

# YOUTH, MOBILITIES, AND TIME: TAIWANESE WORKING HOLIDAYMAKERS IN NEW ZEALAND



Presenter: Lisa Tsai MSc (First Class Honours)

Supervisors: Dr. Francis Collins & Dr. Ward Friesen  
School of Environment, The University of Auckland

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# Life Course



**“YOUTH”**

# What is Youth/Youth Mobility?

- A period of **transition**: dependence to independence
- **In-between** education and work
- Popular forms of **youth mobility** in the literature: international students, backpacking, working holiday

Knowledge  
Acquisition

Travel and  
Exploration

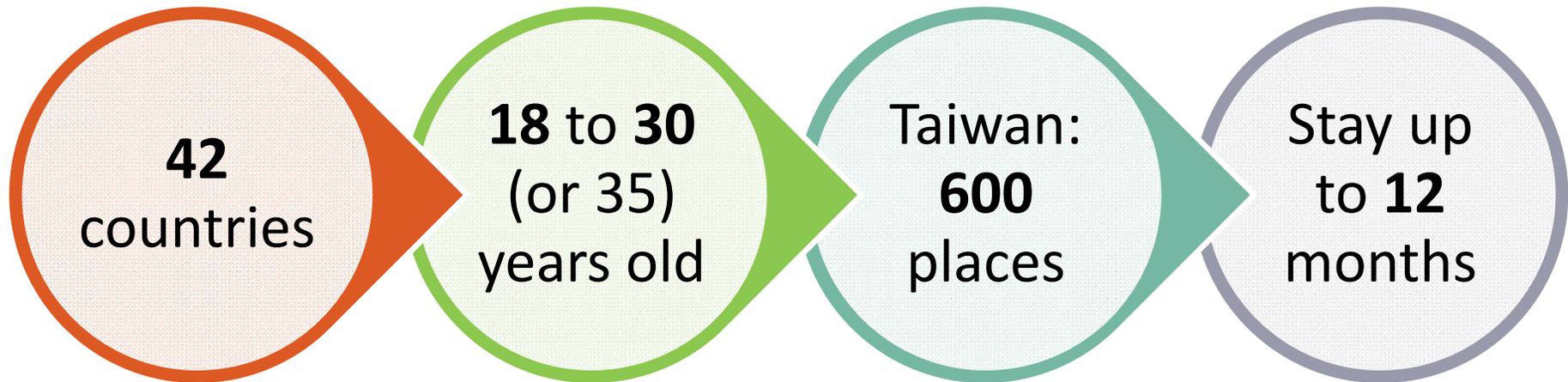
Self -  
transformation

Temporality

Gaining New  
Experiences

Independence

# NZ Working Holiday Scheme (Visa)



Work visa policy	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Working Holiday Schemes	43,258	43,030	48,631	54,640	61,404
Family	25,540	25,505	25,442	26,778	29,305
Essential Skills	22,341	22,065	22,406	26,497	28,548
Specific Purpose or Event	13,408	13,558	13,616	15,242	16,589
Study to Work	11,758	14,058	14,882	11,841	13,688
Horticulture and Viticulture Seasonal Work	8,469	9,103	9,588	10,836	11,677
Work to Residence	2,662	2,510	2,526	2,475	2,861
Other	9,623	10,187	9,745	9,301	8,706
<b>Total</b>	<b>135,010</b>	<b>138,161</b>	<b>144,933</b>	<b>155,683</b>	<b>170,814</b>

Approved temporary workers by work visa policies, 2010/11–2014/15 Source: MBIE (2015)

# Research Methodology

**28** semi-structured interviews with WHMs from Taiwan

**18** female and **10** male

Spent **3** months or more in New Zealand

**Mid to Late-20s**

From **various cities** in Taiwan

Region in New Zealand	Number of people	Where they were located (at the time of interview)
Auckland	12	Auckland, Warkworth, Waiheke Island
Bay of Plenty	5	Te Puke, Rotorua, Katikati
Manawatu - Wanganui	1	Ohakune
Canterbury	6	Christchurch, Rakaia
Otago	4	Cromwell, Wanaka, Oamaru

# Median Age of Working Holidaymakers in New Zealand (2014/2015)

Source: MBIE (2015)

