

MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ASN501: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chinese Diaspora: Effects on the Rise of China

By: Abdullah Burkan BEREKETOĐLU

Submitted to: Őerif Onur BAHĐECİK

Spring – July 19, 2021

Introduction

The three main *themes* will be discussed; the separation may not be direct, but a transition and sometimes mixture of all themes together discussed in one paragraph to state a fact. The main problems are:

- 1) The economic effect of Chinese Diaspora on Rising of China (in other words, PRC's development)
- 2) The sociocultural effect of Chinese Diaspora on Rising of China (in other words, global acceptance and favorability gained by the Chinese Diaspora's social and cultural behaviors that are connected to Mainland China)
- 3) The political effect of Chinese Diaspora on the Rising of China (i.e., in other words, new Chinese regulations due to diaspora which lead to the Rise of PRC)

In each theme, there will be opinions that are shared by scholars which will be mentioned in the review, and also opposite or different points of view on the theme by another scholar or by the same scholar, but in additional research will be discussed to see where the literature goes on the case, and understand fully the themes that will be reviewed in the literature review.

Our approach in the review is to share different opinions from a different or same scholar and add a different perspective or an opposing fact to the theme.

Background

Throughout the history of the Mainland Chinese emigration, the Chinese Diaspora, which is named as diaspora after 1949, the year of PRC was founded, to other parts of the world affected both the region they, Chinese people, immigrated in and China itself. There are several reasons for the emigration of Chinese people, but even in the worst-case, they kept their identity of being Chinese. At the places that they are located in, Diaspora created their cultural lands such as Chinatown, local Chinese communities, streets, etc. The old-time diaspora mostly happened in Southeast Asia and started Chinese communities mixed with locals after some time in the future. According to Liu (2016), some of these people who have migrated to other countries from China went back, and these people are called Fallen Leaves. Furthermore, he mentioned that these people were welcome to come back to China even after the 1950s, in which there are opposing pieces of evidence are shown by Lai (2004).

The ones that are emigrated to the other countries were encountered with harsh racism and needed to localize in local communities that shared similar cultures with minor differences from Mainland China in which culture can be taught as preserved due to this type of polarization and nonacceptance in the mainstream communities of the countries, especially, in the diasporas in western countries. Furthermore, restrictions on remittances from the diaspora to Mainland China were forbidden to further assimilate overseas diaspora in western countries and break the connection of family members from China and the diasporic country. There are several different views on the cases discussed above that will be mentioned with their names.

After WWII, a new wave of Chinese immigrants started to emigrate, but this one was

different from the start. In the past, for some, more than three-fourths of the total population emigrated, and for some, just more than 50 percent of the people migrated to Southeast Asia. In this era, according to Zhou & Liu (2012), Southeast Asian countries tried a different approach on the Chinese mixed citizens; which were different from the practices of Western countries. This diaspora is different from the rest because according to Martinez-Zarzoso & Rudolf (2020) there were communities that are found to do business with PRC rather than individual remittances. Moreover, these new generation immigrants are not accepted as citizens to PRC after they are naturalized members of the other state (Lai, 2004). Most of these people are supported to spread Chinese culture with the new political agenda of PRC. Some scholars also mentioned that people who went or were born as second-third generation of these prior immigrated families in the West were not Chinese, culturally, anymore. Furthermore, they argue that in Southeast Asia this cultural relativeness and bond to PRC is different from the Chinese in the West, and also they are not fully naturalized as it is in the West, which is rejected by Zhou & Liu (2012).

There were different understandings by different academicians that can be seen in the literature on both economic and sociocultural approaches that held by both overseas Chinese over the years and by PRC and the prior Chinese dynasties. The approach after the '70s that was affected by both the strictness of the other countries' Chinese immigration policy and the PRC's regulatory rules change is actually what helped to make the modern rise of China. Show China to the global community as culturally appropriate, significant in academia, and has solid economic opportunities.

