Locational decisions and residential preferences of Taiwanese immigrants in Australia

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, the increase of Asian migrants in large cities has contributed significantly to the cultural landscape of Australia, especially in the city suburbs. Based on the Census and in-depth interviews of 103 Taiwanese migrants, this research examines the location decisions and residential preferences of Taiwanese migrants in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. The reasons for choosing the state, the particular city, and specific area of residence are probed into. The survey shows that migrants moved to Australia mainly for children's education, lifestyle and political instability reasons. The main reasons for choosing to settle in Sydney were favourable business opportunities, and the northern part of Sydney was preferred. Those who chose Brisbane are attracted by the good climate there, and the residents preferred the Sunnybank area. Melbourne was chosen for the good education it offers, and areas on transportation lines near good schools are selected. Choice of residence was based mainly on their needs and their resources which may change over time. In general, they always choose to locate in close proximity to their family, friends and Taiwanese communities. Their locational choice depends on income and housing budget, proximity to good schools and shopping centers, and information from friends or earlier migrants. Based on such factors, this study clearly demonstrates that the Taiwanese immigrants are fundamentally different from early Chinese settlers who once aimed to settle at Chinatown locations.

Introduction

Taiwanese emigration has reached a considerable level in the last two decades, with major destinations including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Among the various reasons accounting for the increase in out-migration, rapid economic growth, political instability, an increase in personal income and the relaxation of travel restrictions in 1989 are foremost. Other important factors are the introduction of economic business migration policies by various countries targeting skilled and entrepreneurial groups.

This paper looks into an important aspect of the settlement experience of the Taiwanese¹ in Australia in their process of adaptation in the host society. Earlier research on the Taiwanese have amalgamated this national group with other ethnic Chinese (Chiang *et al.*, 1998; Coughlan, 1998; Ip *et al.*, 1998; Wu *et al.*, 1998) or focussed on their social and economic incorporation in Australia (Chiang and Hsu, 2000; Chiang and Kuo, 2000; Chiang and Song, 2001; Chiang 2004a, b).

A broad picture of the Taiwanese immigrant population in Australia in the last 15 years is revealed by the Census of 1986, 1991, 1996, and 2001, during which the Taiwanese immigrant population increased

approximately 10-fold between 1986 and 1996, while it nearly doubled between 1991 and 2001 (Table 1).

The number of Taiwanese settler arrivals was highest in 1990–1991 (at 3491 persons), and 2000–2001 (2599 persons) (Table 2, Appendix 1) Taiwan ranks eighth in the top 10 source countries of birth of settler arrivals in 1991–1992, contributing 3%, or 3172 population in total, while Hong Kong and China ranked second and 7th, respectively. By the late 1990s, Taiwan became the ninth largest source country for immigrants to move to Australia, accounting for 2.5% of all arrivals in 1996–1997 (2180 persons).

Following the pattern of population concentration in Australia, Taiwanese are settled in the three cities of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Eighty-five percent of Taiwanese migrants lived in these three cities as of 2001: 33.5% or 7502 individuals resided in Sydney, 32.1% or 7205 persons in Brisbane, and 18.9% or 4248 migrants in Melbourne, and 15.5% or 3463 Taiwanese in other cities (Table 1). Figure 1 shows the distribution of Taiwan-born population in major cities in Australia in 1986, 1991, 1996, and 2001.

Between the census years 1991 and 1996, Queensland rose from second to the foremost state hosting the largest concentration of Taiwan-born population. As of

Table 1. Distribution of Taiwan-born in Major Cities in Australia, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001

Year	1986		1991		1996		2001	
City	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sydney	806	39.2	4921	38.0	6729	34.4	7502	33.5
Melbourne	577	28.1	2413	18.6	3432	17.6	4248	18.9
Brisbane	219	10.7	3600	27.8	6038	30.9	7205	32.1
Other cities	454	22.1	2024	15.6	3348	17.1	3463	15.5
Total	2056	100.0	12958	100.0	19547	100.0	22418	100.0

Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished census data (1986, 1991, 1996, 2001).

2001 Census, the top three states populated by the Taiwan-born were Queensland (37.6%), followed by New South Wales (35.3%) and Victoria (19.4%) (Table 3, Figure 2)

Taiwanese home-ownership was as high as 75.3% in 1996, and dropped to 61.8% in 2001² (compared to 71.23% and 59.4%, respectively with other Australians (Table 4). Single-family housing dominated, followed by flat, unit or apartment. The average number of rooms per household is 3.6.

