

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/H06/18 (please insert ref. above)

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <u>six</u> months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within <u>12</u> months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Trajectories, strategies, practices of second-generation Hong Kong transnational families

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Dr Lucille Lok Sun Ngan/ Associate Professor	Department of Social Science/ The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	Dr Anita Kit Wa Chan/ Associate Professor	Department of Social Sciences/ The Education University of Hong Kong
Others		

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	2019.01.01	N/A	Approved by HSUHK on 2020.04.24
Project Completion Date	2021.12.31	2022.06.30	
Duration (in month)	36	42	
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	2022.12.31	2023.06.30	

Part B: The Final Report**5. Project Objectives****5.1 Objectives as per original application**

1. Examine the range of factors within the spheres of employment, family life and children's education that are affecting their migratory trajectories;
2. Explore their notions of home and belongingness in regard to home and host countries;
3. Examine local and transnational practices and strategies that are utilized to pursue family projects;
4. Examine how gender relations are played out in the transnational migration process within the context of the family.

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

Reasons for the change:

- 1.
- 2.
3.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives (*Max 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved*)

Below describes how each of the objectives has been realized:

This project examined factors affecting the migration trajectories of second-generation returnee families from Hong Kong within the spheres of employment, family life and children's education (Objective 1). We found that the aspiration for a better quality of life for the family was the dominant driver for reverse migration. Returnees' relative, rather than absolute, affluence and their ability to capitalize on their transnational mobility gave them the capacity to aspire to what they saw as "better" education in the West, thus improving their children's lifestyle and ultimately that of the whole family. However, as they moved back to their previous places of residence abroad, downward social mobility was apparent, with a reduction in income and lowered work positions expected after migration. Thus, despite their relative affluence, they experienced complex coexistence of privilege and vulnerability in the reverse family migration process.

Another aspect of the project explored second-generation returnees' notions of home and belongingness (Objective 2). Our findings revealed that combined with their possession of dual citizenship and complex transnational sense of belonging, many second-generation returnees in this study identified themselves as partially Hongkongers, and they did not necessarily perceive Hong Kong as home. Frequently, terms such as a "hybrid", "outsider" or "global citizen" were used to describe their identity which alluded to their transnational sense of belonging and a certain sense of detachment from Hong Kong. As transnational youths, they underwent processes of acculturation to the host society, and circular migration between the host country and Hong Kong resulted in returnees' transnational outlook.

The study also examined local and transnational practices and strategies utilized to pursue family projects (Objective 3). To make sense of their decision to leave, returnees in this study constructed Hong Kong and the West in binary oppositions, putting the former as inferior to the latter in terms of quality of life (stressful vs. relaxed; materialistic vs. fulfillment; stratified vs. equal). These binaries were sometimes reinforced by nostalgic and emotional memories of their youth in the West. Our findings showed that imaginaries not only supported returnee parents in pursuing a lifestyle that was personally meaningful but also ameliorated uncertainties and emotional challenges (e.g., the feelings of sacrifice involved in their reduced social mobility after migration).

Moreover, the research examined how gender relations are played out in the transnational migration process within the context of the family (Objective 4). We found that previously employed overseas-educated mothers were particularly affected by reverse family migration from Hong Kong to the West. While these mothers possessed transnational capitals that differentiated them from first-generation immigrant women, reverse migration still led to compromised careers and re-domestication for them. By elucidating how work-family transitions were justified, this study demonstrated that beyond economic factors, interrelated gender, cultural, transnational and lifestyle dimensions significantly impact the negotiation of work-family challenges among skilled women in transnational circuits.

