

A Decade of Taiwanese Migrant Settlement in Australia: Comparisons with Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Settlers

David Ip*

(ABSTRACT)

The arrival of Taiwanese migrants in Australia represents the second major wave of Chinese immigration to Australia. Many entered Australia as business migrants. Typically they were well-educated, affluent professionals, managers, entrepreneurs who were looking for new business opportunities as well as a lifestyle characterised by open-space, clean air, good education for their children, and personal and political safety. Yet the settlement experiences of many Taiwanese migrants, despite their affluence and (business) skills, have been characterised by stress and hardship, particularly in making adjustments in social, business and economic relationships.

A review of statistical data compiled from census and government reports in Australia has revealed that after a decade in Australia, the Taiwanese settler group was still characterised by high unemployment, even when compared to other Chinese migrant groups from Hong Kong and the PRC. It is suggested that the Taiwanese migrants' persistent high non-participation in Australia's labour force is indicative and poignant of their highly distinctive, albeit not exclusive in broader Chinese migrant terms of their experience of migration settlement. There seems to be an increasing number of Taiwanese settlers returning to resettle in Taiwan in recent years because of perceived better employment and business opportunities or for family and personal reasons. Recent interviews with Taiwanese settlers have also suggested that the most recent arrivals, being more aware of the obstacles in achieving work or business satisfaction during settlement, seem less likely to commit themselves to lifelong settlement in Australia.

Key words: Taiwanese migrants, Chinese migrants in Australia, unemployment, settlement, return migration.

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Recent Chinese Immigration to Australia

Asian immigration constitutes the single most important feature of socio-economic change in Australian society in the last decade (Coughlan and McNamara 1997). Since the White Australia Policy was jettisoned in the mid-1970s, Asian migration has outstripped net British and Irish migration for all but four of the past 15 years (Carruthers 1999). While it remains presumptuous to consider the end of the twentieth century the 'Asianisation' of Australia, its impact upon the fabric of Australian society is without question, and has been both broadly and deeply felt. It generated, among other things, a series of heated debates on immigration, Australian national identity, and racism in Australian society (Castles et al 1998), formed a centre of attack for Pauline Hanson's much controversial and notorious One Nation Party, and in sum spurned significant shifts in the configuration of Australia's political landscape (Gary and Winter 1998; Adams 1997). Furthermore however, Asian immigration has also become an integral facet of the shift in Australia's economic redirection toward the Asian region (McGillivray and Smith 1997; Milner and Quilty 1998).

In terms of the makeup of recent Asian migration to Australia, the Chinese figure most prominently. In numerical terms in fact, between the late 1980s and the early 1990s Hong Kong became the top source of Australia's immigrants -- in 1991 and 1992, it ranked second as one of the top ten source countries (DIMA 1993). Between 1995 and 1996, China became the third largest source as well (ABS 1997). The rapid growth in Chinese immigration during the late 1980s through to the early 1990s was the outcome of changes in both Australian policies as well as complex international developments. Similar to other Western industrialised nations, Australia has gone through a period of economic restructuring in order to adapt to new international economic imperatives. The basis of its economy overall shifted from manufacturing to service or knowledge-based industries. By 1985 manufacturing accounted for only 17% of Australia's GDP, on par with India and far below Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) such as South Korea and Taiwan. In 1988/89 its service sectors accounted for 41% of GDP, more than twice its manufacturing industries (Anstee: 27, 1995). Commensurate with these changes in the economy have been increasing workforce demands for specialist experts in banking,

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accounting and financial services, making it essential for Australia to attract not only skilled immigrants, but also to encourage a flexible influx of capital and finance inseparable from a proportion of its new settlers. At the same time, economic developments in Europe meant there were few Europeans seeking to migrate to Australia, thus it was no accident that during this period Australia actively sought to attract highly educated and skilled professionals from economically affluent NICs in Asia (Castles and Miller 1993).

The first wave of post-war Chinese immigration to Australia would not have emanated from Hong Kong had it remained a British colony. In 1983 the British Thatcher government decided to revert Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. The fear and uncertainty of what the future would hold prompted many Hong Kongers to emigrate, which for many offered the only form of insurance with maximum security. The possession of a foreign passport for example has given Hong Kongers the promise of protection should they choose to return to live in Hong Kong. Should there be any political upheaval, as foreign citizens they could also depart immediately (Lary *et al* 1994). It was no surprise to find that the number of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong increased rapidly after 1983 (Table 1). With the Tiananmen incident in 1989 a persistent reminder, Hong Kong Chinese migration to Australia peaked in 1991/92.

Many Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong came to Australia as independent skilled migrants, but a significant proportion of them also came as business migrants. In November 1981 the Australian government officially launched the Business Migration Program (BMP), between July 1982 and June 1990 a total of 36,555 BMP settler arrivals took place. About one-third of these came from Hong Kong. However, 15.3% of all business migrants during this time also came from Taiwan (Inglis and Wu 1991:4). In fact, between 1991/2 and 1995/6 about 61 per cent of the skilled settler arrivals from Taiwan were business migrants, and close to 90 per cent of the skilled migrants from Taiwan who settled in Queensland entered under the business migration category (Ip *et al* 1998b). These represented the second wave of recent Chinese immigration to Australia that began in 1985 and peaked in 1991 (Table 1).