The study

Research questions

Migration, conventionally defined as a permanent shift of residence across predefined boundaries, may be considered to be a human response to intolerable economic, social, and demographic forces in the environment. There tends to an identification of the self with the local

in which one has resided for a prolonged time, and some emotional strain is involved in leaving this locale and family, friends, and colleagues for a strange new environment (Bogue, 1969, p. 753). Migration is chosen reluctantly by most people, particularly in areas where family ties and community bonds are keenly felt. (Kosinski and Prothero, 1970, p. 266)

A number of researchers have suggested that the individual or household is the appropriate unit of analysis (Brown and Moore, 1970, 1971). Common to the so-called behavioural work on immigration is the notion of 'place utility' which can be defined as an individual's degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a place (Wolpert, 1965). It is believed that the decision to move and the choice of destination do not occur simultaneously, and that competing immigration destinations are considered sequentially. The role of personality in human spatial behavior is also discussed by Wolpert (1966, p. 93) who asserts that "migration is essentially human spatial response to the operating environmental stress". The behaviouralist approach to the explanation of why immigration occurs has also been criticized by those who take the structuralist perspective of political economy, who argue that greater account must be taken of the constraints imposed on individual choice by the prevailing social, economic and political framework (Pahl, 1979; Short, 1984).

Furthermore, Moore (1972) posited that conditions of neighbourhood such as natural environment, neighbours' characteristics, accessibility and public facilities are important consideration in the choice of residences. As Massey and Bitterman (1985) discusses, residential space is defined by the intersection of the factors of social status, family status and ethnic status. This spatial organization develops as people from a similar background seek areas in the urban environment with similar characteristics (Berry and Kasarda, 1977). Changes in the family life cycle has been brought up by Rossi (1955) and Bell (1996) to account for changes in the destination of movement due to the housing needs at various times, but little information is provided about the likely decisions of international movers.

Residential preferences of New Asian immigrants have seldom been studied. It has been noted by Yu (forthcoming) that in contrast to most other immigrant groups in the United States, Taiwanese immigrants have a particularly high propensity for homeownership. By

Table 2. Settler Arrivals of Taiwan-born, 1985–1986 to 2003–2004

Year of Arrival	Persons	Percentage of Taiwan-born arrivals among total arrivals
1985–1986	381	0.4
1986–1987	804	0.4
1987–1988	1146	0.8
1988–1989	2100	1.4
1989–1990	3055	2.5
1990–1991	3491	2.9
1991–1992	3172	3.0
1992–1993	1434	1.9
1993–1994	785	1.1
1994–1995	794	0.9
1995–1996	1638	1.7
1996–1997	2180	2.5
1997–1998	1518	2.0
1998–1999	1556	1.8
1999–2000	1699	1.8
2000–2001	2599	2.4
2001–2002	1715	1.9
2002–2003	1109	1.2
2003–2004	881	0.8

Data source: BIMPR, DIMA and DIMIA, *Settler Arrivals*, various issues.

Figure 1. Distribution of Taiwan-born Population in Major Cities of Australia. Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished Census Data, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001.

applying the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the U.S. Census to study homeownership attainment across time (1980–1990), and across three major metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York), he found that Taiwanese immigrants tend to have a high mobility and high homeownership at the same time. A strong tendency for homeownership in 1990 was found, suggesting an aggregate effect of Taiwan relaxing its emigration policy, expansion of immigration quota of U.S. for Chinese immigrants, the U.S. immigration law favouring established professionals, and strong Taiwan currency in 1980s. As a sub-group of ethnic Chinese, Taiwanese immigrants have been considered as high achievers with a large proportion of professionals and executives and have brought wealth with them when they immigrated to the United States, particularly to Los Angeles where their homeownership rate was 75% in 1990.

Table 3. Distribution of Taiwan-born in Australia, 1991, 1996, 2001

States	1991(%)	1996(%)	2001(%)
New South Wales	39.9	36.5	35.3
Victoria	19.3	18.3	19.4
Queensland	32.2	37.0	37.6
South Australia	2.1	2.4	2.3
West Australia	4.7	4.5	3.9
Tasmania	0.1	0.2	0.2
Northern Territory	0.4	0.2	0.3
Australian Capital Territory	1.3	1.1	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Another study on initial destination choices of skilled immigrants from Hong Kong, China and Taiwan to Canada in 1983–1999 was based on an application of a multinomial logit model to the micro data of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Xu and Liaw, 2003). The findings strongly support the human capital investment theory and the ethnic enclave theory. An increasing importance of transnationalism and the attempts at using Quebec as a stepping stone to settle down in other parts of Canada as landed immigrants was found. Immigrants will persist to concentrate in Ontario and British Columbia, while for the rest of Canada, only Alberta has some chance of increasing significantly its share of these immigrants.

Our earlier attempt in understanding Taiwanese migrant's location decisions in Australia was broad-based and exploratory, along other questions on their reasons for migration, and economic incorporation in Sydney (Chiang and Hsu, 2000; Chiang and Kuo, 2000). On the basis of a questionnaire survey run in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in 1999–2000, we found that education for their children in Australia, as well as the high crime rate and perceived political instability in Taiwan were foremost factors when it came to people's decisions to leave Taiwan. Our preliminary investigation looked into the reasons for moving to Australia, as well as the choice of residential location. In spite of their high educational levels, Taiwanese migrants face various difficulties in finding employment commensurate with their former business skills. As underemployment and downward mobility are common within this recent

Figure 2. Distribution of Taiwan-born Population in States in Australia. Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished Census Data, 1991, 1996, 2001.

group of migrants, there is a need to depend on other sources of income, such as savings and work in Taiwan. 'Astronauts' and return migrants are the outcomes of various migration experiences even at this early stage. This in fact affects how the migrants choose their residence as they need to accommodate the needs of the children in school, and the parents, usually mothers, who were left in Australia to take care of the children (Chiang, 2004b). According to the 2001 Census, the Taiwanese community was dominated by young adults between the ages of 15–24 (43.1% for males and 33.4% for females), and 25–54 (34.9% for males and 53.1% for females), indicating a predominance of younger males and older females.

