# Reflections on the Studies of Overseas Chinese in the Pacific*

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## Introduction

Population movement has been a constant phenomenon in human societies before and after the term globalization came into existence. Equipped with navigational skills, the Austronesian-speakers have used the Pacific Ocean like a highway. Yet, on the high sea, there have been other non-Austronesian speakers, notably Europeans and Asians. Europeans intermittently visited the Pacific first as explorers and traders and gradually became settled planters and colonists in the 19th century. There were settler colonies such as Australia and New Zealand under the British influence and New Caledonia under the French control. Sugarcane plantations in Queensland and Fiji, phosphate mines in Banaba (Kiribati), Makatea (French Polynesia) and Nauru and coconut plantations on many islands all needed external labor for the exploitation of resources. This imbalance of labor was a significant force in the shaping of contemporary composition of populations in the Pacific. People moved from densely populated areas to where laborers

* Revised version of the paper presented at the International Conference on Retrospects and Prospects of Pacific Islands Studies in Taiwan held by CAPAS, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, June 24, 2005. Publications reviewed in this article are limited to those available in libraries in Taipei area, through electronic journals and interlibrary loans. University libraries have a better collection of studies on Australia and New Zealand Chinese due to recent immigration from Taiwan to these two countries. Publications on other small Pacific societies are scant. Internet provides some information concerning the Chinese presence, but the information is hardly scholarly. I imagine there are more works done and kept in local government offices or libraries. This study is limited by the time interlibrary loan takes and money it costs.

were in demand. These inter-island migrants worked by contract and sometimes settled permanently. Movements usually marked out the boundaries of an empire, and facilitated cross-locality understanding which later contributed to nation-building.

In addition to the labor recruitment within Pacific Islands, Asians were also brought in to meet the need for labor in mining and plantations. Colonies were jealously guarded as sources of laborers. The British imported, Indians to work on sugarcane plantations in Fiji, the French recruited the Javanese to work at nickel mines of New Caledonia and Chinese from Hong Kong to work at Atimaono cotton field of Tahiti. Chinese were the major source of Asian laborers working in the Pacific. They were indentured laborers, returning home at the end of their contracts. Chinese contract laborers were spread out on different continents. In the Pacific they appeared in Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti, Nauru, Palau etc. Other than contract laborers, there were Chinese traders on many islands. In some cases they were the first Chinese pioneers buying local produce and running branch stores for businesses in Hong Kong, in other cases they followed the route of contract laborers.

The Chinese in the Pacific are often ignored for their small numbers in countries distant from other Chinese communities. The field of Overseas Chinese Studies was initiated by and thus entangled with national politics. The Chinese of Southeast Asia attracted the most scholarly interests. They have retained their dialects, Chinese schools, all sorts of voluntary associations, business networks, concerns about Chinese politics and contacts with home regions in China. They could be easily recognized as Chinese. The Chinese in the Pacific is a different case. The Chinese immigrants were at first sojourning males who left their wives and children behind in China, and intended to return home someday. Whether these Chinese men returned home later or died in the islands they often cohabited with local women and raised families. Who are these children of mixed marriages? How are they received by their mothers" families? Their fathers?

Researchers? Instead of questioning the essentialist definition of "Chineseness," we often overlook unexpected representation of Chinese immigration:

> *"I am still looking for my grandfather, Ah-Chew or Ah-Kew. He was brought to Samoa as a plantation worker during the war…He took my grandmother Fale Matofa Tavana Namulau"ulu as his wife…Please send any information about the Chinese in Samoa my way. …It's hard 【to】 find information in Samoa about the Chinese…Good luck to all of us in our search for our ancestors…"* (Eveni Tafiti 2003)

## Hawaii

Hawaii was a stopover point facilitating the trade among the American Northwest coast, Pacific islands and China. Chinese had been involved in this trade since the early 1800s. Sugar production and exclusive laws shaped Chinese migration to Hawaii around the turn of the 20th century. Hawaii was annexed by the United States in 1898, and adopted Exclusion Laws the same year. Migration research tends to follow present national boundaries, thus, Hawaii is an extension of the continental United States.