The most significant Chinese migrants however, at least numerically, have been the numbers from the People's Republic of China (PRC) settling in the mid-1980s following the Australian government's decision to sell places in Australian universities and English language classes to overseas students. Before the Tiananmen incident in 1989, over 20,000 PRC students came to Australia, and an additional 25,000 followed in the next two years. Admittedly most were more interested in finding opportunities to work and settle in Australia beyond and above studying English, and the Tiananmen incident subsequently made many more determined to stay on and gain political asylum. Given the circumstances many of these were given a special four-year extension to their temporary entry permits and following an extensive lobbying campaign the government announced in November 1993 that the majority would be granted refugee status and given permanent residence in Australia. As a result, close to 37,000 PRC Chinese obtained permanent residence by February 1996, giving them the right to bring in immediate family members. In fact 1995/6 saw more than 11,000 new settlers, or

slightly more than 11 per cent of the total Australian immigration intake for that year, arrive from the PRC. While the numbers arriving from Hong Kong and Taiwan has slowed since the mid-1990s², growth in the numbers of PRC immigrants have remained strong throughout the latter half of the 1990s (Table 1). This represents the third wave of recent Chinese immigration to Australia.

² The intention to emigrate among Hong Kongers started to dip since 1993 perhaps because more were resigned to the inevitability of Hong Kong being reincorporated into the PRC as a special administrative region, or simply, those who had most fear had already made plans to emigrate soon after the Tiananmen incident. This was indicated by the number of applications received at the Australian Commission in Hong Kong.

Number of Applications Received at the Australian Consulate in Hong Kong, 1986/87 – 1998/99

Year	Number of Applications Received (Cases)	Number of Visa Granted (Persons)
1986 – 1987	6,317	-
1987 – 1988	8,178	-
1988 – 1989	6,882	10609
1989 – 1990	14,029	14218
1990 – 1991	11,414	17451
1991 – 1992	5,980	13339
1992 – 1993	3,238	5925
1993 – 1994	3863	5067
1994 – 1995	5893	4929
1995 – 1996	6369	5877
1996 - 1997	3228	5286
1997 – 1998	1243	4156
1998 - 1999	1484	2195

Sources:

Skeldon, R. 'Hong Kong in an international migration system' in R. Skeldon (ed.) *Reluctant Exiles? Migration from Hong Kong and the New Overseas Chinese*, p. 49. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc, 1994.
 Australian Commission Hong Kong (<http://www.australia.org>, accessed on 22nd August 2000).

The sudden drop in Taiwanese immigration to Australia was caused by changes, and specifically the introduction of English language requirement, in the skilled/business migration program.

Table 1: Chinese Settler Arrivals in Australia 1980 - 2000

Year of Arrival	Birthplace			Total
	China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	
1980-- 1981	1,435	775	--	2,210
1981-- 1982	1,503	1,295	125	2,923
1982 – 1983	1,193	2,040	132	2,688
1984 – 1985	3,163	3,296	241	3,822
1985 – 1986	3,138	3,117	381	6,700
1986 – 1987	2,690	3,398	804	6,892
1987 – 1988	3,282	5,577	1,146	10,005
1988 – 1989	3,819	7,307	2,100	13,226
1989 – 1990	3,069	8,054	3,055	14,178
1990 – 1991	3,256	13,541	3,491	20,288
1991 – 1992	3,388	12,913	3,172	19,473
1992 – 1993	3,046	6,520	1,434	11,000
1993 – 1994	2,740	3,333	785	6,858
1994 - 1995	3,708	4,135	794	8,637
1995 - 1996	11,247	4,361	1,638	17,246
1996 – 1997	7,761	3,894	2,180	13,835
1997 – 1998	4,338	3,194	1,518	9,050
1998 – 1999	6,133	1,918	1,556	9,607
1999 – 2000	4,660 ^(a)	1,130 ^(a)	1,270 ^(a)	6,950 ^(a)

(a) July 1999 to March 2000.

Sources:

1. Harris, K.L. and Ryan, J. (1998) 'Chinese Immigration to Australia and South Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Legislative Control', in E. Sinn (ed.) *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, pp. 373-390. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
2. ABS, *Migration*, various issues.
3. ABS (2000) *Overseas Arrivals and Departures*, March.
4. Coughlan, J.E. (1998) 'The changing characteristics of Chinese migration to Australia', in E. Sinn (ed.) *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, pp. 299-345. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

In numerical terms, when compared to immigrants from the PRC or Hong Kong, the size of the Taiwanese migrant population in Australia is small (Table 2). However, their initial presence in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as business migrants (Table 3) created much controversy and debate³.

³ There were allegations that money laundering operations and movement of financial and personal assets derived from criminal sources had into Australia had been linked to the BMP. Furthermore, there were reports of widespread abuse of the BMP among the accredited agents and complaints that only 25% of the total number of migrants entering under the BMP had established a business in Australia after their arrival. This sparked a Commonwealth inquiry into the BMP in 1991. In the end, the inquiry found such allegations inconclusive but recommended a tighter control of the BMP. See Joint Committee of Public Accounts (1991) *Report 310 Business Migration Program*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Table 2. Chinese Population in Australia 1991 and 1996

Year	China	Hong Kong	Taiwan
1991	77,799	57,510	13,025
1996	111,124	68,350	19,536*

Sources:

ABS (1994) *Community Profiles: 1991 Census (China Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (1994) *Community Profiles: 1991 Census (Hong Kong Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (2000) *Community Profiles: 1996 Census (China Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (2000) *Community Profiles: 1996 Census (Hong Kong Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (1998) *Clib96 (Final Release)*. ABS, Canberra.