Despite their recent arrival, immigrants from Taiwan have higher home ownership rates compared to Australians on the average. As over 70% of the Taiwanese have

acquired housing in their first few years of settlement, the various impacts on the cultural landscape, housing market and city planning are starting to be felt. The dynamics of the decision process include why Taiwanese choose Australia as a country, which city they moved, and the location of their homes. In this paper, it is assumed that the household decision on where to locate is related to the reasons for migration such as children's education, the natural and social environment, the economic ability of the parents, and the adjustment process, such as meeting the needs of 'astronaut' wives.³

It is believed that understanding where migrants live is an important aspect of migrants' settlement experience, and provides a critical input to policy making at all levels of government, in aspects of health, education, recreational facilities (White and Williams, 1996). Earlier, most Australian immigrants settled in New South

Table 4. Ownership of dwellings of Taiwan-born, 2001

	Fully owned	Being purchased	Rented	Others	Not stated	Total
Dwelling structure						
Separate house	4306	782	668	176	114	6046
Semi-detached, row or terrace, townhouse etc.	354	132	768	33	26	1313
Flat, unit or apartment	528	166	1943	56	60	2753
Other dwelling	19	0	19	4	—	42
Not stated	38	7	34	3	4	86
Total	5245	1087	3432	272	204	10240
Percentage	51.2	10.6	33.5	2.7	2.0	100.0

Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished census data (2001).

Wales, followed by Victoria, then Western Australia. When the ethnic composition shifted to include more Asians, the geographical distribution pattern of the groups also changed.

Tonkin (1993) carried out a literature review and an analysis of data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Immigrants to Australia in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The literature review suggests two types of immigrants to make sense of their location decisions – those who have come to Australia basically as pioneers, with no prior ties to the country, and those who have come in a ‘second wave’, generally with existing family and/or members of their ethnic communities being the major attraction. The predominant influences on the choice of initial settlement location by immigrants within the first group are employment opportunities, distance from the country of origin, location in the State in which immigrants arrive, housing and house prices, state government policies and demographic characteristics. After immigration from any particular country has been occurring for some time, conditions generally led to a chain migration effect overwhelming the other influences on initial location, particularly in times of economic downturn. This seems to be more important for those immigrants from non-English-speaking background (NESB) countries than others. Tonkin (1993, p. xv) also pointed out that the overriding influence of the attraction of established communities for prospective immigrants from all immigration categories has caused immigrants from similar countries of birth to locate together, and the influence of relatives and friends is the major factor in the initial location decisions for skill and independent category.

Hugo (1996) studied the geographical distribution of immigrants, the causes of their geographical concentration in Australia, and its implications. As post-war immigration to Australia tended to settle in the nation’s largest cities, 80% of overseas-born lived in the largest cities in 1991, concentrating in Sydney and Melbourne. The 1991 Census shows that the majority of Asian-origin groups have more than 90% of their communities living in major cities. On the other hand, those who have been established in Australia longer have an increasing tendency to settle outside major cities.

The reasons for residential segregation of particular birthplace group has been well discussed under the following factors: (1) Distribution of job opportunities at the time of arrival, (2) Distribution of housing opportunities at the time of arrival, (3) Timing of the peak immigration of particular groups, (4) Scale of immigration of a particular group, (5) Initial place of arrival, (6) Location of family members and people from the same country of origin, (7) Language, (8) Marginalisation, and (9) Type of Immigration.

Burnley (1996) noted that the migration process of European origin giving rise to the strongest ethnic concentrations in most Australian cities was chain migration. It was reinforced by the strength of kinship

and wider social networks in the communities and societies of origin, with people taking the values of family ties, responsibilities and mutual aid with them in their migration to Australia. An expression of this was the regrouping of communities in suburbs adjacent to those of original settlement. However, the circumstances of migration, settlement, employment and housing changed with the introduction of the ‘points system’, whereby the source of potential migrants to Australia was widened and a selection system was introduced based on age and skill criteria. New communities began to form, with migrants from Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong becoming much more common, many of whom arrived as skilled and professional migrants. He employed the index of dissimilarity and index of redistribution to investigate the re-location of immigrants from Europe, Middle-East and Asia in Sydney. Using southern Europeans and Lebanese-born as examples, it is found that regrouping took place through residential mobility in second and third settlement areas after migrants first settled in core concentration areas (Burnley, 1996, p. 97). In the end, he foresaw the need to employ life history survey analysis and qualitative approaches.