Glick (1980) conducted his comprehensive research of the Chinese in Hawaii while he was teaching in Hawaii during 1929-1932 and 1935-1937. He relied on not only archives but also interviews. His book "Sojourners and Settlers" covers a time span from the beginning of Chinese migration in the mid 19th century to the 1970s. Glick focused on the transition of the Chinese from sojourners to settlers, how their occupation, family structure, community organizations, and they themselves as a group transformed. The Chinese became urbanized, moved to cities, took up occupations other than farming and laboring, kept Hawaii-born children educated in Hawaii, becoming nationalists and finally citizens.

McKeown (2001) criticizes the traditional nation-based migration studies. Neither the assimilationist approach nor the overseas Chinese viewpoint, McKeown escapes from ideas of bounded territories, and resorts

to links and networks. He employs one of Bourdieu's key concepts habitus to capture the human capacity for change and stability, and he further applies this idea to a translocal scale. Instead of following Robertson's "global field" beginning with early European expansion, McKeown considers that Chinese migration constitutes a transregional field. This field is defined by networks, international status, ethnic identities, and individuals (p.19). In "Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change," McKeown analyzed the Chinese migrants in Peru, Chicago in addition to Hawaii. Chinese immigrants of these three areas came from roughly the same region of China around the same time. His aim is to demonstrate the necessity of a global perspective in migration studies. Local differences serve to offer a look at the diversity of global processes and networks.

According to McKeown, Chinese in Hawaii experienced a more balanced sex ratio than the Chinese in continental United States. The presence of wealthy merchants bringing women and children with them, migration of Christian Hakkas in nuclear families, and reputable missionary school system attracting families to leave children in Hawaii for education contributed to the balanced sex ratio.

**Figure 1. Chinese in Hawaii, 1853-1940**

| Year | Total | Percent Female |
|---|---|---|
| 1853 | 364 | |
| 1866 | 1,306 | 8.4 |
| 1878 | 6,045 | 3.8 |
| 1890 | 17,457 | 6.2 |
| 1900 | 25,767 | 13.4 |
| 1910 | 21,764 | 20.8 |
| 1920 | 23,507 | 31.1 |
| 1930 | 27,179 | 39.0 |
| 1940 | 28,774 | 40.4 |

Source: adapted from McKeown (2001): 36.

McKeown pointed out the good rapport between Chinese and Hawaiian royalty before annexation and the significance of the consequent dominance of American cultural hegemony. As American culture became dominant in Hawaii, Hawaiian–born Chinese began to revive voluntary associations to transform into an ethnic group in the plural Hawaiian society. Immigrants became ethnic groups. Culture became heritage.

Chinese migrants and their descendants in Hawaii have rarely been the focus of research since Glick's comprehensive study. There are a few biographies (Ching & Chong 1987; Chong-Gossard 1992). A fertility study included Hawaii as a place with no single racial majority in comparison with California (Johnson & Nishida 1980). McKeown's work at the turn of the 21st century is interested in developing a different conceptual framework to reexamine previous studies of Chinese migrants along national boundaries. His work and others' emerged since the 1990s have adopted basic ideas of globalization.

## Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand are similar in many ways. Both were settler colonies with a majority of British or Irish immigrants, considered the Britain in the South Pacific. The Chinese first came to this part of the world as indentured laborers around the middle of 19th century, and their numbers declined as colonial governments imposed increasingly restrictive immigration regulations since the 1880s until World War II. This situation was changed during the War, when wives and children were permitted to reunite with their families for humanistic reasons. Thus, Chinese communities became stable and naturally grew in size. Australia and New Zealand have seen a surge of new Chinese immigration since the late 1980s, after the reform of immigration policies. Contrary to the farm hands, gold miners, market gardeners and street hawkers of early Chinese immigrants, new arrivals under Business and Skills Migration Program tends to be highly educated middle class. They maintain transnational households,

shuttling between Australia/New Zealand and Taiwan, Hong Kong or China.