Review

History shows us that the Chinese emigration to different regions was not only limited

to, from 1949 to today, but it has more phases that we should focus on to fully understand what is Chinese emigration and what has changed in the emigration that turned it into Chinese Diaspora that helped China rise economically, socioculturally and in other intermediary ways (Lai, 2004). Lai (2004) classified the immigrations into four separate classes (300 BC to 200 AD, the dynasty times, 16th to 19th century, after imperials, and the modern-day immigration.). On the other hand, Liu (2016) covers old age emigration, primarily to Asian countries, after meeting with European imperials, and lastly, modern times of China. Both cover differently due to their point of view on the effects of diaspora on the rise of modern-day China. For Liu (2016), the Chinese diaspora always kept their root identity, even in places that put Chinese immigrants in harsh racism and disintegration from the country diaspora's mainstream community. On the other hand, Lai (2004) covers each region that Chinese people migrated to in a more general way. Lai in the paper doesn't mention deep details, but still, it is essential to note that it covers a broader range, at least in this paper.

According to Zhou & Liu (2012), after 1949, the year that PRC (China) was founded to 1978, China strictly ban emigration from China to other countries and cut the connections between diaspora and China. Sawada & Kokobun (1998) have complementary additions to Zhou & Liu (2012). They state that after 1978, the economic rise of China has an exponential increase by the effect of overseas Chinese investment to China with their leading investments after the regulatory changes in financial laws. On the other hand, Martínez-Zarzoso & Rudolf (2020) shows that in the '70s, immigration did not stop, and the remittances, mails, and other family connections were just strictly controlled by the Chinese government. Furthermore, Nyíri (2019) pointed out that things were changed after 1986 in which Chinese traders took

advantage of the exit-entry law and sold consumer goods to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Moreover, Liu (2016) says that diaspora was accepted to the country as nationals, Fallen Leaves, which is actually contradictory to what was said by his prior article with Zhou & Liu (2012).

Martínez-Zarzoso & Rudolf (2020) states that the Chinese diaspora helped the mainland economically, due to their relation of co-ethnicity and sharing similar cultures, and these were the people that come from mainland China, mostly from Southeast China. On the other hand, Smart & Hsu (2004) says that the Chinese from Taiwan were also one of the key contributors to the economy and investments in the PRC. Taiwanese people were not from similar cultures and didn't share any family bonds with those in overseas China generally, but they still find it as an opportunity to earn money, and they did.

In the early days of the 20th century in the west till the '80s, and even further in Mexico, Diaspora Chinese at overseas countries had local communities that gave food, provided housing and job to newcomer Chinese immigrants. These people were loyal to their cultures, but in Southeast Asia, things were slightly different. Zhou & Liu (2012) says that in Singapore as an example Chinese people were favored, and local people were not against the diasporas' connection with their homeland. This connection actually benefited the local communities, economically while also helping the economy of China. Diaspora in Southeast Asian countries such as; Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, etc., invested in the Mainland Chinese businesses and initiated agreements that led China to access a bigger market, in the initial process. Ampalanavar-Brown (1998), supports the case mentioned by Zhou & Liu(2012) by mentioning the 1973-1992 years interval and the GDP increase in all regions

(agriculture, industry, and services) of Mainland China which is caused by foreign direct investment (FDI), that is directly connected to the ethnic Chinese (the diaspora in Southeast Asia, and West). Furthermore, Samphantharak (2011) adds a different point on the fact that after a certain time PRC (Mainland China) changed its behavior on Southeast Asia(SEA) since Southeast Asia now lost the network advantage and PRC started to dominate the business in the region, and also the economy of China become more globalized. The globalization of the Chinese economy then led the diasporas ethnic effect in Southeast Asia to gradually diminish and the selection process for more competent businesses as partners stepped in as a new economic program in SEA (Davies, 2013).

After the 1970s, what we can call as modern-day diaspora, has differences that are discussed in the 1986 China's Association of the History of Overseas Chinese sponsored a symposium on developments after WWII, new immigrants are now referring themselves with their foreign nationality and differ from the past by following points.

