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Going Global: Household and the Demographic Transition in Taiwan

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Going Global: Householding and the Demographic Transition in Taiwan

This article examines the multifold dimensions of householding strategies in Taiwan, which have been embedded in a globalization process in the last two decades. It demonstrates how people mobilize family resources and attain household reproduction through ways such as international marriage, hiring migrant workers as domestic helpers and caregivers, overseas retirement, and studying abroad to pave the way for family migration. It concludes that globalization is the cause as well as the solution to the household crisis of reproduction in Taiwan. Yet, the crossborder strategies of households raise the need for government to formulate inclusive policies to create a multicultural society.

KEYWORDS: HOUSEHOLD · GLOBALIZATION · INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION · FAMILY · TAIWAN

At the beginning of the twenty-first century household formation in Taiwan unfolded as a picture full of the imprint of globalization. In 2003 1 out of every 3.5 newly wed couples was involved in a crossborder marriage; at the same time, the fertility rate fell to 1.1 percent, rendering Taiwan as one of the countries with the lowest fertility rates in the world. In the same year nearly 120,000 foreign healthcare givers tended the elderly in Taiwanese families, and new destinations where one could retire overseas, including China and Vietnam, became part of the householding agenda.

All of these indicators point to a fundamental challenge to, if not a crisis in, the traditional concept of the household in Taiwan. How Taiwan society is managing this challenge, particularly by searching for alternatives in a global sense, is the concern of this article. It focuses on how these factors are pushed by globalization, here featured as people flows that affect household formation in Taiwan, a society heavily influenced by traditional Chinese concepts of family. Global dynamics not only bind forces impacting households, but they also often become sources and strategies to help the Taiwanese overcome difficulties in household formation and sustenance (see Douglass 2006 and this issue).

In this context, the household can be seen as an institutional arrangement for working out the different needs of its members at different human lifecycle moments. In the sections below, these moments are explored separately with an overarching concern ultimately to show how those strategies are linked with each other in a broader process that can be summarized as global householding.

The 1980s: An Epoch of Accelerating Globalization for Taiwanese Households

As basic units of human social organization, households frequently stand at the forefront of society to witness the impact of globalization. One major force changing the household is a process summarized as the demographic transition, which commonly occurs around the world when market forces prevail and incomes increase. A central feature of this transition is that, when a society becomes more “modernized” through economic growth, the fertility rate falls. Taiwan not only fits this model, but it can now be said to be a leader in accelerated transition to below replacement fertility (Thornton and Lin 1994; Yue and Lan 2003).

As Taiwan underwent a transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, it also completed its twofold demographic transformation from a rural to an urban society with below replacement fertility rates, which actually began in 1983. No sooner had Taiwan entered this new population stage than it further strode into an urban society based on consumer and producer services. This latest stage has produced a great impact on households in Taiwan. Underlying the drop in fertility have been such trends as rising rates of never married and very late marrying adults, paralleled by soaring numbers of single households and continuously dropping fertility rates. Increasing orientation toward professional careers among women and men, the shift of orientation toward consumerism that necessitates two or more incomes to sustain it, and other factors such as rapidly rising levels of educational attainment among women leading to changing preferences on the qualities of spouses, all contribute to the urban and demographic transitions.

As a partial response to the inner crisis of the reproduction of households within Taiwan, the imperatives of globalization in the late 1980s also brought on potential solutions through the huge scale of people flows. Under the name of national security, from the Second World War onwards, the Taiwan government has practiced strict regulation over the flow of peoples, especially between Taiwan and mainland China. Along with the democratization of Taiwan in the late 1980s, which was ushered in by the abolition of martial law in 1987, a more open policy was adopted. Meanwhile, new regional dynamics were emerging. After the mid-1980s Taiwan grew from being a country that received foreign direct investments (FDI) to one that exported FDI to Southeast Asia and China, such that today Taiwan ranks as the top investor in a number of countries, including China and Vietnam. Along with capital investment, the manufacturing sectors in Taiwan relocated overseas and brought flows of businesspeople and staff to those countries. An estimated 750,000 Taiwan businessmen are said to be working in mainland China (FECS 2006) and 30,000 in Vietnam on a long-term basis. This externally oriented policy officially announced the new epoch for the Taiwanese people's further interaction with China and Southeast Asian countries with which Taiwan has strong cultural and geographic connections. It also laid the groundwork for the fast growing number of foreign spouses in the 1990s.

Global dynamics exerted tremendous challenges on households. The renowned precursor was the emergence of the "Migratory Bird Family" in the late 1980s, which characterized families with fathers working in mainland China while the mother and the children stayed in Taiwan for the children's

education (Jou 2003). This arrangement of family separation affected an estimated 2 million people. Issues such as children growing up without seeing their father for months, wives worn out by the immense burden of family responsibilities in Taiwan, and businessmen taking on second wives in the countries where they worked have been presented frequently by scholarly research and journalists' reports on people's daily lives.

Migrant Spouses

While the old Migratory Bird Family still remains, a new type of Migratory Bird Family has arisen since the early 1990s. Not long ago, marrying a foreigner was a rare option that only a certain number of people who had a lot of foreign exposure would take. However, the fast growing number of international or cross strait marriages during the past two decades has changed this notion. Since the late 1990s Taiwan has witnessed a surge of female immigrants from China and Southeast Asia moving to Taiwan through marriage (table 1). According to Taiwan's Ministry of Domestic Affairs, their number reached 343,341 in March 2005. Of this number 218,841 (64 percent) are from mainland China, while 124,550 (36 percent) are mostly from Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand. In a great majority of these marriages Taiwanese men married foreign women. Foreign male spouses reached around 23,500 only, or less than 7 percent of the total

Table 1. Crossborder marriages among all married couples in Taiwan, 1998–2005

YEAR	TOTAL MARRIED COUPLES REGISTERED IN THE YEAR	NUMBER OF MIGRANT SPOUSES FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA	MIGRANT SPOUSES FROM MAINLAND CHINA, HONG KONG, AND MACAU	MIGRANT SPOUSES IN TOTAL MARRIAGES (PERCENT)
1998	145,976	10,454	12,451	15.7
1999	173,209	14,674	17,589	18.6
2000	181,642	21,338	23,628	24.8
2001	170,515	19,405	26,797	27.1
2002	172,655	20,107	28,906	28.4
2003	171,483	19,643	34,991	31.9
2004	131,453	20,338	10,972	23.8
2005	141,140	13,808	14,619	20.1

Source: Ministry of Interior 2006

number. As previously noted, in the peak year of 2003 1 out of every 3.5 newly wedded couples was involved in an international or crossborder marriage.