## Australia

The early studies of the Chinese in Australia focused on the history of migration and settlement. Relying on census data and government surveys, C.Y. Choi (1975) provided a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the Chinese occupation, marriage and residential patterns. Huck (1970) used the Australian case to argue for the assimilability of the Chinese immigrants. As Australia ended its White Australia platform in 1965, there emerged a few studies trying to comprehend the development of anti-Chinese racism. Cronin (1982, 2001), Curthoys (1973, 2001) and Markus (1979, 2001) started their researches at this time and have been actively engaged in this field since. Australian scholars grew aware of the absence of non-Europeans in the representation of Australian history, and began to fill the void with the historical experiences of the Indigenous and the Chinese. The Chinese diaspora also became noticed and included in the curriculum of Australian Studies, growing out of its previous nationalist agenda(Curthoys). Details of early Chinese immigration history and settlement were uncovered and records unearthed and interpreted.

Chinese had long been presented in general fuzzy pictures, if not absent in Australian history. Against this generalization, there has emerged more and more studies focusing on specific regions, small localities, Chinatowns, and families, such as Atherton, Ballarat, Cairns, Little Bourke Street, Palmer Field, Pine Creek Region, and Wolfram mines (Brumley 1995; Comber 1995; Couchman 1995; Fitzgerald, S. 2001; Koi 1995; Lyndon 2001; May 1995; McCarthy 1995; Wilton 1995). Ryan (1995) published the early history of the small Chinese population in Western Australia, thirteen years after Cronin did her work in Victoria, the first colony setting precedents for dealing with the Chinese presence. The importance of the Chinese in Australian history is finally officially recognized. Australian Heritage Commission (2003)

published a "migrant heritage places kit… to find and access Chinese Australian heritage places." This tool kit aims at rectifying the "gap in knowledge of migrant-related heritage places."(Australian Heritage Commission 2003: v)

Instead of portraying the Chinese as a indistinct population based on census and other government documents, recent studies have explored new methods and various sources of material to trace individual groups of Chinese, particular stores and their networks, to recount their particular experiences. Archaeology, material culture studies, oral history and literature open new ways to look into internal diversity among Chinese immigrants and changes over time. McCarthy (1995) points out the importance of archaeology in reconstructing early Chinese history. Although the Chinese once outnumbered European immigrants in Western Australia, historical documents reflected European perspective of their experiences. Remaining material artifacts in previous Chinese mining camps would reveal what is being concealed in archives. Similar large scale survey of Atherton, Queensland has been conducted by graduate students of the Material Culture Unit at James Cook University since 1985 (Grimwade 1995). This long term survey has been funded by the University, the National Trust and the National Estate Programme. This kind of work combines various methods, looking into historical documents, conducting personal interviews, surface surveys and archaeological excavations.

Two conferences of importance were held one year apart: "Histories of the Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific" in 1993 and "Chinese Settlers and Sojourners in Australasia and the South Pacific" in 1994. The 1993 conference was organized by the Museum of Chinese Australian History is more comprehensive, including all but one contributor of the 1994 conference. Both conferences strived to explore new methods and new sources of material. Relatively speaking, the 1993 conference discussed the diversity of the Chinese immigrants in greater details. Herbalists (Rolls 1995; Loh 1995), merchants (Wilton 1995), banana traders (Couchman 1995) and

cooks (Yu 1995) were identified in addition to the familiar miners, market gardeners and street hawkers.

Since the early 1990s, Australia has become one of the receiving countries of Chinese immigrants (Skeldon 1995). There came studies identifying the effects of new immigration policy and characteristics of new Chinese immigrants. Coughlan & Hon (1997) provided a socio-economic and demographic profile of new immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Macau, Malaysia and Singapore based on 1991 census findings. Khoo & Mak (2003) focused on career satisfaction, the presence of children and their importance on the adjustment of immigrants. Post-1980s immigrants tended to be highly education, skilled professionals, but unsatisfactorily employed, however, the major concerns of these new arrivals were family ties and a better physical environment (Wu 2003). Mak (1993) also studied the home society of the immigrants to examine the pre-immigration preparation of Hong Kong residents admitted for immigration to Australia. Many works targeting the adjustment of new immigrants point to the lack of adequate employment opportunities as contributing to the "astronaut parent" or "frequent flyer" phenomenon (Chiang 2003; Coughlan & Hen1997; Khoo & Mak 2003). Others consider transnational families part of a broader trend of globalization which engages also Australian cohorts.

Although there are numerous studies of Chinese immigration and settlement in Australia, they seem to divide into two camps: one focuses on the history of early Chinese immigration, the other focuses on the post 1980s new immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and elsewhere. Except in one case (Niemeier 1995)they are treated as separate groups, and sustain no interactions.

## New Zealand

Similar to Australia, researchers come from different disciplines, including amateurs with profound knowledge and interest of family histories (Koi 1995), local cemeteries (Brumley 1995) and community

archives. James Ng (1993, 1995a, 1995b) is an important part-time researcher of the early Chinese immigrants in Otago. The prevalent caricature of Chinese prompted James Ng (1993) to compile material from various sources to reconstruct the history of the first Chinese gold miners in Otago. Ng, a medical doctor, himself lived through the different stages of Chinese immigration. To him, the crucial date in Chinese New Zealander's history is 1951, when Chinese women and children were permitted to reunite with their husbands and fathers already in New Zealand. Ng and his family went through these changes personally. His four-volume work provides full details of gold miners, their names, village origins and concerns. Also dealing with the Dunedin Chinese, Pawakapan (2003) tried to explain the social distance between the Chinese and the larger society from the seclusion of self-employment rather than falling into easy answer of racial discrimination.

Ip criticizes the lack of serious studies of New Zealand Chinese. They are still treated as "anecdotes" (2003a: xi). Her book intends to make the highly "visible" yet "indistinct" Chinese comprehensible to the mainstream New Zealanders (2003a: xi). Ip's (2003b) edited volume on New Zealand Chinese is inclusive of both waves of immigrants covering early gold diggers in the 1860s as well as the present-day transnationals. Unfolding History, Evolving Identity (2003b) consists of four parts that are more than chronologically arranged. The first two parts followed the settlement of early immigrants and Part III targeted the coming of new immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Affluent professionals moved to New Zealand only since the late 1980s, but they were found to be marginally engaged in their professional lives (Ip 2003c). Low sex ratios for certain age groups indicate a separation of family members in different countries and that of work and family life (Ho 2003; Ip 1995, 2003c, 2003d). New Zealand is likely one of several bases for transnational families. This phenomenon is also observed in Australia (Chiang 2003).

**Figure 2. Chinese Population in New Zealand by Sex, 1867-1996**

| Year | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| 1867 | 1,213 | 6 |
| 1871 | 2,637 | 4 |
| 1896 | 3,773 | 86 |
| 1906 | 2,515 | 55 |
| 1916 | 2,017 | 130 |
| 1921 | 2,993 | 273 |
| 1936 | 2,432 | 511 |
| 1945 | 3,414 | 1,526 |
| 1956 | 4,026 | 2,705 |
| 1966 | 5,700 | 4,583 |
| 1976 | 6,081 | 6,779 |
| 1986 | 9,803 | 9,591 |
| 1991 | 18,750 | 18,939 |
| 1996 | 39,168 | 42,144 |

Source: Ip (2003d: 343).

Part IV Standing Up centers on the surge of racism in the early 1990s that brought the descendants of early immigrants and recent immigrants to a common front. A New Zealand-born community leader wrote "the feeling of déjà vu, that history was about to repeat itself over 100 years later, was overwhelming" (Wong 2003: 268). The revival of racism pushed the "old" Chinese to campaign for an official apology for poll tax policies and succeeded in 2002 (Wong 2003). The Epsom Normal Primary School proposed to restrict the entrance of children from non-English speaking background in 1995, and withdrew its proposal as Asian immigrants efficiently coordinated their protests on a national level (Pang 2003). This controversy also exposes the differences between old settlers and new immigrants in terms of their respective political styles and groups interest (Pang 2003). Taking the differences between settlers and new arrivals and the differences among Chinese immigrants of different origins, Ip suggest that instead of an assumed homogeneous Chinese community, plural

Chinese communities fit the reality better (Ip 2003b: 140). Adjustment of new arrivals also attracts attention from scholars (Liu, Ng, Weatherall & Loong 2000; Selvarajah 2005)

## Papua New Guinea

There were about 2,760 Chinese in Papua New Guinea on the eve of its independence (Wu 1985: 8). The first Chinese came to work on German plantations in New Britain and New Ireland in the 1870s, but the large number of them came in the 1950s. They went through German, Australian and Japanese rules and independence in 1975. The number of Chinese in Rabaul dropped from 889 in 1971 to fewer than 300 in 1980 (Wu 1985: 12, 180). David Wu conducted his research of the Chinese in Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s. His work is comprehensive and of great historic depth. He consciously described New Guinean Chinese population with Southeast Asian Chinese in his mind. He employed the concept of adaptive strategy in his analysis of kindred structure of Chinese enterprises and their heavy concentration on retail and wholesale businesses. Their aggressive pursuit of wealth and aloof attitude toward local politics seemed maladaptive at time of independence. This book provides rich background material, detailed analysis of Chinese family enterprises and community political structure.

**Figure 3. Chinese Population of Papua New Guinea, 1921-1957**

| Year | Chinese Population |
|---|---|
| 1921 | 1,402 |
| 1926 | 1,279 |
| 1931 | 1,179 |
| 1936 | 1,523 |
| 1941 | 2,199 |
| 1951 | 1,949 |
| 1956 | 2,378 |
| 1957 | 2,448 |
| 1972 | 2,760 |

Source: Wu (1985: 193).

## Fiji

Fiji was a British protectorate until its independence in 1970. Early Chinese immigrants found their way to Fiji through Australia. Their general stores were often branches of businesses in Australia. Under the indirect rule of the British, the need for labor in sugarcane plantations was replenished by Indians who came to constitute a slight majority of Fiji's population. The size of the Chinese community in Fiji is small and politically insignificant.

**Figure 4. Chinese Population of Fiji, 1921 to 1974**

| Year | Chinese Population | Percentage of Total Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 910 | 0.57 |
| 1936 | 1,751 | 0.88 |
| 1946 | 2,105 | 1.10 |
| 1956 | 4,155 | 1.01 |
| 1966 | 5,149 | 1.08 |
| 1972 | 4,725 | 0.88 |
| 1974 | 4,000 | 0.60 |

Source: Greif (1977: 45).

Feeling powerless by their small size and threatened by the tense relations between Fijians and Indians, the independence of Fiji caused some 20% of the Chinese to re-immigrate to Canada, New Zealand and Australia. To understand this "self-induced" (Greif 1977: 47) ill-feelings, Greif conducted a questionnaire survey of 80 Chinese in 1974 to examine their degree of assimilation, political knowledge and interest, feelings of personal insecurity, plan of emmigration, prospect for the future of the Chinese in Fiji etc.(1977: 49). Greif concluded that the Chinese of Fiji would disappear in a decade. Kumedawa (1989) went to Fiji ten years after Greif and found the persistent Chinese group. She incorporated objective and subjective factors to examine the formation of ethnic identity within individuals. Kumedawa's work saw a stable Chinese community and provided details at both a group and individual level.

## Samoa

The majority of the Chinese came to German Samoa to work on coconut plantations under contract. There were twelve Chinese living in Samoa before the first shipment of laborers arrived at Apia (Tong 1997, Willmott 1995). The number of Chinese contract laborers totaled 6,984 between 1903 and 1934 (Liua'ana 1997). Seventy-four percent (5,179) of them were repatriated back to China between 1906 and 1948(Liua'ana 1997). Of 295 Chinese living on Samoa in 1948, only 126 intended to return home. Before embarkation twenty-two more chose to settle permanently. What attracted them to stay, away from their ancestral land? What happened to them? How have they lived their lives? Tong's research (1997) focuses on the official negotiation between Chinese and German governments regarding working conditions on Samoan plantations. His study examined documents in Chinese language inaccessible by most scholars unfamiliar with the language. Liua'ana (1997)'s work provides some clues about lives beyond hard labor at plantations and how some Chinese have become part of Samoa.

Cohabitation between Chinese men and Samoan women had caused concerns among the Samoans, and resulted in government rules prohibiting Chinese men from entering Samoan villages (Liua'ana 1997). Since planters kept employing Samoan women at plantations, the Chinese–Samoan relationships continued inside the compounds. Government considered forced repatriation, as the number of children resulting from these unions increased. After World War II the Chinese again faced repatriation, Samoans proposed to allow the Chinese with Samoan families to stay. Other than personal intimate ties with Samoans, Chinese supported Mau movement in various ways in the late 1920s. Their assistance was later recognized by gift in land and matai tiles (Liua'ana 1997). How have the Chinese and their descendants lived? There are traces of a diasporic presence. Chinese immigrants in Western Samoa gave a gift of Samoan artifacts including pieces of tapa, a fan, mats and others to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

1963. These gifts from Samoan Chinese are transferred to Department of Anthropology at National Taiwan University.

## French Polynesia

Americans became interested in the Pacific after WWII. Harvard University was one of the major universities seriously engaged with researches in this area. French Polynesia attracted some graduate students conducting their fieldwork. In addition to local maohi (maori) population, Chinese was also their target of research. Moench(1963) carried out his research of the Chinese in Utoroa, Raeatea of Society Islands. He followed the Utoroa Chinese to Papeete, the port town of Tahiti, and completed their network of merchandise distribution. "Tunga ganhe"(patron-and-client relations) appropriately underlined the connection between retailers and wholesalers, suburbs and Papeete, outer islands and Tahiti. His research was done when signs of significant transformations of the French Polynesian society were first sensed.

Coppenrath (1967) was pushing the Chinese population toward legal assimilation through naturalization. He was right in the tide of change. A lawyer, he proved that the Chinese could be culturally French. His book focused on legal regulations concerning immigration, residence and citizenship. At the moment of great transformation of Tahitian society in the middle of 1960s, he concluded that the Chinese had been assimilated culturally, and consequently legally. This view of assimilation was rebutted by a young generation of local-born, French-educated Chinese(Wenfa 1976). They posed an idea of integration instead of total assimilation. This is a book preparing the ground for the political participation of local-born Chinese. Coppenrath and Wenfa both were from Tahiti, representing legal and political concerns respectively.

Tung(1993) conducted her fieldwork from 1989 to 1990, thirty years after the drastic transformation of French Polynesian society. French government fueled money into its previously neglected territory overseas.