Overall, this research team has succeeded in addressing all four objectives of this research project.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	Addressed <i>(please tick)</i>	Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i>
Examine the range of factors within the spheres of employment, family life and children's education that are affecting their migratory trajectories;	√	100%
Explore their notions of home and belongingness in regard to home and host countries;	√	100%
Examine local and transnational practices and strategies that are utilized to pursue family projects;	√	100%
Examine how gender relations are played out in the transnational migration process within the context of the family.	√	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

Firstly, this study found that the aspiration for a better quality of life for the family was the dominant driver of migration for second-generation returnee families. Such motivation contrasts the quest to accumulate capital for class reproduction which has been a central theme in the literature on transnational migration from Hong Kong. Returnee parents' main frames of reference for considering how and where to live were shaped by interactions between their children's education, economic factors, transnational mobility, and imaginary and emotional aspects of migration. In addition, while there has been a tendency to focus on privilege among middle-class family migration from Hong Kong, we found the actual significance of economic dimension and the coexistence of privilege *and* precarity among second-generation returnee families who are relatively affluent. Complex intentions and emotions related to reverse migration underscore the challenges of mobility among subsequent immigrant generations, which cannot be reduced to a friction-less and hypermobile process. Findings have been published in the *International Migration Review*, presented at an international conference and local seminars and media publications.

Secondly, among returnee parents who had lived away from their families in Hong Kong during their youth abroad, we found that emotions related to their earlier transnational split family arrangements, cultural values – especially filial piety and family togetherness, and a constellation of family relations were integral to their migration plans for their children and family. These findings complicate the adverse impact of splitting the family transnationally, which is commonly studied at the point of separation and unsettles the representation of East Asian transnational migration as an instrumental strategy for household accumulation. These findings were published in *the Asian Studies Review* and presented at an international conference and local seminars and media publications.

Thirdly, the research was conducted during a period when the anti-extradition bill movement emerged, and the national security law was enacted. We found that the transnational backgrounds of second-generation returnees limited the role that political concerns played in their migration considerations, deviating from the prevailing politically oriented immigration discourse in Hong Kong. By perceiving their foreign citizenship as an exit ticket and having an ambivalent sense of belonging to Hong Kong, they placed themselves in a distinctive transnational position. Moreover, parenthood priorities revolving around their children's interest overshadowed political worries. In particular, their concerns were mainly over the pedagogy and education culture of mainstream schools and affordability of international education in Hong Kong. While international schools provided a solution, their high fees made them unaffordable. Thus, despite the expectation of diminished career prospects and even some having to up their careers altogether after migration, it was their children's interest that weighed most heavily in their cost-benefit calculations and motivated reverse migration. These findings have been presented at an international conference and local seminars and will be published in *The China Review*.

Fourthly, our findings showed that despite returnee mothers being highly educated in the West and possessing distinctive transnational backgrounds (overseas education, transnational support network, English competency etc.) that differentiates them from first-generation immigrant women, the process of reverse migration often leads to compromised careers and domestication for them in the destination country. Yet, there was a clear acceptance, and for some even an embracing, of such transitions. We found that beyond economic factors, interrelated gender, cultural, transnational and lifestyle dimensions significantly impact their negotiation of challenges of work and care, ameliorating the uncertainties and emotional tensions in the process. A paper discussing these findings is being reviewed by the *Chinese Sociological Review*.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (Maximum half a page)

This research examined the migration trajectories of second-generation returnee families from Hong Kong. Findings on emotions of guilt and ambivalence related to the care of elderly parents reveal recurring cultural values of filial piety that Chinese adult migrant children must continuously grapple with, willingly or otherwise as they seek for better family life and education for their children abroad (Ngan & Chan, 2021). While this study has provided the concerns and sentiments of the younger generation, we know very little about how family migration of the younger generation affects older family members. Research and policies related to ageing have tended to explore and support “ageing in place” in local communities. However, for the older generation in returnee families, many find themselves in continuous movement across borders or are part of families separated across international borders. At the same time, older family members are not just passive receivers of support; instead, they can also actively contribute to the transnational family’s well-being. Moreover, many of them also possess dual-citizenship and are especially susceptible to being involved in or affected by transnational processes due to their social ties abroad, privileged mobility and relative affluence. As such, further exploration into the neglected lives of older people in transnational families is of vital importance. This is especially so when reverse migration to previous places of settlement is increasingly common among a younger generation of returnees. Extending this research, we have begun a FDS project on Transnational Ageing and Family Processes among Elderly Hong Kong Parents (UGC/FDS14/H15/22).

