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Transnationalism and Migration: Chinese Migrants in New Zealand*

Raymond C. F. Chui

Transnational migration is an integral part of the modern world. Immigration policies, economic initiatives and international agreements of modern nation-states have shaped the growth of transnational migration. Nation-states classify migrants into different categories for the purpose of border control; they have favoured some groups of migrants over the others.[1] This is particularly true for New Zealand, which has maintained close connections with the United Kingdom and preferred British migrants to other peoples since the nineteenth century. New Zealand has always emphasized the economic integration of migrants into the society. Against this background, Chinese

*The concept of transnationalism has been used in recent migration studies to refer to the activities of migrants oriented towards two or more national territories. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (1994) define transnationalism "as the processes by which migrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." Transnational migrants establish economic spaces across national boundaries for economic, social, political, cultural and familial reasons, even though they have settled down in another country.

migrants arrived and developed their transnational networks across the Pacific Ocean for familial, social and economic reasons. This paper discusses the transformation of New Zealand's immigration policies and its impact on transnational practices of Chinese migrants from the past to the present. It begins with a critical account of the early development of immigration policies in New Zealand. Then it discusses the transnational networks of Chinese migrants in New Zealand throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The core of this study focuses on the different patterns of Chinese migration and settlement in New Zealand after the immigration reform in the 1980s and the emergence of Chinese transnational networks in the recent decades.

The Arrival of Early Chinese Migrants in New Zealand

As with other Pacific Rim countries, transnational activities in New Zealand began as informal trade and resource exploitation in the pre-colonial period. Whalers, sealers and merchants had travelled across the Tasman Sea since the late eighteenth century, long before the arrival of Europeans in New Zealand.[2] At that time, trading activities, resource extraction and population movement between New Zealand and Australia reflected the earliest liberal form of transnationalism. Gordon A. Carmichael notes that trading of flax and kauri timber intensified the movement of the Pacific population during the early nineteenth century.[3] The economy of resource extraction became more

diversified when gold was found, attracting large numbers of Europeans and Chinese to New Zealand.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, New Zealand had become integrated into the British Empire and its immigration policy was in line with the expansion of British global hegemony.[4] The New Zealand government deliberately encouraged immigration from Britain, Germany and Northern Europe. David Bedggood asserts that English capitalists supported large-scale migration to New Zealand because of the fear of growing instability in Britain and the colony's need for labour.[5] Therefore, British immigration to New Zealand was part of the international population flow that spread across Australia, America, Africa and other colonies during the heyday of the British colonialism.[6] Most immigrants came to New Zealand via Australia, not from their home countries in Europe. Some of them later returned to Australia while others settled in New Zealand but maintained their ties to Australia and Britain.[7]

New Zealand did not have a centralized immigration policy until 1870. Some provinces had implemented their own immigration policies since the 1850s.[8] For example, the Chamber of Commerce in Otago recruited Chinese labourers through merchants in Hong Kong as gold miners, but the Chinese had to pay their way to Otago.[9] After the wars with Maori tribes ended in Taranaki, the New Zealand government introduced the Immigration and Public Works Act 1870, under which Britain

agents were used to recruit skilled migrants to develop the infrastructure in New Zealand.[10] This immigration policy was designed to enhance the modernization of New Zealand as a British colony.[11] The New Zealand government organized campaigns in major British cities to compete with other colonies for skilled migrants. It sought to recruit engineers, rail workers, artisans, female domestic servants and other skilled workers from Britain.[12] It even provided travel funds to the migrants.[13] This development created extensive British transnational networks within the Empire. From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century most European New Zealanders regarded Britain as their homeland and themselves as the imperial subjects.[14]

The story of Chinese immigration is different. The New Zealand government and the early migration studies have considered the nineteenth-century Chinese gold miners as "sojourners" and "reluctant migrants".[15] They claimed that unlike the British and European settlers, the Chinese sojourners intended to return to China.[16] Most Chinese at that time came to New Zealand through America and Australia.[17] They moved across different national boundaries to pursue economic opportunities and saw New Zealand as one node within the transnational employment network. In this view, the Chinese were similar to other Europeans who came to the goldfields in California, Victoria, Otago, Melbourne and South Africa. However, the Chinese never considered New Zealand to be a place for permanent settlement. They were strongly attached to their home villages through strong

kinship and native place ties. They came to New Zealand because of economic opportunities.[18] Without the political and economic support of the Chinese imperial state, the Chinese could not compete with the British settlers and establish a stronghold in New Zealand.

The growth of Chinese transnationalism resulted from a combination of internal and external factors. Since the opening of treaty ports in the mid-nineteenth century, the expansion of a capitalistic economy into southern China led to unemployment and massive waves of emigration.[19] Many Chinese families sent young men abroad to look for better economic prospects in order to help their parents and kinsmen at home.[20] Over two million Chinese were reported to have left their homeland.[21] Besides economic considerations, political instability and social disruption in the last few decades of the Manchu Empire (1644-1911) forced many Chinese to come to New Zealand.[22] The early Chinese migrants retained strong affiliations with their homeland and they seldom engaged in social, cultural and political events in New Zealand unless it was essential for their survival.[23] The Chinese migrants supported each other through their kinship and native place networks.[24] These networks helped to facilitate chain migration.