Lacking data on ethnic status, the birthplace and language data were used to explore Sydney’s residential geography at two spatial scales, and to identify the degree of residential segregation of each birthplace and language group. (Johnston *et al.*, 2001). Their regression analysis used to assess the relevance of human capital to observed levels of segregation suggests that the dynamics of Sydney’s housing market facilitate movement into most areas of demand, subject only to labour market constraints.

Literature on residential location in Australia helps to formulate research questions of this study. An early observation of where Taiwanese live was made by Kee (1999) and Schak (1999) who are familiar with the leaders of the Taiwanese community in Melbourne and Brisbane respectively. Two Masters thesis on the residential mobility of Taiwanese and Hong Kong immigrants respectively by Boyer (1995) and Wang (1993) have made significant contributions.

Against this background, we hope to explore the issue of location decisions and residential preferences and make the following inquiries:

(1) To identify the factors which influence where Taiwanese immigrants settle in Australia, (2) To obtain some insights into the actual decision-making process of immigrants in choosing their residences, (3) To find out differences in settlement patterns between Taiwanese and other Australian migrants and suggest policy implications.

Research methodology

Data from the Australian Census provide the backdrop for this study and help formulate conceptual questions. Qualitative information for this research was collected

through personal ethnographic interviews with individual immigrants by the two authors from Taiwan between July 2000 and February 2001. The interviews have been designed to elicit information complementing the Census data and to explain distribution and residential choice and mobility of Taiwanese Migrants in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

About 103 informants were interviewed on various occasions: after church gatherings or volunteers' meetings, after Chinese martial arts training classes, at morning tea or social gatherings in the evening, at the workplace or during parent's meetings at local Chinese schools. A snowball technique was employed to identify individuals to be interviewed since it was difficult to establish a sampling frame for a random sample. The selection of informants took into consideration of criteria such as time of migration, place of residence, gender, occupation, and voluntary associations that they belonged to.⁴ Mandarin, Hokkien and Hakka, the three dialects most commonly spoken by Taiwanese migrants, were used during the interviews in order to facilitate a smooth flow of conversations and clear articulation of ideas. While the interviews were unstructured and open-ended, they were guided by a list of general questions. They lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to three hours and were tape-recorded. Our analysis is based on ethnographic research from an *emic* (insider's) perspective that gives voice to the immigrants and focused on self-assessment of their experience of location decisions and residential preferences. There is no intention to draw a scientific sample of the population group but merely to present highly representative snapshots of the situation. The following analysis therefore employs mainly qualitative data.

Findings and discussion

Profile of Taiwanese immigrants

The immigrants interviewed in the course of this study included 41 females and 62 males, about one third of the total living in each of the three cities. Three-fourths (77 people) were 40 years of age or older and most arrived in Australia between 1989 and 1990 when they were 30–40 years old. Forty-two individuals had an undergraduate college degree or above (including 6 Ph.Ds and 4 Masters), 30 attended junior college, and an additional 20 had a high-school diploma.

Fifty-seven entered Australia as business migrants, 25 as independents, and 9 as family reunification cases. A majority moved to Australia together in families; while in some cases, the husband moved first, and later joined by their wives and children. In a few cases, the children moved first to study, while parents came later. Half of the sample came from Taipei, while the remaining individuals were from Kaohsiung, Chiayi, Changhua, Tainan, and other smaller cities in Taiwan.

A few had lived in other countries and half had visited Australia as tourists,⁵ students or for business reasons.

A large majority (over 80%) moved as families, while most (over 90%) lived at homes that they owned. Some rented their homes, or resided in their friend's home when they first moved to Australia. Most (63, or 61%) found their first homes or land to build houses through real estate agents. Nineteen, or close to one-fifth, later rented out an extra house to give them an income. Interestingly, most of them have experiences in moving, either within the Statistical Local Areas within the city, or from another city of Australia. The times they moved increased with the length of their years of arrival in Australia.

Locational decisions

As Taiwanese migrants moved for their children's education and 'lifestyle' considerations, these reasons would enter their decisions in choosing a particular city and where to live in that city. Moreover, the creation of 'astronaut' families after settling down, stages in the family life-cycle, and adaptation process may also affect location decisions. Apart from these social considerations, other cultural factors also operate, differentiating the Taiwanese migrants from other Australians. The following discussions focus on selecting the city and initial location factors.

Selecting the city

In general, Taiwanese are attracted to Australian's social and natural environment which is described as serene, quiet, and friendly with a multicultural policy in education. The main reasons for choosing Sydney was favourable business opportunities, and the northern part of Sydney was preferred. Those who chose Brisbane were attracted by the good climate there, and the residents preferred the Sunnybank area. Melbourne was chosen for the good education it offers, and areas near good schools were selected.

The reasons for Taiwanese migrants to choose Sydney are expressed by different informants as: "A big city would offer better opportunities in jobs, and schools", and "property values tend to rise easily in the big city". In addition, "there are more Asians here, and racial discrimination tends to be less than other smaller cities."

