

“If the Family Lives in Harmony, All of Its Affairs Will Prosper:” An Analysis of China’s  
Overseas Chinese Policy in the New Era and the Politics of “Win-Win”

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**Abstract:** This bibliographic paper analyzes the developments in China’s more aggressive and pandering overseas Chinese policy in the New Era under Xi Jinping, i.e. his conceptualization of the “root,” “soul,” and “dream” of the Chinese nation and the “three benefits” of overseas Chinese policy, and finds that the underlying theme is in creating so-called “win-win” situations. That said, as both the Chinese and Western literature demonstrate, there has been a consistent “guiding principle” from the earliest days of the PRC that overseas Chinese policy should be subordinated to and serve China’s higher “grand strategy” and national interests, in spite of the ostensible re-commitment under Xi to “serving the interests of overseas Chinese.” The reality is that China is only interested in “serving the interests of overseas Chinese” and “win-win” situations to the degree that they serve to further its long-term national interests, which includes co-opting passive acceptance or promotion of the CCP’s carefully constructed narrative of the Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity and its policy preferences among the overseas Chinese. This requires serious reflection on the individual and societal levels on the *cui bono* (who stands to benefit) and, by extension, the so-called *cui damno* (who stands to lose) of “win-win” for the Chinese Government, the overseas Chinese, foreign countries, and other potentially interested non-state parties.

**Keywords:** BRI, Chinese Transnationalism, Overseas Chinese Policy, New Era, “Win-Win”

**Disclaimer:** All of the opinions and views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any entity of the U.S. Government.



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## “If the Family Lives in Harmony, All of Its Affairs Will Prosper:” An Analysis of China’s Overseas Chinese Policy in the New Era and the Politics of “Win-Win”



“The tens of millions of overseas Chinese across the world are all members of the Chinese family. In the best of Chinese traditions, generations of overseas Chinese have never forgotten their [ancestral] country, their origins, or the blood of the Chinese nation flowing in their veins. They have given their enthusiastic support to China’s revolution, construction, and reform.” – Xi Jinping, Seventh Conference for the Friendship of Overseas Chinese Associations, 6 June 2014<sup>1</sup>

“This New Era [of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics] will be an era of building on past successes to further advance our cause...It will be an era for all of us, the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, to strive with *one heart* to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. It will be an era that sees China moving closer to center stage and making greater contributions to mankind.” – Xi Jinping, 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, 18 October 2017<sup>2</sup>

Academic study on the overseas Chinese as a diverse migrant population, and especially on the issues of their identity, integration into the local society, political loyalty, and relationship with their ancestral country, is not a new phenomenon. However, given the increasingly prominent role that China is playing in the globalized economy, international security, and other countries’ calculations of their national interests, a renewed attention is being paid among policymakers in the West to China’s influence operations – and, more acutely, its interference – overseas, including the leveraging of the continuously growing number of overseas Chinese. According to the Asia Society’s *Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy* (2019), “The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) also stepped up its worldwide efforts to claim what it calls ‘discourse power,’ by using sometimes covert and intrusive methods to induce ethnic ‘overseas Chinese’ as well as other foreign groups abroad to adopt, or at least accept, pro-CCP positions.”<sup>3</sup> Drawing similar conclusions, the Hoover Institution’s *Chinese Influence and American Interests* (2018) distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate activities in the practice of foreign policy, characterizing the latter as being “covert, coercive, or corrupting” in nature and, therefore, as posing a quintessential threat to the “integrity of democratic institutions” and to the “principles of freedom and openness.”<sup>4</sup> That is, although China’s diaspora outreach and public diplomacy efforts are not unconventional, the line between the legitimate and the illegitimate is often obscured, whether intentional or not. This is due to the historically intimate connections between the Chinese Government’s overseas Chinese policy and the United Front, which seems to have been dramatically reinforced by the recent consolidation of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) and other State Council offices into the United Front Work Department (UFD) in March 2018.<sup>5</sup>

Among the academic community in China, there has likewise been a clearly heightened interest in the overseas Chinese community (华侨华人, huáqiáo huárén) and overseas Chinese policy (侨务工作, qiáowù gōngzuò) in the past six to eight years, which is arguably correlated with the diversifying strategic interests of the central government. In addition to the OCAO’s bimonthly journal, *Overseas Chinese Affairs Studies* (侨务工作研究, qiáowù gōngzuò yánjiū),

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<sup>1</sup> Xi Jinping. “The Chinese Dream.” *The Governance of China*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2014. Print. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Xi Jinping. “Securing a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Striving for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.” *Xinhua*. 18 October 2017. Accessed 4 November 2017. Website.

<sup>3</sup> O. Schell and S. Shirk. *Course Correction: Toward an Effective and Sustainable China Policy*. NY: Asia Society, 2019. Print. 9.

<sup>4</sup> L. Diamond and O. Schell. *Chinese Influence and American Interests*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution, 2018. Print. 1 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> A. Bowe. *China’s Overseas United Front Work*. DC: US-China Economic and Security Review Comm’n. 2018. Print. 1 and 7.

which dates back to circa 2004, CNKI data specifically shows that academic articles dealing with overseas Chinese (Figure 1) increased steadily from 169 in 2006 and 193 in 2008 to 207 in 2012 and 271 in 2015, including 24 articles in 2015 that examined the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the overseas Chinese. On overseas Chinese policy itself (Figure 2), that number waxed and waned from year-to-year; but, on the whole, it increased from 70 in 2006 and 89 in 2008 to 130 in 2012 and 139 in 2015, with approximately 5 articles combined in 2017 and 2018 that focused singularly on Xi Jinping's contributions. Lastly, Huaqiao University and the Social Sciences Academic Press have co-published annual blue book reports on the developments and trends in overseas Chinese studies since 2011, which the University of Michigan compares to "the Congressional Research Service and the RAND Corporation" in that they are "consumed by top policymakers" for their considerably more insightful and "objective analyses."<sup>6</sup> These invaluable reports, bolded in blue, will be used to complement this paper's understanding of China's overseas Chinese policy as informed by the central government's official messaging.

*China and the Chinese Overseas* by Wang Gungwu, hereby referred to as Wang (1991), deftly explores many of the politically sensitive issues that are being debated today and it is regarded as one of the most preeminent works in overseas Chinese studies in both China and the West. It would be remiss not to at least briefly discuss it here in the introduction. In "The Study of Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia," Wang asserts that the Chinese concept of its own identity was historically rooted in the dichotomy between the civilized Chinese and the barbaric non-Chinese, which made it possible for there to emerge what he calls the Chinese *minzu* (民族, mínzú) nationalist identity that emphasized their common racial origins.<sup>7</sup> In other words, one could still be Chinese without physically residing in China proper because the imagined Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity is an inherent political loyalty to the notion of a Chinese nation that transcended the arbitrary boundaries of modern nation-states. Wang notes, though, that beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, most of the Chinese living and working overseas gradually gave up this identity voluntarily by becoming citizens of foreign countries.<sup>8</sup> In the process, they became "more conscious" of their Chinese cultural/ethnic identity and gained a new local national identity, which Wang admits was at the time "little more than a legal and political identity for official and public use."<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding, Wang discerningly theorizes that the combination(s) and the degree of each identity for a particular individual depends largely on the environment (or what he calls "norms") in which they are raised, illustrating the important point that the contemporary identity of overseas Chinese is extremely complex, deeply personal, and constantly evolving.<sup>10</sup> The puzzle then is: are there desirable combinations of overseas Chinese identities, for whom exactly, and how can they be manufactured or maintained through public and social policy if at all?

In "Political Chinese: Their Contribution to Modern Southeast Asian History," Wang (1991) examines the political identity, interests, and involvement of overseas Chinese and generalizes that there are three main types. Group A, which appears to be analogous with the Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity, "is concerned predominantly with Chinese national politics and its international ramifications." They were motivated in the first half of the twentieth century by the "deep resentments at having been humiliated for several decades," "the feeling that China and the

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<sup>6</sup> University of Michigan Library. "Pishu (皮书)." *Chinese Studies Research Guide*. 2018. Accessed 21 February 2019. Website.

<sup>7</sup> Wang Gungwu. "Chinese Identities." *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991. Print. 198-202.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 209.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 208.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 210-215.

Chinese were about to rise again,” and the desire to be on the “winning side” of history.<sup>11</sup> These attitudes were, as Wang observes, fostered by the close and continuing contacts between these overseas Chinese and China through advances in communications technology and international media, which has only become more relevant with the introduction of new media platforms.<sup>12</sup> On the other end of the spectrum is the culturally, linguistically, and socially assimilationist Group C, which is “drawn into the politics of non-Chinese hierarchies.”<sup>13</sup> It is for this reason, Wang explains, that they tended to be referred to in their new communities as the “good Chinese” or the “loyal and trustworthy Chinese.”<sup>14</sup> That said, Wang suggests that, since 1945, overseas Chinese in most countries fall into the in-between Group B, which is a combination of the cultural/ethnic and local national identities. They endeavor, he says, to “fit themselves into [their] respective national frameworks as best they can” while preserving their unique Chinese family units and heritage.<sup>15</sup> Yet, Wang states that Group B overseas Chinese remain cognizant of China’s affairs and some still hope that “a strong China could help them in their work and livelihood overseas.”<sup>16</sup> This expectedly raises the concern that this attention and, perhaps, their economic or social opportunism can be exploited by a more aggressive and “inviting” overseas Chinese policy today.

James Jiann Hua To (2014) is doubtlessly the most comprehensive study to-date in the West on the overseas Chinese policies of China and Taiwan, which he depicts as an intrinsic competition for sympathy from and influence over the overseas Chinese. He argues, moreover, that China’s efforts have proven to be more effective than those of Taiwan, as evident in the 2008 Olympic rallies, because they are better developed and resourced as well as more “inviting” in their broader outreach to the overseas Chinese and utilization of the “grand [re]unification nationalism” rhetoric.<sup>17</sup> Concretely speaking, To details how the CCP employs attractive business opportunities, expanded consular protections to include even non-citizens, cultural and education programs, new media platforms, “root-seeking” tours, and youth summer camps to promote a revived Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity among overseas Chinese, which can be manipulated “for the purpose of constructing an international environment friendly to China’s global ambitions.”<sup>18</sup> To therefore cautions that participation in China’s overseas Chinese work “does not necessarily broaden...but actually restricts [the] behaviors, outlooks, and identities” of the overseas Chinese by acquiescing to a carefully constructed Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity that “promotes only aspects acceptable to the CCP.”<sup>19</sup> He also gives the examples of Chinese democracy activists, Falun Gong practitioners, Taiwan independence supporters, Tibetans, and Uyghurs to exhibit how the CCP will unhesitatingly use both cooption and coercion to “pre-empt” and “cripple or incapacitate” diaspora groups that are hostile and subversive to its authority.<sup>20</sup> Identifying the motivators for overseas Chinese to engage with or resist China, and more significantly to consciously pick or switch “sides,” is imperative to genuinely understanding the targets of China’s overseas Chinese policy and to suitably countering its tactics when they cross the red line of illegitimacy.

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<sup>11</sup> Wang Gungwu. “Political Chinese.” *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991. Print. 135, 141.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 135. See Sheng Ding’s “Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China’s Rise” in *Pacific Affairs* (Winter 2007/2008) for an in-depth discussion on the relevance of new media platforms.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 142-143.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 139, 142.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 141.

<sup>17</sup> James Jiann Hua To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Print. 282-283.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 286.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 285.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 192-200.

This bibliographic paper intends to analyze the developments in China's overseas Chinese policy in the New Era under Xi Jinping and to demonstrate that, by and large, there has been more continuity than innovation and more challenges than opportunities. The first section will explain the distinction between the Huaqiao and Huaren – the two main branches of overseas Chinese – and the general perceptions of them. The second section will explore the intertwined relationship between China's so-called “grand strategy,” as delineated by Sulmaan Khan (2018), and its overseas Chinese policy, holding the mainstream perspective that the former is served by the latter. This will be followed with an exposition into the major speeches and writings of Xi Jinping on the issue, as discussed specifically by the Chinese academic community. The focus will be on Xi's conceptualization of the “root,” “soul,” and “dream” of the Chinese nation and the “three benefits” of overseas Chinese policy, which seems to evince a harmonization of interests with China's “grand strategy.” That is, the two can be mutually reinforcing of each other by projecting the image of a *capable* and *caring* China and creating “win-win” situations. The fourth section, appropriately, will look at the literature on the BRI as a case study on the increasingly dual function of overseas Chinese policy, namely in the form of “bridging by means of overseas Chinese” (以侨为桥, yǐ qiáo wèi qiáo) and “serving the interests of overseas Chinese” (为侨服务, wèi qiáo fúwù), which have both assumed new significance and urgency.<sup>21</sup> The last section will conclude with some final thoughts, including identification of areas for further research such as a field survey on the attitudes of overseas Chinese toward China's rise, their cultural/ethnic identity, and political activism.

## I. Background: Defining the Huaqiao and Huaren Groups

According to estimates by the OCAO in 2012, the aggregate number of overseas Chinese throughout the world totaled to be approximately 45.43 million, with the largest concentration in Southeast Asia with 73 percent of the total.<sup>22</sup> Figures cited in Chen and Ye (2015) estimated that the number increased to 60 million in 2015, with half of them living in Southeast Asia and nearly two-thirds in the countries and regions along the BRI.<sup>23</sup> In most of these figures, the distinction is not made between Huaqiao and Huaren and, often times, Chinese leaders and scholars will combine the two groups into an overarching “overseas Chinese” term. Likewise, according to Ren (2017), approximately 10 million Chinese people have emigrated from the Chinese mainland alone since its Reform and Opening Up in the late 1970s.<sup>24</sup> He excludes the Chinese students who decide to live and work in foreign countries; however, China's Ministry of Education estimated that there have been 5.19 million Chinese who have pursued overseas study between 1978 and 2017, with 3.13 million (or 83.73 percent) who end up returning after their graduation.<sup>25</sup> This only serves to underscore the indispensable role of returned Chinese students who bring back their newfound knowledge and talents in China's economic and technological modernization. The figures for the overseas Chinese population and its respective component groups, though, have and will continue to be difficult to pinpoint, given the different degrees of availability and completeness of census data in each country and the greater freedom of movement in today's globalized world.