BIMPR (1995), *Atlas of the Australian People - 1991 Census: National Overview*. BIMPR, Melbourne.

*According to figures quoted by Chiang and Hsu (2000), the Taiwanese population in 1996 was 19,547. This was based on unpublished census data acquired from ABS. In Walmsley, Roley and Hugo (1999): 182-183, the figure was 19,574.

Table 3. Settler Arrivals by Eligibility Categories, Selected Years

Year/Country of Birth	Eligibility Category ^(a)						Humanitarian Refugee/SHP ^(c)	Other	Total
	Family Preferential	Family Concessional	OSS/ENS ^(b)	Business	Skilled Special Talents	Independent			
1985 – 1986									
China	2,377				494		599	49	3,519
HK	1,869				1,095		47	107	3,118
Taiwan	-				-		-	-	-
Australia Total	49,774				12,637		11,840	18,159	92,410
1987 – 1988									
China	1,333		1,942			942	19	192	4,428
HK	512		3,116			1,739	60	150	5,577
Taiwan	-		-			-	-	-	-
Australia Total	69,571				34,818		11,076	28,025	143,490
1988 – 1989									
China	1,403	692	344	998		188	14	176	3,815
HK	521	1,606	1,398	2,149		1,368	77	237	7,356
Taiwan	89	90	61	1,706		90	7	57	2,100
Australia Total	59,592			43,796			10,887	31,041	145,316
1989 – 1990									
China	1,034	263	316	1,056		290	9	101	3,069
HK	642	1,252	1,088	2,292		2,366	231	183	8,054
Taiwan	106	45	67	2,620		130	0	87	3,055
Australia Total	49,941			42,836			11,948	16,502	121,227
1990 – 1991									
China	1,543			1,622			9	52	3,226
HK	3,095			10,087			147	97	13,426
Taiwan	173			3,161			0	15	3,349
Australia Total	53,934			48,421			7,745	11,588	121,688
1991 – 1992									
China	1,161	590	275	543	5	662	11	141	3,388
HK	658	2,492	962	1,190	8	7,448	74	81	12,913
Taiwan	153	103	39	2,535	3	313	0	26	3,172
Australia Total	48,621			40,334			7,157	11,279	107,391
1992 – 1993									
China	1,815	245	152	380	11	384	4	55	3,046
HK	819	920	283	920	13	3,447	35	83	6,520
Taiwan	197	62	41	899	4	208	0	23	1,434
Australia Total	32,102			22,137			10,939	11,152	76,330
1993 – 1994									
China	1,833	337	99	134	3	276	1	57	2,740
HK	916	945	140	253	8	965	31	75	3,333
Taiwan	221	107	39	316	0	59	0	43	785
Australia Total	33,580			12,794			11,350	120,44	69,768
1994 – 1995									
China	2,474	280	112	141	16	561	3	121	3,708
HK	914	739	139	258	2	1,917	42	124	4,135
Taiwan	208	68	7	217	2	152	0	140	794
Australia Total	37,078			20,210			13,632	16,508	87,428

Table 3. Settler Arrivals by Eligibility Categories, Selected Years (Cont'd)

1997 – 1998						
	China	2,538	1,642	13	145	4,338
	HK	342	2,702	7	141	3,194
	Taiwan	109	1,259	0	150	1,518
	Australia Total	21,142	25,985	8,779	21,421	77,327
1998- 1999						
	China	3,246	2,455	6	426	6,133
	HK	329	1,447	1	141	1,918
	Taiwan	80	1,228	0	248	1,556
	Australia Total	21,501	28,106	8,790	25,746	84,143

(a) Migration eligibility categories have changed during the period. The allocation of settlers to categories is based on assumptions, to align as closely as possible past policies with current policy. Comparisons between years are therefore indicative only.

(b) OSS – Occupational Share System; ENS – Employer Nomination Scheme.

(b) SHP – Special Humanitarian Program.

Sources:

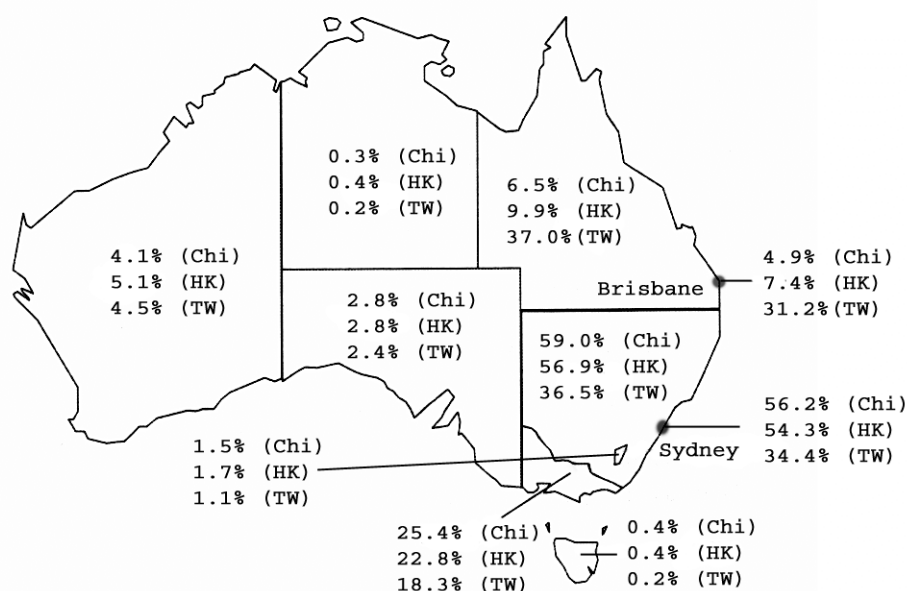
Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Australian Immigration: Consolidated Statistics*, various issues.