The Taiwanese population are dispersed in newly developed and affluent communities in Sydney in its northern parts such as Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, Baulkham Hills and Willoughby, collectively called '*hao chu*' (good area) by the Taiwanese. At a macro-level, Burnley (1996, p. 94) noted that many affluent, highly educated migrants from Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong lived in northern and north-west Sydney. The relatively flat, less expensive and conveniently located areas of Ashfield, Burwood, Strathfield, Parramatta and Fairfield in the Central part of the city are also well occupied. In addition, Randwick and Maroubra were selected by early migrants for its location near the city and

universities, apart from good ocean views. Finally, Woollahra, overlooking the Sydney harbour, is selected by affluent Taiwanese who speculate on properties. It is a prestigious and expensive area to have the 'hsueh li san bao' (three 'treasures' of Sydney) in view, namely, the Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Tower. (Figure 3)

Brisbane and Gold Coast that are located in the south-east of the 'Sunshine State' of Queensland are selected, particularly by Taiwanese from Kaohsiung. It underwent rapid growth and is expected to reach three million population in 2011. It is selected by Asian immigrants for its close proximity, good weather, good environment and low cost of living. At the same time, the rapid growth of service-based industries like banking and tourism has attracted a lot of internal migrants from Australia, particularly from the states of Victoria and New South Wales. The earlier Taiwanese migrants selected towns in rolling country near the Brisbane River such as Indooroopilly and St. Lucia where the University of Queensland and many good schools are located. The later Taiwanese settlers came for the newly developed and flat areas of Sunnybank and its surrounding towns of Sunnybank Hills, MacGregor, Eight Mile Plains, Robertson, Runcorn and Stretton. (Figure 4)

Preceded by the Hong Kong migrants who were the first wave of Chinese immigrants to invest on property, the Taiwanese also tended to select areas with good transportation, shopping malls and Asian food markets. Almost like a second Chinatown, Sunnybank in Brisbane earned its name 'Little Taipei'. A third popular area is Cleveland east of Brisbane and at the end of the railway line, with its canal residence and jetties for individual homes. Away from the crowded Asian prototype cities in their homeland, most Taiwanese now live in big affordable houses, gardens and swimming pools, just like other Australians.

In spite of its bad weather ('four seasons in one day'), Melbourne is considered the 'cultural city' (*wen hua zhi tu*) in the eyes of the Taiwanese who brought their children for a better education than Taiwan's. Some came because of relatives and friends among the earlier migrants. Some even play down Sydney for its business-like atmosphere, and Brisbane for its hot weather in the summer. As one Taiwanese migrant remarked: "In Melbourne, people ask you what school do you go to? In Sydney, what business do you do? But in Brisbane, what wine do you drink?" "The state of Victoria is called the Garden State...it is rated as one of the ten livable cities in the world." "20-40% industries of Australia are located here...we can find work here." "We met a Taiwanese tour guide when we were here in 1996, and decided to immigrate...we struggled to start our rice wine business...while our children attend good schools."

Kew, Balwyn and Doncaster on the tramline and other public transportation routes are desirable areas to live, for those who started to drive on a different side of the road for the first time. Good schools also attract the Taiwanese to Balwyn, Balwyn North, Glen Waverley,

and Camberwell. Six miles from the city centre and on the tramline, Kew, where old and expensive houses are located, attracts Chinese from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Friends and relatives who came earlier and migration agents speed up the decision to settle in these prestigious areas. Doncaster, Doncaster East and Templestowe which are further away from the city were newly developed areas near the highway. Box Hill on the intersection of the rail and bus lines attracts a lot of Chinese for its Asian food, markets, and retail shops. (Figure 5) One can see from Figures 3-5 the location of recent Taiwanese migrants in the three cities of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Their settlements patterns are very different from earlier Chinese settlers in Chinatowns, where immigrants have businesses, family and kinship networks, and access to daily necessities like food and various types of merchandise. Clearly the Taiwanese settlements in all our three cases are far away from original Chinatown locations. Also, the further one goes away from Chinatown locations, the more Taiwanese settlements one may find.

Initial location factors

Various factors influencing migrants' initial location decisions may be at work singly or interactively. As the family arrived, they need practical help and information on housing, food, transportation and children's education. At this point, friends and relatives are often sought after for information on their initial location, as they provide the new arrival with a sense of security or overcome many uncertainties in the new land. As mentioned by some of our interviewees:

We had no friends or relatives here at first, but I happen to have a student whose aunt was here, and she offered to meet us at the airport.

We actually came to Sydney because we already know someone here. We also moved to the north where he lives. We will not feel so scared as we come to a new country as strangers...we also know where the Asian food markets are right away.

My husband came here as a tourist and met one of our neighbors in a supermarket. He was taken to the latter's beautiful home in Raby Bay (east of Brisbane), and we decided to move to the same town. We now live on the opposite bank, and know quite a few Taiwanese who were here earlier.