It is crucial, nonetheless, to clarify that the key difference between Huaqiao and Huaren is in their legal and political status, with Huaqiao referring strictly to Chinese citizens living and

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<sup>21</sup> 许玉明. “以侨为桥传播中华文化.” *Shiqiu* (求实网). 15 August 2018. Accessed 12 February 2019. Website.

<sup>22</sup> China Daily. “Overseas Chinese Distribution.” 6 September 2012. Accessed 12 February 2019. Website.

<sup>23</sup> 陈成吨 and 叶炜. “华侨华人在‘一带一路’战略中的地位与作用.” *龙岩学院学报*. 33.4 (August 2015). Print. 100.

<sup>24</sup> 任弘. “‘一带一路’与侨务新思维.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2017. Print. 249.

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. “2017 Sees Increase in Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad and Returning After Overseas Studies.” *En.MOE.Gov.Cn*. 4 April 2018. Accessed 12 February 2019. Website.

working overseas. The “Guidelines for Defining the Status of Huaqiao, Huaren, Overseas Returnees, and Their Relatives” (2009), narrows it down to encompass only those Chinese citizens who have either (1) accumulated at least 18 months of legal permanent residence in a foreign country within a consecutive 2-year period or (2) accumulated at least 30 months of lawful presence within a consecutive 5-year period.<sup>26</sup> In spite of this extended physical distance from their homeland, Chen and Fan (2010) and Wang (2015) reaffirm that Huaqiao “identify politically with China” and that they have an obligation to actively promote the development of and the friendly relations between China and their country of residence and the “responsibility to safeguard China’s national interests.”<sup>27</sup> Inasmuch as they do so, Huaqiao form an important part of China’s overseas interests (海外利益, *hǎiwài liyì*), an idea that is attributable for the most part to Cao and Li (2006).<sup>28</sup> Sun (2012) further provocatively suggests that their *individual* economic and personal safety interests cannot be ignored and that the Huaqiao, as a constituency, can potentially rise to become a core national interest (核心利益, *héxīn liyì*) in extraordinary situations that require China to respond with the range of “diplomatic negotiations, economic sanctions, international law, and even the threat of force.”<sup>29</sup> These include when there is a “direct, large-scale infringement on [their individual or the national-level] overseas interests” or a “threat to the foundation of China’s sustainable economic and social development,” which are both strategically very vague.<sup>30</sup> The challenge is to carefully weigh between and deconflict the individual and national interests.

In contrast, Huaren is the broader term for the first-generation of Chinese migrants who obtained citizenship in foreign countries and thereby relinquished their legal status as Chinese citizens as well as their descendants, who are born and raised overseas and who may be better known as the Huayi (华裔, *huáyì*).<sup>31</sup> In this sense, Huaren – ranging from Chinese Americans and Chinese Australians to the Hua Vietnamese and Malaysian Chinese – are not normally entitled to “the same privileges and protections” of a Chinese citizen, which Sun (2012) explicitly reminds in saying that the Chinese Government can only provide them with “indirect and moral support.”<sup>32</sup> They are also not assumed to be loyal or feel obligated to China or the CCP and, on this point, Chen and Fan (2010) remarks that, “Although overseas Chinese policy is intended to develop and fully grasp the potential relationship with the Huaren, they are naturally expected to be loyal to their countries of citizenship and should fulfill those responsibilities.”<sup>33</sup> This “firstly” entails “respecting the cultural history, lifestyle customs, laws, and regulations of these countries,” as Deputy Minister of the UWFD Zhang Yijiong reiterated in October 2017, and has been a consistent “requirement” for the conduct of all overseas Chinese.<sup>34</sup> Wang (1991) similarly states that, “The government of the PRC does not claim them for China in any way...the PRC had officially disclaimed having any special connections with foreign Chinese. It remains committed to such a policy today.”<sup>35</sup> Yet, as Suryadinata (2017) observes, “as China grows in economic and political

<sup>26</sup> OCAO. “侨务问答: 华侨, 外籍华人的定义是什么?” 25 November 2015. Accessed 10 March 2019. Website.

<sup>27</sup> 陈奕平 and 范如松. “华侨华人与中国软实力: 作用, 机制与政策思路.” *华侨华人历史研究*. No. 2 (June 2010). Print. 20. AND 王子昌. “‘一带一路’战略与华侨华人的逻辑连接.” *Southeast Asian Studies*. No. 3 (2015). Print. 12.

<sup>28</sup> 曹云华 and 李静. “华侨华人与中国的海外利益.” *侨务工作研究*. No. 6 (2006). Website.

<sup>29</sup> 孙霞. “中国海外利益的政治风险与侨务公共外交.” *华侨华人历史研究*. No. 2 (June 2012). Print. 19-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>31</sup> OCAO. “侨务问答: 华侨, 外籍华人的定义是什么?” Website.

<sup>32</sup> 孙霞. “中国海外利益的政治风险与侨务公共外交.” *华侨华人历史研究*. 25.

<sup>33</sup> 陈奕平 and 范如松. “华侨华人与中国软实力: 作用, 机制与政策思路.” *华侨华人历史研究*. 20.

<sup>34</sup> 中青在线. “中共中央统战部: 希望华侨华人尊重住在国法律.” 20 October 2017. Accessed 15 March 2019. Website.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Gungwu. “External China.” *China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991. Print. 230.

power, its policy toward the Chinese overseas has also changed. It has gradually abandoned its earlier practice of differentiating between Huaqiao and Huaren.”<sup>36</sup> The “blurring” of this distinction, as this paper will later demonstrate, is a characteristic element of overseas Chinese policy in the New Era and integral to the attempted revival of the Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity.

From a more sociological and temporal perspective, it may be useful to distinguish the overseas Chinese in terms of the pre-1979 generation of Old Migrants (老侨/老移民, *lǎo qiáo/lǎo yímín*) and the post-1979 generation of New Migrants (新侨/新移民, *xīn qiáo/xīn yímín*), whose intra-group interactions have sometimes been less than harmonious because of differences in their cultural, political, and socioeconomic backgrounds. One *People's Daily* article (2012) highlights that Old Migrants, who are typically criticized for “having low academic qualifications and poor foreign language skills,” emigrated for the purpose of finding a new livelihood for themselves and their families, often only to be employed in the “Three Knives” (三把刀, *sān bǎ dāo*) industries as “construction workers, hairdressers, and restaurateurs.”<sup>37</sup> Han (2009) and Ren (2017) concur with this in their respective discussions of how factors like “conflict, drought, and famine” and the “lack of job opportunities and poverty” pushed the Old Migrants to move overseas voluntarily with the intention of making money and “repatriating in their older years.”<sup>38</sup> This explains why they are also portrayed as being culturally conservative, “interacting only within the ethnic Chinese community, and not integrating into local society.”<sup>39</sup> Nyiri (2005), in fact, notes that the Old Migrants will go as far as to “attack the [New Migrants for] not being authentically Chinese enough...[and] accuse them of spoiling the reputation of overseas Chinese and of China itself by being criminal and unethical in their business dealings,” with “China” here referring to the abstract concept of an ancestral country as opposed to an expression of preference for either China or Taiwan.<sup>40</sup> That said, To (2014) shows that many Old Migrants had “supported the Kuomintang (KMT) and [Taiwan] as an alternative to communism” and for their “core values of democracy, freedom, and human rights,” but they felt increasingly “alienated, angry, and frustrated” by the promotion of an independent *Taiwanese* identity and state under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the early 2000s.<sup>41</sup> This led some Old Migrants to turn over to China instead, which is extremely consequential due to the centrality of reunification in its overseas Chinese policy.<sup>42</sup>

Old Migrants, moreover, “hope that their [overseas-born] children will study hard and become doctors, engineers, and lawyers,” and this appears to be the case given how Huaqiao and Huaren are now some of the most “high-profile and respected” in various fields as alluded to in Han (2009), Jin and Zang (2012), Chen and Ye (2015), and Zhao et al. (2015).<sup>43</sup> In the process, and not unexpectedly so, the lifestyle and values of these second, third, and so forth generations of overseas Chinese are simultaneously Westernized.<sup>44</sup> In other words, even though they are Chinese genetically, the descendants of Old Migrants tend to identify culturally and socially as

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<sup>36</sup> Leo Suryadinata. *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017. Print. 9.

<sup>37</sup> 人民日报. “海外老侨与新侨的碰撞: ‘三把刀’ vs ‘三师.’” 10 October 2012. Accessed 18 March 2018. Website.

<sup>38</sup> 韩震. “全球化时代的华侨华人文化认同的特点.” *扬州大学学报*. 13.1 (January 2009). Print. 25-26. AND 任弘. “‘一带一路’与侨务新思维.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 250.

<sup>39</sup> 人民日报. “海外老侨与新侨的碰撞: ‘三把刀’ vs ‘三师.’” Website.

<sup>40</sup> Pal Nyiri. “The ‘New Migrant’: State and Market Constructions of Modernity and Patriotism.” *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*. Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2005. Print. 174-175.

<sup>41</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 95-98.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>43</sup> 人民日报. “海外老侨与新侨的碰撞: ‘三把刀’ vs ‘三师.’” Website.

<sup>44</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 269.



American, European, Australian, etc. The Facebook group “Subtle Asian Traits (SAT),” which was founded by nine Chinese-Australian high school students in November 2018 and which now has over 1.195 million members worldwide, is interesting because its content focuses on the complex experiences and cultural/ethnic identities of Asian diaspora youth. More specifically, the content, primarily in the form of memes, draws a spotlight onto positive and negative Asian stereotypes and is designed to be humorous, light-hearted, and relatable. It, at the same time, illustrates the confusion and struggle that many Asian diaspora youth feel growing up as minorities and balancing between their sometimes conflicting traditional and Western cultures.<sup>45</sup> Of note are the following posts, which present a representative overview of the group’s sentiments:

- In a broader discussion on Chinese cultural/ethnic identity, one member posted: “The Chinese diaspora will never erase our heritage... We may be born or become citizens of various different countries...but our shared cultural history and pride will never diminish. I am proud to be American, Chinese, and Taiwanese.”<sup>46</sup>
- In response to the Duke University Chinese language controversy in January 2019, one member posted: “I’m just wondering if people speaking French, Italian, and other Western European languages are also being told to ‘speak English.’”<sup>47</sup>
- One member shared a TED Talk about their experience as a third-culture kid and commented: “‘But where are you *really* from?’... Remember that you aren’t [just] the label that anyone puts on you. Being multi-faceted (culturally, linguistically, etc.) is great and we should be proud to have so many parts of us to [share.]”<sup>48</sup>

SAT in this respect provides a convenient platform for Asian diaspora youth to engage meaningfully and retrospectively with their identity; to find belonging in a community of others who share similar experiences; and to even develop a new sense of appreciation or pride for their culture and upbringing. This cultural/ethnic pride does not have to, and usually will not, come into conflict with their devotion and loyalty to their home countries, and it ought to be celebrated in multi-cultural countries like the United States. The important thing, to echo the conclusions of the Hoover Institution’s report (2018) on the matter, is to more fully integrate the diaspora communities into local society and to raise awareness among them about how that identity can be exploited by hostile foreign powers “to advance their [nefarious] goals and interests.”<sup>49</sup>

The New Migrants, on the other hand, are by and large “born, brought up, and educated in China (particularly from urban centers),” employed in white-collar positions as “accountants, doctors, engineers, lawyers, professors, and scientists,” and “tend to maintain their Chinese culture, language, values” and transnational network of connections.<sup>50</sup> Han (2009) adds that the New Migrants are “generally motivated to go overseas for business opportunities” and to invest and spend their hard-earned money as well as “more likely to move back and forth between China and their countries of residence.”<sup>51</sup> In this sense, Ren (2017) holds the opinion that the “push-and-pull” theory that explained the migration patterns of the Old Migrants is no longer applicable to them.<sup>52</sup> More significantly, as To (2014) perceives, the New Migrants are “emotionally and

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<sup>45</sup> BBC. “Subtle Asian Traits: When Memes become a Diaspora Phenomenon.” 19 Dec. 2018. Accessed 15 Feb. 2019. Website.

<sup>46</sup> Author’s name has been redacted in order to maintain their anonymity. *Facebook*. Posted 1 February 2019. Website.

<sup>47</sup> Author’s name has been redacted in order to maintain their anonymity. *Facebook*. Posted 27 January 2019. Website.

<sup>48</sup> Author’s name has been redacted in order to maintain their anonymity. *Facebook*. Posted 25 February 2019. Website.

<sup>49</sup> L. Diamond and O. Schell. *Chinese Influence and American Interests*. 29 and 35.

<sup>50</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 114-115 and 270.

<sup>51</sup> 韩震. “全球化时代的华侨华人文化认同的特点.” *扬州大学学报*. 25-26.

