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Thesis Title: To what extent is overseas Chinese network a threat to democracy and justification to securitisation



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This thesis began in Q3 2021 and concluded in Q3 2023, which largely overlapped with the third phase of Russo-Ukraine conflict broke out in 2022. There will be limited references relating to the detail of the mentioned conflict, relating to frontline experience of the Ukrainian side. All of which are referenced academically and verified personally if possible. However, some of which may still be redacted due to OPSEC. Also one of the reasons it took longer than usual despite it was largely finished in 2022. As this is an investigation of an ongoing topic and rather an important one and a sensitive one in the current affairs, references and significances of the arrangement have to be constantly reviewed for optimal result. It must take extra caution to interpret in order to avoid generalisation. As the concern of historical references, it is by no means an endorsement of Chinese exceptionalism for either side of the arguments, but rather a mentioning of the origin, the effect and the result of Chinese exceptionalism. It should be seen as a challenge of historical concept of China, not Chinese exceptionalism. This is a debunk of the idealistic, progressive Orientalism and assist the readers to understand and explore what can be the future of the international order in the Indo-Pacific and how do they interact with the rest of the world.

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Abstract:

As the predecessor of the current Special Operation Force, the phrase of ‘Ungentlemanly Warfare’ is no stranger to those who are familiar with military history of the Second World War. Highly skilled, determined military personnel achieving covert objectives behind enemy line by special reconnaissance, raids, guerrillas, sabotage, espionage, false flag and much more other controversial tactics required professional execution. That was later known as the concept of total war described by Erich Ludendorff and even von Clausewitz earlier on. The disastrous outcome of the Second World War, with the invention of nuclear weapon, it became a revelation in nuclear age, that a total war between two nuclear power will be more destructive than humanity has seen.

Hence on a strategic level, concept of preventing a total war has developed into what is now commonly known as hybrid warfare and unrestricted warfare, these concepts of warfare go way beyond conventional forces with a positive identification. The supporting for friendly guerrillas and partisans is not an uncommon diplomatic manoeuvre, nor it is prohibited in Geneva conventions. However, the active use of illegal combatants not only in warfare but also in our everyday life is another policy matter that is dangerous to the current rule-based international order. Among the violations, China have the utmost blatant attempts blurring the border between combatants and civilians, aiming to lay hold of the advantages for the combatants, sacrificing humanitarian protection of civilians and make moral judgement with the trending political correctness. This is no doubt a dangerous attempt to undermine the current liberal democracy and an audacious approach to the international order. Despite many of our NATO allies have recognised the use of this dangerous tactics, many of them approaching from know-what. In this thesis, I will further develop into the know-why and know-how.

1. Background: Rise of China and its emerging tactics

The status of China has been an emerging topic since the end of Cold war. Current status of China has no doubt benefited from a global market that is opened to it, not only to the civilian-owned corporations but also state-owned industrial complexes. Their participation and the global economy allowed the manipulation of the financial tools and transfer of technologies without being a traditional ally of the West, not ideologically at the very least. The orthodox view is that the great amount of wealth generated from the 1.3 billion of controlled population, being exploited to an extent. However, it does not explain the Chinese population, whether that being self-identified as Chinese or literally Chinese nationals, out of Chinese jurisdiction yet actively participating in rise of China which can even be traced back even before the Chinese Communist Party emerged in 1920s, and even before the establishment of China as a political entity.

As much as the orthodox view of academia and scholars understand China, specifically People's Republic of China as a political entity, it also lacks understanding of China as a culture entity emerged from the anti-Manchu sentiment, that can be dated for at least from 1644.¹ As the Chinese authority often emphasis its status in the ancient time which became a motive of their mission for their national interest, to complete the contemporary Chinese studies, we must understand the relations between modern China and ancient "China" to get a full grasp of the spectrum and why does it appeal to not only the party itself but also the Chinese people, domestic and overseas. To clarify the terms in this thesis, the term "Chineseness" does not hold any capacity of jus sanguinis, even if it was the de jure requirement of Chinese nationality law. Any natural person, regardless of their place of birth and their nationality, can be identified as a Chinese by culture and self-identification. Chinese authority has a hybrid mandate to appeal to different audience not just for

¹ González, F. (2023). Situ meitang, patriotic overseas Chinese? *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 19(1), 119–146. doi:10.1163/17932548-12341481

the current regime of CCP but also in the past. In fact, from a historical point of view, the idea of Chinese state itself, inherited Manchu Empire in 1911, established with a strong root of overseas Chinese. Before we begin to answer the research questions, there are three key concepts that has to be defined.