Two major sources of foreign spouses in Taiwan dominate the international inflow of brides: China and Southeast Asian countries. Although both are part of a larger global trend, each of these streams emanates from somewhat different social origins. In 1987 after nearly forty years of being separated by the strait, the Taiwan government, under the pressure of a “visit family back home” movement, allowed those veterans who had followed the Kuomintang (KMT) regime to Taiwan in 1949 to visit their long separated families in mainland China. Following the lifting of restrictions, the veterans who visited their homeland were the first group to marry spouses from the mainland. Later on, along with the increasing social and economic interaction despite the official absence of government interaction across the strait, the trend of getting married with a spouse from the mainland became even stronger.

According to government statistics, in 1988 only 209,000 Taiwanese people visited China, including veterans and tourists. After 1992 the number of Taiwanese people going to China exceeded more than 1 million every year. The number reached 3.1 million in 2000, and in 2005 the recorded travels numbered close to 4 million. These visits pushed the phenomenon of unmarried veterans marrying spouses from mainland China. In recent years, as spouses from mainland China married more Taiwanese men with diverse backgrounds, such as the descendants of another group of married veterans in Taiwan, the numbers have kept soaring.

Similarly, the lifting of restrictions on tourist travels in 1987 and the government policy of encouraging investments in Southeast Asia in the early 1990s brought on the trend of marrying Southeast Asian females. In the beginning the brides were mostly overseas Chinese from Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and marriages occurred mostly through individual networks. Later, as Taiwan's influence expanded in those countries, marriage markets organized by brokers from both sides rose and pushed large-scale international marriage, which in most cases involves the grooms choosing their brides (who do not speak any Chinese) on their first trip to those countries. In the early 1990s Indonesia and the Philippines ranked as the top two countries where migrant spouses came from, but in the late 1990s Vietnam leapt to be the biggest bride-sending country (table 2). By the end of 2004 the accumulated number of Vietnamese spouses in Taiwan already exceeded 80,000.

The Taiwanese men who marry spouses from Southeast Asia are not from the same social groups as the men who marry women from mainland

Table 2. Number of permanent resident visas issued by Taiwan's government to Taiwanese citizens' spouses from Southeast Asia, 1994–2004

COUNTRY	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	TOTAL
Vietnam	530	1,969	4,113	9,060	4,644	6,790	12,327	12,340	12,823	11,566	11,953	88,115
Indonesia	2,247	2,409	2,950	2,464	2,331	3,643	4,381	3,230	2,602	2,746	2,683	31,686
Malaysia	55	86	73	96	102	106	65	-	-	-	-	583
Philippines	1,183	1,757	2,085	2,128	544	603	487	377	389	193	260	10,006
Thai/Burma	870	130	1,973	2,211	1,173	1,230	1,259	1,389	1,664	1,990	1,773	15,662
Singapore	14	52	18	50	85	12	3	-	-	-	-	234
Cambodia	-	-	-	-	-	656	875	567	632	644	890	4,264
Total	4,899	6,403	11,212	16,009	8,879	13,040	19,397	17,903	18,110	17,139	17,559	150,550

Sources: Hsia 2002, 170; Bureau of Consular Affairs 2006

China. Tsay (2004) has compared the two major groups of migrant brides from mainland China and Vietnam. His data reveal that most brides from the mainland are married to retired military servicemen who migrated to Taiwan in 1949 and the early 1950s, so most of those brides currently live in urban areas (Taipei city and its greater megaurban region, or Hua-lien county where there used to have a big military population), in order to have better access to medical and social services for veterans. In contrast, most brides from Southeast Asia marry men from rural or remote areas where fishing or agricultural villages are located. In other words, the Chinese and Southeast Asian spouses married the most disadvantaged social groups of men in Taiwan, but these are different types of men and located in different regions.

The immigrant spouses' roles as a family member are multiple. For example, spouses from the mainland who are married to retired veterans are not only wives but also the main caretaker of their old husbands. In contrast, the Southeast Asian wives help in the family business or agricultural production as well as take care of elderly parents in the family. Shen and Wang's research (2003) on Vietnamese spouses shows that most of them identify themselves as playing the major role of a daughter-in-law in Taiwanese households, which tend to be larger than the average household in Taiwan. In other words, these Vietnamese women form a group who can perform the traditional role of wives in a family. Some of the men who marry Southeast Asian women report that an important factor for their marriage is parental pressure to have children who can continue the husband's lineage.

The government is wary of the social impact of marriages across ethnic lines, but it could hardly forestall the tide because the constitution endows people with the right of marriage to foreigners, despite Taiwan's efforts to regulate immigrants. The government tried to discourage this trend by granting citizenship to foreign spouses only after many years of living in Taiwan. At present, the waiting period for acquiring citizenship in Taiwan is four years for a spouse from Southeast Asia and seven years for someone from mainland China. This difference points to one of the ironies of the use of borders to regulate marriages. Spouses from China, with obvious historical and ethnic linkages to Taiwan, take longer to acquire citizenship than Southeast Asians because of the unresolved political hostility between the two governments. However, the prevailing public opinion takes a different view and blames international marriage brokers for triggering this new trend and profiting from the commoditization of international marriage.

A central question, however, needs to be answered: "Why do Taiwanese men so readily seek wives from abroad?" Answering this question is not easy,

although it should lead us to a core issue of why people reshuffle householding globally in Taiwan. The sections that follow pull several threads together to show how various factors interconnect with the internal crisis of the marriage pattern in Taiwan during the past two decades.

