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Beijing's Policies for Managing Han and Ethnic-Minority Chinese Communities Abroad

James TO

Abstract: The overseas Chinese (OC) form a vast network of powerful interest groups and important political actors capable of shaping the future of China from abroad by transmitting values back to their ancestral homeland (Tu 1991). While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) welcomes and actively seeks to foster relations with the OC in order to advance China's national interests, some cohorts may be hostile to the regime. In accordance with their distinct demographic and ethnic profiles, the CCP's *qiaowu* (侨务, OC affairs) infrastructure serves to entice, co-opt, or isolate various OC groupings. This article summarises the policies for managing different subsets of OC over the past three decades, and argues that through *qiaowu*, the CCP has successfully unified cooperative groups for China's benefit, while preventing discordant ones from eroding its grip on power.

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Keywords: China, *qiaowu*, overseas Chinese affairs, diaspora

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Introduction

The vast majority of overseas Chinese (OC) are comprised of *huaren* (华人) – the millions of ethnic Chinese who have been residing in Southeast Asia for many centuries, and those who have gone elsewhere around the world and adopted different nationalities – many of whom have emerged into their second, third, and later generations as *laoqiao* (老侨, longer-established OC migrants). As such, most *huaren* are very much localised and often disconnected from political matters in China (Greif 1975: 977). However, given their biological and ethnic background, many of them look to the People's Republic of China (PRC) to enrich their cultural roots or to seek economic opportunity.

Over the last 30 years, and more so in the last decade, growing numbers of *huaqiao* (华侨, PRC nationals living outside of China) and *xinqiao* (新侨, new OC migrants) have changed the demographic make-up and outlook of the OC diaspora. They are mostly born, brought up and educated in China. They tend to be younger and retain close links with family, friends and business contacts there. In addition, they maintain their Chinese language, values and culture. Consequently, they do not view themselves as a minority outside of China, but rather as a part of it overseas. Moreover, they have an emotional and psychological need to participate in activities associated with their ancestral homeland (Gao 2004; Nyiri 1999; Lintner 2006).

Finally, there are OC whose activities directly affect developments in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime is not immune to conflict with interstate, trans-governmental, and transnational elements (Barnett 1964) and must contend with rival discourses in its various fields of operation. Those elements requiring special attention are politically active OC residing in countries willing to support their efforts, and include OC pro-democracy, Taiwanese independence, Falungong (法轮功, FLG), Tibetan Buddhist, and Xinjiang independence movements.

This article summarises Beijing's current policies for managing different subsets of the OC over the past three decades. It argues that the CCP's *qiaowu* methods have successfully unified cooperative groups for its own interests, while seeking to prevent hostile ones from eroding its grip on power. The study begins with an explanation of *qiaowu*, followed by a brief description of those movements posing a threat, and then discusses the techniques, outcomes, and implications surrounding the

CCP's policies and practices for dealing with different cohorts of the OC diaspora.

What is *Qiaowu*?

In building a long-term relationship with the OC, the CCP bases its efforts on *huaqiao shiwu gongzuo* (华侨事务工作, OC affairs work), abbreviated as *qiaowu* (侨务). *Qiaowu* is ostensibly a comprehensive effort that seeks to maintain, protect, and enhance the rights and interests of the OC. Tasks include propagating OC policies, promoting OC affairs, researching their needs, and resolving their problems (Wu 2007). In practice, however, *qiaowu* works to legitimise and protect the CCP's hold on power, uphold China's international image, and retain influence over important channels of access to social, economic and political resources both domestically and abroad. To achieve this, *qiaowu* is conducted in view of two aims: to attract the OC back into the fold of the Chinese nation-state, and to convey and project to them the nation-state agenda (Liu 2005: 302–303). Implicit in these objectives is the elimination of potential threats and rival discourses that may challenge the CCP.

The PRC's *qiaowu* administration evolved out of the infrastructure established by previous Chinese governments since the latter half of the nineteenth century. Efforts to develop an official relationship with the OC began in 1858, when Qing officials established bureaus to deal with “British Chinese” following the opening of treaty ports after the Opium War (*Haibua* 1992: 60–62). Emigration policies were gradually relaxed after 1868, and Chinese diplomats began actively courting the OC with the prime objective of securing their loyalty to the empire (Yen 1995: 139; Wang 1991: 245). This included attracting contributions to advance China's interests, and to prevent revolutionary groups from threatening the imperial regime. In order to formalise the embrace of ethnic Chinese overseas for the first time, the 1909 Law of Nationality acknowledged the OC as a special grouping (Lin 2001). It defined anyone born to a Chinese father and/ or mother as a Chinese citizen under the principle of *jus sanguinis*. This broad definition gave the Qing court the capacity to claim OC with foreign citizenship as its own nationals, and implied that it could exercise extra-territorial rule over any OC.

Following the overthrow of the imperial system in 1911, the republican Beiyang government retained the principle of *jus sanguinis*. To protect the interests of Chinese labourers in Europe during the First World

War, it set up the Bureau of OC Workers in September 1917 (Xu 2005: 35, 116). It was re-organised in January 1922 as the State Council OC Affairs Bureau in order to accommodate a broader scope of OC matters (Wang 1989: 48). In 1925, the Second Kuomintang (国民党, *Guomindang*, KMT) Nationalist Party Conference announced policies to persuade the OC to invest in China, provide facilities for their youth to study in China, and protect them against discriminatory laws abroad (Choi 1975: 37). In the following year, the KMT government established the OC Affairs Commission (中华民国侨务委员会, *Zhonghua minguo qiaowu weiyuanhui*, OCAC), and *qiaowu* evolved into a set of regulations, laws and policies overseen by a framework of government and non-governmental bodies, organs and offices. The No. 3 Section of the KMT Central Committee (known as the Overseas Work Committee after 1972) influenced all *qiaowu* processes, and ensured that anti-communist ideology and nationalist sentiment dominated the complete spectrum of OCAC activities. As the key targets, strategic OC communities around the world felt the full brunt of this agenda – having to comply with often-zealous KMT demands, or else face naming, shaming, or ostracisation in the Cold War environment (Ng 1991; Lai 1998: 293–344).

The KMT continued its OCAC operations from Taiwan after its defeat by the CCP in 1949. Back on the mainland, the CCP inherited the existing *qiaowu* framework. The PRC's embodiment of OCAC was later re-established as the State Council OC Affairs Office (国务院侨务办公室, *Guowuyuan qiaowu bangongshi*, OCAO) following the Cultural Revolution in 1978. Over several decades, the CCP and the KMT were direct competitors for the loyalty and support of millions of OC around the world.