**19**

**Germany**

**27**

**Taiwan**

Scheme	Median Age of WHMs in NZ (2014/2015)	% Female
<b>Germany</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>53%</b>
Sweden	22	59%
Netherlands	23	45%
United Kingdom	24	44%
France	24	45%
United States	24	56%
South Korea	24	60%
China	25	68%
Malaysia	26	64%
Japan	27	66%
<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>75%</b>

Source: MBIE (2015)

# Encountering Different Cultural Perspectives

Youth = chance to explore → *Eurocentric discourse*

But Asia → *Filial piety* (respect for elders), family responsibilities/expectations = the priority

## Disapproval from parents to participate in a WH

“My mother said I’m already 26 years old so I should stop wasting time on travelling and mucking around.”

## Asian youth mobility/the imagined ‘West’

“Europeans have this thing called a ‘Gap Year’. In Taiwan we don’t have this tradition, but I think it’s so nice how they get to go overseas and can live on their own.”

# Facing Challenges/Becoming Independent

- **Mismatch** of imagination, expectations, and realities
- **Social infrastructures** and specific ‘**routes**’  
**facilitate/enhance/determine/influence mobility**

*“Our English isn’t that good, so the information that we get is quite limited, so people always end up travelling to the same places and work in the same places.”*

*“I WANT to be in an all-English speaking environment, but I am just too scared to speak English.”*

*“Cooking has been the biggest challenge for me, because I didn’t know how to cook before. Now I do, a little bit.”*

# Time and Temporariness

- WHMs are **highly regulated by time** (but yet - so 'free')
- **Transient nature** of their movement can **disrupt** sense of belonging and attachment to people/places
- Packing, **unpacking**, and packing again...

*“When I don’t have a job, I feel so insecure. I don’t like moving around, but I just tell myself... isn’t that what a working holiday should be?”*

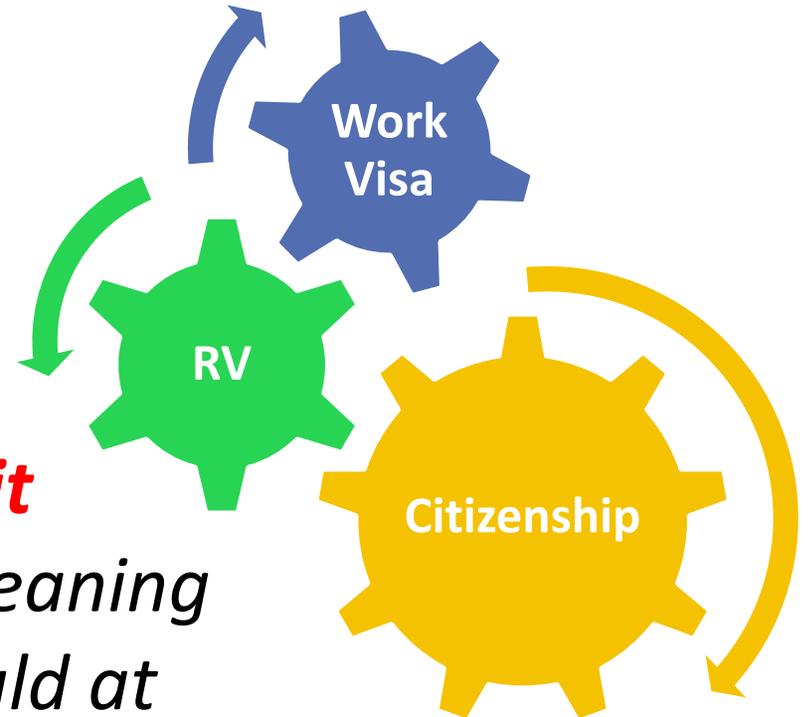
*“I’m never mentally prepared to be out of a job. For me, moving from place to place is stressful and takes a lot of emotional investment, so I’m always worried about where I should go next or what I should do...”*

# Future Aspirations for Taiwanese Youth

New Zealand has become... a place where **dreams and aspirations** can be created and achieved.

*"I need to find another place to call home, and I think I want that to be New Zealand."*

*"A Taiwanese saying goes: **'a rabbit must have at least three holes'** meaning - if you want a better life, you should at least have more than one place to stay."*



**So what does all of this mean for New Zealand?**