1.1 “China” has no boundary

By “China has no boundary” it does not only mean the behaviour, but rather literal territorial definition. Especially when irredentism has always been part of the curriculum of Chinese education. As from history, we understand that “China” translate as Central State, the idea of Central State itself built on the foundation of any territories that is under effective control or expected to have a desire to be put under effective control. In contrast to those are not under effective controlled, they are described as barbarians and is inferior compare to Central State that has to be assimilated or simply conquered which is more than just imperialism.² Which is where the nature of expansionism was installed. The boundary of China has been shifting constantly in history, whether it is from the tributary or by the means of conquer. For which it can be simply expanded indefinitely with only two conditions: cultural assimilation OR effective control. And as time goes by, these conditions are also being blurred and we can relate in recent territorial claim on Formosa, Spratly Islands and East Turkestan. Taking Ice Jecen (Xinjiang) as an example, where it literal translation was “New boundary”, named by the Manchu Emperor Abkai Wehiyehe. Expansionism is buried deep in the Central state concept and is essentially part of the mandate for the Central state. Despite a very different origin, it is a match that echoes with World Communism in very similar terms and operating manners, which will mentioned again in latter chapters.

1.2 “Chinese nation” has no boundary

² Pines, Y. (2012). The Everlasting Empire: the political culture of ancient China and its Imperial legacy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

The concept of the “Chinese nation” was first invented in 1902 by Chinese political activist Liang Qichao. However the original purpose of the creation was not to contrast with Empire subjects of the Manchus, but to suppress radicals of Han nationalists that prefer an armed uprising against the Manchu monarch. Sun Yat-sen’s Tongmenghui, an early underground radical organisation aimed to overthrow the Manchus reign has motto of “Expel the Northern barbarian, restore the Central Mighty”. The motto itself echoes with Zhu's rule who he defeated the Mongols. It was a slogan which specified target at the foreign rules or in their way, barbarians. However, Sun quickly changed the doctrine of newly born China into republic of five nations, that include Han Chinese, Mongols, Manchu, Tibetans and Muslims. However, neither of the latter four was in effective control due to Liang's influence.

Liang was a moderate of the political reformation, the idea of “Chinese nation” was a hypernym to reap as much support as possible. It was first began with five: Hans, Manchus, Mongols, Hui Muslims and Tibetan, but later it was expanded to fifty-six by the PRC according to Stalin’s *Marxism and the National Question* followed by the regime changed in 1949.³ The mentioned definition established by the PRC, included Russ, Uyghur, for which the significant part of the population have very little limited culture ties with China despite the early participation with Communist regime. Followed by the slowly fading character of Marxist-Leninist ideology in the 80s, which soon replaced by the Han Chinese cultural chauvinism, lead to the clash between PRC citizens who are culturally Chinese and non-Chinese. Opposing to early PRC which had a culturally diverse policy for the United Front at the beginning for the purpose of United front, the PRC regime from the 1960s has shown a very different character than what it was. Many of the cultural and religious differences were deemed reactionary, feudalism hence subjected to be standardised in the name of progression during cultural revolution.⁴ Despite it has passed for over 50 years, the current

³ Stalin, J. (1942). *Joseph Stalin: Marxism and the national question, selected writings and speeches*. New York: International Publishers.

⁴ Holzman , M. (2004). *La pensée manipulée: Le cas chinois*. La Tour d’Aigues: Éditions de l’Aube.

regime continue the similar standardisation only in the name of countering extremism and separatism. Coincidentally, regions of these standardisation, for example Tibet, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Hong Kong happens to be bordering other countries which shares an equally if not stronger cultural ties to their Chinese counter part. Thus, these identities often triumphs over the forcibly imposed Chinese identity.