Bureau of Immigration Research, *Settler Arrivals by State of Intended Residence*, various issues.

DIMA, *Settlers Arrivals: Statistical Report*, various issues.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Taiwanese Immigrants

In 1996, almost a decade after the recent wave of Taiwanese migrants to Australia, the vast majority of Chinese population was located in New South Wales. However, 35 per cent of all Taiwanese immigrants chose to settle in Queensland, and Brisbane has the second largest single concentration of Taiwanese immigrants with 31.2 per cent, while another 4.9 per cent lived on the Gold Coast in 1996 (Figure 1). It was the general impression that Brisbane has most Taiwanese migrants from Kaohsiung and that those who originate from Taipei tend to favour Sydney more as a settlement destination (Ip *et al* 1998, Schak 1999). In recent years, however, there has been a tendency for Queensland to overtake New South Wales as the most popular intended destination of settlement (Table 4).

Figure 1: Chinese Population Distribution by State 1996*

*According to Chiang and Hsu (2000), in 1996 41.5% of the Taiwanese population was in Sydney, 37.3% in Brisbane and 21.2% in Melbourne.

Sources:

1. Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.
2. Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.
3. Walmsley, J., Roley, F. and Hugo, G. (1999) *Atlas of the Australian People 1996 Census: National Overview*. DIMA (Dept of Immigration & Multicultural Affairs), Canberra.

Table 4. Intended Destinations of Settlement Among Taiwanese Migrants 1982-1999

	NSW	Victoria	Queensland	S. Aust	W. Aust	Tasman	N. Ter.	ACT
1982-83	66	--	11	5	2	0	5	7
1983-84	38	46	18	4	18	0	4	4
1984-85	94	71	35	11	8	0	11	11
1985-86	111	108	69	34	12	21	18	8
1986-87	354	186	128	67	25	33	6	5
1987-88	513	247	230	52	69	5	14	16
1988-89	846	395	631	57	158	1	7	5
1989-90	1,346	508	969	54	161	0	3	14
1990-91	1,240	470	1,554	67	107	0	4	14
1991-92	1,002	484	1,452	65	88	0	7	9
1992-93	524	225	581	20	43	--	--	--
1993-94	323	99	289	17	41	--	--	--
1994-95	292	82	364	15	32	--	--	--
1995-96	670	209	704	8	40	--	--	--
1996-97	800	237	1,061	22	49	--	--	--
1997-98	633	256	571	15	35	--	--	--
1998-99	608	189	711	12	29	--	--	--

Sources:

DIMA, *Australian Immigration: Consolidated Statistics*, various issues.

When compared to the early Chinese settlers in Australia, the recent Taiwanese immigrants arriving in the early 1990s reflect a significant disjuncture. The early Chinese settlers were mostly characterised by humble and rural origins. Few had any education and many were illiterate. Their journey to and settlement in Australia was often accompanied by a conspicuous absence of women as well as family members. Many were sojourners intending to seek quick profits in a few years and had plans to return to their home villages as soon as they made their fortunes.

The Taiwanese migrants in Australia, like most other Chinese migrants arriving in the early 1990s, were from a "new middle class" comprising mainly professionals, managers, owners of small/medium size enterprises, and administrators from urban metropolises. In 1991, only 15.3 per cent of Taiwanese migrants were qualified, holding either degree or diploma. In 1996, the number had increased to a significant proportion of 24.2 per cent (Walmsley *et al* 1999: 183), perhaps not as high as those from Hong Kong (44.9 per cent) (Zhao 2000a: 16) or the PRC (48.3 per cent) (Zhao 2000b: 16), but higher than those for the total Australian population (16.7 per cent) as well as all other overseas-born populations (19.2 per cent) (Table 5).