Internal Crisis of the Model of Domestic Marriage

Taiwan has been undergoing a general change in marriage patterns that can be summarized as fast-growing rates of late marriage, divorce, and nonmarriage. In 2003 the average age of first marriage in Taiwan was 29.8 years for men and 26.7 years for women, compared with figures in 1983 of 27.4 years for men and 24 years for women. This translates to an increase of around 2.5 years in the first age of marriage within two decades.

Since the late 1980s the divorce rate has been rising fast. This trend could have resulted from many aspects of the social transformation during this period, such as the open door policy toward mainland China. This policy allowed large-scale visits and investments, which caused the dissolution of many families in Taiwan due to long-term separation and Taiwanese men taking second wives and creating second families in China. The trend of a rising divorce rate has continued to the present day. Compared with other major countries in the world, the divorce rate of Taiwan in 2001 was lower only than the U.S., Australia, and Korea. The 2004 figures show that the number of couples getting divorced already approached half of the number of couples getting married in that year.

Another shift in the marriage pattern is the rapid increase in the number of people not getting married at all. Notable is the trend of increasing numbers of unmarried Taiwanese women in relation to men. In 1970 among women ranging from twenty-five to twenty-nine years old 19 percent were unmarried; after three decades the proportion in 2000 leapt to 48 percent, and the latest available figure in 2004 is 59 percent. For women between thirty to thirty-four years of age, the unmarried ratio also rose from 6 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 2000. In other words, in three decades the unmarried rate for women at the national level almost tripled. In Taipei City the tendency is even more obvious. According to figures for 2003, the unmarried among the thirty to thirty-nine age group reached 32 percent.

Why do more Taiwanese women tend to remain unmarried compared with men? Women's increasing participation in employment and advanced education in the past two decades are the main reasons. These factors have changed their expectations—they only want to marry highly educated, afflu-

Table 3. Enrollment rates in advanced education in selected major counties

COUNTRY	YEAR OF ENROLLMENT RATE	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Taiwan	1990	34	34
	2001	75	80
South Korea	1997	82	52
Japan	1995	44	36
Mainland China	1995	24	20
United States	1995	71	92
Canada	1995	81	95

Sources: Ministry of Education 2005; UNESCO 1999

ent men. Consequently, if more men are married compared with women, the men must be finding wives from outside Taiwan at a higher rate than are Taiwanese women. This is certainly the case, as will be explained below.

In 2003 the cohort of women ranging from twenty-five to twenty-nine years old held a labor participation ratio of 73 percent compared with 62 percent for that age group ten years earlier. In addition, the income gap between males and females has been shrinking. In 1993 the average income level of females was only 67 percent that of males. In 2002 the ratio rose to 78 percent. If we focus on the age group from twenty-five to thirty-four, which is the main age group for marriage, the gap further shrinks to around 85 percent.

Similarly, along with the economic achievement of Taiwan and the declining number of children in the family, a growing number of women are getting advanced education. Owing to the education revolution, seen in the increased number of universities since the early 1990s, the enrollment rate of women in advanced education has changed dramatically. In 1990 the rates for men and women were equal for the first time in history at 34 percent. In 2001 the enrollment figures shifted to 75 percent for men and 80 percent for women, indicating that in one decade more women than men were in higher education. This fact has distinguished Taiwan from other Asian countries and moved it closer to trends in North America and northern Europe (table 3).

What is the impact of women's progress in advanced education on the marriage pattern in Taiwan? Surprisingly, despite the dramatic social changes

in recent decades, the conventional model of marrying up for women still prevails. This means that men are expected to be higher than women in three major indicators of status: education, income, and age (Yang, Lee, and Chen 2004). In all marriages, the rate of women with any one out of these three indicators higher than men was 18.1 percent in the 1970s, but in the 1990s it rose to 30 percent. However, in the 1990s only 1.7 percent of all marriages was composed of women with the total three indicators higher than men, showing that the traditional model of men being superior to women and men being older than women still conditions marriage. Yang, Lee, and Chen (*ibid.*) have pointed out that, as women become more equal to men in income and education, the marriage pattern will encounter a profound internal crisis. To keep marriage as a desirable choice for life, men and women need to change their mentality about marriage, otherwise it will lead to an increase, on one hand, in the number of unmarried women with high education and high income, and, on the other hand, in a large number of unmarried men with low income and low educated men.

Other gender and social factors affect the willingness to get married. As more women go to work, the first issue that discourages them from marriage is the dual role they would need to perform as career women and housewives. A national survey shows that in core families, although 40 percent of married men claim that they share the responsibilities of housework (in Taiwan in most cases this means taking out the garbage), in 90 percent of the families women are still the ones in charge of housework and bear the responsibility to tend to the children during their time off from work (MDA 2002).

Another difficulty married women face has to do with the extended family. Although the modern concept of marriage depicts the image of a couple's happy life after marriage, in Taiwan marriage often heavily involves other family members. One of the most difficult issues women deal with is the question of whether or not to live with the parents-in-law. Statistics show that in 2002 45 percent of men and 22 percent of women lived with their parents. Moreover, 32 percent of the married men live with their parents, in huge contrast to the figure of only 2 percent of married women who do so. Women instead tend to live with their husband's parents. About one-third of women were doing so in 2002, implying the need for them to adjust to living with one or both parents-in-law (*ibid.*). Given that there are more and more single female households in recent years, this also means that, for a considerable proportion of women, getting married is the stage at which one ends the life of living by one's self to enter the husband's extended family. The future mothers-in-law still greatly influence their sons in the choice

of wives, while the prospective daughters-in-law are concerned about living with the parents-in-laws after getting married. This can be quite a problem and complicate the decision to get married, and might be even more so when the marriage takes place at an older age for a woman who has been used to independence almost all of her adult life.