Layman’s Summary

(Describe in layman’s language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

The value of this project lies in its timeliness as an emerging pattern of family migration back from Hong Kong to the West among returnee families has been documented in recent media reports. By drawing attention to family-centered lifestyle aspirations and the significance of emotions and imaginaries, aspects that have received scant attention in Chinese migration studies, we have enabled a better understanding of their migration motivation. We also showed that beyond economic factors, the interrelated aspects of transnational backgrounds, lifestyle aspirations, gender roles, and cultural beliefs shape returnee mothers’ justification of domestication and compromised careers. In so doing, this research not only contributed to a generational and gendered understanding of Chinese family migration but also the wider discussion of the impact of circular migration on skilled immigrant mothers. Moreover, by paying attention to the impact of a transnational background, we also underscored the importance of the life course perspective that considered long-term implications of migration and sense of belonging for family members across later immigrant generations. Finally, by demonstrating the complexity of economic dimensions in second-generation transnational families, this research addressed the call for more scholarly attention to experiences of precarities in migration of those who are relatively affluent.

Part C: Research Output**7. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications						Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
(forthcoming)	2022			Lucille Lok Sun Ngan*, and Anita Kit-Wa Chan, Rami Hin Yeung Chan, and Queenie Kwan Yee Siu	“The impact of a transnational background on family migration considerations amid political uncertainty: Second-generation returnees in Hong Kong.” <i>China Review</i> [SSCI, Q1]		(No - forthcoming paper)	Yes	No

2023	2022			Lucille Lok Sun Ngan*, and Anita Kit-Wa Chan	<p>“The quest for lifestyle: Reverse family migration among Hong Kong returnees.”</p> <p><i>International Migration Review</i> (OnlineFirst)</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183221149024</p> <p>[SSCI, Q1]</p>		Yes (Appendix 1)	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202300016
2022	2021			Lucille Lok Sun Ngan*, and Anita Kit-Wa Chan	<p>Transnational familyhood and migration strategies among parachute kids-turned-parents from Hong Kong</p> <p><i>Asian Studies Review</i> Vol 46, no. 2: 197-214.</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2021.1937939</p> <p>[SSCI, Q1]</p>		Yes (Appendix 2)	Yes	Yes https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202100026
		Under review		Lucille Lok Sun Ngan*	<p>Negotiating work–family transition: Reverse family migration among second-generation returnee mothers from Hong Kong</p> <p><i>The Chinese Sociological Review</i></p> <p>[SSCI, Q 1]</p>		No	Yes	No

			Working paper	Lucile Lok Sun Ngan*	Disillusionment and migration decisions among second-generation returnees		No	Yes	No
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8. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Nov to Dec 2021 Canberra	The quest for lifestyle: Reverse family migration among Hong Kong returnees	Chinese Studies Association of Australia 17 th Biennial Conference		Yes (Appendix 3)	Yes RGC's support was acknowledged in the presentation.	Yes https://research.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202100260
July 2019 Melbourne	Parachute Kids and Transnational Families: The Negotiation of Migratory Strategies among Second-Generation Returnee Fathers in Hong Kong	Chinese Studies Association of Australia 16th Biennial Conference		Yes (Appendix 4)	Yes RGC's support was acknowledged in the presentation.	Yes https://research.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900113

9. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

- The PI incorporated findings of this research to the module ASI4007 Migration and Transnationalism in Asia, an elective module in the Bachelor of Social Science (Asian Studies) programme offered by the Department of Social Science, HSUHK.
- New knowledge from this project generated students' interests in migration studies. For example, after taking her migration course, one of the PI's students decided to pursue a Master's degree in Migration Studies after completion of his degree at HSUHK. He received 3 postgraduate offers at 3 reputable British universities and has taken up the offer at the University of Birmingham.
- The research assistant on this project gained knowledge of Chinese migration. Working on this project also equipped her with research skills and experiences including preparing literature reviews, fieldwork, data analysis, and research presentation etc. Following this project, she pursued a doctorate degree in Australian National University, studying Hong Kong international students in Australia and their migration trajectories.

10. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
N/A			

11. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

- Research findings were disseminated in media publications to facilitate public discussion:
 - South China Morning Post ((2021, Sept 18), “The ‘split families’ who are leaving HK again”. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3149148/hong-kongs-children-split-families-move-they-emigrated>
 - 信報網站 Hong Kong Economic Journal (2021, Aug), “二次移民一去難復返 - 身份危機惡化，為下一代教育 (No return for second-generation migration-identity crisis and for better children’s education)”, Vol 533 pp. 20-22. [信報月刊《二次移民一去難復返——身份危機惡化、為下一代教育》引述顏樂桑副教授觀點 - BSS\(Hons\) Asian Studies \(hsu.edu.hk\)](#)
 - South China Morning Post (2021, July 10), “The long goodbye leaves elderly in despair”. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3140557/left-behind-hong-kongs-elderly-face-old-age-less-family>
 - 明報 Ming Pao (2021, July 11), “未來城市：政治動盪就要走？Z世代未必

咁諗(Future city: Leaving for the political uncertainty? Generation Z may not be recognize)”. [未來城市：政治動盪就要走？Z世代未必咁諗 - 20210711 - 副刊 - 每日明報 - 明報新聞網 \(mingpao.com\)](#)

- Research findings were presented at the Australian Consulate-General Hong Kong (5 November 2020), “Migration trajectories and identities: Hong Kong returnees and long-settled ABC’s”.
- Findings were shared at the Department of Social Science’ research seminars at The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong:
 - Ngan, L. L. S. (2022, Apr 21). *Going Back for a Better Lifestyle: Reverse Family Migration among Hong Kong Returnee Parents*. Paper presented at the SSC Seminar, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.
 - Ngan, L. L. S. (2021, Jul 8). *Seeking for a Better Lifestyle: Reverse Migration among Hong Kong Returnee Parents*. Paper presented at the Online Seminar on Mass Emigration Wave, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.
 - Ngan, L. L. S. (2021, Jan 28). *Migration Trajectories of Hong Kong Returnee Parents*. Paper presented at the SSC Research Seminar and SHSS Transnational Studies Research Seminar, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.
- Research findings were published by The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong’s official Newsletter, *Erudition*, in the article “Bidding farewell again- The staying and leaving of second-generation Hong Kong transnational families,” on January 2022 (p.13-14).https://issuu.com/hsmccpao/docs/erudition_hsu_hk_e-newsletter_jan_20_5fcabb3cc9c172/s/14692686
- Recognising that transnational families are increasingly diverse and complex and the presences of a lag in research on transnational family migration processes within the context of the Greater China region, the team, in collaboration with the Center of Greater China Studies at HSUHK organized 2 webinars on “Transnational Migration and Family Processes in Greater China and Beyond” to facilitate discussion between scholars in May 2021. Keynote speakers and participant include a number of renowned academics who are at the forefront of the field <https://migration.hsu.edu.hk/>
- Inter-institutional collaboration - Co-investigator of this project is from another local tertiary institution.

12. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	5* Peer-reviewed Journal Publications (*1 Paper is currently under review and 1 working paper)	2 Conference Papers			Type	No.
					Media Publication	3 Newspaper Articles 1 News journal -----
					Research Seminars	3 Social science research seminars -----
					Newsletter	1 Article in HSUHK's official Newsletter -----
					Undergraduate Teaching	1 Undergraduate module

13. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons