



Title: Return Migrant or Diaspora: An Exploratory Study of New Generation Chinese-Canadian Youth Working in Hong Kong

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Research Question:

Is the search for better economic opportunity the motivation of their relocation to Hong Kong? If so, then why did they choose Hong Kong instead of other countries such as the USA, which is geographically closer to their family? How do they perceive their connections with Hong Kong and Canada?

Importance:

Canada adopts an economic driven immigration policy that intends to keep its economic growth by using immigrants to replace the aging labour force. The outward mobility of new generation youth may not only forfeit its immigrant policy, but also drain its resources invested in training these youths. In addition, the leaving of young members may impact the immigrant families and the local community. Without understanding the logic behind the out-migration of new generation youth from immigrant families, the invisibility of this phenomenon may further hamper a policy response to both the positive and negative consequences of this phenomenon.

Research Findings:

Growing up in a Chinese immigrant family, these young people have certain familiarities with and social connections in Hong Kong. However, their decision to move to Hong Kong is largely due to better job and promotion opportunity. Being young also allows them to be more adventurous. However, despite their cultural heritages and their parent's roots in Hong Kong, many of them tend to position themselves as Canadian diaspora by keeping a friendship circle with other Canadian diaspora in the centre, and keeping their option of returning to Canada open, a place they unanimously called home.

Implications:

While their experience may problematize the current conceptual understanding of transnational migration, the reasons why they decided to move to Hong Kong also raise some policy concerns. With their bilingual skills and highly educated background, this group of young people is a highly competitive human resource in the global job market. To keep this valuable resource in Canada, we need better human resource and economic policies to improve the local job market. For those who have already moved somewhere else, they are a global resource useful to the Canadian economy. We need a policy that can maintain a functional connection with these diaspora who may one day return to their home in Canada.