The Advent of Foreign Domestic Helpers and Healthcare Givers

Non-Taiwanese spouses are not the only international group contributing to household reproduction in Taiwan. After 1992, when the government promulgated an act introducing foreign labor from Southeast Asian countries, there was a large influx of contracted domestic workers and caregivers to Taiwan (table 4). Given the processes of household transformation that create an increasing demand for domestic workers and healthcare givers, their proportions of the total migrant workforce have been increasing even as the shares accounted for by the construction and manufacturing sectors have been diminishing. Domestic and nursing workers are playing an indispensable role in the smooth functioning of households, as they fulfill the roles that fall traditionally on female members, often the daughter-in-law, which include doing household chores and providing care to children and elderly members.

By 1998 the total number of nursing workers reached 41,844, most of them coming from the Philippines. By the end of 2004 the number of caregivers and domestic workers in Taiwanese households had exceeded 130,000, and the sending countries had expanded to include Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand in addition to the Philippines. Virtually all (98.5 percent) of them are females, and predominantly (90 percent) in the age group of twenty to thirty-nine years. Most of them reside in Taipei City/County and Taoyuan County, which accounts for around 50 percent of the total number of these workers in Taiwan. This pattern indicates that metropolitan areas, which have higher percentages of career women, have a higher demand for domestic workers and caregivers to help with managing households.

The soaring numbers of domestic helpers and caregivers are a good indicator of the changing model of households in Taiwan. Although Taiwan used to be a society formed by poor and hard working migrants around 400 years ago, and hiring a maid used to be the privilege of a very few upper class families, the situation has changed. According to a national survey by the Bureau of Statistics in 2003, dual career households account for 44.2

Table 4: Number of migrant workers, nursing workers, and domestic helpers in Taiwan, 1991–2004

YEAR	TOTAL MIGRANT WORKERS	NURSES	DOMESTIC HELPERS
1991	2,999	--	--
1992	15,924	306	363
1993	97,565	1,320	6,205
1994	151,989	4,257	9,201
1995	19,051	8,902	8,505
1996	236,555	16,308	13,947
1997	248,396	26,233	12,879
1998	270,620	41,844	11,524
1999	294,967	67,063	7,730
2000	326,515	98,508	7,823
2001	304,605	103,780	9,154
2002	303,684	113,755	6,956
2003	300,150	115,724	4,874
2004	314,034	128,223	2,844

Source: CLA 2000b

percent of the total households. When to that figure is added 10 percent to account for single-family households, the numbers suggest that around half of all households cannot have parents as full-time caregivers to children or senior members. Here the advent of domestic workers from overseas has provided the solution.

More than half of these workers take on dual tasks, including doing house chores and taking care of the elderly, the sick or disabled persons, and infants and children. Their working hours are around 13.5 hours per day. Half of the employers never give them leave on weekends. Most (82 percent) employers report that they have trouble or difficulty in dealing with foreign domestic helpers in terms, for instance, of language communication and living habits; nevertheless, almost the same percentage of employers say they will continue to rehire their domestic helpers upon the termination of contract. A major reason is undoubtedly economic (CLA 2002). The

2003 survey reports that the average salary of maids is around NT\$18,000 (about US\$550) per month, and this figure includes overtime pay reaching NT\$2,000 only. Considering that the average salary in local manufacturing is around NT\$22,000 and in the service industry it is NT\$42,000 at 43 regular working hours per week, domestic helpers and nursing workers are obviously paid much less.

One factor worthy of note here is that the number of nurses has been increasing rapidly. In fact the advent of health workers from abroad has helped Taiwan address problems with its ageing society. In 1994, with the population above sixty-five years old exceeding 7 percent of the total, Taiwan entered the phase of an aging society; in 2003 the figure rose to over 9 percent. The dependency rate of the elderly (defined as the ratio of the population of people above sixty-five to the population from fifteen to sixty-five) increased to 13 percent in 2003, and according to population projections this figure will approach 52 percent in 2051. However, given that the fertility rate has been dropping even more steeply in recent years, this dependency rate could be even higher.

Although Taiwan is aging, in the past decades the government ignored the policy of healthcare for the elderly, and now it turns out to be a difficult issue for households to bear. Traditionally, coresidence with son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren was an ideal type of living arrangement for elderly people, with the daughter-in-law acting as the major provider of care to the family. According to a survey of elderly people in 2002, the best living arrangement for the majority of 71 percent was to live with their spouse and children; for 14 percent it was to live only with the spouse; and only 2.9 percent said that living in a facility for elderly people was the ideal. However, in this context, because most women become career women to support the family, households encounter problems especially when the elderly suffer from chronic illness and demand healthcare around the clock.

One response might be to send the elderly to some professional care facility. On this issue, the Taiwan government is doing incredibly poorly in preparing for an ageing society. Among a total senior population of 2.13 million, the available legally registered institutes for them, including elderly apartments, nursing homes, and so on, can accommodate 29,452 people only or a mere 1 percent of the total (NSDGCBAS 2005). Both quality and quantity are severely insufficient. Moreover, the cost often falls beyond the affordable level for a middle-income family (MDA 2000). Many families have had to pool money from siblings to support one elderly person in those facilities. At the same time, because the general society still considers the

retirement condo or nursing home to be a place of abandonment, grown children who send their parents to those facilities are considered to be acting against the norm of filial piety, while the elderly parents themselves would often consider this as a shame once relatives, friends, or neighbors ask. In this intertwined ethical and economic dilemma, hiring a migrant laborer to stay at home and take care of the elderly around the clock often becomes the ideal and ultimate solution.

According to a survey of employers of these healthcare givers, in 81 percent of the cases the family attended to the patients before domestic helpers were hired. When asked what they would do if in the future they could not get a domestic helper, 56 percent replied that they would let the family take care of the patients, another 24 percent replied that they would send the patients to a foster house or facility, and only 14 percent said that they would search for a local Taiwanese domestic helper. They expressed preference for hiring domestic helpers from overseas because they are assured of finding good care for the family, reducing the mental pressure of being the caregiver, minimizing the burden of household chores, allowing “the family” to go out to work, and lowering the economic burden (CLA 2002). Obviously, without international caregivers helping at home, Taiwanese families with children or elderly members would have tremendous difficulty in running their households.