The CCP's *qiaowu* effort has its roots in the Third Office of the United Front Work Department (UFWD) and is based upon Marxist-Leninist mass line tactics, techniques and strategies (Steiner 1951: 422–436). UF work aims to win over non-CCP community leaders, neutralise party critics, build temporary alliances of convenience, and systematically shut down adversaries (Porteous 1998; Groot 2004: 124, 129). Moreover, *qiaowu* is a shared duty for all government agencies (including diplomats, ministerial attachés, party cadres, and the *qiaowu* system itself), coordinated as part of a common responsibility to take advantage of OC resources (Wang 1997: 73–74; OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2005c: 9–10). In this context, *qiaowu* developed as a continuous and evolving effort employing social and psychological tools that seek to influence the choices, direction and loyalties of the OC by dispelling

their negative suspicions and misunderstandings concerning China, and replacing those thoughts with a positive understanding instead (Wang 1997: 63–64).

Such feelings for the CCP are not created by heavy-handed indoctrination; instead, *qiaowu* efforts focus on racial, cultural, economic or political forms of attraction and guidance to push the OC to connect with China, and ultimately elicit actions of their own volition. In this context, *qiaowu* mostly appears as a relatively simple and straightforward attempt to stoke transnational cultural interest and ethnic awareness, promote business opportunities, and attract financial and technological contributions.

To best harness OC from various backgrounds, origins and levels of society, cadres conduct continuous investigation into their local circumstances across the globe. To build a strong knowledge base, OCAO regularly send out fact-finding delegations (OCAO External Affairs Department 2005b: 9). OC community associations serve as useful points of contact to gather information and recruit individuals for transnational networking. *Qiaowu* officials pay attention to variations in their attributes and tailor their own work accordingly (OCAO Propaganda Department 2007: 14–15).

At a 1984 provincial conference concerning OC in Beijing, officials noted that efforts and responsibilities for *huaren* did not go far enough. The scope of *qiaowu* failed to accommodate them; there was also insufficient research into their needs and requirements (*Qiaowu gongzuo gailun* 1993: 9). As a result, OC associations, schools and media were becoming disconnected from China both culturally and ideologically. *Qiaowu* had to resolve this issue, with policies addressing these concerns in the context of cultural unity and rivalry with Taiwan's own *qiaowu* effort – which at the time was far superior and dominant in comparison.

A May 1989 State Council *qiaowu* conference expanded policy for exchanges between *qiaowu* offices and the OC, including those of foreign nationality (Jiang 2000: 489–490). This basic strategy was a deliberate and calculated effort to reconnect with all OC, and it has remained unchanged in the contemporary period. Hence, when referring to *qiaowu*, the terms “foreign nationals of Chinese descent”, “foreigners of Chinese origin”, and “people of Chinese origin residing abroad” are often used interchangeably with “Chinese nationals overseas”.

Given the diversity amongst the millions of OC, responses are quite mixed and difficult to measure, but some generalisations can be made.

For the majority of *huaren*, their indifference and detachment regarding political matters in China means *qiaowu* serves little more purpose than to entertain cultural and ethnic pursuits – such as acknowledging and fostering links pertaining to their origins, through to making donations back to their ancestral villages, or perhaps doing nothing at all. Other OC may look to *qiaowu* as a channel for satisfying self-interest, as a means to enhance their prestige and status, or as a chance to ingratiate themselves to diplomats or leaders in China. However, such relationships do not necessarily imply a political connection – they serve mostly to boost individual egos, or to enhance personal favouritism with Chinese officials. Ong and Nonini described this response as a Third Culture of mobile and varied Chineseness – an identity formed in accordance with an “ungrounded empire” evasive of any manipulative state power, and based more upon a continual desire to seek economic opportunity (Ong and Nonini 1997; Callahan 2005: 284–285; Simons and Zielenziger 1994; Beng 2002; Goodman 1997/1998).

Groups that have responded most positively to *qiaowu* are those who actively and openly support Beijing; these groups are comprised mostly of PRC students studying abroad and *xinqiao* migrants. Although these OC groups may not totally identify with CCP-sanctioned ideals and values because of materialism and pragmatism, they tend to retain patriotism and sentimentality for their homeland despite having been away for many years. Consequently, they do not require specific instruction on how to behave, but act upon their own initiative given the appropriate opportunities under a “guiding hand”.

Being outside of China, the OC are not under any jurisdiction or obligation to follow directives from the PRC. Instead, a “guiding hand” serves to maintain a loose, yet still powerful, means of social control. *Qiaowu* cadres and diplomats seek to gain and consolidate trust amongst their targets, actively manage them, and supervise their behaviour under the “Three Dos and Don’ts” principle (三而不, *san er bu*): to maintain sufficient independence while supporting target groups to achieve outcomes; to understand and infiltrate their inner workings without overtly intervening; and to influence through guidance, rather than openly leading them (Guangdong OCAO New Zealand Research Delegation 2004: 2, 6).

For example, *qiaowu* agencies are responsible for providing logistical advice and offering suggestions to OC community leaders for implementation. Alternatively, the PRC embassy might indicate its disapproval by

giving disobedient groups the cold shoulder or withholding invitations to official functions. Other forms of the “guiding hand” can be more direct – comprising gentle reminders, personal communications, e-mails or telephone calls, or even being communicated in speeches by PRC officials. Attachés from the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) hand out propaganda material at diplomatic social functions, or insert them into Chinese-language-school learning materials. In response, obliging OC groups tactfully avoid taboo subjects, as they are well aware of the limits and scope of behaviour under which they are able to address Chinese issues and deal with the CCP authorities so as not to endanger their continued access to embassy resources and networks.

A “guided” relationship is desirable because activity and responses are voluntary and consenting, rather than compelled. Such principles make *qiaowu* an effective tool for intensive behavioural control and manipulation, yet *qiaowu* appears benign, benevolent and helpful. Moreover, while it may seem that these OC enjoy close relations with Chinese diplomats and authorities, any perceived enhancement of prestige or status is only symbolic, as most OC play only an advisory role. Any OC co-opted through *qiaowu* processes must not be allowed to encroach upon the actual arena of decision-making. This functional power is solely reserved for the State Council, its ministries, and the CCP (Christiansen 2003: 10–11, 138–139).

These aspects are inherently part of a discourse that is concealed from the wider public. The OC are denied access to knowledge that may affect the success of *qiaowu* work. The CCP cannot reveal the true purpose of *qiaowu* for fear of damaging the imagined “service” that is the policy’s public face. To this end, embassies and consulates are instructed to protect the confidentiality of OC information, and prevent classified *qiaowu* documents and policy from outside scrutiny (Guangdong OCAO 2006a). Accordingly, *qiaowu* cadres selectively impart to the OC only what the latter need to know (OCAO Internal Affairs Department 2005: 5).

Therefore, where OC groups critical of the CCP regime are concerned (particularly in countries with governments that have political, ideological and geo-strategic concerns about the rise of China and the success of a CCP state, or in those that are sympathetic to the OC’s cause and therefore allow their anti-CCP or anti-PRC activities to continue), the CCP demonstrates anxious (if not obsessive) behaviour whereby *qiaowu* is also used to challenge or eliminate threats. For dissent-

ing groups, *qiaowu* is much more complex and requires not only co-optive, but also coercive methods.