After the end of the gold rush era, family reunion replaced contracted labour as the dominant pattern of Chinese immigration.[25] Most Chinese gold-miners were married before

their arrival in New Zealand, but they left their parents, wives and children behind.[26] The family links constituted an important component of the early Chinese transnational networks between southern China and New Zealand.[27] Moreover, many Chinese adopted a form of transnational split family arrangement in which the breadwinner worked overseas while the wife and children lived in the home village. According to M. Taher, the extended family in China provided a shelter for migrants' wives and children and a place for the returning migrants upon retirement. In this extended family, the husbands went overseas while the wives stayed behind to look after the elderly and children.[28]

The family created a transnational remittance economy between New Zealand and the home villages. The migrants minimized their expenses and regularly sent their families much of their earnings.[29] Early Chinese gold miners were known to live in grass-sod huts with walls made of mud and stone.[30] They tended not to declare the amount of gold which they had taken out of New Zealand in order to avoid paying the export duty. This was a common practice among European gold miners too. James Ng estimated that in Otago, the Chinese miners sent as much as £60,000 home between 1874 and 1901, with an annual amount of £3 per person.[31] The remittances enabled the extended families to purchase land and open business ventures and to move up the social ladder.[32] The rapid development of southern China owed much to these remittances.[33]

Unlike the Europeans, the Chinese did not develop any effective political institutions to safeguard their interests in New Zealand because of a lack of personal assets, high levels of illiteracy and linguistic differences among themselves.[34] Clan halls, ancestral temples, shops, hotels, gambling halls and native place associations were the only Chinese organizations. With Chinese butchers, hairdressers, carpenters, bakers and boot makers from the same home towns, the Chinese migrants developed a self-sufficient and self-sustaining economy among themselves.[35] However, the local workers and business owners in New Zealand could not complete with these Chinese migrants, who were willing to accept low wages and endure long working hours and poor working conditions.[36] Racial prejudice and social hostility from the mainstream society also separated the Chinese from the Europeans.[37] These factors directly led to the growth of anti-Chinese sentiments in New Zealand.

Comparative Analysis of the British and Chinese Transnational Networks

During the long depression in the 1880s and 1890s, many British migrants left New Zealand for Melbourne in Australia.[38] At the request of trade unions, the New Zealand government stopped its pro-migration policy and did not resume it until 1906.[39] Local trade unions blamed non-British migrants for causing unemployment.[40] The Chinese also became the victims of this anti-foreign sentiment. In the 1890s and 1900s, the local miners and

trade unions founded several anti-Chinese associations.[41] Orchardists and small shopkeepers complained about the competition from Chinese shopkeepers and traders.[42] After the end of the World War One (WWI), the Returned Servicemen's Association demanded restrictive immigration laws against Chinese and other Asians.[43] In times of general elections and economic decline, anti-Chinese sentiment became a major political issue.[44]

Besides the economic and social discontents, racial prejudice was an important political factor.[45] The European New Zealanders' fear of the "Yellow Peril" and their adherence to the Social Darwinist idea of a racial hierarchy between whites and non-whites contributed to the growth of anti-Chinese sentiment.[46] The desire for keeping New Zealand racially homogeneous and creating a better and "fairer Britain of the South Seas" reflected the intensity of racial discrimination against the Chinese.[47] As early as the 1880s, New Zealand had initiated a process of what James Belich calls "recolonization" in order to strengthen the British-New Zealand ties. Maintaining racial purity and ethnic homogeneity was an integral part of this policy.[48] As a result, sinophobia became the norm. The Chinese were ridiculed for their different lifestyles, dressing and eating habits, their non-Christian religious beliefs, their lack of proficiency in English language skills, and their segregation from the white settlers' society. At the turn of the twentieth century, the rise of nationalism and the reinforcement of colonial ties to Britain further marginalized the Chinese.[49]

The state's discrimination against the Chinese can be seen in its anti-immigration legislation. The Chinese ended up as the only ethnic group "officially branded as undesirable and subjected to explicit discrimination in immigration".[50] The New Zealand government introduced a poll tax and imposed tonnage restrictions on the number of Chinese migrants.[51] A poll tax of £10 for entry into New Zealand was introduced in 1881 and it was raised to £100 in 1896, equivalent to a labourer's annual income or to one-third of the total cost of purchasing a home.[52] The Chinese could only re-enter New Zealand if they had a poll tax certificate.[53] In 1908, the Minister of Internal Affairs even denied naturalisation to all Chinese in New Zealand.[54] Similar anti-Chinese legislations can be found in Australia, Canada and the United States.[55] Seen from a global perspective, New Zealand sought to exclude the Chinese from Eurocentric migration networks.

Restricting Chinese migration aimed at maintaining ethnic homogeneity in New Zealand. After 1920, all non-British migrants to New Zealand had to seek approval from the Minister of Customs.[56] The New Zealand government still favoured British migrants. WWI strengthened relations between Britain and New Zealand.[57] The New Zealand government adopted an open nomination system for assisted passages to offset the problem of labour shortage.[58] It sought to attract migrant labourers and to promote economic development. Meanwhile, the assisted immigration scheme also helped to redistribute the British

population by attracting 41,000 British migrants to New Zealand.[59] The government's preference for British migrants was associated with the close political, social and economic relationship between the two countries. Britain was New Zealand's major source of overseas capital; it was also the market for New Zealand's agricultural and dairy products and the supplier of manufactured goods.[60] During the 1930s, 80 percent of New Zealand's products were exported to Britain and nearly 50 percent of its imports came from Britain.[61]

The New Zealand government ensured the well-being of the British migrants. Apart from providing free or assisted passages, policies were enacted to grant large tracts of former Maori land to new migrants and to provide low interest loans.[62] However, these services were not available to Chinese migrants. In the early twentieth century the government also excluded Chinese from pensions, unemployment benefits, free medical treatment and family allowances.[63] Their freedom of movement was also confined by law.[64] Furthermore, legislation hindered the economic activities of Chinese migrants due to the pressure from trade unions.[65] The above legislation discriminated against labour intensive Chinese businesses, which used family workers and long working hours to earn a living.[66]