Table 5: Qualifications of Chinese Population in Australia 1991, 1996
(Persons aged 15 years and over)

Number in brackets are figures of 1991			
Level of Qualification	Hong Kong %	PRC %	Taiwan %
Higher Degree	4.8 (3.0)	4.7 (3.1)	--
Postgraduate Diploma	1.8 (1.2)	1.1 (0.7)	
Bachelor Degree	16.3 (12.1)	15.3 (10.1)	
Undergraduate Diploma	5.0 (6.2)	5.1 (4.0)	
Associate Diploma	4.1 (1.8)	5.4 (1.1)	24.2 (15.6)*
Skilled Vocational	2.7 (2.2)	3.8 (3.1)	
Basic Vocational	2.7 (3.6)	1.3 (2.2)	3.5 (3.8)**
Not Stated	7.4 (9.6)	11.3 (17.7)	
<i>Total Qualified</i>	<i>44.7(39.7)</i>	<i>48.0 (41.9)</i>	
Attending ed institution	28.8	8.5	
Not attend ed institution	26.2	46.2	
<i>Total No Qualification</i>	<i>55.0 (60.3)</i>	<i>55.2 (63.5)</i>	
Not Stated	0.3	0.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	

*Degree/Diploma

**Skilled/Basic Vocation

Sources:

ABS (1994) *Community Profiles: 1991 Census (China Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (1994) *Community Profiles: 1991 Census (Hong Kong Born)*. ABS, Canberra.

BIMPR (1995) *Atlas of the Australian People - 1991: National Overview*. BIMPR, Melbourne.

DIMA (1999) *Atlas of the Australian People - 1996 Census*. DIMA, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

The Taiwanese community was dominated by young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 (39.9 per cent) and 25-49 (38.4 per cent). The Hong Kongers were strongly

represented by young dependent children and young adults. Almost half of the Hong Kong community were aged between 25 and 49 according to the 1996 census (Walmsley *et al* 1999: 78). The PRC-born community, on the other hand, was characteristically an older population and had the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over (Table 6).

Table 6: Age Distribution in Chinese Population in Australia 1996

	0-4 yrs	5-14 yrs	15-24 yrs	25-44 yrs	45-64 yrs	65+ yrs
Hong Kong	1.7%	13.2%	27.3%	39.9%	15.2%	2.7%
PRC	0.4%	6.8%	6.1%	48.1%	24.0%	14.6%
Taiwan	--	13.5%*	39.9%	38.4%*	6.3%*	1.9%

*Denotes age groups 0-14, 25-49, 50-64.

Sources:

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

ABS (1998) *Clib96 (Final Release)*. ABS, Canberra.

Walmsley, J., Roley, F. and Hugo, G. (1999) *Atlas of the Australian People 1996 Census: National Overview*. DIMA, Canberra.

Economic Activities and Incorporation

Few Taiwanese immigrants arrived in Australia with pre-arranged jobs or a pre-established business. However, because most Taiwanese entered Australia under the category of 'skill migration', which includes immigrants classified under the criteria of 'employer nominees, business migrants, distinguished talent and independent', many brought with them substantial amounts of savings and capital. This meant they could settle in Australia comfortably without immediate financial concern. In many ways, they differed from many of the PRC arrivals, particularly those who came during the mid-1980s to study English, bringing with them virtually no financial resources. Nevertheless, most Taiwanese migrants found it just as hard as their PRC compatriots to find a 'good' job or to establish an enterprise in a new environment.

Many were unprepared by the obstacles they encountered, due particularly to their lack of English proficiency. In 1991, almost half of the Taiwanese migrants confessed that their English proficiency was poor although over half were reportedly fluent. They certainly fared better than the PRC-born, but were conspicuously behind those who came from Hong Kong. In 1996 their English proficiency seemed to have improved -- only less than one-third claimed to have an inadequate English proficiency (Table 7).

Table 7: English Proficiency: Chinese Immigrants in Australia 1991 & 1996
(Persons aged 5 years and over)

	English Proficiency	
	Very Well/Well	Not Well/Not At All
PRC	51.2% (45.4)	43.9% (47.7)
HK	74.9% (73.0)	15.7% (18.1)
Taiwan	65.4% (53.7)	31.1% (42.4)

Sources:

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Walmsley, J., Roley, F. and Hugo, G. (1999) *Atlas of the Australian People 1996 Census: National Overview*. DIMA, Canberra.

BIPR (1994) *Community Profiles 1991 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Not surprisingly, in 1991, when Australia was in the middle of a major recession and with a national level of unemployment reaching 11.6 per cent, many Taiwanese found it hard to find a job or to establish a business (Ip *et al* 1998, Schak 1999). Among the Chinese migrants, the Taiwan-born in fact had the highest unemployment rate (27.7 per cent), significantly higher than those arriving from the PRC (16.3 per cent) (Hon and Coughlin 1997: 152). If considered by the labour status of family types (couple or one-parent families), the unemployment situation of Taiwanese migrants was less pronounced in 1991 (Table 8). Yet the proportion of Taiwanese migrants who were not in the labour force (see Table 9 as well) remained alarming. If anything, it was indicative of the problems of establishing a business when settling in a new country in the midst of an economic downturn, particularly when compounded by a lack of cultural capital, such as the knowledge and familiarity with a myriad of laws and regulations relating to labour, taxation, unions, banking and trade, or the understanding of business culture and practices in Australian society, along with the lack of a helpful business network. Many nevertheless also admitted that participation in the labour force was a matter of choice (Chiang and Hsu 2000), especially when most did not find jobs that compared well to what they had in their home country.

Table 8. Couple Families with Dependent Offspring: Labour Force Status of Parents of Chinese Origin 1991

Birthplace	Labour Force Status				Total %
	Both Employed %	One Employed %	One/Both Unemployed %	Both not in Labour Force %	
China	43.2	32.3	8.9	15.6	100
Hong Kong	46.6	35.8	5.7	11.9	100
Taiwan	16.5	20.7	11.5	51.2	100

Source: BIPR (1994) *Immigrant Families: A Statistical Profile*, p. 27. Canberra: AGPS.