1. Changes in the local communities.
2. Changes in the employment and social status
3. Changes in the culture

also important to point out that as mentioned in Lai (2004), after 1955 China did not recognize dual citizenship and removed the diaspora from nationality, which made the impact of this type of integration to the foreign countries. Martinez-Zarzoso & Rudolf (2020), states that even though these people as mentioned in the Lai (2004) were shown as not supportive after 1955 is statistically wrong. After the '50s a rise in economic bilateral, co-ethnic business relations started in Southeast Asia. Later in the 1980s Western countries followed this trend of being in business with China and started to integrate into these new economic

collaborations because of their Chinese minorities. These minorities after the support of the Chinese government as mentioned in Liu & van Dongen (2016), started to emerge new conferences that are sponsored by the Chinese government and held by the overseas Chinese academicians and independent researchers to show Chinese academic achievements and to gain affinity on behalf of China to make it seen as a favorable country on international grounds, which later on raised the reputation of China and helped them to get more foreign investments.

Regardless of China's behavior on not accepting naturalized Chinese nationals of foreign countries as national of China, the Chinese Government still helps the diaspora to integrate into their new countries and continue contributions by the elites of the associations that are founded to communicate with China. As an example of this behavior by China; Gungwu (1993), mentions that after the agreement between Hong Kong - Macau & Mainland China, Chinese from all over the world started to invest in, mostly southeastern China, Mainland China. Chinese families priorly migrated to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand invested which is actually helped the rise of China. For Liu (2016), this is still not the case since they state that these people were always loyal to China, and would help in any chance given to them, with remittances and so.

According to Nyíri (2019) after the Soviet Union's backstepping as a global threat to the USA and its allies, a new era (new bilateral agreements with Mainland China and West, Racism towards ethnic Chinese people now seen as a hate crime, Diaspora's communications with mainland started all over again.) for the Chinese Diaspora started in the west, in this so-called new era, Chinese diaspora started a wave of great, peaceful and kind Asia which

lead to people have a favorable image of China and even made people across the world learn Chinese and embrace their culture. Liu & van Dongen (2016) state that the new political agenda of the Western countries that changed their fascist behavior toward the Chinese people made this effect, and Chinese culture in the core is not embraced but used for profit.

China started to promote overseas associations to establish new cultural bonds with the diaspora to connect with overseas Chinese people. These associations engage with overseas Chinese to increase political favorability against the USA and other opposing ideologies(diaspora which sometimes does not fully emphasize the location of the diaspora) by celebrating the Chinese new year and Chinese national days all across the world and spread Chinese culture in a friendly way (Liu & van Dongen, 2016). Also, they engage in new business partnerships to get know-how people to China to use the technology of developed countries. China also with the help of these associations, integrates its culture to developed countries for socioculturally being more favorable from developed countries. China also for to show its gratitude to the overseas Chinese diaspora, invested in Guangdong and Fujian, and created many technoparks and more. Since these provinces gave the most to China, Guangdong and Fujian were rewarded even though the naturalized Chinese immigrants can't come back as citizens. This is not the case for all; according to Zhou & Liu (2012), in Southeast Asia, such as Singapore, integration into the community and creating cultural bonds without changing the culture at all was pretty easy for China. Since Singapore is a nation-state country and benefits a lot from Chinese-Malay, Chinese business cooperation uses this to benefit the nation. Liu (2016) also showed that Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia founded Chinese language and culture schools. These schools, such as Confucius Institute, help China gain affinity and favorability from mainstream media and countries. Lai

(2004), on the other hand, slightly disagrees with the creating cultural bonds part. Since China disconnected itself from the diaspora, new generations have assimilated into their new countries and lost their cultures. With these new culture fairs, they are not integrating but learning about Chinese culture from the perspective of their new nationalities. Still, it is essential to add that even in Southeast Asia, similar rules that the Chinese overseas diaspora needs to abide by apply; fully naturalized citizens of the Southeast Asian Chinese community cannot become PRC citizens again. Instead, China follows a more nurturing and helpful approach since it is the dominating factor in Southeast Asia in recent years (Ampalavanar-Brown, 1998).