Self-employment in the informal economy was therefore the main strategy adopted by Chinese migrants struggling for a living. When the gold was running out in the late 1880s, many Chinese

opened fruit shops, laundries and grocery stores.[67] Few Chinese migrants participated in the mainstream economy, including employment as wage earners. They were unlikely to be hired by Europeans due to prejudice and language problems.[68] Thus, informal trade provided alternative opportunities for Chinese migrants.[69] These businesses had few entry barriers and only required a small amount of initial capital for operation, but involved intensive labour and long working hours.[70] Moreover, only the head of the business needed basic English skills.[71] In such ways, Chinese workers clustered in ethnic niche industries in towns and continued to send remittances back to their homes in China.[72] Less formal businesses enabled many Chinese migrants to contribute to the transnational remittance networks.

Although historical studies focus upon gold miners and traders, some migrants became pioneer transnational entrepreneurs in New Zealand.[73] For example, agricultural products, such as edible fungus, were exported from New Zealand to mainland China.[74] The emergence of transnational remittance and trading networks in the late nineteenth century persisted into the early twentieth century.

Although most Chinese gold miners eventually returned home, their existing networks of mutual support did not weaken.[75] The Chinese transnational networks were strengthened by New Zealand's discrimination policy and by the arranged marriage system which involved looking for brides at home for male

migrants through family and kinship networks.[76] Large numbers of ethnic and village associations with close relationships with the Chinese government were established at that time.[77] However, the economic situation in China encouraged migrants to maintain their employment in the new country. The emergence of transnational networks resulted from the attempt by Chinese migrants to seek overseas economic opportunities, while the discrimination they encountered prevented them from settling in large numbers in New Zealand.

The Chinese Diaspora after the World War Two

After the Great Depression of the 1930s, successive New Zealand governments adopted increasingly nationalistic economic policies, including a Keynesian welfare state policy framework aimed at creating full employment through a high degree of state intervention in the economy.[78] This emphasized import substitution production and mass consumption of standardized commodities. The government increased expenditure on public works, introduced import controls to protect local employment and provided state funded social welfare, health and education.[79] The Department of Labour started to handle immigration issues in 1932 and stopped the assisted immigration scheme in 1935 due to fears that immigration would increase unemployment.[80] More people left New Zealand than arrived in the 1930s.[81]

During the World War Two (WWII), restrictions on Chinese immigration were relaxed with New Zealand's alliance with China against Japan.[82] The New Zealand government allowed wives and children of Chinese migrants to arrive as wartime refugees.[83] The official rhetoric of the 1940s also used an economic framework to support Chinese immigration.[84] The locally born Chinese were permitted to obtain New Zealand citizenship after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.[85] However, the Cold War in the 1950s constrained East-West migration.[86] Sinophobia re-emerged during the post-war boom and extended from workers to intellectuals.[87] The Cold War and sinophobia constrained Chinese migration and transnationalism in the post war period.

Chinese migrants worked hard in the informal economy and continued to send a substantial part of their earnings as regular remittances to their families in their home village in China during WWII.[88] New Zealand Chinese migrants also contributed to community development efforts in the China, including giving donations during wartime. When war broke out between China and Japan in 1937, Chinese Associations in New Zealand organized a donation campaign to "save the motherland" which imposed a mandatory weekly donation from every able-bodied Chinese man.[89] This was another form of transnationalism but it did not lead to strong connections and solidarity within the New Zealand Chinese community. Manying Ip argues that the donation campaign was coercive rather than voluntary and was backed up by threats of sanctions.[90] Those who failed to contribute were

denounced in public notices in Chinese newspapers. Nevertheless, this negative side of networks among Chinese communities is typically ignored in New Zealand studies which emphasize their positive influence.

Between the 1940s and 1960s New Zealand underwent rapid industrial expansion as a result of the development of an import-substitution manufacturing base.[91] Rural Maoris were recruited to work in low and semi-skilled urban jobs and moved to urban areas.[92] Apart from Maoris, thousands of sponsored migrants from Britain and northern European countries were also absorbed into the assembly line production system, service sectors and public works projects.[93]Government sponsored studies at that time note that labour migrants were important to relieve labour shortages.[94] The assisted immigration scheme was reactivated by the National Employment Service in 1947 and continued until 1967 in order to meet labour shortages in several sectors such as building, agriculture and mental health.[95] The government used migrant workers to regulate the labour market and to meet the demand for low wage temporary employment under industrialization.[96] The import of migrant workers was necessary for capital accumulation.[97]

The government carefully selected migrants based on their occupation, health, marital status and age, and gave preference to the British, Western and Northern Europeans, who were regarded as easily assimilated into New Zealand society.[98] The scheme was

originally offered to those of British descent and it was extended to the Dutch, Austrians, Danes, Swiss and Germans in the 1950s.[99] This extension resulted from the government estimation that it was unlikely to recruit a high percentage of British migrants due to wage increases and improvements in working and social conditions in Britain.[100] However, among 84,000 assisted migrants, over 90 percent of them came from Britain.[101] The government adopted an economic approach in the recruitment of migrants under the assistance scheme especially from Britain, and used immigration to intervene actively in the labour market.