<sup>52</sup> 任弘. “‘一带一路’与侨务新思维.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 250-251.

psychologically” connected to China, do not usually become citizens of foreign countries, and have the “need to participate in activities associated with their ancestral homeland,” such as engaging with the Chinese embassies and warmly welcoming cultural and other official Chinese delegations in their overseas “friendship visits.”<sup>53</sup> Zhao et al. (2015) likewise looks at how New Migrant organizations, namely the Brazilian Chinese Cultural Exchange Association and the European Overseas Chinese Association, host events and meetings regularly with local legislators, media, and public to “convey the feelings of the Chinese people” on “issues concerning anti-separatism, national unity, and peaceful reunification.”<sup>54</sup> The paradox with the New Migrants, though, is that they are open to embracing “coffee shops, fast food, Hollywood movies...and foreign holidays” and to “integrating into the mainstream societies of the West,” which must be encouraged and nurtured.<sup>55</sup> This inevitably poses the question of whether the New Migrants are possibly pulled by factors like the attractiveness of the Western lifestyle or the desire to improve their family’s welfare through a better education, ecological environment, etc. overseas.

Regarding the above question, the domestically popular Zhang (2016) facetiously mocks that the group of New Migrants who are most critical of China for its problems and who are motivated to emigrate primarily by the lifestyle, opportunities, and values of the “developed countries” of the West often “tend to change their minds” and become “more patriotic” once they realize their naivete.<sup>56</sup> For instance, instead of the American Dream, freedom, and “superb social welfare,” he says that they are vulnerable to being victims of debt and financial trouble, must deal with the “fear and frustration” of being “surrounded by problems of drug abuse, looting, murder, and even street gunfire,” and have their expectations crushed by the “low levels of social protection and strict tax regulations.”<sup>57</sup> In that case, these New Migrants “missed out on the golden opportunity of China’s rapid wealth expansion” and its “unfolding epic transformation,” and their renewed patriotism should be restated as a feeling of “regret.”<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, the forward-looking Nyiri (2001) observes that, beginning in the 1980s, China’s central government and larger society gradually accepted the idea of “expatriation” as actually being “self-sacrificing” and “patriotic” rather than “suspicious” or traitorous.<sup>59</sup> The difference, here, is the faith that the majority of New Migrants, who commonly embrace the Party’s education, sincerely view going, and implicitly staying, overseas as an opportunity to “contribute to the development of [China]” and to “improve the [status] of the Chinese in their host societies,” which “generates pressure [on them]...to succeed.”<sup>60</sup> This archetype of the model New Migrant is best personified by the nameless engineer for a construction company who cannot celebrate Spring Festival with his family in China and the STEM graduate student who returns to China to boost the “brain gain” despite the more comfortable living conditions in the West, and it stands in stark contrast to the Chinese student who returns after undergraduate when he fails to secure a job and the parents who send their children to high schools overseas to bypass the competition of the infamous *gaokao* test. Therefore, it can be said, the New Migrants have more a diversified set of motivations to emigrate compared to the Old Migrants and that their decision to do so is not inherently patriotic or otherwise.

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<sup>53</sup> To. Qiaowu: *Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 115 and 154.

<sup>54</sup> 赵磊, 胥慧颖, and 翟迈云. “华侨华人 - 公共外交的独特资源.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: SSAP, 2015. Print. 262-264.

<sup>55</sup> 人民日报. “海外老侨与新侨的碰撞: ‘三把刀’ vs ‘三师.’” Website.

<sup>56</sup> Zhang Weiwei. *The China Horizon*. Hackensack, NJ: World Century Publishing Corporation, 2016. Print. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 2-3 and 5-6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 3, 6, and 8.

<sup>59</sup> Pal Nyiri. “Expatriating is Patriotic?” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 27.4 (October 2001). Print. 637.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 638-639.

## II. Co-evolution of China's "Grand Strategy" and Its Overseas Chinese Policy

A country's "grand strategy" is defined loosely as "the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state's deliberate effort to harness diplomatic, economic, political, and military tools together" to pursue its long-term national interests, and it is absolutely not a static phenomenon.<sup>61</sup> In the case of China, the Chinese Dream of rejuvenation – a catchphrase emblematic of the New Era – captures the essence of those long-term national interests, particularly with the connotation of a *restoration* of what is deemed as China's rightful status as a central world power which will "enhance the confidence and self-respect of the more than one-billion strong Chinese nation, reduce the likelihood of China being bullied, greatly diminish potential threats from other countries, and help China secure cooperation and support from other countries...."<sup>62</sup> It does not adequately draw attention to the different stages of China's journey to rejuvenation, though. In fact, as Ye (2011) articulates, "Only when [China] becomes a world power can we say that the total rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been achieved," and it is clear that the journey is in its last leg.<sup>63</sup> Khan (2018) is an important work, in this regards, in that it intuitively delineates China's "grand strategy" into its different stages, which can help contextualize the development of China's overseas Chinese policy: in the initial stages of China's anti-Japanese resistant, reunification under the CCP, and so-called "standing up" under Mao Zedong, the "patriotic" overseas Chinese were recognized for donating money and other resources to advance those causes. Their role as an "advantage" (优势, yōushì), "opportunity" (机遇, jīyù), and "resource" (资源, zīyuán) for China's modernization and the "return to reason" became increasingly institutionalized during the Reform and Opening Up period and through the leadership of Jiang Zemin, who sought to remain steadfast on that path.<sup>64</sup> The turn of the 21st century saw a stronger, but "still-wounded" China with much work to be done, and this is expressed in Hu Jintao's concepts of "people-oriented, serving the interests of overseas Chinese" (以人为本, 为侨服务, yǐrénwéiběn, wèi qiáo fúwù) and the "Three Great Prospects" (三个大有作为, sān gè dàyǒuzuòwéi) in overseas Chinese policy.<sup>65</sup>

FitzGerald (1972) argues that the CCP, which did not have a coherent plan for dealing with the overseas Chinese question when the PRC was founded in 1949, inherited many of the policies of the KMT, including in its ambiguous "claim [to] the broad undifferentiated masses of overseas Chinese as nationals of the [PRC], irrespective of their own attitudes or the attitudes of the governments of the countries of residence" in the early years.<sup>66</sup> In part, as he demonstrates, this was due to the hope that the "patriotic" overseas Chinese would contribute to the development of the state through their financial remittances and technical talents and to promote its foreign policy, such as to "explain and propagate China's policy" on Taiwan, to "gain diplomatic recognition for [the] new government," and to "struggle against colonialism and imperialism."<sup>67</sup> Considering that, FitzGerald declares that this established the precedent that overseas Chinese policy must serve, or at least not contradict, foreign policy interests, which reopened the concerns among Southeast Asian countries about China's intentions with the overseas Chinese and its perceived "revolutionary" objectives.<sup>68</sup> On this point, FitzGerald highlights that the CCP also inherited many

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<sup>61</sup> P. Feaver. "What Is Grand Strategy and Why Do We Need It?" *Foreign Policy*. 8 Apr 2009. Accessed 22 Feb. 2019. Website.

<sup>62</sup> Ye Zicheng. *Inside China's Grand Strategy*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. Print. 74.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>64</sup> Sulmaan Wasif Khan. *Haunted by Chaos*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Print. 176, 246.

<sup>65</sup> 任贵祥. "习近平关于侨务问题的重要论述及丰富内涵." *中国浦东干部学院学报*. 12.2 (March 2018). Website. 38.

<sup>66</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. Print. 79-80.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 88-90. AND M Venkataraman. "An Analysis of China's 'Overseas Chinese' Policy." *China Report*. 34:2 (1998). Print. 165.

<sup>68</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 101.

of the KMT's problems related to the overseas Chinese, specifically with the consular protection of the overseas Chinese and their relationship with the government and local society of their countries of residence. Regarding the former problem, he calls it "one of the first and most burdensome liabilities involved in accepting responsibility for overseas Chinese," and one that the CCP was "not prepared to commit itself to."<sup>69</sup> This is reflected in the gradual shift from "promising to make every effort to protect [their] proper rights and interests" in the Common Program in 1949 and encouraging "self-reliance" and "unity" as the most effective form of protection to ultimately removing the obligatory language of "make every effort" in the ratified 1954 Constitution.<sup>70</sup>

In the same way, FitzGerald (1972) asserts that the CCP's "experiment in decolonization," an endeavor "to dispel the belief that [China] was exploiting the overseas Chinese for political purposes antagonistic to the countries of residence," began with the elimination of dual nationality and the promotion of "self-determination" with the Bandung Treaty in 1955.<sup>71</sup> To explain, that formal treaty stipulated that ethnic Chinese in Indonesia who held dual nationality at the time, which numbered between 700,000 and 900,000 according to Mozingo (1961), must "opt for [either the] Chinese or Indonesian nationality" and that ethnic Chinese thereafter would be citizens of their countries of birth barring their decision to naturalize elsewhere or other special circumstances.<sup>72</sup> In doing so, the CCP signaled that it "was prepared to renounce its claim to all overseas Chinese dual nationals if they chose to opt for [the] local nationality."<sup>73</sup> Venkataraman (1998) likewise notes that, "Premier Zhou Enlai offered to sign treaties embodying these [same] provisions with any government, if the government concerned had diplomatic relations with the PRC or recognized the PRC as the sole, legal government of China."<sup>74</sup> This was the foundation of the normalization of Sino-Malaysian, Sino-Philippine, and Sino-Thai relations in the mid-1970s, Venkataraman shows, as China pursued closer ties with ASEAN countries to secure support for its United Nations seat.<sup>75</sup> More significantly, the "experiment in decolonization" culminated, as FitzGerald posits, with the CCP's encouragement by 1957 for the overseas Chinese "to [adopt] local nationality, to [learn] the local culture and language, to love [but not interfere in the politics of] the countries of residence, and to unite with the local people."<sup>76</sup> This would prove, he summarizes, to be "not just the most effective means of improving relations with Southeast Asia, but [also] the most practical means of unburdening itself of its own overseas Chinese problems."<sup>77</sup>

In considering the anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia that led to the transition to the rightist "New Order" under Suharto in October 1965, it can reasonably be said that "decolonization" could in practice produce a "lose-lose" outcome for China's foreign policy interests and for the overseas Chinese's personal safety and well-being. Namely, as Chang (1980) portrays, China intentionally watched "impassively" as the situation unfolded and "took no initiative for [the] protection" of the overseas Chinese, who were blamed indiscriminately as a group for their alleged role in the failed Community Party of Indonesia coup, despite the ongoing reporting that "the riots against [them] continued with even more bloodshed."<sup>78</sup> The two diplomatic notes from the Chinese Ministry of

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 83.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 83.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 104-105.

<sup>72</sup> D. Mozingo. "The Sino-Indonesian Dual Nationality Treaty." *Asian Survey*. 1:10 (December 1961). Print. 25.

<sup>73</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 109.

<sup>74</sup> M Venkataraman. "An Analysis of China's 'Overseas Chinese' Policy." *China Report*. 169.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 171.

<sup>76</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 142 and 152.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 134.

<sup>78</sup> C. Y. Chang. "Overseas Chinese in China's Policy." *The China Quarterly*. 82 (June 1980). Print. 297.

Foreign Affairs, dated April 1966, as a matter of fact detailed all of the “monstrous crimes” that were committed over those six months, including the beating, illegal detention, and murder of “innocent Chinese nationals” and the destruction and looting of their houses and shops; however, it ironically requested that *Indonesia* “immediately arrange [the] ships to transport back to China” the overseas Chinese who had the desire “of their own will” to do so, which went unanswered.<sup>79</sup> This forced China to declare in May 1966 its own “willingness to send a ship” to repatriate them, with the first group leaving Indonesia in October 1966 due to the deadlock in the negotiations and with an estimated final total of 10,000 by mid-1967.<sup>80</sup> This was during the initial phases of the Cultural Revolution, and Van Der Kroef (1968) supposes that these overseas returnees likely “preferred the uncertainties of a future on the Chinese mainland to what looked like the certainty of an anti-Chinese pogrom in Indonesia.”<sup>81</sup> That said, notwithstanding China’s initial attempt at non-intervention in the situation, Suharto remained suspicious of China and “suspended” diplomatic relations in October 1967, which were not restored until 1990.

Interestingly, the affair previously described also raises the issue, as FitzGerald (1972) characterizes, that “the aspect of overseas Chinese affairs [that] attracted [the] most attention was [its] external policy, which in 1967 had the appearance of an offensive to mobilize all Chinese abroad in the cause of revolution” and which incited the anti-Chinese protests in Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Mongolia.<sup>82</sup> FitzGerald contends that there is no clear indication that China directed these radical activities and that the facts suggest it was still committed to the pre-Cultural Revolution policy of “decolonization” and encouraging the overseas Chinese to respect the “local customs and laws” of their countries of residence.<sup>83</sup> In other words, as Dai (2013) hypothesizes as well, the breakdown of overseas Chinese policy and the dismantling of its “organizational network,” which was infiltrated by “revolutionary” elements, by early 1968 was essentially a goodwill gesture to “ease the diplomatic pressure” from countries in Southeast Asia, which is an important historical question that is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>84</sup> They ignore, though, the de facto reality that overseas Chinese and overseas returnees were increasingly regarded as “bourgeois,” “reactionary,” and “ideologically suspicious,” which made those who had family connections to them vulnerable to criticism and discrimination and which made the OCAO obsolete.<sup>85</sup> This is mentioned only in passing in Chen (2008) and Li (2018), but they provide a fair treatment of the Cultural Revolution and the “suffering” that it caused to the overseas Chinese and their domestic relatives.<sup>86</sup> To (2014) specifies that “domestic overseas Chinese publications were suspended,” “overseas Chinese properties were confiscated and their relatives persecuted,” and “references to special treatment for [the] overseas Chinese were removed,” which led “about 400,000 [of them] to leave China between 1967 and 1972” and to “contemplate settling permanently [overseas.]”<sup>87</sup>

In October 1977, a year after the arrest of the Gang of Four at the direction of Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping declared at a meeting with compatriots from Hong Kong and Macau during the National Day celebrations that, “It is reactionary to say that ‘overseas relations’ are complicated

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<sup>79</sup> “Chinese Notes to Indonesia Asking Repatriation of Chinese Nationals.” *Int’l Legal Materials*. 5:4 (1966). Print. 775-777.