Most migrants applied through agents to come to Australia.⁶ The information they received are also greatly shaped by the agents. A part of the migration service often provided by the earlier migrants is getting help for settling down, through so called '*an chia kung szu*' (home settlement company), this service fills in the gap when help which is needed may not be provided by any friends and relatives. The Chinese saying: "Parents stand-by you at home; friends are in need abroad" (*tsai chia kao fu mu, chu wai kao peng yu*) is often mentioned

Figure 3. Distribution of Taiwanese Immigrants in Sydney, 2001. Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished data, 2001. Note: (A): Area, (C): City.

Figure 4. Distribution of Taiwanese Immigrants in Brisbane, 2001. Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished data, 2001.

by our informants. A similar cultural phenomena is found among other national groups like the Italian, Greek and the Vietnamese (Burnley, 1996). Apart from friends, the initial location also depends on transportation, particularly in relation to where children go to school. Other locational factors are proximity to places of work, shopping centers, and green open space in the neighbourhood.

While temporarily housed in the government migration center in the earlier days, a hotel or homestay arranged by the agent may serve the new arrivals who immediately need assistance. Some jumped into decisions in buying their new homes quickly and regretted afterwards. Later migrants were smarter and consider renting a better option than making an impulsive decision to buy a house. As suggested by one recent arrival:

Figure 5. Distribution of Taiwanese Immigrants in Melbourne, 2001. Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Unpublished data, 2001. Note: (C): City.

One should wait to see what the family really needs. It would be risky to make a quick decision without understanding the environment better...Where do children go to school? Where does one shop? How far is one's home from the railway station? Where are your friends? What kinds of community activities are there? These all count as important considerations.

A recent migrant who made a decision to rent a townhouse made an observation as follows:

Many Taiwanese rushed into a decision when they first came, because they feel that the house is much cheaper compared to what they get for the price in Taiwan. Later, they found that the more expensive the house, the more difficult it is to sell it later on...I have decided

not to buy a house because I don't want to pay for the land tax and the managerial fees. When I need to have my faucet repaired, I just called my landlady...I don't want a house with a swimming pool, nor a garden like the earlier Taiwanese migrants. Someone spent AUD10,000 to fill up the pool afterwards. I just need a small two-storeyed house in an east-west direction. It should be near the bus station, so that my children can take the bus to school... I want a new house built with bricks instead of wood, so that I do not need to deal with termites...the most important consideration is proximity to schools.

When the Taiwanese choose suburbs, they tend to favour newly developed areas with brand-new brick and

tile houses. But for many Taiwanese, the most important consideration is to live in the zones for reputable schools, since it is for their children's educational opportunities that most of them have taken the important step of migration. A house near the school, a shopping center and the bus stop is particularly important for a family if the wife is left to stay with the children in Australia, while the husband goes back to pursue his career in Taiwan. Schak (1999) noticed that Taiwanese in Brisbane choose the Sunnybank area which is quite flat and easier for driving for their wives.

In one case of our study, the husband flew to Brisbane three or four times to get the house built before moving over with the whole family. Friends and agents often play crucial roles for the initial location decision, but once in a while, the Taiwanese migrant just settled down with his own ideas:

According to the 'an chia' company, most Taiwanese stay in Epping (north of Sydney) on the railway line. With a family and two kids, my husband and I first settled down in a serviced apartment recommended by someone at the information desk at the airport. Later, we rented a house in Epping for two years with help from the housing agent.

Needs and capital considerations in housing preferences

While accessibility to schools is highly prioritized, proximity to work is also important. We also find gender differences and family needs important in the Taiwanese culture. The Taiwanese men prefer large garages or study rooms, while the women pay foremost attention to kitchens. As Chinese cook with a strong fire, gas stoves are preferred over electric stoves which are also considered more expensive. One homemaker talks about the special arrangement made for her extended household as follows:

My mother-in-law suggested that we should look for a house with two adjoining but separate parts: one for her, and one for us, so that she is also free to come over to our side as she wishes. We got one with a kitchen to separate the two households...but under the same roof.

Other cultural differences are clearly seen between the Taiwanese and other Australians. Tree leaves that drop on the roof and the pool are big problems for the Taiwanese. A tree in the front yard is a nuisance too, while other Australians like living in houses with a lot of trees and shades, which would look very secluded to the Taiwanese. Taiwanese also prefer bay windows, and near neighbourhoods with people. Those who takes "Feng shui" (geomancy) into consideration believes that the telegraph pole near a house, a big tree in the yard, a door facing each other, depressed areas in the front and the back, and a house located in the circuit undesirable. Sometimes, squarish buildings are highly prioritized when compared to irregularly shaped ones.

Above all these decisions, where one lives depends on how much one can afford, as one of our pragmatic informant remarked:

We will look for the area where we can afford to live, and then look for the suitable house.

This is particularly true for the business migrant who has not been able to find employment immediately after arrival, although they have brought a lot of money to live on at the beginning.