The OC Pro-Democracy Movement

After the Tiananmen Square Massacre in June 1989, vehement and widespread protests against the CCP erupted around the world – most of which were dominated by OC groups, often led by student dissidents who either had escaped from China or were sent into exile. They ended up in different universities across the globe and formed a variety of pro-democracy organisations. Other (mostly state-sponsored) PRC students already overseas also became a liability for Beijing. As a result of the Emergency Immigration Relief Act of 1989 for Chinese Nationals following the June 4th Incident, Washington accorded them special immigration conditions – precipitating the potential problem of thousands choosing to remain abroad and not return to participate in China’s modernisation, or worse yet, engage in anti-CCP activities. Of the 50,000 PRC students living overseas, 80 per cent were in North America, and 10 per cent were actively anti-CCP. These students were the focus of a “fierce political struggle over human talents” (Eftimiades 1994: 117–139).

The CCP immediately went into damage control to aggressively eradicate, prevent, or pre-empt subversive discourses from rising amongst the OC diaspora. Provincial governments mobilised those with family and business connections overseas to make contact with their OC counterparts and explain the incident in Tiananmen Square. Cadres supplemented these activities by distributing specially produced propaganda materials (Chen 1989; Brady 2008: 163). The CCP dispatched delegations worldwide to visit OC communities in an urgent effort to win back their confidence and loyalty, whereby diplomats attempted to “preserve the harmony” (保和, *baobe*) by presenting their “official” version of events.

Ethnic Chinese were targeted by intensified efforts to unify them through mind and spirit. For the next two decades, the CCP’s *qiaowu* strategies sought to align the OC with Beijing. Coupled with growing nationalism for China throughout its re-emergence as a world power, and boosted by increasing numbers of PRC students and *xinqiao* migrants living overseas, *qiaowu* has worked to bolster more OC support for the regime than ever before.

The Taiwanese Independence Movement

A second threat to the CCP is the Taiwanese independence movement – made up mostly of Taiwanese compatriots and *Taiqiao* (台侨, Taiwanese OC). Peaceful reunification is fundamentally linked to the CCP's legitimacy and survival, and therefore elevated to the highest level as a nationalist project (Liu 2005: 240–241). The major pressure groups are the World United Formosans for Independence, the Formosan Association for Public Affairs, and the World Taiwanese Congress. Their aim is to advance a non-Chinese identity amongst Taiwanese state-owned corporations, overseas representative offices, and within government itself. They were particularly active in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when they lobbied to boost foreign arms sales to Taiwan and campaigned for high-level Taiwanese government figures to visit the United States (van Vranken Hickey 2007: 72). Various *qiaowu* strategies to deal with Taiwanese OC groups have been successful – assisted by China's rapidly improving economic situation and the change of political direction in Taipei since the KMT's return to power in 2008.

Falungong

Originally supported by the Chinese authorities as a means to improve the spiritual condition of China's populace, Falungong (FLG) was registered under the umbrella of the China Society for Research on Qigong Science in 1992. With a widespread following (including senior CCP members and military officials attracted by its health benefits) and spread over many branches throughout China and over 200 contact points around the world, FLG eventually became a major opposition force and irritant to the CCP. FLG showed itself to be very capable of mobilising quickly and effectively to threaten CCP interests. In 1997 FLG was de-registered following a Central Propaganda Department ban on all publications written by its founder, Li Hongzhi (李洪志). In 1999, the PRC passed a law to suppress heterodox religion and legitimised the CCP crackdown on the FLG movement as an evil cult (Leung 2002: 761–784).

Although the CCP has been ruthless in its attempt to shut them down entirely within China, FLG members continue to practise abroad freely as an extreme anti-CCP movement outside the control of the Religious Affairs Bureau. FLG uses a variety of methods to promote its cause. These include writing letters to major newspapers, holding

demonstrations outside PRC embassies and consulates, protesting against visiting CCP leaders, practising exercises in public areas, and making use of modern communications technology and the Internet to mobilise practitioners. They also assist CCP members, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and other CCP-sponsored groups to sever their allegiances with the communist regime. To gather public support, FLG distributes anti-CCP material in the form of DVDs and free copies of its newspaper, the *Epoch Times* (大纪元, *Dajiyuan*), and hosts spectacular cultural performances. Those seeking further information can participate in "Bible study"-style meetings, dinners and casual seminars.

FLG and its activities around the world continue to be the target of mostly coercive strategies from PRC embassies, consulates and pro-Beijing groups. Its primary mouthpiece (*Epoch Times*) lacks credibility; its members have been forced underground due to fear of retaliation, and public support for them is weak. FLG has also lost significant support and financial backing in the changing political environment in Taiwan. Nevertheless, the group remains a viable threat to the CCP by repeatedly embarrassing them on human rights issues, and by exposing negative aspects of the regime and its methods.

Non-Han OC: Tibetan and Xinjiang Independence Movements

The global population of ethnic-minority OC numbers approximately seven million. Despite not being of Han ethnicity, the CCP still considers them Chinese, based on the concept of the Chinese nation (中华民族, *Zhonghua minzu*) and its official discourse of "unity of the nationalities" (民族团结, *minzu tuanjie*) (Nyiri 2002: 220). However, the CCP highlights their ethnic or geographic origins, and differentiates them from the Han majority by using terms such as *guowai zangbao* (国外藏胞, foreign Tibetan compatriots), *Xinjiangji haiwai huaren huaqiao* (新疆籍海外华人华侨, Xinjiang ethnic-Chinese OC), *Weiwuerzu huaqiao* (维吾尔族华侨, Uyghur OC), or simply *shaoshu minzu qiaobao* (少数民族侨胞, ethnic-minority compatriots). Moreover, the specific policies relating to ethnic minorities are labelled accordingly – for example, *shejiang shezang qiaowu gongzuo* (涉疆涉藏侨务工作, work concerning Xinjiang and Tibet OC). These terms are carefully chosen to emphasise the relationship between these groups and the Chinese nation: *Hua* (华) acknowledges their ties to China and

Chineseness; *qiao* (侨) implies a political or nationalist connection; and *bao* (胞) denotes a compatriot link.

Publicly, *qiaowu* officials ensure that ethnic minorities are accorded respect and that they feel welcome by acknowledging their importance for China's international friendship and relations, its economic development, societal advancement, and as a key component of the Chinese people. They play down the issue of separatist and independence activity in their commentary, claiming that the majority of ethnic-minority OC are patriotic, support reunification and oppose independence (State Council Information Office 2010).

However, some ethnic-minority OC do not consider themselves *huaqiao* (Li 2004). These non-Han groups do not see a *qiaobao* (侨胞, OC compatriot) connection between themselves and China or the PRC government. According to Tibetan activist Namlo Yak, 85 per cent of overseas Tibetans qualify as "hostile forces" by giving their support to the Tibetan government in exile (Yak 2006).

As a result, while Beijing views non-Han OC as part of the wider OC population and praises them with positive rhetoric, it treats them with caution. Throughout China's modern history, ethnic-minority groups have been directly linked to China's national defence of its border regions. The growing influence of Islamic states and religious affiliation in these areas raises concerns that minorities might support claims for independence, such as the "Free Tibet" or Xinjiang separatist movements.

Between 1950 and 1959, the CCP attempted to undertake domestic "social reform" measures by systematically dividing and weakening local rule. In addition to military occupation, the CCP worked to cultivate the elite classes of Tibetan society and groomed the younger generations to accept the CCP. These efforts failed, and an uprising in March 1959 culminated in violence. Throughout this period, approximately 150,000 Tibetans had fled to India, Bhutan and Nepal – amongst them the Dalai Lama. In exile, many of them joined resistance movements (such as the Tibetan Relief Association) to rally the masses in the homeland against the CCP. Similarly, in 1962, about 50,000 Kazakhs and Xinjiang Uyghurs moved to the Soviet Union following PRC efforts to introduce communes and alter nomadic habits. In the late 1960s, because of questions surrounding their loyalty, Beijing regarded minority groups in border areas as potentially subversive (Pye 1976: 489–512).

At the same time however, non-Han OC possessed attributes that were useful to the Chinese authorities – such as their economic, cultural and political advantages (Schein 2005). After the US normalised relations with the PRC in 1979, the CCP sought to entice Tibetans to return. It established a special committee promising to guarantee their religious rights and mobility. They were also offered preferential treatment (such as settlement, financial assistance and property protection) not unlike the redress offered to other *guiqiao* (归侨, returned OC) of the period. These efforts were viewed with suspicion and not readily taken up. To Beijing's chagrin, the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan OC continued to appeal to the United Nations, eliciting sympathy and support for their right to self-determination.

In the 1990s, policies directed specifically toward Tibetan OC had two aims: first, to attract and encourage support for Beijing, and second, to silence and delegitimise threats from anti-Beijing forces – in particular, the Tibetan government in exile (Tenzin 1993). In March 1996, the CCP's Central Committee issued specific directives calling for overseas embassies and consulates to establish bases in areas with high OC populations and to collect information on any developments concerning these issues (CCP Central Committee 1996).

These policies continue today, and are similar to those dealing with other non-Han minorities, including stifling the spirit of independence movements, attacking East Turkistan terrorist forces, and defeating the Xinjiang independence movement (Zhao 2004: 315–323). In addition, *qiaowu* seeks to prevent separatism and internationalism of these issues by attempting to unite the Uyghur OC for the motherland, and by opposing foreign (mostly Western) pressure to weaken China (OCAO External Affairs Department 2007b: 1–9). Specific goals include improving public diplomacy, expanding the common acknowledgement of China and ethnic unity amongst ethnic-minority groups, while criticising foreign forces that seek to damage national stability and hurt its international image (Zhong 2011).

Although concerns with the pro-democracy and Taiwan independence movement have been largely addressed, the FLG, Tibetan and Xinjiang OC remain under the close watch of the CCP. Some *qiaowu* strategies have sought to unify these OC in a context desirable to the CCP; others have attempted to cripple or incapacitate any hostile OC elements.

“Welcome In”

First and foremost, *qiaowu* seeks to encourage the OC to promote the PRC/ CCP stance and thinking while reducing mutual “misunderstanding” (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2005a: 9); it also works to spur emotional, nationalistic patriotism based on common ancestry, culture, friendship and sentimental village connections (Qiaowu ganbu peixun jiaocai bianxie xiaozu 1993: 73–74). To achieve this, *qiaowu* has placed significant emphasis on the notion of *luoye guigen* (落叶归根, falling leaves return to their roots).

Since 1978, increasing numbers of ethnic Chinese have travelled to China in search of their origins. *Qiaowu* authorities promote “root-seeking” (寻根, *xungen*) through extensive propaganda efforts showcasing China’s economic development, business opportunities, and feelings of homeland as efforts to welcome them back “home” – mostly in the form of sightseeing tours that aim to evoke a sense of appreciation that China is doing as much for them and their culture as possible (Li 2007: 1–6).

These trips may achieve cultural objectives, but “root-seeking” has delivered only mixed results when viewed in a political context of bringing the OC closer to the CCP. While the overall policy suggests that there should be a broader outreach to all OC (reflected in a recent proliferation of “root-seeking” events), the actual focus of resources falls on strategic groups.

Before the onset of larger *xinqiao* populations after the 1990s, the largest market for “root-seeking” tours was the *laoqiao* – in particular, their youth. Then and now, China’s attempt to reconstruct their OC identity is often hampered by conflict with *laoqiao* beliefs and assumptions, as well as their inability to speak Mandarin. Moreover, second- and third-generation OC hold firmly to their foreign nation-state identities, unlike the portable transnational identities of newer migrants. As a result, using biological, cultural and nostalgic links as a basis to form a politically conscious identity is often a failed ritual (Louie 2000). Most participate with an apolitical mindset dominated by social priorities.

As a result, “root-seeking” events now follow a top-down, centralised and pro-active approach that reflects the desire of *qiaowu* officials to address the failings of previous programmes. For one thing, events emphasise activities that have a tangible pay-off for the hosts. For example, camps run for *laoqiao* organisations with financial and logistical assistance from OCAO have had their funding withdrawn or reduced under a “user

pays” scheme. *Qiaowu* officials argue that not only does this relieve financial pressure on Chinese authorities, but also that because participants pay their own way, they are expected to have more enthusiasm for learning, and therefore engage in a deeper and more meaningful way (OCAO Propaganda Department 2005a: 5–7).

Instead, those groups receptive to embracing a PRC-friendly identity are the new target for state-sponsored events. As numbers of *xinqiao* increase, organisers now often assume that participants are able to speak, read and write in Chinese. While *laoqiao* are still invited to attend, promotional material is in Mandarin – indicating that these camps are aimed squarely at *xinqiao* and those who are more likely to deliver the results expected. For example, elite (精英, *jingying*) OC representing a younger, talented, modern generation enjoy fully subsidised capacity-building – linking them to a dynamic China full of career opportunities. Top academic, community and business leaders are invited to attend conferences, workshops and training courses that promote networking, management and team-building under CCP methods. These programmes directly influence the development of OC communities – educating their future administrators on how to manage their associations in the context of the *qiaowu* infrastructure and philosophy (Lü 2008; OCAO External Affairs Department 2005b: 3–4).

Another significant development is the deliberate focus on younger OC. In the early years of the 2000s, OCAO launched a new initiative – targeting those aged 16 and under. This is a pre-emptive attempt to influence OC youth before they have the opportunity to participate in rival tours (such as those organised by the Taiwanese OCAC), secure pro-CCP feelings early on, and foster these sentiments throughout their lifetime. Camps remain completely under the control of OCAO, and consist of pre-arranged tours based on cultural, educational or sightseeing themes. Participants must follow these schedules without deviation and often without parental supervision.