Table 9: Labour Force Status (Percentage) Among Chinese Immigrants Groups 1991
(Persons aged 15+ years old)

	Hong Kong		PRC		Taiwan	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Unemployment rate	13.4	13.8	14.9	18.6	27.0	28.5
Labour force participation rate	63.4	50.0	75.6	52.1	33.5	24.9
Labour force status not stated	0.5	1.2	2.1	2.8	1.8	1.9

Source: ABS 1991 Census, Table No. CSC6035 in Hon and Coughlin (1997).

It was therefore not uncommon to find that many Taiwanese simply lived off the capital they had brought with them. For those who had not closed down their businesses in Taiwan, their professed aim was to commute between Australia and Taiwan to keep the old business running, leaving their spouses and children behind in Australia with reunions during vacations. This arrangement however is not unique to the Taiwanese. Among recent Hong Kong arrivals, the phenomenon of 'astronaut families' has been widespread (Inglis *et al* 1996, Pei-Pua 1996). They too found it difficult to obtain jobs in Australia comparable to the high wage and prestige that came with their previous occupation (Wu *et al* 1998).

Among those employed in 1991, the Taiwanese migrants were more likely to be employed as managers (18.9 per cent), professionals, or para-professionals (17.8 per cent), a pattern similar to that dominated within the Hong Kong group, but drastically different from the China-born who concentrated in low status, unskilled, blue collar occupations, with one quarter each working as tradespersons or labourers and another tenth as machine operators or drivers (Table 10). Many of the PRC migrants also had to work two or three jobs to make ends meet (Marsh 1999).

Table 10: Employment (%) of Chinese Immigrant Groups 1991 Census

	Hong Kong		PRC		Taiwan	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Manager /administrator	12.3	6.4	7.9	5.2	30.3	13.5
Professional	30.4	17.9	10.0	8.3	17.0	10.4
Para-professional	4.2	9.5	2.4	4.3	2.5	1.9
Tradesperson	16.8	2.6	25.1	6.1	6.6	2.7
Clerk	6.4	22.8	2.4	10.3	5.6	21.9
Personal service/sales workers	11.6	20.4	6.1	15.1	9.9	16.2
Plant /machine operator	2.9	4.7	10.6	15.1	2.4	3.0
Labourers / related workers	7.6	6.8	24.3	23.8	7.9	9.7
Inadequately stated	0.9	0.9	1.8	1.7	2.8	1.8
Not stated	6.8	7.9	9.4	10.2	14.8	19.0

Source: ABS, 1991 Census, Table No. CSC6182 in Hon and Coughlin (1997)

It has been accepted that self-employment is often considered by migrants as a favourite recourse to overcoming the difficulties of unemployment (Waldinger 1990). In view of

the fact that many Taiwanese were business migrants, it was not surprising they had the highest proportion of self-employment (Table 11). In 1991, when the national average rate of self-employment among varying ethnic groups in Australia was 5.8 per cent (Inglis 1999), the economic incorporation of Taiwanese migrants into the Australian society could be considered exceptional.

Table 11: Employment Status (%) of Chinese Immigrants 1991

	Hong Kong		PRC		Taiwan	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wage/salary earner	79.0	83.3	81.6	83.1	54.9	64.3
Self-employed	9.2	7.2	8.8	8.6	22.4	19.0
Employer	11.0	7.6	9.0	6.4	17.6	9.3
Unpaid helper	0.8	1.9	0.6	1.9	5.2	7.5

Source: ABS, 1991 Census, Table No. CSC6035 in Hon and Coughlin (1997)

In 1991, despite their affluent background and their high level of education, the median personal income of Taiwanese migrants was not high. The figure for men was \$21,604, and women, \$17,001. These were considerably lower than those of the Hong Kong group -- \$27,614 for men, and for women, \$21,026. Median earning among the PRC men however was only \$18,637, and for women \$15,955 (Hon and Coughlin 1997: 160).

Changes After A Decade

After a decade of immigration to Australia, what are the changes one can observe within the Taiwanese group? How do they compare with other Chinese migrant groups? In 1996, unemployment within the Taiwan group was estimated at 19.6 per cent (Walmsley *et al* 1999) which, when compared to the 1991 figure, was noticeably reduced. Nevertheless it remained seriously high, especially when compared to the national average of 9.2 per cent (Table 12). Informants in Chiang and Hsu's (2000:12) research indicated that many obstacles prevented Taiwanese migrants from obtaining employment in Brisbane (Ip *et al* 1998) -- poor English and the unwillingness to accept a job they perceived to be inferior to their previous one continued to haunt their Sydney informants. Chu's (2000) preliminary research on Brisbane's Taiwanese migrants similarly confirms that unemployment or underemployment was still widespread. Home ownership among the Taiwanese, however, remained high (75.3 per cent) (Walmsley *et al* 1999:182-183).