Through these different stories, we came to know the different situations when the initial location decisions are made. We also found out that quite a lot of Taiwanese migrants have relocated since they first came. This is an important aspect of their adaptation to the life style of Australia that they have no accurate knowledge of at first, such as the regulations of the City Council not allowing trees to be cut. The various reasons for moving include changing to a more profitable property, to move to an environment with better climate, to live closer to the city as a place of work, or the need to move to a bigger house, etc. Some consider moving closer to the city for work, or when children have finished school. Overtime, the Taiwanese migrants got used to their new environment, and got the most out of their experiences.

Conclusion

This study hopes to fill in the gap left by the Census and macro-level studies on location decisions and residential preferences of immigrants in Australia. In spite of their recency in arrival, the Taiwanese immigrants have formed vibrant communities and made significant imprints in different large cities in the host country. This research examines the initial location factors of recent Taiwanese immigrants in Australia and the decision-making process and mechanism affecting their moves. Housing preferences and adaptation are reflected in their decision-making process of residential mobility. Using a qualitative approach, this study carried out in-depth interviews of 103 immigrants in the three major cities of Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

While Sydney and Melbourne have traditionally received the majority of immigrants, Brisbane and the Gold Coast have become a more popular place of residence for new settlers in recent years (Murphy, 1997). The Taiwanese migrants also follow this changing pattern over time. The results from this study show that Sydney was selected because of more opportunities for business, Brisbane for the good weather, and Melbourne for the education of their children. The decision mechanism is based on 'preference and needs', 'capital' and 'adaptation process' and the interaction of these three elements leads to diversification and individual differences in residential choice (Hsu, 2002). The concentration in the suburbs is largely decided by the need to locate in close proximity to their family and friends who form earlier Taiwanese communities. From the very

start, their residential pattern evolve from complex decision processes across time and space, differing from earlier Chinese migrants who concentrate in Chinatowns in the past. While Chatswood is the second Chinatown for Hong Kong migrants in Sydney (Burnley, 1996), we find that Sunnybank is the second Chinatown for Taiwanese in Brisbane. In spite of being distributed widely in large cities, they are still closely related through their social network within and between cities in Australia which rapidly developed along with their initial location. Chain migration will play greater role in future, similar to other immigrant groups being studied by Tonkin (1993).

The factors considered in their locational choice included income and housing budget, children's education, proximity to work and shopping centres, and closeness to friends or other Taiwanese. Over time, the reasons for residential choice changed, reflecting individual preferences and experiences, apart from such main reasons of change in life-cycles and fluctuating housing prices. In general, the migrants preferred new houses that are dominated by three and four-bedroom units and that tended to give them a high level of satisfaction. Gradually, there appeared a lower preference for houses with swimming pools and gardens, as migrants relocate to different houses.

The new Asian immigrants who constitute large numbers have been producing an impact in the host country in the last two decades. While Chinese immigrants tend to live in large cities and in suburban neighbourhoods such as 'Little Taipei', 'Little Shanghai', or 'Little Hong Kong', they become a significant part of the new social and cultural geography of Australia. This reinforces Tonkin's (1993) findings that the overriding influence of the attraction of established communities for prospective immigrants from all immigration categories has caused immigrants from similar countries of birth to locate together. This phenomenon has a significant impact on regional housing market and deserve further studies by policy-makers and research on ethnic communities in Australia. As in the case of Brisbane, the settlement of affluent immigrants from Asia, especially from Hong Kong and Taiwan, contributes to the increase in the intensity of commercial and recreational activities that result in consumer cosmopolitanism and the rapid transformation of economic and social landscapes in the affluent suburbs. (Ip *et al.*, 1998).

It has been noted by Hugo (1995) that most residential concentrations of ethnic groups are in areas with lower socioeconomic status, and that the major concentrations of NESB (Non-English Speaking Background) populations are in the industrial and lower-cost housing areas of the major cities. This is not the case with New Asian immigrants, since the reasons for them to immigrate are different from the Europeans and Asians from developing countries. The Taiwanese came mainly for perceived better education for their children than in their homeland, and a better life style which is

offered by the affluent suburbs.⁷ Like the Hong Kong immigrants studied by Wang (1993), they did not migrate from Taiwan primarily for job opportunities nor for joining their relatives, but for a range of other reasons. They come from large and medium cities in Taiwan, and the majority came to Australia by the category of 'skilled and business' migration. They are well educated and professionals with some wealth. Therefore, they are completely different from the majority of non-English speaking immigrants who were commonly less educated, worked in manual occupations and of lower social status. Being located in selected middle class and upper-middle residential areas, there is a tendency to spread out through relocation, as more skilled and business migrants move in.

Like other New Asian immigrants, patterns of Taiwanese immigration differ from the early ethnic Chinese immigrants who tended to settle in Chinatowns. With wealth, entrepreneurship and good education, they are not marginalized groups at the very start. However, in spite of their economic adaptation through their high homeownership rate, their assimilation is not complete, as their other aspects of adaptation have not helped their acculturation in Australian society. This is by no means unique of the Taiwan-born in Australia. To what extent does their residential concentration in suburbs hinder assimilation like the earlier settlers in Chinatown has to be answered in future studies.