These revisions are also applied to bringing ethnic-minority OC closer to this CCP version of “Chinese” identity. At the Fifth Global Ethnic and OC Organisations Friendship and Networking Conference held in Beijing in 2010, OCAO chairwoman Li Haifeng (李海峰) outlined several imperatives: expanding social, economic, cultural and sporting relations with Uyghur, Tibetan and other minority OC in order to deepen those groups’ understanding of the motherland; advancing Xinjiang and Tibetan issues through media and exchanges amongst Uyghur,

Tibetan, and other minority OC so these groups can become ardent propaganda agents for China; and supporting Uyghur, Tibetan and minority cultures while emphasising Chinese culture and language (*China News* 2010).

In this vein, while special classes are provided for ethnic-minority OC youth to study their own language, *qiaowu* officials stress that Mandarin is the key tool of communication (OCAO External Affairs Department 2007b: 1–9; Li 2007: 1–6). In some cases, long-term acculturation programmes last up to one year and focus on improving Mandarin and Chinese culture through dance, martial arts training, and competitions (*China Daily* 2011). This highly intensive effort is a slow and gradual attempt to influence a small number of ethnic-minority youth from significant and strategic regions (such as Pakistan, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), who are then sent back to their homelands as ambassadors for promoting and projecting PRC values and culture in a non-invasive manner.

In addition, representatives from ethnic-minority OC communities are regularly invited to showcase their unique regional music, songs, dance and other art forms through international festivals celebrating the diversity within Chinese culture (OCAO Propaganda Department 2005b: 1–5). These events seek to build national unity in a context desirable to the CCP. With cooperation from the UFDW, “patriotic” overseas Tibetans (those who wish to return and help their home towns and who publicly acknowledge their support for Beijing) arrange visits to Tibet on the pretext of cultural and artistic exchange (Yang 2010). They are then briefed on the development, changes and achievements of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and encouraged to pass on their observations to other overseas Tibetans abroad (*Xinhua* 2006a; *China Tibet Online* 2011; *People's Daily* 2002). These activities extend to those who have previously engaged in separatist activities, but exclude blacklisted Tibetan OC.

“Going Out”

Attempts to instil positive feelings for China are also managed through external, “going out” methods. Since the early 1990s, the CCP sought to change negative views toward Beijing amongst the OC by reinforcing propaganda (Speech 1 1993). One public relations strategy was to use cultural exhibits to advance imperceptible infiltration and influence (Zeng 1993). An example was the Florida Splendid China theme park,

which opened in 1993. Situated near Walt Disney World in Kissimmee, Florida, this facility was an ambitious attempt to showcase China and its ethnic minorities in the most positive light to foreign audiences. Florida was chosen due to the high number of visitors to the state, a leading tourist destination. Moreover, the United States is a major source of support for the Tibetan cause, and therefore a significant target for propaganda work.

The park was jointly owned and operated by OCAO and China Travel Services – both leading agencies for dealing with the OC, indicating that OC were the principal target. The park is comprised of scale models of famous landmarks (such as the Potala Palace), replicas of historic treasures, and figurines depicting each ethnic grouping in China, while live-action acrobatic shows and restaurants provided additional cultural and culinary amusement. The aim was to show visitors the symbols of Chinese unity and to highlight Beijing's inclusive attitudes. However, while its sister park in Shenzhen was a success in attracting visitors, the Florida operation eventually closed down in December 2003 due to a drop in tourists.

Because such large-scale operations are expensive to maintain and operate, the CCP has returned to traditional strategies, employing conventional and cost-effective methods of mobilising direct interaction with foreign audiences. Propaganda officials instructed delegates at a 1993 work conference to accord greater and more frequent coverage to the Tibet issue over other provinces in China. *Qiaowu* cadres produced handbooks, videos and pamphlets that showcased homeland development and sentiment, while advocating Beijing's minority and religious policies. Given that they appear to be more objective in their reporting than the Chinese state-controlled media, foreign journalists were selected to visit China and used to convey those messages abroad (Zeng 1993). Other methods included sending Tibetan cultural and academic experts overseas, or using consular and diplomatic resources to show exhibitions, articles, speeches and television programmes in a PRC-friendly light. These special delegations were encouraged to “go out” and show OC minorities that China is benevolent, accommodating, and supportive of all its peoples (Tenzin 1993).

Little has changed over the last 20 years. Overseas Tibetans, scholars, and other influential groups abroad in areas with large concentrations of OC or those of political significance are to be won over with “positive propaganda” – such as content concerning Tibet's improving

economic situation (*Xinhua* 2011). The CCP continues its people-to-people work by sending high-profile pro-Beijing personalities abroad to liaise with targets. For example, Living Buddha Dengde Wangzhi is a council member of the Buddhist Association of China, and also a Standing Committee member of the Sichuan Provincial Federation of Returned OC. He actively calls upon overseas Tibetans to be patriotic and supportive of reunification efforts (*Xinhua* 2009).

Both “welcome in” and “going out” strategies show some success with those groups willing to accept the CCP message. However, given that the majority of overseas Tibetans still support the Tibetan government in exile, and that Xinjiang and FLG groups retain staunch anti-CCP attitudes, *qiaowu* work struggles to deal with reconciling issues related to ethnicity and nationalism. While ethnic minorities are to be celebrated as part of the social fabric of the PRC – as are efforts that work to reduce antagonism – policies and implementation occasionally clash with one another. For example, to ensure a clear definition of the CCP’s ideal interpretation of Chineseness amongst the OC diaspora (and to prevent certain groups from detracting from that ideal), PRC diplomats have even hindered those of Tibetan and Taiwanese origin from participating in “Chinese” events (Madsen 2005). Such actions aim to prevent highlighting independence issues that members of such communities could be associated with. Throughout the history of *qiaowu*, realist political imperatives have always taken priority – rival discourses cannot be allowed to flourish.

Prevent Independence, Promote Unification

Beijing viewed Taiwan’s *qiaowu* efforts as promoting an alternative discourse that directly threatened China’s national integrity. Such assertions intensified during the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) period between 2000 and 2008. PRC analysts correctly noted that as long as Chen Shui-bian (陈水扁, Chen Shuibian) was in power, the quest for Taiwanisation would continue. As such, cultural centres, propaganda, influential OC, and political bodies would receive more resources for promoting independence (OCAO External Affairs Department 2000: 4–5, 9, 12).

One of the pro-Taiwan bodies given official DPP support was the Global Alliance for Democracy and Peace (GADP). The GADP was established in 2002 as an OCAC-sponsored offshoot to promote Taiwan’s pursuit of freedom, democracy and human rights in major cities

around the world. Members were mostly pro-DPP *Taiqiao* and those seeking closer relations with the Taiwanese government. The GADP received financial and administrative support for 99 branches in 49 countries, making it effectively another diplomatic voice for a DPP-led Taiwan, which represented an overt political challenge to the CCP. As such, it rallied behind Taiwanese independence groups and enjoyed friendly relations with the Chinese pro-democratic and FLG movements.