1.3 “Chinese people” has no boundary

Hence the previous concepts, to determine one’s affiliation with China has very little to do with their nationalities or race. That comes into the question relating to Chinese diaspora, particularly Han Chinese, that have a the significant role as mentioned in the previous point. As previously stated, both Sun's revolution and Liang's reformation for the Manchu Empire heavily relies on the constructed identity that was later become the foundation of nation building. Their activism relies on overseas resources, particularly Chinese business by appealing to the rivalry between the ruling Manchus and vast majority of the Han Chinese. But like their rebelling precursors, their political ambitions expanded beyond their original intentions. The "mightiness" has to be proved by inheriting the empire's territory, in the name of reparations. However, without feudalism, it has to be achieved by "inclusion" "quality" and "liberation" for the indigenious yet deprived them from their natural right of self-determination to legitimise the control over the territories. Hence the fundamental reason why the definition of Chinese nation has to be adjusted overtime to accommodate the political need. That is reflecting on the Chinese nationality law where there is no common standards in practice despite it has ruled-out the legitimation of dual nationality. That lead to a status of "naked officials" where the next of kin for Chinese officials reside in most mostly Western countries yet continue to enjoy their privileged status given their parents continue to serve the Chinese authority.

At the same time, the Chinese authority continue to extend their jurisdiction to Chinese-born

asylum seekers, by abducting an individual who no longer possess Chinese nationality and obtained foreign nationality, announce his non-existing Chinese national to justify the abduction, conflicting their own nationality law. On the flip side, the famous case of US-born Chinese athlete Eileen Gu where she had no entitlement of Chinese citizenship, never lived in China acquired Chinese citizenships weeks before representing China at the Winter Olympics at Peking 2022 serves another example of the arbitrary nationality law.⁵

Chinese national intelligence law also justified the legal obligation of Chinese national to assist operation of intelligence gathering for the authority, that in combination provide a resourceful ground in theory to make-comply on any individuals who have any interests relating to Chinese authority without ever possessing a Chinese nationality. As per mentioned of the predominately jus sanguinis taken in the Chinese nationality law, which is proven arbitrary alone combine with the aforementioned arbitrary definition of nation which is normally bounded by cultural or linguistic homogeneity, now only dictated by political interest of the Chinese authority will ultimately become a weapon, which it has been the case in history. Which has been a common justification and practice of Chinese authorities regardless of announced ideologies, that including the Imperial kidnapping Sun in London, KMT's assassination of Henry Liu in United States or violent event of Chinese diplomats in Manchester, 2022.⁶ Regardless how the international rules appears to be, their concept is to bend them by stating all Chinese are supposed to be in their effective control regardless of jurisdictions.

1.4 Connection between the current People's Republic of China and its predecessor

There was mentioning in the previous paragraph concerning the process of China's nation

⁵ The Economist. (2022). Olympic skier Eileen Gu sparks a debate about dual nationality. The Economist. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/china/2022/02/17/olympic-skier-eileen-gu-sparks-a-debate-about-dual-nationality>

⁶ Chinese Consulate assault investigation continues. (2022, October 19). Retrieved from <https://www.gmp.police.uk/news/greater-manchester/news/news/2022/october/chinese-consulate-assault-investigation-continues/>

building in the early 19th century. Despite an initial denial of Manchu's rule, the then newly born Chinese republic indeed inherited the empire's territory with intention, yet in order to do that, they must transplant the duality of the empire. Both regimes of the contemporary China, CCP and KMT which compete for the representation of China had related themselves one way or the other to the two rebels that ultimately lead to regime change in ancient China. the Red turbans rebellion against the Mongols and the Taiping rebellion against the Manchus. The similarities being they both appeal to a peasantry organisation against the empires' feudalism. In Marxist theory, they would both be considered class struggle. However, the outcome were vastly different since flat-out peasantry organisations are considered merely instruments to rebel against the specific authority, rather than having an ultimate goal. Which were proved soon after they have secured their parameters, they proceed with the same authoritarianism only in a different form factor. And that also become the case for both CCP and KMT in power. Regardless of the political beliefs or way of governance, the pursuance of an imperialistic border has dictated the geopolitical interest of any Chinese authorities, even without being an empire. For which we are witnessing a similar case up close coming from the Russian authorities on Caspian Sea, Black Sea or the Baltics regardless of their ideologies, whether that be Tsardom or Soviet or the current Republic. The geographical location limited the options they have in the game of geopolitics. Only that China at its current state, have even less options than its imperialistic precursor or its neighbour to the north, simply due to the highly centralised governing where bureaucracy replaced the localised, self-reliance communities which used to contain the social fabric to be capable of protecting themselves, now the further-broken community with numerous of lost individuals can hardly be organised to defend themselves from challengers over the border or revolt against masters in Peking in the twenty-first century. Historically, that has been the dilemma of any Chinese regime which developed into a key failure that lead to the collapse of it.