Overseas Retirement

Taiwanese traditionally value the concept of “back to the homeland in the late stage of life,” surrounded by familiar people, things, and settings to make life easier as one grows older. Going back also means contributing to the place that had nurtured them, as well as honoring the whole family. Therefore retirement overseas at first seems not a popular, even if workable, option. However, in some circumstances, such as extensive networks of household members across state borders, emigration for retirement becomes desirable.

For Taiwanese the United States is likely to be the number one destination for retirement overseas. This is not a new phenomenon at all. In the past emigrant students to the U.S. would bring their parents to the U.S. once they received their U.S. citizenship. In major cities, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, and New York, the number of Taiwanese senior citizens rises continually, making the parents of emigrant students the second largest group of immigrants from Taiwan, next only to the number of emigrant students themselves (Li 1998).

According to this report, these elderly people are unlike the earliest generation of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. who used to live in a self-contained Chinatown. Rather, most of them live in the suburbs with their grown children who have at least a Master's degree. The retired elderly people have difficulty with this suburban living style, which is alien to them. In addition, elderly people who are not very mobile are prone to suffer from loneliness when their grown children go to work and the grandchildren go to school in the daytime. Many even say they were "deaf, blind, and dumb" when they had just arrived in the U.S. because of the language barrier, and that the immigrant life for a senior citizen could be like a prison (*ibid.*).

However, retirement life is not all about hardships. Those who are determined to stay and blend with American life often find a major support group in the local associations organized by Chinese (Taiwanese) senior immigrants, which are very active in many cities. For example, around ten Chinese senior organizations exist in Los Angeles, and six or seven around the Silicon Valley area. In Houston, where there are about 150,000 Taiwanese immigrants, the Houston Chinese Senior has over 4,400 members. The so-called Chinese Culture Centers in major U.S. cities provide social networks to seniors through activities such as Taichi and calligraphy. Some cultural centers also help newly arrived senior people by providing English classes (especially for eventual citizenship), driving classes, and leisure activities such as mahjong, dance, and singing. In addition, senior people are encouraged to learn different American values, one of which is to rely on themselves rather than the traditional Chinese family idea of "raising children to look after you in old age." Elderly immigrants from China and Taiwan also actively reach out to American society at large to win recognition.

However, a considerable number of senior people are unable to adapt successfully and eventually end up returning to Taiwan, or traveling back and forth between Taiwan and the United States. Meanwhile, new living arrangements have appeared in the United States. The concept of the retirement condominium, which is far from being a popular idea in Taiwan, is now considered as an alternative to the inconvenient and isolated retirement life in suburban American. In addition, even Taiwan-based NGOs, such as Tzu-Chi, have also set up programs to build retirement villages for the overseas Taiwanese in the United States. The success of this strategy relies heavily on the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program of the U.S. government. Senior citizens who meet the low- and middle-income criteria of this program are eligible to apply for residence in the retirement community, which includes subsidies in health insurance (*ibid.*).

The U.S. is not the only place that draws large numbers of Taiwanese immigrants who spend their retirement overseas. After the Taiwan government opened travel to China, the number of people returning and settling down across the strait increased. The Taiwan government estimates that by 2003 a total of 6,000 people among the retired soldier group originally from mainland China had stayed on across the strait, while the Chinese government estimates the number to be over 10,000 (CCTV 2004). For these retired soldiers, retirement in China fits the traditional concept of the homeland as a restful place to go back to after journeying through life. However, economic considerations play an important role, too. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the pension fund that retired Taiwanese soldiers had was relatively small in relation to the cost of living in Taiwan, but it was sufficient for a comfortable retirement in China. Moreover, the Chinese government gave incentives to help the retirees settle down and set up local businesses.

Another prominent retirement destination overseas is Vietnam. This is not surprising given that currently around 30,000 Taiwanese people reside in Vietnam on a long-term basis, and at the same time over 80,000 Vietnamese women have married Taiwanese spouses, with most of them already having given birth to children in Taiwan. Moreover, due to the income gap between Taiwan and Vietnam, Taiwanese are regarded as “powerful consumers.” In Vietnam, some new types of real estate developments near big cities have already caught on to this trend. For example, Saigon South, a recently (partially) built suburban new town and housing estate in the southern part of Ho Chi Minh City, is seeking to attract Taiwanese businesspeople to reside there now or in the future when they retire, by promoting itself as a safe neighborhood that provides amenities and medical facilities. The exact number of retired Taiwanese people in Vietnam is yet to be determined, but because a Taiwanese company is developing Saigon South awareness of this housing project will increase among Taiwanese businessmen and migrants in Vietnam.

Diversifying Paths of Childbearing

Just two decades ago the government was worried about the population explosion on the island, and tried hard to promote family planning: “two children are just good, and one kid is enough.” Recently, however, policy makers and scholars have realized that the fast shrinking number of newborn babies is worrisome. In 1983 for the first time Taiwan witnessed its fertility rate go below replacement level, and since then the curve has kept

dropping. Around the early years of the new millennium, Taiwan's fertility rate already approached that of Japan, a country deeply worried about the decreasing youth population. However, in Taiwan the fertility rate now seems to be going down even more dramatically than Japan, given that just within three decades the numbers of newborn babies have diminished by half. In recent years the number of newborn babies dropped from 305,000 in 2000 to 216,000 in 2004, down by about 29 percent in only four years.

In 2003 the fertility rate reached its historically lowest national figure of 1.2, which is about the same level as that of Japan. This phenomenon alarmed the government because it contradicted the earlier positive population projections, and has great implications on related policies such as social welfare and the education system. According to a projection made in 2001, deaths will outnumber births by 2028, and thus the total population will start to decrease. However, this projection was made on the assumption of a total fertility rate of 1.6. By using the fertility rate of 1.2 in 2004, the year of the beginning of population decline advanced to 2016—twelve years earlier than what was anticipated in the projection made in 2001. Moreover, in contrast to the current situation of seven adults supporting one elderly person, in twenty-five years, or just a generation, the proportion would dramatically change to three adults only for every elderly person, which would have severe implications for the country's capacity to sustain social welfare services.