Table 12: Labour Force Status of Chinese Population: By Sex, Australia 1996
(Persons aged 15 years and over)

	PRC		Hong Kong		Taiwan
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Employed	58.3	37.4	53.4	41.8	
Unemployed	7.7	7.2	5.8	4.7	19.6
Not in labour force	32.8	54.2	40.3	53.0	
Not stated	1.2	1.2	0.5	0.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Sources:

Walmsley, J., Roley, F. and Hugo, G. (1999) *Atlas of the Australian People 1996 Census: National Overview*. DIMA, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Similarly, unemployment was common among the PRC group in 1996, although it had improved slightly at 13.4 per cent. They were probably helped by the Australian qualifications they had gained (Marsh 1999). Still over half of them (58.3 per cent) reported earning less than \$300 a week (Table 13). This was higher than for all overseas-born persons (52.8 per cent) and for all Australians (50.8 per cent). Their home ownership rate, at 30.4 per cent in 1991, was the lowest among the three Chinese immigrant group. In 1996, however, 59.9 per cent of this group owned or purchased their homes (Walmsley *et al* 1999: 43).

Table 13: Weekly Income of Chinese Population in Australia 1996

	<\$80	\$80-159	\$160-299	\$300-499	\$500-699	\$700-999	\$1000-1499	\$1500+
PRC	20.5	17.9	17.5	22.6	10.0	5.0	1.7	0.8
HK	32.2	11.3	11.4	14.6	11.1	9.1	5.1	2.3

Sources:

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

The Hong Kong group was perhaps the most well off among the three, with some 12.9 per cent (Table 13) in higher income categories (above \$700 per week), compared to 10.8 per cent for the total Australian population. Its share of people who were in professional and para-professional occupations (55.2 per cent) was also significantly greater than for the total population (38.8 per cent) (Table 14). In comparison, the Taiwanese migrants were not likely to find professional occupations, but consistently found jobs as managers or administrators (Table 15). Hong Kongers too had high home ownership rate (75.6 per cent), slightly more than the Australian average (71.3 per cent) (Walmsley *et al* 1999: 79). Yet the unemployment rate within this group was still 9.7 per cent, and there was a higher than average proportion of people (56.5 per cent) with a gross weekly income of less than \$300 (Table 13). It is also evident there was a much higher proportion than all overseas-born persons not in the labour force, but this could be explained by the fact that there were a large number of students configuring the Hong Kong population.

Table 14: Occupation of Chinese Population in Australia 1996

	PRC	Hong Kong
Managers & Administrators	6.4	6.6
Professionals	15.0	31.9
Associate Professionals	13.0	15.4
Tradespersons / Related Workers	15.0	6.7
Advanced Clerical/ Service Workers	1.8	4.7
Int. Clerical, Sales, Service Workers	10.3	17.7
Int. Production / Transport Workers	14.0	4.1
Elem Clerical, Sales, Service Workers	5.8	5.9
Labourers / Related Workers	14.6	4.7
Inadequately Stated / Not Stated	4.0	2.3

Sources:

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census Hong Kong Born*. ABS, Canberra.

Zhao, Z. (2000) *Community Profiles 1996 Census China Born*. ABS, Canberra.

What is most significant about the Taiwanese migrants after a decade of settlement in Australia then is their perpetual high level of non-participation in the labour force (Table 15). The large proportion of Taiwanese migrants not in the labour force in the early 1990s could well be explained by the unfavourable economic climate for setting up a business or getting a job for new migrants. In the more economically stable and buoyant times during the late 1990s, the limitation of such an explanation becomes apparent. The persistent high non-participation in Australia's labour force among Taiwanese migrants seemed even more peculiar particularly or incongruent given the rapid emergence of a plethora of Taiwanese migrant owned small businesses in Brisbane's southern suburbs of Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills, and even in the CBD (Chu 2000). Perhaps this has more to do with the obstacles many Taiwanese migrants encountered in achieving work or business satisfaction.

Table 15. Occupation of Taiwanese Migrants, Selected Years

	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	97-98	98-99
Mangers & Administrators	31.1	29.2	19.8	18.3	25.9	24.8
Professionals	7.2	11.0	13.6	17.4	11.0	9.7
Associate Professionals	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.7	3.2	3.2
Tradepersons/ Related Workers	0.6	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.7	0.7
Advanced Clerical/ Service Workers	2.4	2.8	5.0	3.8	1.4	0.7
Int. Clerical, Sales, Service Workers	0.9	1.1	1.9	2.6	0.8	0.4
Elem Clerical, Sales, Service Workers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Labourers / Related Workers	0.3	0.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.2
Not in Labour Force	56.4	51.2	52.9	52.6	56.1	56.9
Inadequately Stated / Not Stated	0.0	1.7	3.3	2.6	0.8	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: DIMA, *Settlers Arrivals*, various issues.

Notably it was also reported that in recent years, there had been an increasing number of Taiwanese migrants returning to Taiwan. Their *departures* are well illustrated by official statistics (Table 16). According to estimates made by the Taiwanese informants recently interviewed in Brisbane⁴, as much as 50 per cent of Taiwanese migrant families had at least some members who returned to Taiwan for various reasons.

Table 16. Taiwanese Settler* Permanent Departures 1984-1999

Year	Numbers	Year	Numbers
1984-85	2	1991-92	178
1985-86	14	1992-93	162
1986-87	17	1993-94	183
1987-88	28	1994-95	170
1988-89	33	1995-96	219
1989-90	54	1996-97	261
1990-91	99	1997-98	261
		1998-99	516

*Taiwan as country of birth

Source: DIMA, *Australian Immigration Consolidated Statistics*. Various issues.

