in Mobile, Alabama, actually creates a pull on another rural Chinese villager somewhere outside Fuzhou. And your tip is most likely sent home as a remittance to become part of the growing family fund to send the next sibling on a transnational journey to Chinatown and beyond!

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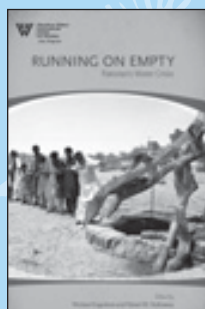
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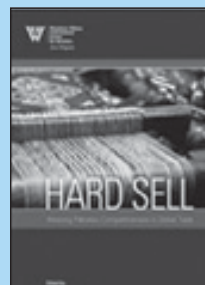
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