The declining number of newborn babies is closely connected to the changes in marriage patterns described above. Late marriage increases the physical difficulties of childbearing; the rising divorce rate serves as a disincentive to having and raising children; and staying unmarried almost completely precludes the possibility of having babies since in Taiwan marriage is still nearly an absolute condition for having children. (In 2003 only around 3 percent of newborn babies came from nonmarital relationships.) Nevertheless, the phenomenon of very low fertility does not jibe with surveys conducted by the Bureau of Health in 1992 and 1998, which show that the ideal number of children for a couple is around 2.4. This could mean that married couples did not decide voluntarily to have very few or no children.

The concern of both women and men about childbearing is the tremendous cost of education (Yang 2005). It has been estimated that the cost of raising a child and providing that child with basic education is around NT\$5 million, but in 2003 the average family income in Taiwan reached NT\$92,700 per month only. More often than not, having children means a difficult life of trying to make ends meet; children also act as constraints on individuals who aspire to cope with a highly competitive and fast changing

working environment. According to a survey conducted by the media (Wang 2005), 40 percent of women do not consider marriage as hampering their career performance, but only 8.2 percent of women say raising a child (or raising children) would not.

Because childbearing has become a critical decision for couples, diverse strategies are emerging to cope with this dilemma. A mainstream group of married couples only have one child, and some scholars consider them as practicing a voluntary “one child policy.” In the case of the unmarried men who are pressured by their parents to get married and have a child, marrying a foreign spouse has become a solution, and it seems to be working. The number of children born to non-Taiwanese mothers has increased in absolute and relative terms (table 5). In 1998 the number of such newborn babies was 13,904, which represented 5.12 percent of the total number of babies born that year. Four years later, in 2002, the number more than doubled to 30,833. By 2003 1 out of every 7.5 newborn babies was born to an originally non-Taiwanese mother, indicating an average increase of 8.3 percent within five years. This new trend has raised public awareness of the need for a multicultural approach to education in the future.

Table 5. Number of babies born to immigrant and Taiwanese mothers, 1998–2003

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF BABIES	BABIES BORN TO TAIWANESE MOTHERS	BABIES BORN TO IMMIGRANT MOTHERS	
			NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
1998	271,450	257,546	13,904	5.12
1999	283,661	266,505	17,156	6.05
2000	305,312	282,073	23,239	7.61
2001	260,354	232,608	27,746	10.66
2002	247,530	216,697	30,833	12.46
2003	227,070	196,722	30,348	13.37

Source: DOS 2006

For some societies undergoing a crisis of diminishing number of children, adoption of children from other countries can be a solution, as seen in the United States and European countries. However, in Taiwan this is not even an option. Adoption used to be popular at the start of Taiwan’s industrialization, when poverty prevailed and fertility rates were kept high. Families burdened by many children would send them away to better off couples

that either suffered from infertility or needed a boy to continue the family line. However, the adoptive family tended to conceal the fact of adoption because the inability to bear a child (which often meant to give birth to a baby boy) was considered contrary to filial piety, and adoption was seen as an undesirable break in the blood ties between parents and children. However, in the period of high fertility before the 1980s, Taiwan sent babies to other countries for adoption, with the United States as a major receiving country. More girls than boys tended to be sent out, reflecting the preference for boys in Taiwan.

However, Taiwan now finds it difficult to solve its own baby bust crisis and is reversing the past pattern by turning to international adoption to bring children to families in Taiwan. The national statistics for adoption of children is at around 1 percent of the total number of babies born in Taiwan, but about one in every three cases of adoption is terminated. For example, in 2004 the number of adoption cases was 2,752, which represented 1.3 percent of the total number of births of 216,419; of these adoption cases, 945 (or 34.3 percent) were terminated (MOI 2005). In contrast, the number of couples who seek medical solutions to infertility problems is much higher than the number of those who resort to adoption, despite the high cost and risk of these procedures. According to the Bureau of National Health Insurance (NHI 2006), the number of couples that sought a medical cure for infertility in 2002 was over 5,000. This pattern can be explained by the conservative notion of the family and the lack of an adoption culture. This does not mean, however, that adoption from abroad or even from China does not occur; rather, it means that outward acknowledgment of adoption is still taboo.

Another approach is through a surrogate mother to bear a child for an otherwise infertile Taiwanese couple. For some couples, passing on the bloodline of at least one of the spouses is a much more acceptable way of having children than adoption. However, this issue is under serious social debate, with strong opposition from religious groups and some policy makers. No wonder then that in order to save face and avoid troubles, such as meeting the biological parents, a black market that offers newborn babies for sale now exists.

Education: Overseas Students and Parachutes Kids as Pioneer Emigrants

Throughout its great transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society, Taiwan's people have valued education as a result of the influence

of Confucian culture. This traditional value was well incorporated to the new situation that combined job growth and population growth up to the late 1980s. The difference, however, is similar to what has been happening in many developing countries: instead of seeking education solely within Taiwan, Taiwanese students have pursued advanced education abroad.

Studying abroad for advanced education often involves multiple motivations and decision-making processes of individuals and households, combining education, job opportunity, and, most importantly, migration. In the early postwar era emigration was sought as a way to pursue a better life when Taiwan was both under the threat of war across the straits and under the domestic suppression by the KMT government. The only exception to the KMT government's closed door policy, which regulated people's travels abroad, was for those individuals who went abroad to take up postgraduate degrees, which often served as the clearest means for emigration of other family members who subsequently followed abroad. For this reason, the number of Taiwan's overseas students increased dramatically. For example, in 1950 only 216 persons went abroad for advanced education, but in 1985 over 6,000 people did. Recent years show a receding trend not only because of advances in education in Taiwan but also because other avenues for emigration have appeared with the end of travel restrictions in the period of political reform.