Young Taiwanese adults, for example, were reportedly leaving for better job opportunities and a more 'exciting' lifestyle after completing their university degrees. Many of the early business migrants who were 'astronauting' between Taiwan and Australia had also decided to spend most time in Taiwan. Their spouses similarly resolved to join their husbands in Taiwan when they felt their children were old enough to look after themselves. Some informants joked about the replacement of 'astronauting Taiwanese parents' by 'astronauting children' as it is more common to see the 'parachute children' jetting frequently to visit their parents in Taiwan. Others expressed a growing concern about the emergence of teenage gangs (Jian 2000) among Taiwanese 'parachute children' who remained "unsupervised, had plenty of money to burn and had no need to look for a job". Some older parents of early business migrants were also compelled to follow their adult children returning to Taiwan, as they could not depend on their grandchildren to look after them. More importantly, as word got around through many return migrants that the business climate in Australia was not conducive for small and medium businesses, either as a result of restrictive government policies or being conned by unscrupulous migration brokers, many recent Taiwanese arrivals plan to return to Taiwan as soon as they gain Australian citizenship and their children completing their university education.

To put things in perspective however, return migration among Hong Kong migrants has also been high. Between 1997-98, the outflow of Hong Kong migrants from Australia exceeded inflow by 310 persons (*Independence Daily* 27/28 May 2000).

⁴ Interviews with 15 Taiwanese informants who arrived in Brisbane less than 5 years were conducted in July 2000.

Conclusion

The arrival of Taiwanese migrants in Australia represents the second wave of Chinese immigration to Australia, one which began as recently as the late 1980s at a time when Australia's economy was undergoing a major post-Fordist restructuring and attempting to attract skilled and entrepreneurial migrants capable of transferring both financial as well as cultural capital and create new businesses to employ Australians. While most migrants from Hong Kong took advantage of the skilled migration category, many Taiwanese migrants entered Australia as business migrants. Typically many were well-educated, affluent professionals, managers, or entrepreneurs looking for new business opportunities as well as a lifestyle that was blessed with open-space, clean air, good education for their children, and personal and political safety (Ip et al 1998b). Yet the settlement experiences of many Taiwanese migrants, despite their affluence and (business) skills, have been characterised by stress and hardships, particularly in making adjustments in social, business and economic relationships.

A review of statistical data compiled from census and government reports in Australia has revealed that after a decade in Australia, the Taiwanese settler group was still characterised by high unemployment and with the largest proportion of population who were not in the labour force when compared to other Chinese migrant groups from Hong Kong and the PRC. This is not to imply that there has been little economic success among Taiwanese migrants. Mr Gordon Fu (Fu Hsien-da), who, in a short period of four years rose with meteoric speed, from nowhere to the 54th position on BRW's (*Business Review Weekly*) list of the wealthiest 200 Australians in 1996, with an estimated worth of \$170 million, for example, has continued to enjoy enormous economic success. His Yu Feng group at present owns 16 shopping centres in southeast Queensland⁵. His total assets are estimated to be worth about \$335 million (*Business Review Weekly* 2000) and his contribution to the gradual 'cosmopolitanisation' of the suburb of Sunnybank in Brisbane from a quiet, monocultural dormitory suburb into a booming multicultural business and entertainment satellite continues to impress not just Taiwanese or Asian, but also Australian entrepreneurs (Ip et al 1998).

It is suggested that the Taiwanese migrants' persistently high non-participation in Australia's labour force is related to the obstacles they found in achieving satisfaction in work and business. There seems to be an increasing number of return-migration among Taiwanese settlers in recent years. Some choose to return for better employment and business opportunities. Others return because of family and personal reasons, and still others, like some older parents, depart Australia because they have no other alternative as their adult children decide to return to Taiwan. It has also been suggested that the most recent arrivals from Taiwan are more pragmatic. Keenly aware of the obstacles among

⁵They included the Arnadale Shopping Centre, Big Top Shopping Centre, Booval Fair, Brookside Shopping Centre, Capalaba Park, Cannon Hill Kmart Plaza, Fairfield Gardens, Logan Central Plaza, Margate Shopping Centre, Mt Gravatt Plaza, Peninsula Fair Shopping Centre, Stafford City Shopping Centre, Sunnybank Hills Shoppingtown, Sunny Park Shopping Centre, Sunnybank Plaza and Toowong Village

earlier Taiwanese settlers had in achieving work or business satisfaction, they are more likely to return to Taiwan when they obtain Australian citizenship and their children complete tertiary education in Australia.

It must be emphasised, however, that these are recent impressions from the field and more empirical research is needed to further validate such claims. Nevertheless, one should not be surprised if recent Taiwanese arrivals appear more ready to resettle in Taiwan. After all, there is nothing altruistic about immigration. As Ong (1999: 135) observed, overseas Chinese, and particularly in this case, Hong Kong and Taiwanese business migrants, are the ideal *homo economicus*, donning a mixture of familial moralism and ultra-instrumentalism, "readily submit to the governmentality of capital, plotting all the while to escape the state discipline". They are the ultimate flexible citizens and expressions of a habitus that is finely tuned to the age of globalism and late capitalism.

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