Immigration was quite high in the 1950s and 1960s.[102] The government not only facilitated European migration but also encouraged Polynesian labour migration through a number of work permit schemes.[103] This was a result of the extension of New Zealand's colonial role in the Pacific. Pacific People from some former colonies, such as Cook Island, Niue and Tokelaus, had automatic rights of residence in New Zealand.[104] The government also provided special quotas of immigration and temporary work schemes to people from other Pacific countries with close political and cultural ties with New Zealand, such as Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, under the 1974 Immigration Policy Review.[105] Moreover, immigration authorities tended to ignore overstaying work permits so long as the demand for unskilled cheap labour remained high. The government utilized Pacific migration to ease the labour shortage for industrial expansion. This government practice was similar to Western European states recruiting

migrants from Turkey and Africa through a guest-worker regime in the 1960s and 1970s.[106]

While facing increased pressure to assimilate, the first generation of Chinese migrants in the 1940s maintained their local dialect, customs and ways of thinking.[107] A few Chinese restaurants opened in main cities, such as Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, serving mainly Chinese people.[108] Canned Chinese food, herbal medicines and products also began to be imported into New Zealand and sold at both Chinese and non-Chinese stores after the WWII. Chinese continued their engagement in the informal economy in the post-war period. To overcome racial discrimination Chinese adults and their children engaged mainly in family businesses such as fruit shops, market-gardens, hand laundries or Chinese stores.[109] Chinese migrants developed a reputation from serving the ethnic community and later played an important role in fruit and vegetable production and retailing. The Chinese consolidated their position in market gardening and greengrocery after the 1930's depression and continued to work until the 1960s as labour-intensive service workers in the informal economy.[110]

When the government allowed Chinese wives and children to enter New Zealand under family reunification in the post-war period, transnational family arrangements declined in the Chinese community. The transfer of remittances to Mainland China significantly reduce after the 1950s, when the PRC government

confiscated property owned by migrants.[111] At this point the New Zealand Chinese started putting their savings and profits back into their businesses, building their own houses and improving their standard of living rather than remitting much of their savings to relatives in China.[112] Many former migrants chose not to return home due to their anti-communist sentiments.[113] Simultaneously, the PRC government prevented the reunion of New Zealand-Chinese families and imposed severe restrictions to stop people leaving the country until the late 1970s.[114] The Cultural Revolution, which occurred between 1966 and 1976 also hindered transnational activities between New Zealand and PRC. Political circumstances in the PRC discouraged migrants from maintaining transnational connections with their homeland in the post-war period.

While economic connections between the New Zealand Chinese and Mainland China declined, other forms of transnationalism remained important for new generations. In the period between the 1940s and 1960s, young Chinese were encouraged by their parents to seek spouses from the wider Chinese diasporas, such as Hong Kong, while Mainland China was no longer regarded as a preferable source country.[115] Moreover, they invested capital overseas in the wider Chinese transnational community. For example, Chinese migrants invested in the Hong Kong property and stock market by the late 1950s.[116] Yet, Ng Bickleen Fong reveals that although the in-group sentiment based upon place of origin and clan was still strong in

the 1950s, traditional Chinese family patterns were in a state of disorganization due to the small family size, absence of ancestor worship and lack of high degree of filial piety.[117] In the post-war era, Chinese migrants in New Zealand showed an increasing level of integration while placing less emphasis on maintaining the Chinese way of life and connections to their home country.

The Chinese Migration in the 1970s

Large increases in world commodity prices led to an economic boom in the early 1970s.[118] In response to the labour shortage, an assisted passage scheme was reintroduced in New Zealand to attract skilled migrants.[119] However, a sharp and prolonged recession occurred after the oil crisis and several European states imposed non-tariff barriers to protect their agricultural sectors.[120] New Zealand's trade deteriorated by more than 40 per cent in the mid 1970s, with increased import costs and declining export value.[121] Consequently, the government argued that the influx of migrants put a strain on housing, services and employment, and ended the subsidized immigration scheme in the late 1970s.[122]

Flexible production under a post-Fordist regime required a new kind of capital accumulation that affected migration. Similar to the situation in Western Europe, as described by Robin Cohen, an international division of labour began to replace the internal racial division of labour in New Zealand from the 1970s. The demand for cheap unskilled labourers declined.[123] Migrants in the

semiskilled and unskilled manufacturing industries were viewed as competitors to local workers. The government employed ruthless methods to catch and deport illegal Pacific Island migrants when the demand for unskilled labourers had diminished.[124] Overstaying Pacific Islanders rather than people from other ethnic groups were arrested, although they were only a minority of overstayers. James Belich notes that the racist response from the public was a result of the identity crisis under decolonialization.[125] The dramatic shift in close relationships and colonial linkage between New Zealand and the United Kingdom produced confusion among European New Zealanders about their own status. The increasing social and ethnic tension also threatened their tight collective identity as Britons or "better Britons". The populist antagonism and scapegoating of various ethnic and migrant groups emerged out of this identity crisis.

Much of the special access to British markets for New Zealand producers was also terminated when Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1973.[126] When New Zealand extended its connections to Australia, Canada, the United States and Japan, the traditional attachments to Britain further began to weaken.[127] The unrestricted access rights of migrants of British ancestry were abolished in the 1974 immigration policy review. Afterwards, all migrants to New Zealand, except Australian, had to apply for residence under four categories: family, humanitarian, refugee and general. Simultaneously, Commonwealth citizens and British citizens from the Commonwealth were excluded from Britain

under the new Act in 1971, unless they obtained a quota voucher or a work permit.[128] Despite these reforms, connections between New Zealand and Britain were still important and maintained by other cultural forms of transnationalism.[129]

Nevertheless, immigration policies were influenced by the increasing international emphasis on human rights.[130] New Zealand started to accept large numbers of refugees in the 1970s. Due to the pressure from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN), the New Zealand government initiated an Indo-Chinese Refugee Resettlement Programme in 1975.[131] The government accepted refugees during the acceleration of the Vietnam crisis in 1978 and admitted around 6,000 Indochinese refugees by 1985.[132] These migrants and their family members were accepted by the government for humanitarian reasons. International obligations encouraged New Zealand to accept migrants that they would have previously considered as undesirable.[133]