In the face of these developments, Beijing quickly began intensive “prevent independence, promote unification” work (反独促统工作, *fandu cutong gongzuo*) through the coordination of PRC consulates and embassies under three main themes: convincing the OC that they are family, winning over the moderates among them, and converting the hardened ones to accept reunification (OCAO External Affairs Department 2007a: 5–13; OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2005b: 8–9; Zhou 2004: 7).

Accordingly, the CCP established various pro-Beijing and pro-unification organisations amongst OC communities around the world for the sole purpose of opposing and challenging Taiwanese independence movements. For example, there are 170 branches of the Peaceful Reunification of China Association (中华统一促进会, *Zhonghua tongyi cujinbui*, PRCA) in over 80 countries. All of them are actively assisted by the PRC in coordination with *qiaowu* agencies (OCAO External Affairs Department 2007a: 3), including the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification, OCAO, and an army of diplomatic staff. Embassies encourage the OC media to report on PRCA activities and distribute these statements to foreign government agencies and media outlets (OCAO External Affairs Department 2005b: 4).

Efforts to promote China had to be gentle, without arousing sympathetic feelings toward Taiwan (Liao 2005: 5). *Qiaowu* officials encouraged OC groups to increase their participation in embassy activities and cultural events, along with cross-Strait cultural, trade and technological exchanges (OCAO External Affairs Department 2007c: 1–7). These methods were complemented with efforts to foster patriotism (such as PRC national flag-raising or glorifying the Beijing Olympics) while actively isolating or extinguishing Taiwanese “independence” by rousing dissatisfaction with a DPP-led Taibei.

As a result, Taibei’s attempt to push its pro-independence agenda on the wider OC community was largely a failure. First, Taiwan’s domestic political situation had weakened and become polarised as a result of

Taiwanisation. Although it actively supported some PRC activists, scholars and students who sought asylum abroad, in many cases the DPP funded only those dissidents who made pro-independence demands. Second, Taipei's efforts were stymied by a lack of frontline diplomatic resources: While Taiwan's OCAC sought to extend its outreach to *xinqiao* and their associations following increased migration from mainland China, it provided them with service only if they were willing to support and recognise Taiwan. The students themselves were critical of the lack of formal relations with Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) officials (Rawnsley 2000: 92). Taiwanisation had left Taipei without the flexibility and resources required to deal with these groups. Third, Taipei was already too late in reaching out to strategic *xinqiao* OC communities. In 2003, Taiwan's OCAC dispatched representatives to North America in an effort to raise awareness of democracy amongst those groups. However, the majority of these pro-Beijing OC refused to accept Taiwan's right to self-determination, as they supported the CCP discourse that argued sovereignty and economic development were more important than democratisation. This was the result of years of counter-subversion efforts by the CCP – *qiaowu* cadres had been particularly active since the early years of the 2000s by sending their own delegations to liaise with OC in strategic areas to promote peaceful reunification (Liu 2005: 303; OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2005b: 6–7, 2003: 4; Harrison 1988: 800). Beijing's pre-emptive *qiaowu* effort with *xinqiao* and PRC student groups ensured that these buds of “grand unification nationalism” had blossomed (Chiou 2003).

Transformation Work

In situations where the OC cannot be “welcomed”, or persuaded to side with Beijing, they are to be “transformed” (转变, *zhuǎnbìan*). Like other forms of *qiaowu*, “transformation” work is an intensive psychological effort that involves smooth, quiet, subtle and imperceptible methods for challenging rival discourses while promoting positive feelings about the PRC (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2003: 1; OCAO Economics, Science, and Technology Department 2005: 20). For example, strategies for the Taiwanese independence movement comprise a global campaign to target hardened pro-Taiwan *laogiao* and pro-independence *Taiqiao* communities (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2005a: 9) in a bid to siphon off sources of traditional sup-

port. This involves intensive propaganda programmes and using generous financial incentives to entice them to switch their allegiances (Chen 2002: 188). The CCP has managed to attract support from, isolate or threaten interest groups on this issue (Wuthnow 2006).

Transformation methods have been very successful – particularly in regard to OC groups actively pursuing closer (economic) links with China. For example, in 2005, one of Chen Shui-bian’s strongest corporate supporters switched over to Beijing, praised its anti-secession law, and backed the “One China” policy. Other Taiwanese business associations also looked to China as their future and criticised plans for independence (van Vranken Hickey 2007: 72).

Similarly, *laoqiao* groups have since accepted or shifted their support toward Beijing in return for access to benefits offered by the mainland. The KMT no longer enjoys the grip that it held over OC communities between the 1950s and 1980s (Lai 1998: 293–344). By the 1990s, Taiwan had entered a “competing stage” for OC loyalty. During the DPP period, some strategic *laoqiao* groups could not reconcile their pro-KMT beliefs with a DPP ideology, were alienated and frustrated because of Taiwanisation, or disappointed that Taibei was not doing enough to maintain links with them (Canfield 2006; Li 2006). This was a perfect opportunity for the CCP to step up its *qiaowu* efforts to reclaim these despondent OC.

As for former student activists in the pro-democracy movement, Beijing has offered them material wealth and status through various *qiaowu* incentive policies (Kurlantzick 2005; Hsu 2001). While some OC remain critical of the CCP over its human rights record and attitude toward religious freedom, most prefer a “constructive engagement” with China for commercial and political interests (Beech 2004).

Coercion

Subtle methods of persuasion, “transformation”, or “root-seeking” are ineffective in dealing with strongly resistant OC groups. Instead, CCP authorities resort to direct interference by harassing, blacklisting or attacking hostile elements. Such work goes beyond the scope of the *qiaowu* administration, and is implemented through other government agencies such as the MFA and the Ministry of State Security (MSS).

In preparation for a potential dissent on the part of PRC students abroad after 1989, the MSS dispatched agents posing as students, faculty

members or businesspeople to observe their behaviour and correspondence and to report on their activities. These agents sometimes even directly warned or threatened to pressure their families back in China (Gertz 2005; Smith 2001). While there are some OC academics who are not intimidated by these actions, many practise self-censorship, or at least demonstrate conservatism in order to maintain access to fieldwork in China and to avoid retribution, banishment or detainment (Link 2001; Terrill 2009).

To crack down on FLG, the CCP Central Committee created the “610 Office”, in which all CCP agencies were coordinated. An FLG report alleged that MOE attachés organised PRC students to watch anti-FLG videos or attend seminars that directly pressured Chinese student associations to act against FLG, and manipulated elections to prevent practitioners from becoming leaders of OC associations (World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong 2004). In 2006 Ottawa refused to renew PRC diplomat Wang Pengfei’s diplomatic visa following reports he was gathering information on Canadian FLG members (Laghi 2006).