The United States has been the major destination of Taiwanese students going abroad for advanced education. By 1985 a total of over 80,000 Taiwanese had studied in the U.S. for advanced education. They accounted for 93 percent of all the Taiwanese students who were overseas by then (Tsai 1988). In the 1990s, each year saw more than 10,000 individuals going to the U.S. to study. The immigration policy in the U.S. was a big factor that influenced Taiwanese students to pursue migration. In 1972 Taiwan's government changed its policy and allowed overseas students to take their families with them, and at the same time deregulated its control over emigration. This move echoed the transition in the U.S. government's policy of welcoming migration around the same time period. In 1965 the U.S. government enforced the Amendment Acts to welcome migrants who fell in the category of facilitating the U.S. economy, with a quota of 20,000 persons from each country per year. Meanwhile, based on the spirit of family reunification, immigrant citizens could apply to bring to the U.S. their spouses, children, and also siblings and their children. However, in 1979 Taiwan and the U.S. severed diplomatic relations due to the establishment of U.S.-China diplomatic relations. Taiwan's quota of 20,000 was then allocated to China.

This did not change until 1982, when the lobbying by Taiwanese finally pushed the Reagan administration to issue the same quota for Taiwanese immigrants. In 1986 the U.S. government provided amnesty to illegal immigrants who arrived before 1982. This development pushed Taiwanese immigration in the U.S. to its peak.

Just like the brain drain that happened in many Asian countries during the same period, before the 1980s a high percentage of Taiwanese overseas students chose to stay on in the countries in which they had received their Master's or doctorate degrees and subsequently found jobs. In fact, before 1985 around 40 percent of the students abroad earned their Ph.D. degrees in the United States, which was paralleled by a high percentage of Taiwan overseas students becoming long-term residents and citizens in that country (Tsay and Tai 2002).

According to Tsay and Tai (*ibid.*), from 1960 to 1979 only 14 percent, or around 6,200 persons, of the 52,513 overseas students returned to Taiwan; the others chose to settle down in other countries, mostly the United States. The term *Tai-Mei* (Taiwan/U.S. group) was even coined to identify these people. According to Tsai's (1988) research on the immigrant students in the U.S., by 1985 the motivation to stay on was to pursue professional knowledge and earn advanced degrees so they could earn high incomes and have a good life in the future. When choosing schools, they tended to choose those that offered scholarships. Moreover, Tsai (*ibid.*) found that, in the earlier era, most of those who went abroad and stayed on received financial support from their families at least occasionally, but there was also a high 65 percent who were able to remit money to their families in Taiwan. Even with the group that arrived in the U.S. in the 1980s, about 30 percent could still remit money back to Taiwan. According to the survey, around 60 percent of the students/immigrants answered that they had at least one sibling living in the United States. With regard to the city in which they resided abroad, Taiwanese immigrant students in the early stage preferred to reside in New York, while the students in the 1970s and 1980s tended to choose California and Texas. On average they had one parent living in the United States.

From the above, it seems clear that a large portion of the Taiwanese overseas students turned out to be immigrants in the United States. Interestingly, however, the 1980s did not only witness the peak of immigration to the U.S. but also the start of Taiwanese emigration from the U.S. (Tsay and Tai 2002). The development of information technology (IT) industries in Taiwan in the 1980s attracted many highly technical professionals to return to Taiwan, and their number was around 45,000 up to 1985. The Science Park

in Hsin-chu became a huge base for them, and approximately 5,000 of the returnees came to Hsin-chu to work and live with their families. Together they comprised 5 percent of its total staff, and most of them began serving in high level posts, including as CEOs. When asked why they were willing to return to Taiwan, around one-third of the returning migrants replied that they did so to fulfill the expectation of their family back in Taiwan. The government was also trying hard to draw back skilled overseas Taiwanese, by giving research subsidies, providing air tickets, and offering deals on housing mortgage to help them settle down in Taiwan (*ibid.*). One of the most important types of assistance was to help with the education of the children of the returning specialists. Interestingly, the setting up of the Experimental High School at Hsin-Chu Science Part in 1983, which featured a bilingual Chinese and English program, was intended for the science park employees' families but not for the surrounding community.

The discussion above focuses mainly on adult household members who have gone abroad. In fact, from around the mid-1980s up to now there has also arisen another type of Taiwanese studying abroad, this time from the younger generation. It has been estimated that from 1983 to 1995 a total of around 60,000 young people with ages ranging from six to eighteen years became "parachute kids" who were sent abroad alone, or frequently accompanied by mothers. Although a few cases of parachute kids had appeared before the mid-1980s, the number was relatively small due to the restrictions on people's travel, especially for children, who depended on parents for passports and visas. Only since 1987, when the government deregulated tourist travels abroad, did child travel become easier for parents to handle. This brought about a booming surge in the number of children who travel abroad for education. The main destinations for Taiwanese parachute kids included the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Before 1994, however, the situation was more complicated for boys than for girls because boys who turned nineteen were required to serve in the military for two years. If they did not return to serve in the army, they would have serious problems upon their later return. In 1994 this regulation changed. Boys studying abroad could stay on until they turned thirty years old, if they were continuously receiving education abroad. This policy pushed the tide to a new peak.

Why do parents send their children abroad to study? According to a survey completed in 1995, the reason was for a better educational environment (76 percent). However, other important aspects that were identified included: to find a better living environment where children could grow up (75 percent), to enhance language abilities (62 percent), and to improve children's abilities

to compete in the job market in the future (39 percent). Around 11 percent replied that their family as a whole was planning migration out of Taiwan, so they just sent the children first to get used to the new setting (Chen 1996).