On the flip side, as a Leninist regime, the concept of semi-state is no stranger to the Chinese

administration. The tactics are to create status of a pseudo sovereign state and manipulate the Westphalian rights and instruments such as diplomatic missions and cultural exchange to achieve the political goal.⁷ Where modern academia described it as “Sharp power” occasionally.⁸ In the reality, seeing China as a Westphalian state is not conducive to a productive observation of the Chinese tactic engaging the world. Prime example is the Confucian institute where the current regime discredit it as a figure of reactionary in the 60s and swiftly change its attitude towards in the 80s which later become the symbol of the Chinese state. From that, we can understand where traditional IR theory deployed to observe sovereign state often fail to understand China one way or other: Where sovereign states are understood as one entity pursuing its own interest, the Chinese state is merely a tool or a projection of a smaller entity. There is very little common ground or coherent between individuals. It is no surprise as country with the largest population and second biggest land mass in the world. However, states with similar character are usually has a decentralised administration to ensure effective across. China is quite the opposite. Through out the history of China in the last three hundreds years after the Mongol invasion, a unitary administration has often be the result of regime change and preferable.

With the combination of an imperialist territorial claim, Pan-nationalist cultural identity, Leninist administration, it has formed China’s complexity and it often contradict one to another when it comes to observation with the existing IR scope. To make an accurate judgement that provide assistance in our decision making, we must take the observing entity out of the existing rules and see it as a complete entity. It would be equally inaccurate to view China as an empire, nation state or communist country. Similarly, it would be insufficient to see Chinese proxy overseas as subject of empire, member of a nation or simply communist, therefore misjudging the variety of their tactics and miscalculating their influence.

⁷ Evans, A. B. (1987). Rereading Lenin’s State and Revolution. *Slavic Review*, 46(1), 1–19. doi:10.2307/2498617

⁸ Walker, C. (2022). Rising to the sharp power challenge. *Journal of Democracy*, 33(4), 119–132. doi:10.1353/jod.2022.0051

2. Theoretical implementation: Correlation between cultural identity and behaviour of China and its people

French sinologist Marie Holzmann had once expressed in an interview, about how Chinese cultural belief does not possess the capacity of understanding role of citizen. Where one's rights and duties are defined. Confucian emphasis the relative role of a man in the society in relations to other, such as father-son, teacher-student or master-servant, much more than role to oneself and beyond personal relations, such as society with multilateral connection as a whole. The heavily imbalance have lead to an imminent difficulties of finding the homogeneity in process of nation-building, which is already a difficult task considering the land mass and population. Yet the current state of morality is much worse due to the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, was targeting to cancel olden standards, Confucianism and all other beliefs were denounced and replaced by violent ideology struggle and Maoism. The process has made Chinese nationals, particularly Han Chinese who have their morality and pre-existing social contract removed from the cultural-religious belief. Which was the final straw to have the society return to the Hobbesian world, a state of nature, where "Bellum omnium contra omnes" war of each against all happens. Despite the historical fact that their morality has been crushed when the Manchu conquered China proper and slaughtered tens of thousands of them, same for the Mongols which took the same move couple of centuries before them. Yet in official Chinese history, time of their rules are considered part of ancient Chinese dynasty despite a completely different cultural preferences. That bizarre historical view which are common accepted for Chinese speakers constructed a contradicting sentiment towards their own history. They would accept and consider the "Century of Humiliation" narrative as their own shame despite that shame began long before, only imposed by the Manchus.⁹ This contradiction is what I would consider as collective cognitive dissonance, that symptoms of it is what makes understanding

⁹ Kaufman, A. (2011). Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy": The "Century of Humiliation" and China's National Narratives. United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission. Retrieved from <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>

Chinese behaviour often more complicated than others, and the mentality of it created a very different world view, often twisted and destructive even, which reflected in both behaviour of Chinese authority and civilians. In the following paragraphs, I will focus on the contemporary cause of the cognitive dissonance and how does it reflect on different behaviours.