In other cases, FLG practitioners accused CCP agents of attacking staff of the *Epoch Times* and destroying computer equipment (Reporters without Borders 2006). Although internal *qiaowu* memoranda do not allude to resorting to illegal and violent methods, they do prescribe using “intense pressure” (强大压力, *qiangda yali*) as the key to stifling OC media operations unwilling to respond to Beijing’s cues. For example, PRC diplomats shut down a Fijian OC newspaper that advocated Taiwanese independence (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2007: 6–16).

OC groups posing a threat to the CCP are also the targets of social malware attacks. While it is difficult to prove that the PRC government is responsible for ordering the interception and theft of electronic files and e-mails from computer servers belonging to groups such as the Office of the Dalai Lama, investigations show that the source addresses used for spreading the viruses were located in Xinjiang – where special police and intelligence units dealing with independence issues are based (Nagaraja and Anderson 2009; Information Warfare Monitor 2009; Gutmann 2010).

Divide and Rule

Another technique to weaken hostile forces is a “divide-and-rule” strategy. After June 1989, Beijing actively isolated and prevented individual organisations amongst the OC pro-democracy movement from consolidating against it. PRC students were the target of aggressive forms of group management, extra-territorial influence, counter-infiltration, and counter-subversion. In March 1990, the PRC State Education Commission convened a meeting of education counsellors in Chinese embassies and consulates, instructing them to expand their influence over student organisations. In December 1990, senior foreign propaganda official Zhu Muzhi (朱穆之) suggested rectifying any negative feelings by encouraging the most patriotic students to return to China, while strengthening the patriotism of those choosing to stay abroad (Zhu 1995: 292–293).

To facilitate this, a 1992 order by the State Council Administrative Bureau provided amnesty, upon returning to China, to those who engaged in acts against the PRC or its interests (Qian 1996: 285). The remainder staying abroad would be categorised depending on their loyalty to Beijing; each group was to be addressed with specific measures. Relationships with pro-CCP students would be maintained and strengthened; to win over the less patriotic, propaganda methods would be used; and finally, those elements deemed a danger to PRC national interests would be exposed and attacked. This would ensure that PRC students would remain a controllable asset for the CCP (Eftimiades 1994: 117–139).

The CCP’s efforts were aided by infighting, rivalry, and recrimination between student leaders. Dissidents accused each other of self-aggrandisement and self-interest. Ultimately, without a charismatic leader, the democratic movement suffered. Despite efforts to re-organise in the late 1990s (such as the Wei Jingsheng Foundation and OC Democracy Coalition), the movement remained fragmented and polarised due to individual personalities and competition over financial resources. Many activists lost their influence or lacked the capacity to lead – either because of the conditions of their release, or because they were no longer interested in promoting their former political ideals. Many OC in the wider diaspora had grown disheartened and felt ambiguous about their ability to lead a successful campaign (Beck 1999).

At the same time, the CCP stepped up its effort to coordinate and consolidate pro-Beijing activity amongst splintered student groups. Branches of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) were established on various campuses around the world after 1989 to manage

and draw various groups under one umbrella. Furthermore, *qiaowu* efforts sought to network PRC students with other local OC organisations and business associations to increase levels of influence and exchange (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2003: 8; Wu 2003).

It was evident from the CCP's handling of the 2008 Olympic Torch rallies in major cities around the world that it was actively involved in building up factions of pro-Beijing OC to face off against other, non-compliant OC. At a critical period for China's re-emergence on the international stage, the CCP was basing its image and legitimacy upon national unity. Beijing feared that hostile groups such as the Tibetan, Xinjiang and FLG movements would escalate global attention toward sensitive human rights issues. The CCP resorted to mobilising thousands of pro-Beijing supporters in Canberra, San Francisco and Nagano for an overwhelming show of patriotism in order to drown out dissenters (To 2012).

In the weeks following, Beijing was well aware of the negative fallout surrounding these noisy and heated protests. If such elements were to strengthen and proliferate amongst the OC, their efforts could easily backfire in the face of public opinion (Barme 2008). For example, during the 2009 Melbourne Film Festival, efforts to prevent the screening of the pro-Uyghur documentary *The Ten Conditions of Love* also ended in violence between rival OC groups. Such outbursts pointed toward a new development in managing patriotic zeal amongst PRC students abroad. CSSA leaders realised that the more they protested, the more attention their opponents would enjoy. Therefore, their new stance was to remain collectively inactive, and instead move toward more dialogue and communication as the primary tool for promoting the "real China" (Qi 2009).

Efforts to promote a less aggressive image, yet tempered with the same level of crowd management techniques, were evident during Vice-Premier Li Keqiang's (李克強) visit to Christchurch, New Zealand, in November 2009. In that instance, the PRC embassy had selectively notified leaders of key pro-Beijing groups in secret to form a welcome party outside the hotel where he and his entourage would be staying. The invitation attracted about 200 OC, who turned up with large red banners. However, FLG practitioners caught wind of the visit and turned up to stage a rival silent protest right next to the welcome party. The leader of the local PRCA branch kept excited participants in line, while colleagues circulated amongst any rowdy PRC supporters, quietly reminding them not to engage in any boisterous activity.

Diplomatic Pressure

Where it has been unable to overpower or break down hostile elements, the CCP uses diplomatic pressure. For example, in April 2006, Beijing urged Washington to “properly handle” Chinese nationals accused of terrorist activity held in Guantanamo Bay by dealing with suspects in a “prudent, responsible and proper manner” (*Xinhua* 2006b). While this may have appeared to demonstrate China’s respect for the international judicial system, it was a veiled attempt to legitimise its own crackdown on East Turkistan Islamic Movement terrorists. Following the closing of the camp, Beijing pressured foreign governments to extradite Uyghur prisoners back to China for trial under PRC law. Beijing retaliated both diplomatically and economically against those governments that refused to cooperate – such as Albania, which accepted five Uyghurs from Guantanamo in 2006 (Goldstein 2009).

In dealing with FLG, PRC diplomats urged members of local government, community leaders, and media organisations not to support the movement as a matter of policy (Ho 2002). For example, in July 2002 the Chinese embassy and consulate both successfully pressured Auckland International Airport to remove a pre-paid, contracted billboard advertisement promoting FLG principles (Cleave 2002). In 2003, the Chinese ambassador to Fiji, Zhang Junsai, made an appearance on local television speaking against FLG distributing pamphlets and banners in Suva. He mobilised local pro-Beijing OC groups to provide information and organised a protest at the police station. Fijian officials promptly arrested the practitioners and ordered them to leave (OCAO Policies, Laws, and Regulations Department 2007: 6–16; Radio New Zealand International 2003).