The Chinese profited from an increasingly growing market economy. They became further integrated into local Polynesian society when local-born Chinese were granted French citizenship automatically in 1973, and began to participate in local politics. Tung's work documented transformed Chinese collective activities and analyzed the representation of Chinese "community" in Temple Kanti, Chinese New Year celebrations, commemoration of the arrival of the first Chinese, and that of a martyr Shim Chiu Kong. The Chinese "community" came to alive on the stage of local politics. Saura (2002) revised his thesis previously written in 1985 and finally published in Tahiti. His original thesis was a historical study of the Chinese community. The recently revised book is composed of three parts: installation (1865-1929), formation (1929-1964), integration (1960-21st century). Like Coppenrath (1967), he also analyzed government documents to trace Chinese immigration, formal restrictions on immigration and naturalization. He updated census information, added new happenings, and changed some sections as things developed since he completed his thesis in the mid-1980s. Saura renamed his book "Tinito(Chinese in Tahitian): la communaute chinoise de Tahiti, installation, structuration, integration" to emphasize its local Tahitian context. He admits that his work offers a partial and outsiders" understanding. Its contribution comes from drawing material from diverse and rare sources. Local-born Chinese also emerged in this field as autobiographers or scholars. Jimmy Ly(1996) has written three books about the history and identity of local Chinese. Sinchan, a trained ethnopsychologist, explored the core of Hakka culture: its belief.

## Conclusion

In new nations in the Pacific, reconstructing national history in order to establish a separate political identity is normally practiced. This national history at first centered on European settlers in settler colonies such as Australia and New Zealand. Gradually there has emerged an interest on the part played by native populations as well as non-European immigrants, thus

history of Chinese immigration became a proper research issue. These historical studies employed archaeological excavation in addition to usual reliance on government documents such as health, police and military records. There are also studies on museum collections, and Chinatowns, but they are treated as traces of historical facts, helping rebuilding the Chinese presence in the past. Concept of cultural representation has had little significance in the studies of Chinese immigration in Australia and New Zealand.

Most studies reviewed here reflect a few false assumptions of Overseas Chinese studies. The early Chinese immigrant communities were often considered as bachelor societies of single males. In fact, Chinese immigrants have had been maintaining multi-local families since their first move. Chain migration and circular migration have been usual ways of population movement. Immigrants" financial and conjugal ties with families at home, and usual replacement of fathers by sons were ignored by this perception. This trans-national network is finally noticed in a new wave of immigration in New Zealand and Australia. We see terms like astronaut parents, parachute children, frequent fliers applying to transnational households. Transnational network is not a new phenomenon. It has been working with the earliest immigrants. With a historical depth, we should look into the immigrants" concept of family, marriage and sexuality to explore ways they approach their ideal life.

Most studies treat Chinese communities as homogeneous societies. Internal class differences were often ignored. For example, Chinese communities were often described as bachelor societies, but there were wealthier members who could afford traveling expenses and whose households at home had enough women to work sent for their women to join them overseas. In studies of Australian and New Zealand Chinese, there is a division between "old settlers" and "new immigrants." "Old settlers" were frozen in the past. They became the target of historical reconstruction. Their contemporary presence was seldom mentioned. Do they and new

immigrants constitute or act as a collectivity? On what occasion? How are they distinct from new immigrants in today's cultural politics?

Overseas Chinese Studies established itself as a field of study out of political circumstances. It was a laboratory substituting the then closed mainland China. Support from Overseas Chinese communities helped maintain the legitimacy of Nationalist government representing Chinese people and culture since 1911 Revolution. Overseas Chinese Studies emerged after WWII. Most attention was given to populous Southeast Asia. Other than Hawaii and Australia, the Chinese in Oceania received little scholarly attention. The size of the Chinese community and political and economic influence determine them as an interesting case or not. Another factor contributing to the lack of studies of Oceania may be related to the idea of cultural authenticity. Scholars were looking for "authentic Chinese community." Dialect groups, cemeteries, temples, voluntary associations, secret societies, family enterprises etc., characteristics of overseas Chinese communities, substantiated the idea of an "authentic Chinese community." Thus, the Samoan Chinese or Chinese Samoan was excluded. We need to loosen our definition of "Chineseness," and allow for variation and transformation of Chinese immigrant populations. Then we will start to learn about the diversity of Chinese immigrants and their descendents.

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