These cultural fairs, New Year celebrations, culture days, bubble tea, etc., also increase the affinity to Chinese culture, which helps China to become a favorite country in the global community (Kuehn et al., 2013). This socio-cultural and political dominance then, as seen in current news started to change contemporary world culture to evolve to be similar to Mainland Chinese culture, prevent global protests against China due to people being on their side ideologically and culturally, and later on gradually starting a dominance across the world by the help of overseas Chinese (These people are the main players that lead to such effect.). Ding (2007) calls this socio-cultural and political agenda national image-building and also mentions that it started right after the Cold War.

To conclude, one can say that the Chinese diaspora helped China to rise economically, which can be viewed by Davies (2013), Smart & Hsu (2004), made China one of the dominating and challenging socialites and cultures (Sun, 2010), Ding (2007), and politically a superpower Gungwu (1993), but with few differences on the statements by different scholars

made that some scholars state that diaspora is used, other scholars think bilateral and ethnic similarities and shared culture led to today's China, but one thing is sure, legislations in China today shows that there is no longer ethnic bond importance for China rather the thought of how much PRC can benefit from the overseas diaspora by using guns of racism and separation from the Chinese community for the ones that don't abide the rules of the overseas associations and PRC, for the ones that want to stay connected to the roots, and their families.

Bibliography

Smart, A. & Hsu, J.Y. (2004). The Chinese Diaspora, Foreign Investment, and Economic Development in China, *The Review of International Affairs*, 3:4, 544-566, DOI:

[10.1080/1475355042000241511](https://doi.org/10.1080/1475355042000241511)

Ampalavanar-Brown, R. (1998). Overseas Chinese Investments in China - Patterns of Growth, Diversification, and Finance: The Case of Charoen Pokphand. *The China Quarterly*, (155), 610-636. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/655952>

Davies, K. (2013), "China Investment Policy: An Update," OECD Working Papers on International Investment, 2013/01, OECD Publishing.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k46911hmvbt-en>

Ding, S. (2007). Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China's Rise. *Pacific Affairs*, 80(4), 627-648.

Retrieved April 29, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40377433>

Gungwu, W. (1993). Greater China and the Chinese Overseas. *The China Quarterly*, (136), 926-948. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/655597>

Liu, H. (2016). Opportunities and Anxieties for the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia. *Current History*, 115(784), 312–318. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2016.115.784.312>

Liu, H., & van Dongen, E. (2016). China's Diaspora Policies as a New Mode of Transnational Governance. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25(102), 805–821. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1184894>

Kuehn, J., Louie, K., Pomfret, M. D., (Eds.).

(2013). *Diasporic Chineseness after the Rise of China*. UBC Press.

Lai, W. (2004). Chinese Diasporas: An Overview. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50(2), 1-14. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40654449>

Martínez-Zarzoso, I., & Rudolf, R.. (2020). The trade facilitation impact of the Chinese diaspora. *The World Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.12950>

Zhou, M., & Liu, H. (2012). Changing Patterns of Chinese Immigration and Diaspora-Homeland Interactions in Singapore and the United States. *UCLA: International Institute*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7051501n>

Nyíri, P. (2019). The “Rise of China” and Chinese in the world. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 15(1), 123-127. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17932548-12341396>

Samphantharak, K.. (2011). The Rise of China and Foreign Direct Investment from Southeast Asia. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 30(2), 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341103000204>

Sawada, Y., Kokobun, R. (Eds.). (1998, February). *Challenges for China-Japan-US Cooperation*. ISBN 4-88907-017-6; 200 pages; *Japan Center for International Exchange*.

Sun, W. (2010). Motherland Calling: China's Rise and Diasporic Responses. *Cinema Journal* 49(3), 126-130. doi:10.1353/cj.0.0201.