As noted, the top reason for sending children abroad could be attributed to the limited chances of entering the university in Taiwan, which was around 30 percent, a low figure that would dash many parents' high expectations for their children. To increase their chances of entering the university, children attended a cram school where they spent two or three hours more after classes each day and even on weekends. At the same time, in the late 1980s Taiwan was approaching its peak of industrialization. Issues such as deteriorating safety, deteriorating environment, and a relatively low level of urban amenities appeared in a situation where an emerging affluent middle class could afford to spend money for better education for their children. Thus, they either sent their children to stay with relatives or friends who had already migrated to the U.S., or with some adult family members, often the mothers, who went to the U.S. together with the children. This situation created a popular social phenomenon that went beyond parachuting, and it was called "astronauting," involving the father or both parents staying and working in Taiwan, and the children, or the children and the mother, staying abroad for an extended period, perhaps years, with family members flying back and forth to visit each other.

Ip's (2001) research up to 1996, a decade after the parachute tide, somehow confirmed the special strategy adopted by Taiwanese business immigrants to Australia. In contrast to immigrants from Hong Kong and China, Taiwanese immigrants had a much higher percentage of home ownership but a lower employment rate despite being "well-educated, affluent professionals, managers or entrepreneurs." This seeming paradox could be explained by the motivation to provide children with a good living environment and opportunity for education abroad by having a nonworking mother live with them in the foreign country. He also found that, after a decade had passed and their children had grown up to take care of themselves, more and more of those business emigrants had decided to spend their time in Taiwan, and also their spouses began returning to Taiwan. Even the grandparents who had emigrated with the couple to retire in Australia also returned to Taiwan with them because they could not live with the grandchildren only. In his research, Ip shows that after a decade the "astronauting" direction had shifted already. By that time, the grown-up children were the ones flying back and forth between Australia and Taiwan to visit their families.

The tide of parachute children has stabilized in recent years because of the rapid increase in the number of universities in Taiwan in the 1990s. In 1986 there were twenty-eight institutes of advanced education nationwide; by 2005 the number had risen to 159. Because the expansion of advanced education released a large allocation for university freshmen, it reduced sharply the general competition for getting into the universities. By 2005 the total allocation released to the de facto registered number of students approached 120 percent, meaning that the supply was far greater than the demand. Thus, the context that resulted in the early generation of parachute kids had changed.

However, with regard to studying abroad, a new phenomenon is emerging. Since the mid-1990s, along with the deepening cross-straits interaction and the growing economic prosperity in China, China is turning out to be the new destination for Taiwanese students abroad. This should not be surprising given that an estimated 500,000 Taiwanese businesspeople are currently working in China, and over 4 million persons traveled across the straits in 2004. Despite the fact that the Taiwanese government has not yet formally recognized educational degrees issued from the China side, there have been over 10,000 people studying or who have already received degrees in China, especially for advanced levels of education (*United Times* 2005). Their ages vary widely along with their motivations. Most of them are Taiwanese businessmen in China or their family members are in China. Some consider studying in China as helpful in building networks with elites in China, who would benefit ongoing or future business activities there. Most people made this decision based on a vision of working in the mainland in the long term. Some have pursued it even more aggressively by considering it to be a smart strategy or shortcut for work or doing business in a third country, “because all of the world acknowledges the educational degrees issued by China, although Taiwan does not” (*ibid.*). For some Taiwan businessmen sending their children to study in China, mainly Beijing and Shanghai, is a natural step to complete their plan of soon migrating and finally settling down in China.

In all of these cases and periods of migration, education in Taiwan has been deeply embedded in the phenomenon of global householding involving the international movement of and transactions among household members. The fact that specific aspects of migration and geographical orientations have shifted over time makes the word “global” all the more compelling.

Conclusion

In an era of globalization, the Taiwan case shows that householding at the national level is becoming more and more difficult to accomplish and sustain. The rapidly increasing numbers of career women are moving away from the traditional women's roles related to household reproduction, such as childbearing and taking care of children, the elderly, and sick family members. Taiwanese women, after gaining high education and economic independence in the past two decades, are gradually taking nonmarriage, late marriage, and not bearing children as a form of resistance against the marriage system, especially when the government has been putting the pressure of household reproduction onto women while failing in providing better social welfare for them and their families.

The surge in immigrant spouses is a response of Taiwanese society to seek global solutions to the householding crisis. This process is partly being spurred by the deeper integration of Taiwan's economy with its neighboring countries through the offshore shift of manufacturing and increasing trade linkages. In Taiwan immigrant spouses from Southeast Asian countries and China, despite being newcomers to the society, are playing the traditional roles of the Taiwanese daughter-in-law, including helping the family economy, giving birth, and providing care to family members. The increasing number of domestic helpers and nursing workers also suggests that householding strategies are going more global.

Will these global solutions eventually come to the rescue of the householding crisis in Taiwan? If global householding is to be accommodated, how could changes in governance better help to facilitate it? The current situation shows that governments often react negatively to immigrant household members and are mostly blind to their many contributions to society.

However, even before the advent of the householding crisis in Taiwan in the past two decades, global householding had long been a part of an active strategy by Taiwanese households to pursue better life prospects, including good education, job opportunities, and a fine living environment. When Taiwan was at an early stage of industrialization and education served as a good tool to social mobility, emigrating students from Taiwan served as a principal channel for the whole household to achieve upward social mobility. They created multiple effects, including remitting money back home after finishing their education, developing careers abroad, and getting citizenship for themselves and other household members, including siblings, who then

joined the students by moving other household members abroad. They also paved the way for parents to retire in the United States.

In contrast to the first wave of students who moved abroad to facilitate the movement of other household members, a second wave of children moving abroad for education by joining already established family members abroad began. This occurred after Taiwan had achieved a high level of economic development and created a broad stratum of middle class families, significant numbers of whom had already established global householding as their way of life.

More recently, global householding by Taiwanese is becoming even more complex. Reverse flows to Taiwan and the frequent flying back and forth between Taiwan and the immigrant countries is becoming a common occurrence as part of managing within the household all elements of work, education, and suitable living arrangements. It suggests a more complicated migration pattern based on reshuffling household members and organizing resources at a global level. It also reveals motivations for a better household life that go beyond economic or simple livelihood goals as the earlier model of migration theory suggested. In other words, global householding is integral to Taiwan as a society and can be expected to become of even greater significance in the coming years.

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