<sup>80</sup> J. Van Der Kroef. “The Sino-Indonesian Rupture.” *The China Quarterly*. 33 (Jan-Mar 1968). Print. 30-32.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

<sup>82</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 169.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 169 and 184. AND C. Y. Chang. “Overseas Chinese in China’s Policy.” *The China Quarterly*. 283.

<sup>84</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 164-166.

AND 代帆. “从统一战线到共赢 中国侨务政策的新发展及其思考.” *Southeast Asian Studies*. No. 4 (2013). Print. 70.

<sup>85</sup> C. Y. Chang. “Overseas Chinese in China’s Policy.” *The China Quarterly*. 285.

<sup>86</sup> 李明欢. “国际移民与人类命运共同体构建:以华侨华人为视角的思考.” *华侨华人历史研究*. No. 1 (March 2018). Print. 4.

<sup>87</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 64-65.

and cannot be trusted...Overseas relations are a good thing and can open up all kinds of relationships.”<sup>88</sup> Likewise, as To (2014) conveys, the “National Overseas Chinese Conference in November and December 1977 “blamed [the Gang of Four] as the cause of the failure of overseas Chinese programs” and “called for the revival and reinforcement of [overseas Chinese affairs] under the slogan ‘all patriots are one family,’” which was realized with the re-establishment of the OCAO in January 1978.<sup>89</sup> Inasmuch, the OCAO sought to appeal to the overseas Chinese, who were prideful of the Chinese *minzu* nation as Deng said in 1979, to use their rich ties to attract the foreign “capital, intelligence, and participation” needed for China’s agricultural, industrial, military, and scientific and technological modernization.<sup>90</sup> This included the “rectification of past abuses” and the “reforming of policies,” namely through the introduction of “benefits and privileges for [the] education and housing [of] the overseas Chinese and their children in March 1983 and the conveniently timed passage of the “Law of the PRC on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Overseas Returnees and the Relatives of Overseas Chinese” in 1990.<sup>91</sup> Khan (2018) designates this period of China’s “grand strategy” as an effort by Deng, who experienced suffering during the Cultural Revolution himself, to restore “reason” and “stability” in China, which were seen as the precursors to its “strengthening.”<sup>92</sup> This explains Deng’s draconian response to the student protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989, which he apparently believed would have “undone” the efforts of Reform and Opening Up and which would have been “inimical” to the state’s stability and security.<sup>93</sup> That said, the ensuing Western sanctions, according to Chen (2008) and Zhang (2014), resulted in the rebranding of overseas Chinese policy in terms of the “unique opportunity” theory, which encouraged the overseas Chinese to take advantage of the occasion to develop China themselves. This neglects the reality, as To shows, that many overseas Chinese were horrified by and protested “vehemently” against the Chinese Government’s brutality and repressiveness.<sup>94</sup>

In light of Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents” (三个代表, sānge dàibiǎo), Ren (2007) and Chen (2008) associate him with the “advantage” and “resource” theories, which are more “*policy-oriented*” and which acknowledge the actual and potential benefits and role of the overseas Chinese in fueling China’s “foreign exchange” and “socialist modernization” during the Reform and Opening Up period.<sup>95</sup> Of distinction is that Jiang “attached great importance” to education: Chen cites his comments about the “advantage of Chinese traditional culture and education” in “developing the feelings and understanding of the overseas Chinese” toward China, which they will carry forward to all the peoples of the world, while Ren elucidates on how he equally supported overseas studies in science and technology to create “living treasures,” who will contribute invaluable to their respective fields and ideally return to China.<sup>96</sup> In any case, the defensible implication of the “advantage” and “resource” theories is that the overseas Chinese are expendable and that their use value comes-and-goes, especially when compared with China’s higher “grand strategy” and national interests. The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade

<sup>88</sup> 李黎明。“侨务领域拨乱反正述略。”《当代中国历史研究》。6 May 2009. Accessed 15 April 2019. Website.

<sup>89</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 68-69.

<sup>90</sup> 陈水胜。“从‘海外关系是个好东西’到‘侨务工作三个大有作为。’”《侨务工作研究》。No. 5 (2008). Website. AND 张斌。“邓小平‘独特机遇论’在新时期中国侨务发展战略中的继承与发扬。”《侨务工作研究》。No. 2 (2014). Website.

<sup>91</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 70-71.

<sup>92</sup> Sulmaan Wasif Khan. *Haunted by Chaos*. 166 and 246.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 165 and 169.

<sup>94</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 26-28.

<sup>95</sup> 任贵祥。“江泽民侨务思想述评。”《当代中国历史研究》。31 August 2007. Accessed 12 April 2019. Website.

<sup>96</sup> 陈水胜。“从‘海外关系是个好东西’到‘侨务工作三个大有作为。’”《侨务工作研究》。Website. AND 任贵祥。“江泽民侨务思想述评。”《当代中国历史研究》。Website.



by NATO in 1999 and the collision between the American EP-3 and Chinese F-8 in international airspace in 2001 – both of which involved the loss of Chinese lives – are contemporaneous examples to illustrate that. In the first incident, Khan (2018) observed that China was determined not to let the incident derail its negotiations with the United States on its accession to the World Trade Organization, which is why Jiang only requested an arguably frivolous letter of apology from U.S. President Bill Clinton as the condition for resuming those negotiations.<sup>97</sup> In the second, the Chinese leadership was resigned to interpret the American “expression of sorrow for the Chinese pilot’s death” as an informal apology. The reason for that was because China’s “bid to host the 2008 Olympics was still pending” and because “the vote on China’s WTO membership was yet to be taken.”<sup>98</sup> This leads Khan to precisely say that, “There was so much China needed America for; it could not afford to sacrifice all its interests in order to make a point about a dead pilot. It was important, as Jiang would have said, to think of the larger strategic picture.”<sup>99</sup>

Subsequently, as Lu (2005), Jamal (2008), and Ren (2018) attest, there was a decisive shift in overseas Chinese policy under Hu Jintao in the early 2000s to emphasize its purpose of wholeheartedly “serving the interests of the overseas Chinese,” which is in line with his pronouncement that “the core of the ‘Scientific Concept of Development’ (科学发展观, kēxué fāzhǎn guān) is the ‘people-oriented’ principle.”<sup>100</sup> Here, as Li (2008) clarifies, “people-oriented” means “benefiting, empowering, and loving...the broad masses,” “paying attention to their comprehensive development potential, happiness index, and quality of life,” and “meeting their aspirations and diversity of needs.”<sup>101</sup> Lu enumerates, moreover, the services necessary for “caring for and supporting the long-term development and survival interests of the overseas Chinese and overseas returnees” as entailing: “Chinese education, hardship relief, donation management, employment and labor, housing policy, the right to vote, social security, and many more.”<sup>102</sup> In this respect, **Zhang (2015)** finds that between 2000 and 2011, the OCAO promoted a number of notices, opinions, and regulations adopting the above services to improve the livelihood of overseas returnees and to protect the legitimate interests and rights of overseas Chinese, including the amendments to the “Law of the PRC on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Overseas Returnees and the Relatives of Overseas Chinese” in 2000. This is in addition to dozens of other decentralized municipal and provincial regulations for handling remittance and resettlement rights.<sup>103</sup> It is not clear in **Zhang**, though, how expansive or effective any of these measures were. Nonetheless, Hu’s contributions to overseas Chinese policy are characterized in a representative number of academic and newspaper articles, such as Chen (2008), Li (2009), Jin and Zang (2012), Lu (2012), Dai (2013), and Ren (2018), predominantly in terms of and as prioritizing the “Three Great Prospects,” which Hu introduced at around the same time in 2005 and which refers to the prospects for overseas Chinese policy and work *to do more* to “contributing to the grand goal of a harmonious, moderately prosperous society; containing and opposing Taiwan independence; and promoting friendly people-to-people exchanges.”<sup>104</sup> This provides a glimpse into what appears to be the “tension” in balancing between the priorities of “serving the interests of the overseas

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<sup>97</sup> Sulmaan Wasif Khan. *Haunted by Chaos*. 190-192.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 193-194.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 194.

<sup>100</sup> 卢圣鑫. “坚持以人为本, 做好为侨服务: 在为侨服务中如何保持共产党先进性.” *侨务工作研究*. No. 2 (2005). Website.

<sup>101</sup> 李向国. “论胡锦涛‘以人为本’的‘民本位’思想.” *中国党政干部论坛*. 12 June 2008. Accessed 14 April 2019. Website.

<sup>102</sup> 卢圣鑫. “坚持以人为本, 做好为侨服务: 在为侨服务中如何保持共产党先进性.” *侨务工作研究*. Website.

<sup>103</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国 关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: SSAP, 2015. Print. 28-30.

<sup>104</sup> 代帆. “从统一战线到共赢 中国侨务政策的新发展及其思考.” *Southeast Asian Studies*. 71-72.

Chinese” and making strides toward the “Three Great Prospects,” even though they are not contradictory. That is, overseas Chinese policy was still seen as being an expedient means to an end, i.e. subordinated to the “grand strategy” of China’s modernization and strengthening, under Deng, Jiang, and Hu as opposed to being a worthwhile end in and of its own right.

### III. Chinese Transnationalism and Overseas Chinese Policy in the New Era

Against this background, Chen (2017), Li (2017), and Ren (2018) all argue that the comprehensive contributions of Xi Jinping to overseas Chinese policy, which are based on his extensive experience with it through his Party leadership positions in Fujian (1985-2002), Zhejiang (2002-2007), and Shanghai (2007), builds upon the decades of work accomplished by his predecessors and constitute a “dialectical and unified” system of thought. As Ren comments, “there is development in inheritance, and there is inheritance in development.”<sup>105</sup> In fact, Chen, Li, and Ren all demonstrate in their examination of Xi’s key speeches and writings that there were many common themes that were also expressed by his predecessors, including but not limited to: the hard-working and patriotic spirit of the overseas Chinese; the importance of having overseas Chinese who are in high-tech fields and skilled in science and technology; their irreplaceable role in driving China’s economic modernization, furthering the cause of peaceful reunification, and promoting cooperation, friendship, and understanding with people of foreign countries; the language of a Chinese *minzu* nation in reference to the patriotic overseas Chinese; and the need to protect their legitimate interests and rights. In that sense, there has been much continuity in overseas Chinese policy under Xi. The consensus among them, though, is that Xi’s main theoretical, and potentially his most transformative, contribution to overseas Chinese policy is in his promulgation of the “root” (根, gēn), “soul” (魂, hún), and “dream” (梦, mèng) concept which underlies the call for a revived and reinvigorated Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity today:

“For Chinese people both at home and abroad, a united China is our shared root, the profound Chinese culture is our shared soul, and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is our shared dream. The shared root that fosters eternal brotherhood, the shared soul that links our hearts, and the shared dream holds us all together - we will write a new chapter in the history of the Chinese nation.”<sup>106</sup>

This draws upon the Chinese collective historical memory of national humiliation, *formally* invites all members of the transnational “Chinese family” – Huaqiao and Huaren, and Old Migrants and New Migrants alike – to contribute to China’s inevitable, but long-awaited “national salvation,” and is essentially giving them the opportunity to stand on the “right side” of the history of the Chinese nation.<sup>107</sup> Ren explicates that, in doing so, Xi has made China’s overseas Chinese policy more “open and inclusive,” which makes it easier to “find the biggest concentric circle to condense the hearts of overseas Chinese,”<sup>108</sup> and To (2014) sees it as a means to “win over the moderates” among the overseas Chinese.<sup>109</sup> That being the case, Jin and Zang (2012) proposes that overseas Chinese can be divided into target types: active participants in overseas Chinese work, passive participants, persuadable participants, and people who will unequivocally oppose/resist.<sup>110</sup> This gives the impression, to use the parlance of FitzGerald (1972), that China is once again claiming

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<sup>105</sup> 任贵祥. “习近平关于侨务问题的重要论述及丰富内涵.” *中国浦东干部学院学报*. 38.

<sup>106</sup> Xi Jinping. “The Chinese Dream.” *The Governance of China*. 69.

<sup>107</sup> Zheng Wang. *Never Forget National Humiliation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. Print. 77 and 89.

<sup>108</sup> 任贵祥. “习近平关于侨务问题的重要论述及丰富内涵.” *中国浦东干部学院学报*. 38.

<sup>109</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 207.

<sup>110</sup> 金正昆 and 臧红岩. “当代中国侨务公共外交探析.” *广西社会科学*. No. 5 (2012). Print. 4-5.



all of the overseas Chinese for itself and that the “experiment in decolonization” is over, and the decision to do so must have very well carefully weighed the possible benefits and drawbacks.