Although chain migration predominates to some extent, the Taiwanese did not depend economically on their nationals, and thus did not form ethnic enclaves at a large scale like the second wave of traditional immigrants, nor are they like the first group who came for employment (Tonkin, 1993). However, they formed close social networks across cities due to common cultural background in Taiwan, sometimes through different social organizations, especially religious ones. At the micro-level, their different political inclination in the homeland may decide whom they associate with. Rumors travel rapidly within the city, while social activities such as visits by dignitaries from Taiwan are organized effectively across state borders. Over the years, they have kept their cultural traditions in Australia and evolved as Australian Taiwanese (AT), to be differentiated from other ethnic Chinese, such as Australian Chinese and Australian Hong Kongers. Without formal diplomatic ties between Australia and Taiwan, the Taiwanese communities are there to represent a different sub-ethnic group with high visibility in the Australian society and a socially active community.

While the business migrants were equipped with capital, business and industrial expertise, they generally experienced difficulties in establishing businesses in Australia due to the different business, marketing and industrial relations environment (DIMIA 2003). On top of this is their lack of cultural capital, including good English, proper accreditation, and unfamiliarity with Australian business culture which is totally different from Taiwan's. Yet, coming to Australia with wealth

and an urban background, they are good at property investment and maintain a high homeownership rate. Thus, it can be argued that labour participation rate would not be sufficient to explain the socio-economic status of the Taiwanese community. Similar to the findings of Yu (forthcoming), homeownership attainment is an important symbol of economic success of Taiwanese immigrants despite their lack of substantial acculturation by English proficiency or engagement in the labour force in their early years of settlement in the United States. It can be still said that Taiwanese immigrants have adapted economically to the U.S. and Australia well in advance of acculturation. Given the education opportunity for their children and a better quality of life (benefits) offered by Australian environment, the cost of their immigration experience is justified.

While settling down in Australia, some Taiwanese are at the same time global citizens engaged in international businesses and pursue a bi-local/multi-local residence pattern. They fit the description of “transilient migration” as mentioned in Burnley (2001) and a highly mobile group using air-borne traffic many times a year. Similar mobility patterns have been noticed by Ip (2003) in her observations of Taiwanese in New Zealand who suggested that the Taiwanese see New Zealand as the ‘last utopia’ which offers them a lifestyle refuge and their children the chance of a good education. They are truly global citizens, while committed to the Australian host societies in their own ways such as carrying out philanthropic work, regularly sponsoring religious events, and running Chinese language schools.

As the Chinese are growing rapidly in terms of population and diversity, it is worthy to further study the sub-ethnic differences in settlement patterns and their impact on the Australian cultural landscape. Further in-depth study is needed for the Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong counterparts. A comprehensive post-settlement program is necessary to ensure that migrants maximize their opportunities to be actively incorporated into the host society’s economy. Pre-departure information can be provided by the policy makers of both sending and receiving communities to ensure that the migrants are better prepared before they go to live in a new country. Policy recommendations to foster early integration of migrants into the wider economic and social life of Australia are needed.

Notes

1. The Taiwanese community studied here encompass both those born in Taiwan and those who were born elsewhere, especially in China, but had lived in Taiwan before they migrated to Australia. Their numbers therefore exceed the Taiwan-born as enumerated by the Census. They should include the children of the

new Australian Taiwanese (AT) migrants who are Australian-born.

2. This include ‘fully owned’ and ‘being purchased’
3. The term ‘Astronaut’ originates from Hong Kong, meaning ‘Wife empty person’, denoting the husbands who are left with no wives in Hong Kong. Tam (2003) wrote that it can also mean “Too empty person” meaning the wives who are left with no career, no income, no domestic helper, and no husband at the place of immigration.
4. In spite of being recent migrants, the Taiwanese migrants belong to a wide range of associations such as the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-chi Foundation, Australian Taiwanese Friendship Association Inc., the Taiwan-Australia Business Association, Friends of Australasian Youth Association, Inc., Women’s Association, the Friends of Taiwan Society Inc., Overseas Chinese Business Institute Alumni Association of Australia, Taiwan Association of Businessmen, Veterans Association, and various university alumni associations, etc.
5. Including those who came with migration agents to tour various cities of Australia, as part of the application package.
6. According to our survey, the fees charged by migration agents ranges from NTD 200,000 to 400,000 (AUD 10,000–20,000) in the mid-nineties (Chiang and Hsu, 2000). Part of the migration package provides help in settling down in Australia. The agents in Taiwan often work with their counterparts who are often earlier immigrants in Australia.
7. This happens because the Taiwanese find houses so affordable in Australia. By selling their small apartment in Taipei, the immigrant can easily afford to buy a spacious house with a lawn, a courtyard, and a swimming pool.

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Appendix 1

Settler Arrivals of Taiwan-born in Australia, 1985–1986 to 2003–2004

Data source: BIMPR, DIMA & DIMIA, *Settler Arrivals*, various issues.

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