The progressive difficulty of gaining access to European high-income markets pushed the New Zealand government and business people to re-orientate trade links to the newly industrialized Asian countries, such as Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, where significant economic growth had started from the 1970s.[134] New Zealand recognized the government of PRC in 1973, eased restrictions on Asian migrants with professional qualifications, and widened the family reunion

policy to include parents of Chinese residents.[135] In the late 1970s, the New Zealand government introduced the first business immigration policy, the Entrepreneur Immigration Policy (EIP), to encourage business migrants to invest in "think big" projects.[136] Simultaneously, due to a "brain drain", entry on occupational grounds was favoured.[137] The transformation of New Zealand's relationships with Britain and Asian countries resulted in a new understanding on immigration policies in this period. The new form of transnationalism emphasized the flow of professional and business people rather than unskilled labourers in response to the demands of the new economy.

When greater numbers of young New Zealand-born Chinese gained tertiary qualifications, these young people gained access to a variety of occupations and obtained higher social standing.[138] New Zealand-born Chinese preferred to work in professional jobs rather "family businesses" and Chinese professionals, such as medical doctors, engineers, lawyers and accountants became more common by the 1960s.[139] The offspring of early Chinese migrants tended to integrate economically into New Zealand society after several decades of settlement. In the 1970s, while some Chinese opened fish-and-chip shops and small restaurants, the majority engaged in wage employment in the mainstream economy. Moreover, as the majority of the New Zealand Chinese were locally born, cultural heritage was emphasised less by the second and later generation communities.[140] The New Zealand-born generations had limited Chinese language ability, and festivals,

such as Chinese Lunar New Year, were not celebrated. Following their progress towards assimilation, succeeding generations of Chinese migrants were recognized by the mainstream society as a self-contained, law-abiding, well-educated and largely middle-class "model minority".[141] The transnational connections of Chinese to their home country declined in the 1970s while the new wave of migration started in the next decade.

The Internationalization of New Zealand: A Liberal Migration Policy

Significant amendments to the New Zealand immigration policy in the 1980s and 1990s were associated with neo-liberal reforms of governmental practices. Since the late 1980s, the government has adopted an increasingly cosmopolitan approach to encourage internationalization of the economy. The current mode of production required new types of migrants and encouraged new paths of transnationalism oriented towards Asian countries. With a growing consciousness of globalization, the government opened up the economy to foreign investment, privatized portions of the public sector, and reviewed immigration policy in 1986.[142] The post-Fordist mode of flexible production emphasizes international competitiveness and demands of innovative production. [143] Therefore, skilled labourers, professionals and entrepreneurs replaced semi-skilled labourers as major targets of migrant recruitment which was in line with the development of a competitive, information and knowledge economy. The

Immigration Act in 1987 abolished previous discriminatory restrictions on national origin as selection criteria working against entry of Asians. The main aims of immigration policies were to improve human resources to boost the economy and connect New Zealand to international markets including the newly industrialized countries.[144]

Since the 1980s, internationalization has largely replaced the traditional linkages between New Zealand and Britain.[145] Economic reforms attracted investors from Asian countries, and the Immigration Act in 1987 and the points system in 1991 officially abolished restrictions on national origin as selection criteria that had previously worked against entry of Asians.[146] Similar transformations in immigration policies were apparent in other Pacific Rim countries, such as Australia, Canada and the United States. Personal merit, qualifications and potential economic contribution replaced nationality and ethnicity as prime selection criteria for entry. Orientation towards global, particularly Asian, connectedness was another force opening up Asian immigration. However, except for a few years in the late 1990s, British remain the largest category of migrants to New Zealand. The new immigration policy also limited its application to entrepreneurs, skilled labourers and professionals capable of engaging in transnational activities. This cosmopolitan immigration approach was constructed within a framework that emphasized national interests.

The 1991 Immigration Amendment Policy introduced two new categories and imposed a points system as a selection mechanism.[147] Prospective immigrants were assessed and those who achieved points higher than the pass mark were eligible to obtain approval for residence. The points system was similar to those used in Canada and Australia. The General Category (GC) and the Business Investment Category (BIC) were administrated as major migration streams. Points were awarded to prospective immigrants under GC according to their employment qualifications, skills and assets, while BIC emphasized the amount of investment capital available to transfer to New Zealand. Migrants could also be granted residence in New Zealand through family reunification under the Partnership policy, Family Parent category and the Sibling or Adult Child policy. In addition, the New Zealand government now allows for refugee admissions via various humanitarian categories, and offers approval under the Samoan and Pacific categories of immigration.[148] The government controls admissions mainly through the first two economic categories but children and the secondary breadwinners are also admitted as family members. Therefore many people who enter under GC or BIC are neither skilled labourers nor business people, and these migrants may have a different understanding of migration than the main applicant in the family.

In New Zealand, immigration has again become a contested terrain. Maori scholars, such as Ranginui Walker, argue that the government did not consult the Maori community and failed to

consider principles of the Treaty of Waitangi when widening immigration from Asian countries.[149] The policy reforms were regarded as threatening the primacy of biculturalism and special linkages between Maori and British New Zealanders.[150] Since 1995, the government also has tightened control over the issuing of permanent returning resident visas to avoid migrants using New Zealand as a step to enter Australia.[151] Moreover, following a neo-liberal logic, the New Zealand government emphasized migrants' "self-sufficiency" and individual responsibility for their own welfare. Since July 1998, new migrants have to be resident in New Zealand for two years before gaining access to welfare benefits.[152] These changes in immigration policy during the 1990s were partly in response to negative comments about Asian immigration in populist and political discussions, as well as Australia's concern about New Zealand migrants entering Australia through the "back door ".[153] This shows that public opinion and other international concerns played an important role in the reform of New Zealand immigration policies.