It is constructive to consider Harding (1993)’s discussion on the emergence of the “Greater China” (大中华, dà zhōnghuá) discourse in both China and the West in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the trends of globalization. It refers to “the rapidly increasing interaction among Chinese societies around the world” on the basis of a “common cultural identity,” “economic interdependence,” and/or the prospects for “political reunification,” which he shows has received mixed reactions in terms of its desirability and feasibility from the macro-perspective.<sup>111</sup> For instance, Harding says, in China, “there is interest in extensive cultural and economic integration among the [mainland], Hong Kong, and Taiwan...as a way of securing political reunification” whereas, on Taiwan, “there is also an interest in promoting cultural and economic ties with the mainland, but...as an alternative to political reunification.”<sup>112</sup> However, that does not necessarily resolve the underlying differences between the many Chinese societies and the fears that they may have regarding further integration, which Harding concisely sums up as “the dislocations of economic life, the erosion of cultural identity and the loss of political autonomy.”<sup>113</sup> Ong (1999), in contrast, frames Chinese transnationalism as a “flexible citizenship,” in which individuals are empowered to “fluidly and opportunistically [respond] to changing political-economic conditions...[i]n their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena.” There are, as such, both overseas Chinese who distance themselves from the Chinese mainland and those who relish in “the glow of Chinese fraternity,” in spite of the fact that they all have the “same ancestral stock and same language.”<sup>114</sup> This is a crucial level of analysis in the study of the overseas Chinese in that it may have more explanatory power for behavioral variances and it may prevent against the indiscriminate “demonization” of an entire community merely for their “feelings.”<sup>115</sup>

Returning to the main subject, Ren (2018) clarifies that the intellectual foundation for Xi Jinping’s concept of the “root,” “soul,” and “dream” of the Chinese nation can be found in an article titled “Establishing the Concept of a ‘Greater Overseas Chinese Affairs’” (大侨务, dà qiáowù), which Xi published in April 1995 while serving as Deputy Secretary of the Fujian CCP Committee. In the article, Xi declares, “All Huaqiao and Huaren are descendants of the Chinese nation. It is our unshrinkable responsibility to do a good job to each and every Huaqiao and Huaren.” To that end, Xi proposes that, “All levels and departments must participate in the extensive and great [project of] overseas Chinese work. The OCAO cannot continue singing a “one-man show. We must mobilize the whole of society to participate together.”<sup>116</sup> This appears to be the justification for the subsuming of the OCAO by the UFWD as alluded to at the beginning of this paper. That said, and even more significantly, Xi writes that overseas Chinese policy should not only aim to “tap into the potential” of the Huaqiao and the Huaren, but should also be guided by the outwardly magnanimous notion of the “three benefits” (三个有利, sān gè yǒulì): “benefit investors, benefit the country of residence, and benefit China” (对投资者有利, 对所在国有利, 对中国有利, duì tóuzī zhě yǒulì, duì suǒzài guó yǒulì, duì zhōngguó yǒulì). The implication is that the overseas Chinese’s cooperation and exchanges with China can be a “win-win” situation

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<sup>111</sup> Harry Harding, “The Concept of ‘Greater China.’” *The China Quarterly*. No. 136 (December 1993). Print. 660-661.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* 683-684.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 684.

<sup>114</sup> Aiwaha Ong. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logic of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1999. Print. 6 and 65.

<sup>115</sup> L. Diamond and O. Schell. *Chinese Influence and American Interests*. 35.

<sup>116</sup> UFWD. “[学习] 习近平总书记谈侨务工作: ‘大侨务’观念的确立.” 7 April 2017. Accessed 15 February 2019. Website.

for everyone and simultaneously “contribute to the world’s peaceful development,” which may have a legitimizing effect for overseas Chinese and especially for the Huaren who have foreign citizenship.<sup>117</sup> This “doctrinal” theme is seen in Chen (2010), Dai (2013), **Zhang (2015)**, **You and Zhang (2016)**, Li (2017), **Ren (2017)**, Li (2018), Lin (2018), and Ren (2018), some of which will be looked at in further detail. With all that in mind, one can see how this one article conceivably lays the essential groundwork for understanding Xi’s thought on overseas Chinese policy.

In order to appreciate the appeal of the model of “win-win” in overseas Chinese policy in the New Era, it is necessary to juxtapose it within the context of the critique among the overseas Chinese that they are only valued for their “financial and human resources” and that their relationship with China is a “one-way street,” as Chen (2010) and **Zhang (2015)** admittedly highlight.<sup>118</sup> Instead, as **Ren (2017)** effectively portrays, the interactive model of “win-win” is about the habituation of “giving and taking” based on the “mutual accommodation, concession, and tolerance” of each other’s interests and rights, and he suggests that China “give more” to and “take less” from the overseas Chinese.<sup>119</sup> Interestingly enough, Xi Jinping had employed this exact language in his aforementioned April 1995 article saying that, “We must not be eager for quick success... We should act in accordance with the principle of ‘give first, then receive’ (先予后取, xiān yǔ hòu qǔ) for ‘long-term planning,’” which multiple Chinese netizens relate back to the insights found in Chapter 36 of the *Laozi* and Chapter 5 of the *Sunzi*.<sup>120</sup> The idea here is that it is strategic for China to diligently care for the economic and personal safety interests of the overseas Chinese inasmuch as doing so will encourage and empower them to contribute to China’s national interests, such as its continued economic modernization, increased soft power, and peaceful reunification. This cycle is expected to perpetuate over time provided that the participants all perceive that their interests are being satisfied, which is a motivation rooted in human nature. Relatedly, Dai (2013) supposes that the model of “win-win” in overseas Chinese policy can help avoid the political sensitivities associated with the United Front and prove to be more well-received than a purely nationalist or patriotic rhetoric, which may deepen distrust of China’s intentions among foreign countries and overseas Chinese and result in a “lose-lose situation.”<sup>121</sup>

Jullien (2004), citing both the *Laozi* and the *Sunzi*, identifies the so-called correlative concepts of the “downstream” and “upstream” of a given situation as a major motif in classical Chinese military and philosophical thought. He characterizes that in the initial stages of a given situation, i.e. the “upstream,” one can gain the upper hand by gently guiding it before reality is set in stone and letting it proceed to produce the predicted outcome, as it is inclined to do so by the nature of things. In other words, it is easier to create the circumstances that decisively give rise to a certain, desired reality in the early stages when everything is flexible and fluid.<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, in the realization stage of a situation, i.e. the “downstream,” reality has a much more definitive “square” shape, which makes it difficult and demanding in effort and resources to reshape, if it is even possible at such a late stage.<sup>123</sup> Jullien similarly states that an action that is taken in the “downstream” of a situation is more noticeable, and likely to be more resisted to, than

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<sup>117</sup> 任贵祥. “习近平关于侨务问题的重要论述及丰富内涵.” *中国浦东干部学院学报*. 32-33.

<sup>118</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 31-32.

<sup>119</sup> 任弘. “‘一带一路’与侨务新思维.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 265-266.

<sup>120</sup> UFWD. “[学习] 习近平总书记谈侨务工作: ‘大侨务’观念的确立.” Website.

<sup>121</sup> 代帆. “从统一战线到共赢 中国侨务政策的新发展及其思考.” *Southeast Asian Studies*. 74.

<sup>122</sup> F. Jullien. *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2004. Print. 126.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 128.

an action that is taken in the “upstream” when it is too early to be detected.<sup>124</sup> In terms of overseas Chinese policy, the model of “win-win” and its emphasis on “seeking common ground while setting aside differences” (求同存异, qiútóngcúnyì), as Dai (2013), Zhao et al. (2015), Li (2018), and Lin (2018) note, epitomizes the primacy of early discernment of and intervention in a situation. This is because, as this paper purports, the normalization of “win-win” distracts from the differences and minimizes the issues between the overseas Chinese and China, which makes it more likely that conflicts will be resolved in China’s interests in the long-term out of the concern for continued economic and social benefits. Thus, to accept the model of “win-win” is to also accept by extension – or, at least, to be willfully ignorant of – China’s arbitrary detention of dissidents and human rights activists like Li Ming-che and Liu Xiaobo, censorship of the Tiananmen Square massacre, economic and technological espionage, encroachment on freedoms in Hong Kong that are protected under the Basic Law, interference in Tibetan Buddhist religious institutions, and the “re-education” of hundreds of thousands if not millions of Uyghurs, etc.

Of course, this is not to overlook that, with the model of “win-win,” there has been an ostensible recommitment – for whatever reasons, sincere or not, and to whatever extent – to make overseas Chinese policy in the New Era more “people-oriented” in “serving the interests of overseas Chinese.” In fact, the decision to include the specific language of “improving and strengthening [our] services” for the first time under Xi Jinping’s leadership in the *Government Work Report* in 2019 is quite promising and suggests that there is forthcoming national-level policies or legislation to expand and standardize them in the near future.<sup>125</sup> Perhaps, this was in direct response to the “appalling” mistreatment of Chinese tourists in Sweden in September 2018, the armed terrorist assault on the Chinese Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan in November 2018, and the high-profile arrest of Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou in Canada in December 2018 among other incidents involving overseas Chinese in the past year. However, as Li (2017) and Ren (2018) show, it is actually consistent with Xi Jinping’s statement in 2005 that, “The beginning point and foothold of overseas Chinese policy is to serve the interests of overseas Chinese,” and that, “The relationship between the development of the overall situation in Zhejiang and serving the interests of overseas Chinese... must be handled properly.”<sup>126</sup> These sentiments are re-echoed in Xi’s stern reminder in his report to the 19th National Congress of the CCP in 2017 as well, in which he says, “Do not forget our original intention. Remember our historical mission” (不忘初心, 牢记使命, bù wàng chūxīn, láoji shǐmìng), whereby the “original intention” is to “pursue the happiness [and well-being] of the people of the Chinese nation.”<sup>127</sup> That pursuit, moreover, is now within reach as a confident, emboldened China’s national and overseas Chinese interests converge in “unity.”<sup>128</sup> On “win-win,” Ren concludes that Xi has “comprehensively [and scientifically] deepened and expanded the ‘people-oriented’ mission of ‘serving the interests of overseas Chinese,’” which was officially propagated by Hu Jintao nearly two decades ago.<sup>129</sup>

To illustrate the recommitment to “serving the interests of overseas Chinese,” Suryadinata (2017) contrasts the decision to evacuate more than 35,000 Chinese citizens from Libya during its

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 137-138.

<sup>125</sup> PRC State Council. “Full Text: Report on the Work of the Government.” 16 March 2019. Accessed 5 April 2019. Website.

<sup>126</sup> 李其荣. “习近平侨务论述对党和国家领导人侨务思想的继承和创新.” *丽水学院学报*. 39.1 (January 2017).

Print. 3. AND 任贵祥. “习近平关于侨务问题的重要论述及丰富内涵.” *中国浦东干部学院学报*. 33.

<sup>127</sup> 冯俊. “为何反复强调‘不忘初心, 牢记使命.’” *解放日报*. 12 December 2017. Accessed 23 February 2019. Website.

<sup>128</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国 关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 19.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. 33.

civil war in 2011 and that to evacuate 3,000 Chinese citizens from Vietnam in 2014 after anti-China riots broke out in reaction to the Chinese placement of an oil rig in disputed South China Sea waters. In the former, he notes that China “wanted to take a business-as-usual approach,” but faced mounting pressure from the Chinese state-owned enterprise workers and their relatives back home for their rescue, which was completed by early March. Its success, nonetheless, was heralded by Xinhua, which proclaimed, “...all the overseas Chinese [should] keep in mind: though thousands of miles apart, China – a prosperous, stable and strong homeland – is always their safe haven linking them by heart.”<sup>130</sup> In the latter situation, Suryadinata observes that China, despite maintaining a low-profile posture, “immediately sent medical teams and ships to repatriate the Chinese workers who were affected, showing that it was able to protect its overseas citizens.”<sup>131</sup> In addition to this, Connolly (2018) gives the examples of the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Iraq in 2014, Yemen in 2015 (including 270 others of various citizenships), Sudan in 2016, and the Caribbean and Indonesia in 2017 after catastrophic natural disasters to evince China’s growing capabilities to “face a rising expectation to protect its people overseas.”<sup>132</sup> That said, Suryadinata and To (2014) both recognize that China’s consular protections sometimes does not distinguish between Huaqiao and Huaren, as seen in the evacuation of non-citizen ethnic Chinese from Kuwait in 1990<sup>133</sup> and the Solomon Islands in 2006.<sup>134</sup> To further remarks that China has often “demanded local governments ensure the life, property, and safety of [Huaqiao and Huaren alike] during times of crisis,” with “concern and warmth for [the Huaren] and their livelihoods” intended to gain their trust and support.<sup>135</sup> Yet, Suryadinata and To reiterate that China’s national interests invariably come first and that China will never compromise itself to help “those overseas Chinese perceived as a liability.”<sup>136</sup> The U.S. Department of State likewise warned in January 2019 that “[foreign] citizens of Chinese heritage may be subject to additional scrutiny and harassment [in China], and [the Chinese Government] may prevent their embassies from providing consular services,” which is a double-edged sword for the blurring of the distinction between Huaqiao and Huaren.<sup>137</sup>

#### IV. Belt and Road Initiative: A Case Study in Striving for “Win-Win” Cooperation

The BRI, formerly known as “One Belt, One Road,” is a dynamic development and foreign policy strategy announced by the Chinese Government, under Xi Jinping, in late 2013 and enshrined formally into the constitution of the CCP in October 2017. Its stated intention is “to promote the connectivity of [the] Asian, European, and African continents and their adjacent seas” through “partnerships among the countries along the [Silk Road Economic] Belt and [21st Century Maritime Silk] Road.”<sup>138</sup> It seeks specifically to deepen global “cultural inclusiveness, economic integration, and political trust” by strengthening connectivity in five main areas: “capital circulation” (资金融通, zījīn róngtōng), “facilities and infrastructure” (设施联通, shèshī liántōng), “policy coordination” (政策沟通, zhèngcè gōutōng), “people-to-people ties” (民心相通, mínxīn xiāngtōng), and “unimpeded trade” (贸易畅通, mào yì chāngtōng).<sup>139</sup> In order to do so, China

<sup>130</sup> Leo Suryadinata. *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas*. 86.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* 103.

<sup>132</sup> P. Connolly. “Chinese Evacuations and Power Projection.” *The Strategist*. ASPI, 12 Dec. 2018. Accessed 13 Apr. 2019. Website.

<sup>133</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 208.

<sup>134</sup> Leo Suryadinata. *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas*. 77-78.

<sup>135</sup> To. *Qiaowu: Extra-Territorial Policies for the Overseas Chinese*. 208 and 239.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* 246.

