

**A comparative perspective on educational policies for  
children of immigrants in Taiwan**

Submitted by Hsin-Jui Ho, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree  
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Signature: .....

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## **Abstract**

The education of immigrant children is a persistent concern in many western countries. Taiwan has begun to face this challenge in the last decade. The immigrants in this context are mostly females from Southeast Asia and mainland China, on the basis of marriage to a Taiwanese resident. Since Taiwanese society holds a prejudice against them, the children born to foreign mothers are believed to have a negative impact on the quality of the Taiwanese population and to create particular educational problems.

The study employs an interpretive approach combining components of international comparison and policy research. Within this qualitative methodology, mixed methods were used to collect data and gain multiple understandings of the phenomenon in Taiwan. These methods of document analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation of foreign mothers' communities, along with a documentary review of the UK experience of educational policy for immigrant children from the 1960s onwards, provide a comparative perspective that has considerable reference value for Taiwan.

It was found that the children of immigrant mothers in Taiwan do not appear to underachieve or fall behind, in contrast to the prejudice held by Taiwanese society. The study also explores the characteristics of disadvantage of children born to immigrant mothers. Through the comparative historical review of the UK and Taiwan, the study also found that when people are faced with different cultures, their attitudes appear to move through in a similar process of adjustment which interacts with and responds to policy formulation. In addition, some recommendations for educational policy for children of immigrant mothers in Taiwan are discussed. The study

proposes that learning plural mother tongues is a means to improve these children's self-identity, allowing them to develop bilingual advantages and contribute to the country's competitiveness.

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