In many cases, these types of efforts have worked – particularly with those afraid of compromising friendly relations or commercial interests with Beijing. For example, the University of Auckland (a Confucius Institute partner) initially cancelled a visit by Uyghur leader Rebiyah Kadeer, citing security concerns (*Otago Daily Times* 2009). In Nepal, anecdotal evidence cites Chinese authorities pressuring local officials to contain the Tibetan independence movement through a system of informants, and preventing traditional worship. The Nepalese government supports the crackdown on and arrest of Tibetan refugees in return for much-needed economic and infrastructural aid (Beech 2011).

The desire to maintain friendly political and economic relations also takes priority in Taiwan. After Ma Ying-jeou (马英九, Ma Yingjiu) won

the ROC presidential election in 2008, the threat of Taiwanese independence eased significantly. Ma demonstrated his willingness to concede to Beijing's demands by refusing to meet with pro-democracy activists (*Taiwan News* 2009). Furthermore, although having previously enjoyed a close relationship with anti-CCP groups, both TECO and OCAC reassessed their position: OCAC ceased giving an annual subsidy of 100,000 USD to the GADP for its political activities (Lin 2008), while TECO indicated that it would no longer support the FLG and pro-Tibet movements despite their repeated requests for assistance.

Raising Nationalism

Pro-Beijing sentiment has developed amongst the OC in the context of several major changes to both the geo-political environment and demographic landscape since 1989. Support for China and the CCP can most likely be attributed to China's improved global position. Overall, the OC of the twenty-first century show much less bias than their Cold War predecessors, and have less antagonism toward the CCP than earlier generations. The memories of the older generation who experienced firsthand the wrath of communism have faded, and most OCs would prefer to see stability and economic development in China rather than bloodshed (Lee 2004). Many welcome the opportunity to participate economically and politically in China's re-emergence. These OC no longer feel ashamed of China as the poor and sick man of Asia, but actively draw upon it as a great source of strength, regardless of the regime.

Growing numbers of new migrant OC has meant that in some cases, *xinqiao* outnumber their *laogiao* counterparts and any other OC groups preferring independent thought. Raised under the influence of CCP rhetoric, values and nationalism, *xinqiao* have at least a better "understanding" of modern China and a greater potential to align more closely with Beijing than do other ethnic Chinese. After many years of patriotic education at home, which was later reinforced externally through Chinese-language media, modern communications and traditional rituals, PRC students who returned from study overseas were, according to China specialist David Zweig, "no less jingoistic than those who have never gone abroad" (Liu and Hewitt 2008).

Although there are difficulties in evaluating the success of *qiaowu* strategies in augmenting these feelings, *xinqiao* OC are most likely to demonstrate public acceptance of *qiaowu*, and therefore their support for

the Chinese authorities. They look to the PRC embassy for prestige, status, political networks and, more recently, diplomatic protection. OC migration to non-traditional destinations (such as the Pacific, Africa, and Eastern Europe) has meant that Beijing has begun to pay more attention to the OC and their interests. The MFA established a Division of Consular Protection in 2006 (and later upgraded it to a Consular Protection Centre in 2007). A special Emergency Response Office was also set up to deal with urgent OC issues. With such infrastructure in place, the PRC has the capability to monitor, and respond to, OC affairs throughout the world – in particular, matters concerning anti-Chinese sentiment or natural disasters. Moreover, the PRC is prepared to go “all out” to protect the OC from racism, harassment and damage to property (*China Daily* 2005). While diplomatic assistance is normally extended only to its own nationals, all ethnic Chinese remain *tongbao* (同胞) and therefore part of the Chinese “family” (Anonymous 1 2007).

In such cases, *qiaowu* seeks to advance inherent political and psychological objectives. Following its evacuation of OC from the Solomon Islands and Tonga after violent riots in 2006, *qiaowu* officials noted that the OC were actively looking to Beijing for assistance. To boost China’s positive image, OC newspapers published photographs of cheering evacuees waving red banners, flags and flowers (*Nanfang Ribao* 2006). PRC sources openly acknowledged these measures were to prop up the “national pride and dignity of those who have been assisted” (*China Daily* 2006). At the height of criticism surrounding chequebook diplomacy in the Pacific, Beijing went to great lengths to demonise the DPP government. This was particularly important in the Solomon Islands, which held official diplomatic relations with Taipei. The OC community there were a ready source of strategic support for a switch in recognition (To 2010).

As China’s presence grows around the world, and as the OC population increases and diversifies, China’s consular work will increasingly focus upon OC affairs. In this context, *qiaowu* specialists have recommended that PRC diplomats increase their coordination with *qiaowu* agencies (He 2007). For example, diplomats advise OC and affiliated companies to develop closer contacts with the Chinese embassy and consulates, and unite for better self-protection (Embassy of the PRC in the USA 2005; *Xinhua* 2006c).

Beijing intends to assert itself as the leading force for assisting OC in trouble, above the local authorities, police, and traditional OC volun-

tary or benevolent associations. Whether it does so, however, is dependent on China's national interests at any given point in time. *Qiaowu* authorities are careful to portray China's actions as purely humanitarian; the government seeks to avoid the risk of appearing interventionist for fear of stirring up ethnic tensions or regional suspicions, and consequently hindering its state-to-state relations (Guangdong OCAO 2006b). Although the PRC has a duty to protect its nationals abroad, and despite its eagerness to reclaim the OC as its own, Beijing remains selective on how it responds to those in trouble, and then only on a case-by-case basis. Again, realist assumptions take priority.

Conclusion

Qiaowu has evolved over many decades as the CCP's frontline effort to connect with and manage OC communities around the world. By embracing common themes of Chinese unity and modernity, and being implemented through a comprehensive set of programmes and policies underscored by techniques of articulate persuasion and systematic management, *qiaowu* has resonated positively with certain groups of the OC diaspora to become stronger than ever before in building support for the regime.

With those seeking to align themselves with Beijing, *qiaowu* employs co-optive measures bringing economic, social and cultural benefits. For those who may be less willing to accept the CCP's version of China and Chineseness, *qiaowu* authorities seek not to indoctrinate, but to expose their membership to a fresh perception of China in the hope that they might look toward it with renewed interest – igniting sentimental love and pride for China as an attempt to cast aside (or at least dilute) any suspicions amongst them.

The remaining groups of anti-CCP OC are much more difficult to deal with. However, techniques of inclusion or coercion continue to work steadily against them. By 2008, threats such as the pro-democratic and Taiwanese pro-independence movements had been largely subverted, and remain only a partial cause of concern. Similarly, FLG have been largely isolated and discredited, while the Tibetan and Xinjiang separatist movements find themselves overwhelmed by a wave of Chinese nationalism. Nevertheless, given that the majority of Tibetan and Uyghur OC hold particularly resolute attitudes against the regime, and that past policies directed toward them have failed miserably, the chances of success-

fully “transforming” such groups are slim. These hostile groups will continue to be a potential source of embarrassment for the CCP. Attempts to cultivate the OC for China’s interests continue to expand and strengthen, but face significant obstacles that cannot be resolved by carrots and sticks alone.

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