In 2003, the New Zealand government adopted an increasingly Third-way policy framework, which focused on the supply side of the labour market. The Skilled Migrant Category was also introduced in order to ease demands for skilled labourers. As stated in the government pronouncement, this legislation claimed to shift "New Zealand from being a passive recipient of applications for residence under this category, to an active recruiter of the people we need and we know will do well here".[154] Prospective migrants submit an expression of interest rather than a

direct application. The Ministry of Immigration selects suitable people and invites them to submit an application for residence. The new legislation aims to tighten control over characteristics of potential migrants in order to protect national interests rather than further liberalize immigration. The government actively seeks skilled labourers and capital suitable for the local economy.

Until 2000, the New Zealand government provided no settlement services to general migrants. The official position was that the high employment level and a focus on English-speaking migrants implied that the need for specific settlement services was low and the provision of state housing for the general population was regarded as an effective settlement assistance programme for migrants.[155] Moreover, migrants who had been selected were supposed to settle in New Zealand without difficulty by using the human capital and assets they brought into New Zealand.[156] The government tended to ignore the needs of non-English speaking migrants and expected them to use their own efforts to settle in the new environment. English courses and resettlement services were only provided to refugees.[157] Settlement policies, such as Migrants Pilot Projects and Pilot Migrant Settlement programmes, were developed in 2000. These programmes emphasized placing migrants into the local business and labour market, as well as linking them into business and professional networks.[158] The new policy perspective was consistent with government rhetoric on social inclusion, development and investment.[159] The new policy

approaches emphasized the role of the government in creating the circumstances to facilitate the active participation of migrants.

Instead of providing direct settlement services to migrants, however, the New Zealand government largely depends upon contracting out programmes and services. These services are delivered by community and voluntary organizations, such as the Shakti Asian Women's Centre and Chinese New Settlers Services Trust in Auckland. Such organizations offer a range of services including language courses, legal assistance, counseling, social services and support for women seeking safety from domestic violence. The government also invited people in the ethnic and migrant communities as steering partners in the ministerial advisory group and incorporated them into the planning process.[160] These people are identified as being able to network with a range of organizations. The establishment of the Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust and the New Out West programme are examples of the collaboration between central government, local government and communities in tackling settlement and migration issues.[161] Despite the emphasis on adopting a Third-way approach in its recent settlement policies, the government attempts to ensure the readiness of migrants to work and contribute to New Zealand as skilled labourers or entrepreneurs with minimal assistance from the host country.[162]

A new version of the integrationist perspective has been adopted by the government. Government discourse has shifted

from a strong focus on ethnic cohesion in the recolonization period, to a neo-liberal approach on individual responsibility and active participation regardless of ethnicity, and ultimately to a Third-way approach that emphasized assistance of the government and communities to facilitate migrant participation and labour market inclusion. Migrant integration in the labour force and society is regarded as fundamental to the immigration programme given the public criticism that migrants, especially Asians, were failing to contribute significantly to New Zealand. The government tightened control over who can enter through general and family schemes in order to choose migrants who are more likely to integrate into New Zealand. Preferences are given to those who can build up the knowledge economy, while emphasizing the development of skills, talents and connectedness.[163]

The Chinese Transnational Migrants after the mid-1980s

Chinese migrants coming after migration reforms in 1986 are different from their counterparts in the earlier period. Many post-1986 Chinese migrants have a middle-class background and obtained residence under the Skills and Business Migration categories. The PRC and Hong Kong have become the major source countries for permanent and long-term arrivals to New Zealand since the late 1980s, but before 1986 arrivals from PRC were less than a thousand per year. However, the numbers increased significantly three years after the reforms.

The net migration from PRC and Hong Kong significantly increased from the mid 1980s.[164] Migrant inflow from these two regions further increased to a peak in the period between 1995 and 1999. It is important to note that the recent arrivals include residents, visitors and overseas students. The large proportion of Hong Kong people who departed after 1997 includes migrants who returned when the political uncertainty in Hong Kong diminished but departures also reflect the return of a number of overseas students after graduation. This represents one dimension of transnational practices of Hong Kong migrants in New Zealand.

Employment and participation in the economy have been noted as vital to recent migrants. As with other international migration studies, New Zealand research mainly conceptualizes the recent Chinese migrant integration process in terms of economic activity, industry, labour markets, and socio-economic position. Michael Fletcher proposes that employment rates and income growth are important indicators to understand degrees of settlement.[165] Jacquline M. Lidgard emphasizes that Asian migrants would not feel that they were actually "settled" in New Zealand unless they were engaged in similar jobs to those they had in their home country.[166] Yet, studies show that Chinese migrants had a lower labour force participation rate and a higher unemployment rate than the general population.[167] Moreover, a higher proportion of the Chinese male migrants worked in part-time jobs than in the general New Zealand population, and self-employment is an important employment status for Chinese

migrants. According to these studies, Chinese migrants show a low degree of integration in the domestic economy.