2,1 Post-1989 social development

Despite the Maoist policy were dismantled by Deng in 70s, closely followed by an economic reform which opened up China to market economy, the social fabric has been largely destroyed to a point of no return.^{10 11} Unfortunately the optimism of reformation does not compensate the wildly mistrust that has been planted and now watered by a pinch of capitalism. The incident happened in Tiananmen Square 1989 signalled the disconnection of the unfound optimism of the prestige student leaders who actually have no capacity of violence, organisation beyond activism nor bargaining power of their political desire, neither the Chinese authority offers sympathy for it. In fact, the further crackdown has broke it into even smaller pieces where none of the later decentralised civil rights movement in China has the prospect to shaken the rule of the Communist regime. Another point to note is the student leaders in 1989 were largely privileged, nomenklatura cadet who largely benefit from the system yet felt resentment in gerontocracy of Deng and Li, they are being educated in universities as future party leaders. Being stripped most of the morality, money and power worshipping became a social norm, a push towards machiavellianism/ Without actual ownership of private property, the Chinese authority took advantage of greed generated from the globalism and redirected the grief of Chinese nationals as an instrument to maintain internal stability, despite a prior economic reform has already begun in the 80s.¹² Global economy

¹⁰ Holzman, M. (2007). *Chine, à Quand la démocratie?: Les Illusions de La Modernisation*. La Tour d'Aigues: Éd. de l'Aube.

¹¹ Lim, L. (2015). *The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen revisited*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Wang, Z., & O'Mahoney, J. (2014). *China's 1989 choice: paradox seeking wealth and democracy*. Retrieved from <https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/summer-2014-1989-and-the-making-of-our-modern-world/chinas-1989-choice-paradox-seeking-wealth-and-democracy>

integration provide an opportunity for Chinese authority to emphasise such doctrine, even after the Tiananmen square massacre, which caused minimal obstruction of it.¹³ The economic growth replace justice as a mandate of post-Tiananmen China and the West is happily comply to that. Clinton presidency continue to support China joining the WTO only 3 years after the massacre took place with a few human rights conditions which China never complied.¹⁴ On the European side, Blair administration of UK and Sampaio administration Portugal continue to handover Hong Kong and Macau to China in 1997 and 1999. Both territories are considered the remanent of imperialism in China, that is related to the fore-mentioned Century of Humiliation.¹⁵

On one side, it is a boost to Chinese chauvinism by a iconic move to handover the territories, it is also undeniably a political triumph of the CCP where the Western imperialists finally admit their defeat to them, added to their legitimacy to rule, which sums up the ideological effect of it. Yet the reality is neither territories were fully in Chinese control due the agreement between the CCP and the West. They were both kept largely free and westernised society and some autonomy as part of the negotiation so the CCP could fully enjoy the credit and recognition from the West. CCP has to abide by the conditions mentioned that include an independent immigration policy and relatively liberal civil society in both territories. These conditions made both territories distinctively different and arguably a superior system from China proper, that create another form of shame for both CCP and Chinese civilians, for example when they realise they need visas to enter supposedly Chinese sovereign territories, that is contrary to what they tend to believe in.¹⁶ Those systemic differences create hostility towards that incompatibility, considering a segregation and discrimination towards

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Spalding, R., & Kaufman, S. (2019). *Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

¹⁵ Kaufman, A. (2011). Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy": The "Century of Humiliation" and China's National Narratives. United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Retrieved from <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>

¹⁶ Chu, Yingchi (2003). *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self*. Routledge Publishing. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.

Chinese civilians. That sentiment returned as a feedback and fuel CCP's motivation and justification to erase that differences, eager to put both territories under full control. This is where the currently political deadlock is at in the Pacific, around the controversy about the status of the mentioned territories. As it is still under development, yet it is clearly in Chinese favour. The exact outcome is yet to be known, but the causation is rather clear, defined by Chinese ideology.