<sup>137</sup> U.S. Department of State. “China Travel Advisory.” 3 January 2019. Accessed 26 April 2019. Website.

<sup>138</sup> PRC State Council. “Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative.” 30 March 2015. Accessed 15 Feb. 2019. Website.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* Website.

itself has pledged to invest over one trillion dollars (in liberal estimates) to infrastructure projects along the BRI route and, in this respect, it is comparable to the United States' Marshall Plan in the post-World War II period, except in that it is projected to be more far-reaching. Since its announcement over five years ago, the BRI is gauged to have over 70 participating countries, over 3000 projects, and at least \$34 billion in investments by China.<sup>140</sup> There are plans to expand the BRI to incorporate countries in the Caribbean and Latin America, which would only be natural with the number of existing Chinese investments and infrastructure projects in the region and which underscores the constantly diversifying, expanding, and ongoing nature of the Initiative.<sup>141</sup> This precludes a definitive discussion on the impact and future progression of the BRI.

Nonetheless, the BRI, if implemented successfully, is expected to be a “powerful, but benevolent China’s contribution to the history of mankind” by building a “new world order” (新秩序, *xīn zhìxù*)<sup>142</sup> that corrects the “imbalance” of the globalized, “West-centered world [led by the United States] in which the East was subject to the West, land [was] not as important as the sea, and rural areas [were] inferior to urban areas.”<sup>143</sup> More practically, the BRI hopes to end the phenomenon where “the poorer became poorer while the rich got richer” because “developed countries constantly grabbed resources from developing ones and monopolized their markets”<sup>144</sup> with the institutionalization of “new rules for investment and trade” and “new standards for globalization.”<sup>145</sup> The “community of common destiny,” based on “shared interests” and “shared responsibilities” embodies the spirit of that new world order in that it “stress[es] equality and fairness, cooperation focusing on mutual respect and win-win results, as well as China’s own understanding of global integrity and interests.”<sup>146</sup> Realizing balance, inclusiveness, and harmony in international politics, as advocated by the BRI, is certainly a noble objective; however, realistically speaking, China is only interested in them to the degree that they serve to further its long-term national interests. This becomes poignantly true in reading Xi Jinping’s statement on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” when he says:

“China’s reunification will not harm the legitimate interests of any country, including its economic interests in Taiwan. It will only bring more development opportunities. It will only inject more positive energy into the prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world and it will only make great contributions to the building of the ‘community of common destiny’ and to promoting the cause of human progress and the world’s peaceful development.”<sup>147</sup>

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (2017) best summarizes the connection between the BRI and China’s grand strategy as: “The BRI could help re-orient a large part of the world economy toward China...[and] render these countries more dependent on the Chinese economy,

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<sup>140</sup> Stratfor. “Assessments: China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Five Years In.” 22 June 2018. Accessed 15 February 2019. Website. and China Daily. “Central SOEs Managing Over 3000 Projects Under BRI.” 12 Nov. 2018. Accessed 15 February 2019. Website.

<sup>141</sup> Andreea Brinza. “Redefining the Belt and Road Initiative.” *The Diplomat*. 20 March 2018. Accessed 15 February 2019. Website.

<sup>142</sup> Huanqiu (环球网). “习近平首提‘两个引导’有深意.” 20 February 2017. Accessed 22 February 2019. Website. The implications here for the institutions and values of the existing international order are beyond the scope of this paper; however, Zheng and Zhang (2017) revealingly say that the BRI intends to replace the spirit of “freedom and democracy” championed by the United States. This is because the United States supposedly used “force, sanctions, and violence” to impose Western liberalism around the world. Zheng Yongnian and Zhang Chi. “The Belt and Road Initiative and China’s Grand Diplomacy.” *International Strategic Relations and China’s National Security*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, 2017. Print. 319-20.

<sup>143</sup> Yiwei Wang. *The Belt and Road Initiative: What Will China Offer the World in its Rise*. Beijing: New World Press, 2016. 27.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* 164.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* 51.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 184.

<sup>147</sup> Xinhua. 习近平: 在《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会上的讲话. 2 January 2019. Accessed 22 Feb. 2019. Website.

increasing China's economic leverage over them. The BRI may also win China political gains. [China] may be able to exploit its financial largesse to influence partner country policies to align with its own interests," which in this case is the implicit forsaking of Taiwan.<sup>148</sup> The point is that in international politics, as in life, there is no such thing as a free lunch (天上不会掉馅饼, tiānshàng bù huì diào xiàn bǐng), which Xi publicly invoked in his 2017 new year's speech.

To elaborate, Callahan (2016) and Duara (2018) convincingly contend that the BRI, despite incorporating contemporary Chinese foreign policy principles like equality, reciprocity, mutual respect, mutual trust, and win-win cooperation and China's firm insistence to the contrary, is in many ways reflective of the traditional Chinese tributary system. In particular, in Callahan's explanation of this "hierarchical Sinocentric regional system," even though "Chinese leaders often stress that they see large and small countries as equal on the world stage...the PRC's diplomats and scholars often invoke China's historical tributary system to their neighbors as a benevolent model of regional order for the 21st century."<sup>149</sup> In other words, and as Womack's asymmetry theory astutely predicts in the "deference-recognition" paradigm, Callahan observes that, "Beijing expects loyalty in return, and 'international friendship' generally means that other countries cannot criticize China. Or, when they do criticize China, neighboring countries are seen as pawns in American geopolitical games, rather than sovereign governments expressing legitimate national interests."<sup>150</sup> On this, Duara (2018) suggests that, "If we can conceive of [the] BRI as combining cultural and economics of investment and trade with an apparently cooperative and light military presence, it could well be comparable to the Chinese imperial tribute system of the last millennium."<sup>151</sup> Taken all together, the BRI can reasonably be considered as a carrot-and-stick strategy for China's exerting of its influence over other countries. The onus, then, is on China to get these countries to both accept its "no-strings-attached" money and the "cultural, political, and security requirements" of its vision for the "community of common destiny."<sup>152</sup>

Suryadinata (2017) investigates the relationship between the BRI and overseas Chinese and posits that the Chinese leadership and scholars overestimate the latter's importance, which "has resulted in the further blurring of the distinction between [Huaqiao and Huaren]" whether intentional or not.<sup>153</sup> Suryadinata finds that the overseas Chinese are distributed unevenly in the countries and regions along the overland Belt and maritime Road, with small populations in Central Asia and Europe and large populations in Southeast Asia. These populations – large or small – may not be as economically powerful or socio-politically influential as purported.<sup>154</sup> Notwithstanding, he also points out that (1) it is often unclear if, and how, overseas Chinese companies and individuals are involved in negotiating the joint projects between China and their countries of residence and that (2) most overseas Chinese invested in China for economic and not necessarily for ethnic or patriotic reasons.<sup>155</sup> One of the examples that he employs is China's undertaking of the Jakarta-Bandung high speed train project in 2015, which he says faced "strong reservations" from the Indonesian Minister of Transportation Ignatius Jonan, "who is said to be of Chinese descent," and which he surmises succeeded due to it being a "better deal" rather than

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<sup>148</sup> CSIS. *How will the Belt and Road Initiative advance China's interests?* 8 May 2017. Accessed 22 Feb. 2019. Website.

<sup>149</sup> William A. Callahan. "China's 'Asia Dream:' The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order." *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics: Special Issue – China and Its Neighbors*. Vol. 1, No. 3. (September 2016). Print. 232.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* 232.

<sup>151</sup> Prasenjit Duara. "Revisiting the Chinese World Order." Unpublished Paper. 23 April 2018. University of Virginia. Print. 16.

<sup>152</sup> William A. Callahan. "China's 'Asia Dream:' The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order." 239.

<sup>153</sup> Leo Suryadinata. *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas*. 167.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* 173-74.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

through the “Indonesian Chinese business connection.”<sup>156</sup> That said, Suryadinata still cautions that China’s insistence on using overseas Chinese as “the basis for establishing relations with Southeast Asian countries and beyond” might deepen deep-seated suspicions, generate tensions between the overseas Chinese and local societies, and prove in the end to be self-defeating, which only a handful of the Chinese scholars that this paper studied actually addressed in their discussions of the BRI.<sup>157</sup> This effect is expected to be even stronger in the coming years in light of the ideologically and politically motivated nature of China’s overseas Chinese policy.

Overall, it cannot be denied that the BRI creates new challenges in and opportunities for the Chinese Government’s overseas Chinese policy. On the one hand, the overseas Chinese can be an invaluable resource for driving the BRI construction by serving as cultural and political liaisons between China and foreign countries, educators, investors, laborers, project managers, and a host of other roles. On the other hand, though, they must also bear the burden of the BRI construction through both foreseen and unforeseen difficulties, including the re-emerging anti-Chinese sentiments worldwide, that may very well jeopardize their personal development, livelihood, and survival overseas. This is exacerbated by the fact that many of the BRI projects “tread across minefields of local conflicts, civil wars, extremism and separatist movements,” notably in Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, Turkey, Xinjiang, and Yemen.<sup>158</sup> Thus, the BRI is an “important ‘test’ [that] China must pass as it rises” in that it will be an opportunity for the Chinese Government to demonstrate its capabilities and resolve to use its newly-restored economic and military power as well as political reach to promote and protect the legitimate interests and rights of the “sons and daughters of the Chinese nation,” and thereby to realize “win-win” situations.<sup>159</sup> The next two subsections will briefly look at the analyses of the Chinese academic community on the relationship between the BRI and overseas Chinese, which this paper categorizes based on the dual functions of overseas Chinese policy, “bridging by means of overseas Chinese” and “serving the interests of overseas Chinese.” The literature concentrates noticeably on the potential use of overseas Chinese in “overseas Chinese public diplomacy” (侨务公共外交, qiáowù gōnggòng wàijiāo) to improve China’s soft power; but more candid scrutiny is being placed on the challenges facing the overseas Chinese and the need for overseas Chinese policy to address them. That is, China’s “grand strategy” and its overseas Chinese policy can be mutually reinforcing in theory and, perhaps, in practice.

#### A. “Bridging by Means of Overseas Chinese” (以侨为桥)

D’Hooghe (2014) identifies Chinese academic and intellectual elites, business companies, celebrities, and overseas Chinese as key non-state actors who are “closely related to, supervised, or co-opted by the government” as part of China’s diversifying public diplomacy complex, and she opines, like To (2014), that the overseas Chinese have become more “extensively engaged” in those efforts. In fact, Xu and Xie (2012) notes that the *National Outline for the Development of Overseas Chinese Affairs, 2011-2015* (国家侨务工作发展纲要, guójiā qiáowù gōngzuò fāzhǎn gāngyào) officially recognized for the first time the importance of nurturing the potential role of the overseas Chinese, and Jin and Zang (2012) states that “overseas Chinese public diplomacy” should be understood as “using overseas Chinese who are familiar and friendly to China, by means of communication and information as their basic method, to explain China to foreign governments

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid. 177.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 179.

<sup>158</sup> Prasenjit Duara. “Revisiting the Chinese World Order.” 18.

<sup>159</sup> Zheng Yongnian and Zhang Chi. “The Belt and Road Initiative and China’s Grand Diplomacy.” 331.



and publics, to promote a good Chinese national image, and to spread Chinese culture.”<sup>160</sup> Moreover, the overseas Chinese associations and hometown organizations are specifically pinpointed by Chen (2010), Chen and Fan (2010), Ren (2014), Chen and Ye (2015), Xu and Xie, and **Zhao et al. (2015)** as “important platforms for overseas Chinese to disseminate Chinese culture, organize activities, and unite their collective strengths,” with their elite “opinion leaders” granted a special status for their “celebrity effect” on local overseas Chinese and society.<sup>161</sup> The Committee of 100, according to **Zhao et al.**, is composed of highly respected Chinese-American business, cultural, and political elites who have been working with their Chinese counterparts since 1991 to introduce the policies and voices of China into mainstream U.S. society, to enhance mutual understanding and trust, and to promote the positive development of the two countries’ bilateral relations.<sup>162</sup> The “deeds, words, and lifestyle” of every overseas Chinese, Chen et al. (2009) and Sun (2012) qualify, also “directly affect foreigners’ perceptions of China” – positive and negative – and they should be mindful of that.<sup>163</sup> The same could be said for the millions of Chinese students and tourists worldwide, the latter of whom have a notorious reputation for their “bad behavior.”

In the context of the BRI, Chen and Ye (2015), Sheng and Ren (2015), Wang (2015), **You and Zhang (2016)**, **Ma et al. (2017)**, **Ren (2017)**, **Wang (2017)**, **Zhang (2017)**, Chen (2018), and Ren (2018) reaffirm that dispelling the distrust of China as well as the prejudices against the Initiative among foreign governments and publics through cultural and people-to-people exchanges is a critical aspect of the “bridging by means of overseas Chinese” function of overseas Chinese policy. In other words, as **Ma et al.** and **You and Zhang** suppose, accurately explaining the intentions and benefits of the BRI; engaging in charitable activities such as “education and medical care, ecological protection, and poverty alleviation” that contribute to local society; and spreading Chinese culture will foster “the spirit of cooperation and friendship of the Silk Road” that will promote the BRI’s recognition outside of China.<sup>164</sup> That is a necessary, but insufficient condition for the success of the BRI construction. The second aspect, which Chen and Ye, **You and Zhang**, and Ren (2018) keenly discern, is overcoming the country and region-specific cultural, legal, and political obstacles to China’s “going global,” which the overseas Chinese have the experience, knowledge, and networks to do. The example that Chen and Ye gives highlights the legal difficulties that Chinese companies face when they try to invest overseas observing that, “The current Chinese legal services industry does not have the capability to “go global” yet...[Chinese lawyers] are unfamiliar with foreign languages and laws, and the foreign lawyers hired by Chinese companies...have cultural and legal thought differences that prevent their free communication with each other. There are overseas Chinese lawyers have the know-how [in both regards.]”<sup>165</sup> There are overseas Chinese accountants, financial and insurance advisors, management and public relations specialists, researchers, etc. who are equally as valuable in mitigating the myriad of problems, Chen and Ye supplement. **You and Zhang** suggests that overseas Chinese, presumably Huaren like Gary Locke, can “advise the governments of their countries of residence on developing

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<sup>160</sup> 徐文永 and 谢林森. “华侨华人社团与中国侨务公共外交 - 以巴西华人文化交流协会为例.” *八桂侨刊*. No. 3 (September 2012). Print. 18. AND 金正昆 and 臧红岩. “当代中国侨务公共外交探析.” *广西社会科学*. 1-2.