The domestic employment situation of such migrant groups is defined as a problem in conventional studies, although research by Andrew D. Trlin and Anne Henderson reveal that employed and unemployed Chinese do not exhibit marked differences in their mental health. However, a substantial number of studies express concern about the "unsuccessful" experience of recent Asian migrants and search for determinants of their "employment problems".[168] Studies note that lack of both local knowledge and recognized work experience, combined with inadequate English are employment obstacles to highly skilled Chinese migrants.[169] Elsie S. Ho, Eric Cheung, Charlotte Bedford, and Polly Leung argue that the "qualification mismatch" between demands of the domestic employment market and the qualification of migrants, as well as the "unrealistic expectations" of migrants continuing in their previous professions are two factors generating high unemployment of Chinese migrants.[170]

In other studies, institutional barriers in the New Zealand's economy, such as an unfavourable business environment, lack of business opportunities in a small local market, small export potential, lack of infrastructure and international focus are cited as hindrances to entrepreneurship.[171] Moreover, Rachael Boswell notes that inadequate language ability and unfamiliarity with the rules, regulations and culture of New Zealand businesses are

barriers reported by Hong Kong business people.[172] Additionally, perceptions of high tax rates and lack of professional business advice were other barriers cited as obstructive to business activities.[173] However, only a small number of Hong Kong Chinese considered employment to be a major problem in migrating to New Zealand.[174] While conventional migration studies attempt to identify reasons why Chinese migrants perform inadequately in the domestic labour market, they rarely focus on their transnational economic activities.

Measured against the neo-liberal definition of the migrant as a self-responsible subject, the high level of unemployment and underemployment of recent Chinese migrants is often regarded as unacceptable, especially from Maori politicians and local commentators. These discussions insist that too many Chinese and Asian migrants have failed to bring in the expected benefits or to fulfil their responsibilities to penetrate into business networks and create jobs.[175] It is also claimed that they contribute little to the economy because they return investment to their home country, opening only small enterprises which employ family labour and even illegal low-wage overstayers.[176]

Chinese migrants are even stigmatized as selfish calculators, manipulating the immigration policy to pursue their own economic self-interest and using money to buy citizenship, while they are unwilling to contribute to New Zealand's economic well-being.[177] Some politicians attribute the employment

difficulties of Asian migrants to personal deficiencies, arguing that migrants have the responsibility to acquire and learn the language and culture, or that migrants have false expectations of business opportunities in New Zealand.[178] Others point to "social problems", such as activities of Asian triads and the exploitation of Asian women in Auckland's sex industry, in association with Chinese migrants.[179] Meanwhile, some people view Chinese migrants as putting pressure on academic institutes and health facilities, increasing traffic congestion on Auckland roads, contributing to water shortage, and boosting land and property prices.[180] Similar to the situation in the early and midtwentieth century, stigma and stereotypes are generated in the media in response to the large number of Chinese migrants arriving in New Zealand.

The Contemporary Chinese Transnational Networks

Transnational networks of Chinese migrants are not new nor are they an extraordinary phenomenon. However, unlike their predecessors who came to New Zealand over a hundred years ago, some recent Chinese migrants maintain a previous job or business of one or more family members with higher income and prospects in their country of origin in order to support other members in New Zealand. Rachael Boswell reveals that many Hong Kong Chinese subsequently return to Hong Kong to continue their business in a more comfortable and familiar setting.[181]

Numerous researchers state that many Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwanese households headed by single parents in New Zealand lived on remittances from their spouses who continue to work or run a business in the country of origin.[182] Elsie S. Ho and Manying Ip note that the low male population among recent migrants aged 30 to 40 indicate the presence of "astronauting" among these Chinese migrants.[183] Women in families with a member working overseas are less likely to work for pay, but manage family and domestic matters in New Zealand. Researchers also reveal that some Hong Kong and Taiwanese children were left by their parents to live with their siblings, relatives, or a homestay family in New Zealand. These children further their studies while both parents return to Hong Kong.[184] "Astronaut" families and "parachute" children are a contemporary migration phenomenon and a new form of Chinese transnationalism.

Return migration of Hong Kong Chinese is often regarded as a purely instrumental practice in many academic discussions. Numerous studies state that faced with difficulties finding full time employment or establishing profitable businesses, most Hong Kong migrants who have high employment expectations prefer to seek better opportunities in other localities. For example, studies by Wardlow Friesen and Manying Ip on Chinese migrants reveal that of those who were managers before coming to New Zealand, only 31 percent were managers after migration and 41 percent failed to continue in their previous occupation after arriving in New Zealand.[185] Moreover, among former business people, 49

percent failed to enter their previous occupation and only 20 percent said that they were still business people. Of those who were former professionals, 38 percent did not enter their previous occupation, and only 26 percent remained professional. Several studies note that this kind of family arrangement is a "survival strategy" and an involuntary response to unattractive employment and business opportunities rather than an instrumental and selfish preference to avoid the responsibilities of contributing to the tax base.[186] Unemployment in the domestic economy has been noted as the major cause of transnational split families.[187]

Recent Chinese migrants also maintain frequent contact with both the country of origin and the country of adoption, circulating and moving frequently between the two countries and elsewhere. Improvements in transportation and communication technologies facilitated these movements.[188] Many Chinese migrants frequently return to their country of origin to visit relatives, enjoy holidays and run businesses. They have parents, siblings and relatives living in the country of origin and even in other countries, such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

Manying Ip emphasizes that commuting is the norm for Chinese migration and permanent settlement is no longer the dominant form of migration to New Zealand.[189] Many recent Chinese migrants return to their home country or migrate to another place after a few years.[190] Richard Bedford, Elsie Ho, and Jacqueline M. Lidgard also note that "New Zealand's skilled

migrant flows will be increasingly dominated by short to medium term residents."[191] For instance, 72,000 international students came to New Zealand to study English language courses in 2003, of these 28,000 were from PRC.[192]

Not only parents but also the young generation of new Chinese migrants choose to develop transnational careers and multi-local lives. Studies find that a large proportion of the young East Asian migrants with high educational expectations and high occupational aspirations, did not wish to settle permanently in Auckland or incorporate into the local economy.[193] Having completed their education, these young migrants choose to return to their place of origin to work, perceiving they will have more job opportunities, earn more money and have better employment prospects than in New Zealand.[194] For instance, from estimating the loss of people in their 20s and 30s between two censuses, Elsie S. Ho reveals that a majority of Hong Kong born young adults were returning to their place of origin or have moved on to another country.[195] The above studies suggest that establishing a transnational family arrangement and commuting between different localities is increasingly common among many Chinese migrants.

Conclusion

Economic, social and political circumstances significantly influence the reform of immigration policies. Immigration is always used by

governments as a source of labour, and recently as a means to bring in capital and connect with the global economy. In the history of immigration in New Zealand, such an economic orientation existed long before the emergence of neo-liberal reforms but under the comprehensive immigration reform in the 1980s, migration became more "liberal" than in the past. Nevertheless, governments never permit the free movement of people across national territories and national territories are strictly controlled. The major policy framework of New Zealand, like that in all highly developed countries, increasingly "produces its own contradictions between drives for border-free economic spaces and border control to keep migrants and refugees out." Recent New Zealand immigration policies give preference to English speaking migrants who are expected to integrate successfully but tightly control access by non-English speaking migrants via the family and humanitarian categories. In order to protect national interests, immigration policies restrict the type of people who can enter and attempt to shape the form of transnationalism that would emerge in the society.

Transnationalism emerged in New Zealand more than a century ago. The earliest modes of transnationalism, including informal trade and movements across the Tasman, dated back up to the late eighteenth century. British transnationalism was dominated and explicitly promoted by the New Zealand government until the 1970s. In the early twentieth century, the government encouraged migration from the United Kingdom to

ease the demand for labour and to strengthen British colonial links. However, New Zealand controlled the entry of Chinese to protect national interests. Pacific transnationalism was facilitated by migration policies to bring in unskilled labourers for industrial expansion in the Fordist production era in the 1950s and 1960s. Since the mid-1980s Chinese and Asian transnationalism has intensified as a result of the policy shift to business and professional migration and to establish linkages to newly industrialized countries. The emergence of transnationalism for different groups of people is closely related to economic opportunities and government practices.

The transnational engagement of Chinese migrants emerged in the early years of their immigration to New Zealand. Early migrants sent monetary remittances back to their place of origin to support their families and communities, and maintained strong familial and affective attachments to their home country. The strong emphasis on economic integration by the New Zealand government did not discourage the transnational practices of Chinese migrants, even during the post war Fordist era where nationalist economic frameworks reinforced assimilation. Succeeding generations of Chinese migrants were seen as most successful and became model migrants who integrated into the mainstream middle-class economy of New Zealand through their educational attainment and language ability. However, they still maintained cultural and familial connections to their home country. Thus, the focus of migration discussions should focus on the various forms of participation, including transnational

engagement rather than only on migrant practices in the host country.

This paper shows that transnationalism is a result of the interaction between migrant practices, the economic and political context of the host and home countries, the response of workers and business people to Chinese migration, and government policies. The economic and political circumstances encourage migrants to move in and out, back and forth between different countries. While business people often support migration to ease demand for labourers, workers tend to reject Chinese migrant workers who are perceived as lowering wages. Transnational activities of migrants are often regarded as an indication of their lack of integration into the host country. These practices are likely to generate further discrimination and stigmas in the dominant society, and to encourage restrictive immigration policies.

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[6] As a result, out of 94,000 migrants who came to New Zealand during the period of 1870 to 1876, 72,000 were assisted migrants (The New Zealand Institute of International Affairs 1950). New Zealand received about half of all British and Irish emigration to Australasia (James Belich 1996). New Zealand provided a settlement place for the emigration of surplus British labourers as an outcome of the capitalist development (James Hollifield 1992).

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[24] In the gold-mining period, M. Taher notes that Chinese migrants concentrated in a few mining centres in Central Otago. The Chinese gold miners lived either in camps far away from the Europeans or in some clusters of isolated huts nearby the gold fields (P. G. Petchey 1998). There were also Chinese camps constructed at Moa Flat in 1869 and Round Hill in 1880 (James Ng 2003).

[25] M. Taher notes that a flow of early chain migration was created by New Zealand Cantonese speaking Chinese gold miners, who originally came from Guangdong Province of South China, in places around Canton City, such as Poon-yu County, Szeyap, Chungshan and Tsangshing (Manying Ip 2003). According to Manying Ip, these Cantonese-speaking migrants and their offspring constituted the majority of the New Zealand Chinese before the new waves of Chinese immigration in mid-1980s.

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[74] Edible fungus, worth £78,000, was exported to China in between 1872 and 1882 (James Belich 1996).

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[127] Since the 1950s, New Zealand expanded its export market to America, Japan and southern Asia while the traditional British market reduced from 66 percent in 1950s to only 36 percent in the 1970s (James Belich 2001). New Zealand also developed the ANZUS alliance with Australia and the United States and shifted its dependence from Britain to America in terms of security but still maintained a strong cultural connection with Britain since the mid-1960s (ibid).

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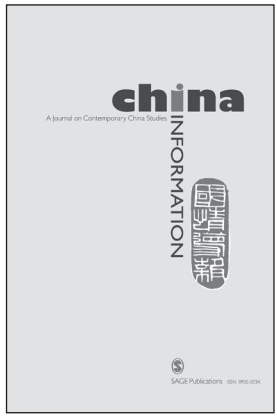

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