<sup>161</sup> 赵磊, 胥慧颖, and 翟迈云. “华侨华人 - 公共外交的独特资源.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 259-260.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* 260-262.

<sup>163</sup> 陈正良, 薛秀霞, and 何先光. “析海外华侨华人在推动中国软实力形成和发展过程中的作用.” *浙江学刊*. No. 6 (November 2009). Print. 128. AND 孙霞. “中国海外利益的政治风险与侨务公共外交.” *华侨华人历史研究*. 20.

<sup>164</sup> 马占杰 et al. “海外侨领与‘一带一路’建设中的民心相通.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: SSAP, 2017. Print. 30. AND 游国龙 and 张禹东. “华侨华人在‘一带一路’中的作用、问题与新动向.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: SSAP, 2016. Print. 2-3.

<sup>165</sup> 陈成吨 and 叶炜. “华侨华人在‘一带一路’战略中的地位与作用.” *龙岩学院学报*. 101-102.



relations and promoting positive interactions with China” too, which involves their participation in politics and which may raise suspicions about the nature of their influence.<sup>166</sup> That said, compared to the Reform and Opening Up period, overseas Chinese policy is just as much now about connecting China to the rest of the world as it is about introducing the world to China.

## B. “Serving the Interests of Overseas Chinese” (为侨服务)

The discussion in Chen (2010), Chen and Fan (2010), Sun (2012), and Xu and Xie (2012) elucidate that the difficulties facing the overseas Chinese, many of which are not unexpected or unknown, can be divided into three types: anti-Chinese sentiments that “ill-intentionally” accuse them of being colonizers, political operatives, spies, and/or saboteurs; barriers to their economic development in the form of political instability, protectionism, and sanctions; and physical threats to their personal safety.<sup>167</sup> These difficulties have all doubtlessly been magnified with the BRI construction and with the developments in overseas Chinese policy under Xi Jinping, and greater attention has been paid to them at the highest levels as a result, as evinced with He and Wang (2015), **Zhang (2015)**, **Lǚ (2016)**, **You and Zhang (2016)**, Li (2017), **Ren (2017)**, Ren (2018), and Zhang (2018). Of note is **Zhang**, who contends that overseas Chinese policy in the 21st century, has seen a “unity of serving China’s development and national interests and of serving the interests of the overseas Chinese,” with exemplifies “win-win.”<sup>168</sup> This encompasses, he points out, the implementation of the eight-part, non-statutory “Benefit the Overseas Chinese Project” (海外惠侨工程, *hǎiwài huì qiáo gōngchéng*) by the State Council in June 2014 to significantly expand the protections and services to ensure the personal development, livelihood, and survival of the overseas Chinese, and he earnestly calls the enactment of formal national-level legislation that will raise their legal status, which can be modeled on the Nanjing municipal one from July 2015.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, as **Zhang**, **Lǚ**, **You and Zhang**, and **Ren** imply, a deficiency in these protections and services – whether or not it is due to inadequacies in government policy – constitute a fourth type of difficulty in and of itself. This paper will spotlight the China Aid Centers (华助中心, *huá zhù zhōngxīn*) and access to Chinese education, which are recurrent in the literature and which Liu (2018) names as two of the “new three treasures” (新三宝, *xīn sānbǎo*) of the United Front.<sup>170</sup>

The China Aid Centers, which are mentioned in **Zhang (2015)** and Yang (2018) and on which there seems to be little to no reporting in the West, were established and funded by the State Council as part of the “Benefit the Overseas Chinese Project” to cooperate with select “credible and influential overseas Chinese associations” in providing better essential and emergency services to the local overseas Chinese, especially the “disabled, elderly, and vulnerable.”<sup>171</sup> These range of services include, but are not limited to: expatriating a teacher in the Philippines suffering from mental illness, helping families in the Houston locate their missing relatives after a strong hurricane, mobilizing social media resources to recover a kidnapped child in Brazil, protesting an incident of targeted anti-Chinese violence in France, and translating Brazilian business laws and regulations relevant to Chinese businessmen.<sup>172</sup> The Director of the OCAO Qi Yuanping, in any

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<sup>166</sup> 游国龙 and 张禹东. “华侨华人在“一带一路”中的作用、问题与新动向.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 3.

<sup>167</sup> 孙震. “中国海外利益的政治风险与侨务公共外交.” *华侨华人历史研究*. 21-22.

<sup>168</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国 关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 19.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* 27 and 31.

<sup>170</sup> 刘芳彬. “新时代方位下的海外统战工作.” *广西社会主义学院学报*. 29:1 (February 2018). Print. 35.

<sup>171</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国 关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 27.

<sup>172</sup> 人民日报. “海外‘华助中心’为侨服务一直在路上.” 17 January 2018. Accessed 22 April 2019. Website.

event, remarked in 2018 that the 60 China Aid Centers worldwide, of which there are four in the United States in Houston, Minnesota, Nebraska, and San Francisco, have “helped the overseas Chinese to feel the true loving care and warmth of the Chinese nation” and have proved to be “important platforms for benefitting the large numbers of overseas Chinese, to promote their harmonious development, and to rally the strength of overseas Chinese society.”<sup>173</sup> Yet, as Yang (2018) observes, the China Aid Centers do not have to restrict their outreach to only the overseas Chinese and will provide material and moral support to the local society, as the China Aid Center in Sao Paulo did after a shopping mall fire in November 2016 by sending condolences and care packages to the survivors.<sup>174</sup> The Chinese Medicine Care Plan (中医关怀计划, zhōngyī guānhuái jìhuà), which is also part of the “Benefit the Overseas Chinese Project,” is similar to the China Aid Centers in that it seeks to “increase the impact of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in caring for the overseas Chinese” while “promoting the image and influence of TCM in the world.”<sup>175</sup> They both embody, as Zhang says, the principle of “relying and serving the overseas Chinese.”<sup>176</sup>

The issue of access to Chinese education for the children of overseas Chinese has equally been accentuated by the BRI construction as the increase in the number of migrants creates a greater demand for those resources and, as Lü (2016) and You and Zhang (2016) find, it is a major “blind spot for the Chinese Government,” which has “the responsibility as a rising great power to provide.”<sup>177</sup> This is an acute problem, they portray, for the overseas Chinese in Africa, where the cost of private education is high and where there is a lack of quality public education. That disadvantages the children of overseas Chinese who have to return and compete against their domestic peers in the *gaokao*, and this forces the overseas Chinese to choose between keeping their families together and leaving their children behind in China to pursue a better education.<sup>178</sup> It is in the interest of China, Lü reasons, to resolve the issue because ensuring access to a standardized Chinese education curriculum not only will encourage more Chinese to go and remain overseas for long-periods of time, but it will also strengthen “the emotional connections and ethnic recognition that the youth have to their ancestral country.”<sup>179</sup> This explains why Chinese education has also been called the “Hope Project” (希望工程, xīwàng gōngchéng) and the “Maintain Roots Project” (留根工程, liú gēn gōngchéng). With that in mind, whereas Lü and You and Zhang recommend copying the French model and internationalizing Chinese education, similar to that of the Confucius Institutes, Ma et al. (2017) notes that overseas Chinese businessmen and elites, such as Gu Runjin from Malaysia, Hui Zhiguang in the Netherlands, and Chen Jianghe from Singapore, have contributed independently and immeasurably to the cause of developing of Chinese education along the BRI route, including the funding of youth summer tours of China.<sup>180</sup> Ma et al. nonetheless recognizes the instrumentality of the China Chinese Education Fund (中国华文教育基金, zhōngguó huáwén jiàoyù jījīn), which was a personal initiative of Hu Jintao, in setting up primary and secondary Chinese schools in Southeast Asia. Ren (2017) reinforces Lü and You and Zhang’s recommendation, and further suggests that the OCAO establish physical overseas

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid. Website.

<sup>174</sup> 杨宏云. “从巴西浙商谈华侨华人促进中国对巴西公共外交的优势与对策.” *西南科技大学学报*. 35:3 (June 2018). Print. 5.

<sup>175</sup> 张秀明. “21 世纪以来华侨华人与中国 关系的新变化.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 27.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. 27.

<sup>177</sup> 吕挺. “非洲华侨华人新移民教育需求分析与供给模式探索.” *华侨华人研究报告*. Beijing: SSAP, 2016. Print. 259 and 272.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. 268.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. 272 and 278.

<sup>180</sup> 马占杰 et al. “海外侨领与“一带一路”建设中的 民心相通.” *华侨华人研究报告*. 45-47.

Chinese schools while simultaneously exploring the potential uses of digital technology, “which will make the overseas Chinese education system more suitable to the changing times.”<sup>181</sup>

## V. Final Thoughts and Future Areas for Research

The concerns about China’s cultural/ethnic, economic, and political propinquity to the overseas Chinese – Huaqiao and Huaren, and Old Migrants and New Migrants alike – and the potential for their exploitation to further its own diplomatic and foreign policy objectives at the expense of other countries is not a new phenomenon, and the Chinese Government has attempted to pacify these qualms since the 1950s. The Cultural Revolution period saw these concerns intensified, as evident in the anti-Chinese protests and violence in Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Mongolia, because of deep suspicions that China was inciting, if not directing, the overseas Chinese to support armed revolutionary struggles. They were not as prominent during China’s Reform and Opening Up in the 1980s and 1990s which relied on the connections and contributions of the overseas Chinese, perhaps because of the expectation among Western countries that economic modernization would concurrently promote political liberalization; however, as this paper illustrated, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao regarded Reform and Opening Up as a tool to preserve the power of the Party and strengthen the state. Those concerns have re-emerged in the New Era with Xi Jinping’s formal articulation and call for the revival of a harmonious Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity and his utilization of the rhetoric of “win-win” to encourage and legitimize the overseas Chinese’s expanded cooperation and exchanges with China, despite the overall continuity in overseas Chinese policy. The Hoover Institution’s *Chinese Influence and American Interests* (2018) aptly summarizes it as: “[I]t is important to bear in mind that while ethnic [and overseas] Chinese can be expected quite naturally to take an interest in things Chinese, it is the [CCP] that puts a target on their backs through its presumption that they are all somehow the ‘sons and daughters of the Yellow Emperor’ (炎黄子孙, yánhuáng zǐsūn) and thus owe some measure of loyalty to the [CCP].”<sup>182</sup> That is antithetical to its avowed mission of making overseas Chinese policy more “equitable.”

On the model of “win-win” in the New Era, it needs to be said that insofar as China’s overseas Chinese policy is genuinely about caring for and protecting the legitimate interests and rights of its own citizens and encouraging all overseas Chinese to contribute and integrate into their countries of residence, to honestly promote friendly people-to-people exchanges, and to respect local customs and laws of their respective societies, it should be welcomed and supported. This has not always been the case, as FitzGerald (1972), To (2014), Suryadinata (2017), and this paper showed, given the consistent “guiding principle” that overseas Chinese policy should be subordinated to and serve China’s higher “grand strategy” and national interests, which is not expected to change dramatically anytime soon even with the more scrutiny at academic and policymaking levels on the importance of a “people-oriented” overseas Chinese policy that “serves the interests of overseas Chinese.” The BRI and the challenges it poses to the economic and personal safety interests of the overseas Chinese, nonetheless, provide an unique opportunity for the Chinese Government to reaffirm its re-commitment to the CCP’s “original intention” to “pursue the happiness [and well-being] of the people of the Chinese nation,” such as through the China Aid Centers, the easing of immigration restrictions for the Huaren, the providing of domestic quality education overseas, and the comprehensive reformation of the “Law of the PRC on the

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<sup>181</sup> 任弘. “‘一带一路’与侨务新思维.” 华侨华人研究报告. 255.

<sup>182</sup> L. Diamond and O. Schell. *Chinese Influence and American Interests*. 29 and 35.

Protection of the Rights and Interests of Overseas Returnees and the Relatives of Overseas Chinese” to name a few.<sup>183</sup> That said, as the Hoover Institution’s report (2018) warns, the CCP may attempt to covertly or coercively “exact a further price” after the fact for these services, which may in turn “create divided loyalties and result in [harmful] actions.”<sup>184</sup> That price may, for example, require the passive acceptance or active promotion of the CCP’s narrative of the Chinese *minzu* nationalist identity and its policy preferences. One revealing indicator of overseas Chinese policy in the New Era will therefore be how, not if, the Chinese Government will punish those who “renege” or refuse to pay that “price.” This requires serious reflection on the individual and societal levels on the *cui bono* (who stands to benefit) and, by extension, the so-called *cui damno* (who stands to lose) of “win-win” for the Chinese Government, the overseas Chinese, foreign countries, and other potentially interested non-state parties such as Chinese democracy activists, Falun Gong practitioners, Taiwan independence supporters, and the domestic and diaspora Tibetans and Uyghurs. Womack (2013) rightful says that “credible reassurance,” which this paper interprets as transparency, on the part of China is tantamount to realizing “win-win” situations.<sup>185</sup> Who is to say, besides the Chinese Government, that a China that is democratic and that embraces free markets and open society would not result in more truly “win-win-win” situations in the long-term?

To conclude, this paper finds that, compared to China and its expansive academic and government resources committed to ongoing study of the changing demographics, identities, and value orientations of the Chinese diaspora worldwide, there is an inimical gap in that dedication and, resultingly, that invaluable understanding in the West where many of the overseas Chinese reside. Likewise, most of the literature in the West focuses almost one-sidedly on China’s overseas Chinese policy and its illegitimate United Front strategy (without comparing and contrasting the two *National Outlines for the Development of Overseas Chinese Affairs 2011-2015* and *2016-2020* and other official documents published by the State Council) as opposed to the overseas Chinese communities themselves. This is extremely misguided considering that, as FitzGerald (1972) poignantly says, “Any attempt to manipulate the overseas Chinese...for the purposes of Chinese foreign policy depend[s] on a combination of control from China and [the] willingness to [participate] on the part of the overseas Chinese [for its success].”<sup>186</sup> The critical question that remains is: how effective is China’s emphasis on cultural/ethnic pride and the opportunity to participate in its restored global prominence and overall strengthening as well as the model of “win-win” in mobilizing the overseas Chinese to voluntarily serve its interests and why? Thus, further in-depth, on-the-ground research on the overseas Chinese, and particularly the multiple generations of malleable youth who are predictably an important target for overseas Chinese policy, and their opinions on China’s rise, their cultural/ethnic identity, and political activism is imperative and rather urgently so. That research should be used to inform foreign countries’ policy responses; it should not lose sight, though, that overseas Chinese as a term refers to a diverse migrant population comprised ultimately of *individuals* with different backgrounds, interests, and needs.

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<sup>183</sup> 冯俊. “为何反复强调‘不忘初心, 牢记使命.’” *解放日报*. Website.

<sup>184</sup> L. Diamond and O. Schell. *Chinese Influence and American Interests*. 36.

<sup>185</sup> B. Womack. “Beyond Win–Win.” *International Affairs*. 89:4 (2013). Print. 912.

<sup>186</sup> S. FitzGerald. *China and the Overseas Chinese*. 100.

## Appendix A – Figures

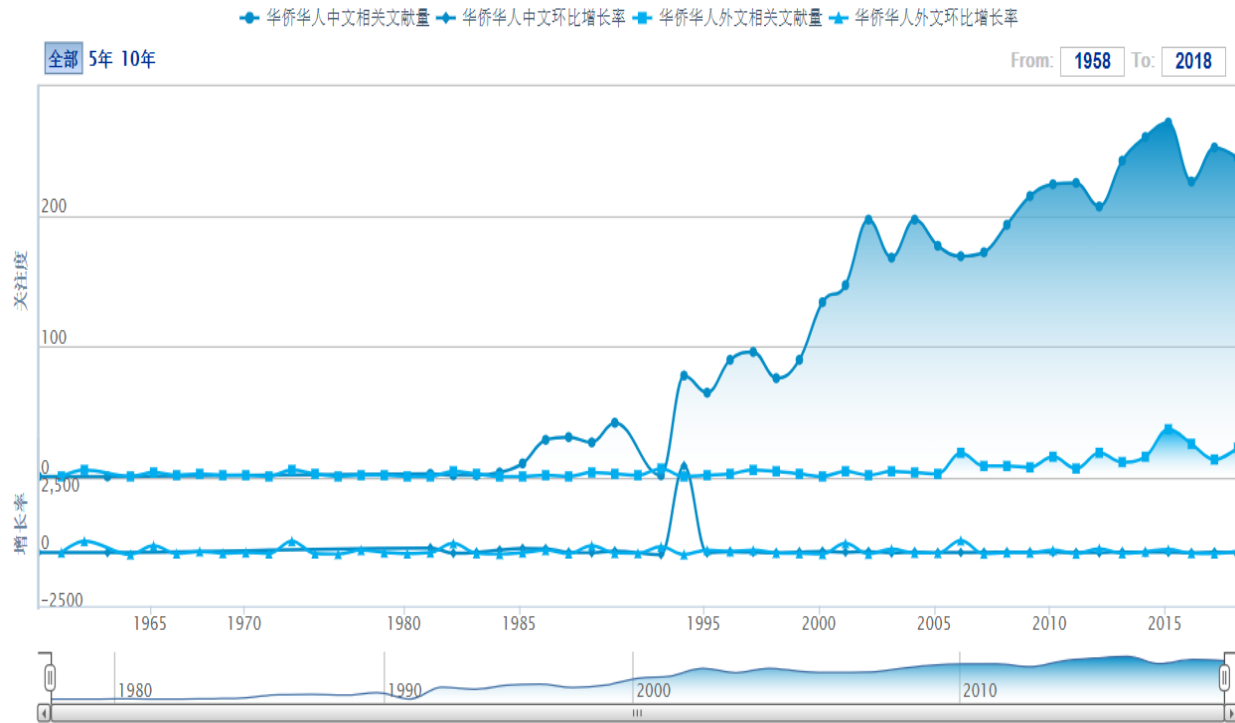


Figure 1: Articles on “Overseas Chinese,” 1958-2018 (Source: CNKI, 24 February 2019)

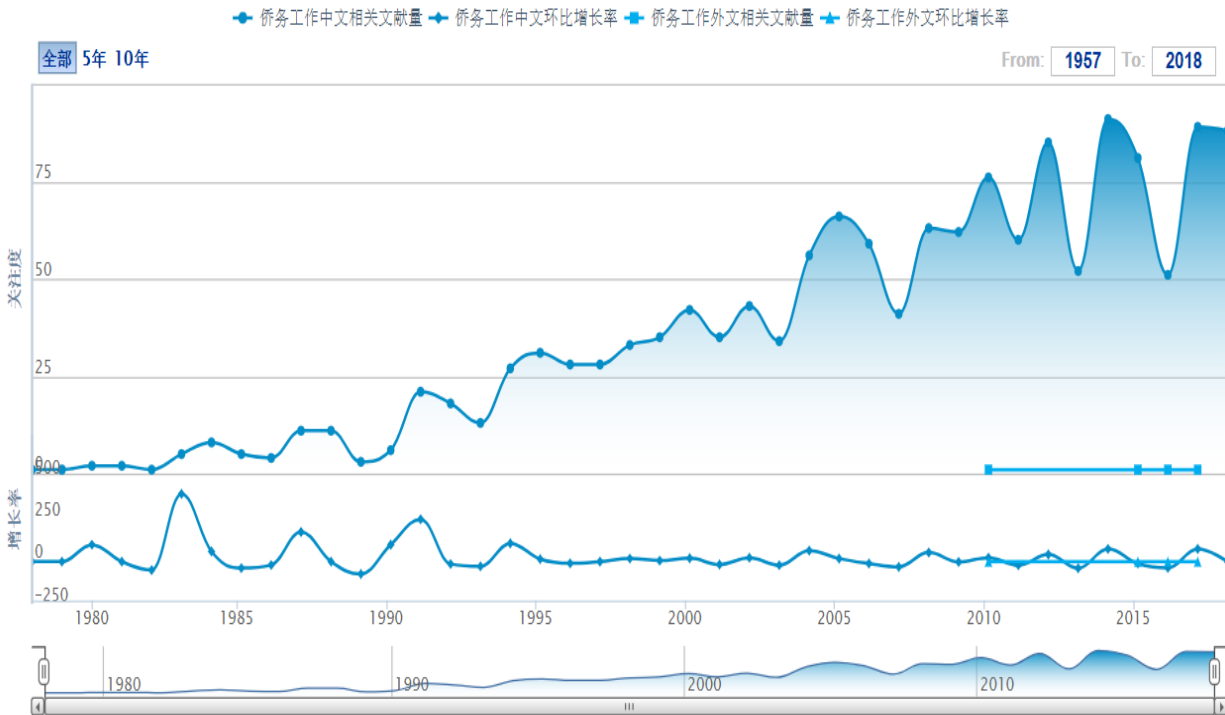


Figure 2: Articles on “Overseas Chinese Policy,” 1957-2018 (Source: CNKI, 24 February 2019)

## Appendix B – Draft Questionnaire

**Cultural and Ethnic Identification of Overseas Chinese:** The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of different generations of overseas Chinese in their new countries of citizenship/residence and to determine the degree to which an individual’s Chinese cultural and/or ethnic identity contributes to their personal values, political opinions, and overall worldview. The participants will be asked to candidly respond to a series of approximately thirty (30) questions on Qualtrics. The questions in the survey cannot be skipped; however, participants can select the “Neutral/No Opinion” or “Prefer Not to Say” options for most questions if they feel uncomfortable responding. The participants can close the survey at any time without submitting their responses.

### I. Demographics

0. Do you consent to participating in the above described study?

- Yes
- No

1. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer Not to Say

3. What is your ethnicity?

- Asian/Pacific Islander
- African/Black
- American Indian/Native American
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Other (please specify):
- Prefer Not to Say

4. What is your highest level of education?

- Less than High School
- High School Graduate
- Some College
- 2 Year Degree
- 4 Year Degree
- Masters/Professional
- Doctorate Degree
- Prefer Not to Say

5. What is your household income level?

- Below \$10K
- \$10K-50K
- \$50K-100K
- Over \$100K
- Prefer Not to Say

6. What is your country of citizenship?

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7. What is your country of permanent residence?

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## **II. Chinese Identity**

8. Do you identify either culturally or ethnically as Chinese?

- Yes
- No

9. How important is your cultural/ethnic Chinese identity to you?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not At All Important

10. Do you agree: I am proud of my cultural/ethnic Chinese identity.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. Do you/did you attend Chinese school while growing up?

- Yes, and regularly.
- Yes, but infrequently.
- No, I did not attend.

12. What is the name of the Chinese school that you attended? Where is it located?

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13. Do you read/speak/write Mandarin?

- Yes.
- No.

14. How would you rate your Chinese proficiency (with 100 being native proficiency)?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



### III. Diaspora Experience

15. Which "immigration generation" do you consider yourself?

- 1- a foreign born citizen/resident who immigrated to a new country of residence.
- 1 - a native-born citizen or resident of a country whose parents are foreign born.
- 2 - second generation to be born in/inhabit the new country of permanent residence.
- 3 - third generation to be born in/inhabit the new country of permanent residence.
- N/A - I currently only hold citizenship in the People's Republic of China.
- N/A - I currently only hold citizenship in the Republic of China (Taiwan).
- N/A - I prefer not to disclose of this immigration-related information.

16. When did you/your family emigrate to your new country of citizenship/permanent residence?

- Pre-1945
- 1945-1949
- 1949-1957
- 1958-1965
- 1966-1976
- 1977-2000
- 2001-2008
- 2008-2019
- Prefer Not to Say



17. Why did you/your family emigrate from the PRC to your country of citizenship/permanent residence?

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18. Do you/your family still have extended family in the People's Republic of China, with whom there is sustained contact? Sustained means continuing for extended periods.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Say

19. Have you ever traveled to the People's Republic of China? If so, how many times?

- Yes, 1-2 times.
- Yes, 3-4 times.
- Yes, 5+ times.
- No, but I want to in the future.
- No, and I do not intend to go.

20. Do you feel you/your family are integrated into your country of citizenship/permanent residence? (Here, assume that your country of citizenship/permanent residence is not the People's Republic of China.)

- Yes, and I/we feel fully integrated.
- Yes, but I/we do not feel *fully* integrated.
- No, I/we do not feel integrated at all.
- Other (Explain): \_\_\_\_\_

21. Please explain the factor(s) which contribute to your answer to the previous question.

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22. Do you identify as being more Chinese or Western in terms of your personal values/worldview? If you cannot decide, please pick other and explain why.

- Chinese
- Western
- Other (Explain): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer Not to Say

#### IV. Political Worldview

23. Do you agree with the following statement: "The media reporting in the West is biased/negatively prejudiced against the People's Republic of China."

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Prefer Not to Say

24. Do you agree with the following statement: "In modern times, the greatest aspiration of the Chinese people is to achieve the mission of national rejuvenation."

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Prefer Not to Say

25. Do you agree with the following statement: "The *sons and daughters of the Chinese nation* must come together and strive with one heart to realize the great aspiration of national rejuvenation."

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Prefer Not to Say

26. Do you agree with the following statement: "I feel *responsible for positively representing* my Chinese culture and the Chinese people in my country of citizenship/permanent residence." (Here, assume that your country of citizenship/permanent residence is not the People's Republic of China.)

- Definitely Yes
- Probably Yes
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Probably No
- Definitely No
- Prefer Not to Say

27. What is your current opinion of the People's Republic of China?

- Very Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Neutral/No Opinion
- Somewhat Unfavorable
- Very Unfavorable
- Prefer Not to Say

28. What is your general opinion of your country of citizenship/permanent residence?

- Very Favorable
- Somewhat Favorable
- Neutral/No Opinion
- Somewhat Unfavorable
- Very Unfavorable
- Prefer Not to Say

29. If given the opportunity, would you work for the government of your country of citizenship/permanent residence?

- Definitely Yes
- Probably Yes
- Might or Might Not
- Probably Not
- Definitely Not
- Prefer Not to Say

30. If given the opportunity, would you be willing to publicly support or work for the Government of the People's Republic of China to improve the foreign perceptions of the Chinese people and nation?

- Definitely Yes
- Probably Yes
- Might or Might Not
- Probably Not
- Definitely Not
- Prefer Not to Say

31. If given the opportunity, would you be willing to publicly support or work for the Government of the People's Republic of China to promote its policy preferences, such as the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)?

- Definitely Yes
- Probably Yes
- Might or Might Not
- Probably Not
- Definitely Not
- Prefer Not to Say

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