2.2 Post-2008 development

Holzmann also explained her observation of the duality of Chinese dissidents towards China hosting the 2008 Peking Olympic.¹⁷ On one side, they despise the rule of the Communist regime and its propaganda, yet they are very much emotionally attached to and genuinely proud of the success of China as a country.¹⁸ She even described it as a state of collective schizophrenia.¹⁹ In that sense, the behaviour of these Chinese dissidents shows a high proximity to their targets in power which is showing their entitlement of the benefit generates from the mighty unified central state, meanwhile disregarding the cost and the fundamentals of liberal democracy which they claim to support. That often lead of criticism where these activists lacks momentum and action that bring actual change. However, it would inaccurate to solely view as their personal choice, it was a historical result that has been embedded in individuals' identity, regardless of political belief and often without realisation. Given it is described as a common theme among namely activists with public profile who are supposed to be very much self-aware, much less can be expected for private Chinese individuals who are not expected to hold similar values from the beginning.

However, this is not a uniquely Chinese problem. Russian dissident Alexei Navalny had a noticeable record of opposing Putin's regime yet embracing the Russian superiority in the region,

¹⁷ Holzman, M. (2007). *Chine, à Quand la démocratie?: Les Illusions de La Modernisation*. La Tour d'Aigues: Éd. de l'Aube.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

given the similar duality in history.²⁰ As dissident activists often rely on their supporter base, it would only be reasonable to make an assumption where there are plenty of individual supporters embrace that ideology, domestic or overseas, that it is an unrevealed consensus between both factions that is against each other. It signifies that not every dissident of their regime are uncompromisable. If dissidents can be defending their government's stance in some circumstances by cultural preferences, collaboration even, that should serves no surprise that diaspora can be just as motivated.

2.3 Post-2014 development

As Beijing Olympic 2008 successfully proceeded with a level of success, China continue to export its cultural values to the world yet the crackdown on domestic dissident has not been stopped.²²

Despite a heavier censorship and restriction on freedom of expression limited social coherent of major opposition in China which secured the rule of CCP, the situation also created an administrative difficulties as society is so fragmented to a level requiring micromanagement all the way down to household registration, which is one of the backgrounds of social credit system developed by mass surveillance with the technology of facial recognition.²³ In fact, growth rate of budget for internal security surpassed defence budget in 2020, which has doubled from 2010.

²⁴Individuals are by no doubt part of workforce to a state, yet they can also be destabilising factor

²⁰ Illarionov, A. (2014). Annexation of Crimea is a litmus Test for Russian Opposition. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/commentary/annexation-crimea-iitmus-test-russian-opposition>

²¹ Peleschuk, D. (2021). 'Enemy Of My Enemy:' In Ukraine, Mixed Feelings About Kremlin Foe Navalny. Retrieved from <https://www.rferl.org/a/navalny-ukraine-attitudes-mixed-feelings-russia-nationalism-putin/31120106.html>

²² Pillsbury, M. (2015). The Hundred-Year Marathon (1st ed., p. 16). New York: Henry Holt & Co.

²³ Spalding, R. S. (2022). War without rules: China's playbook for Global Domination. New York: Sentinel.

²⁴ Nikkei Asia. (2022). China spends more on controlling its 1.4bn people than on defense. Retrieved from <https://asia.nikkei.com/static/vdata/infographics/china-spends-more-on-controlling-its-1-dot-4bn-people-than-on-defense/#:~:text=China's%20%22public%20safety%22%20spending%2C,that%20of%20the%20United%20States>.

when extreme measures are being considered. The humongous number of population is publicly known as the greatest asset of the Chinese state, that include the mass population of Chinese diaspora which China is not in direct control. Approximately 40 million Chinese are overseas As Article 22 of the drafted Patriotic Education Law, first read in 26 June, 2023, overseas Chinese are being included in the target to educate to uphold patriotism.²⁵ China's purpose of this law to actively promote patriotism to all populations is to stabilise domestic population and mobilise overseas population by indoctrination. Education has always been part of China's armoury to raise ideological warfare and that should comes without a surprise. Chinese style of education does not encourage creativity and focus on obedience. It is only a uniquely CCP or Communist way of education, but instead an essence of Confucius education. However it does matched the need for Leninism in the 21st century, despite it has been heavily trampled on during 60s. It is virtually impossible to distinguish the content between Leninist education and Confucius education imposed by CCP, yet it would be otherwise alarming in the West if it appears as Leninism without disguise. That allow the continuation of indoctrination of overseas Chinese in the collaboration of CCP.

Spanish human right group Safeguard Defender which specialised in Chinese affairs published a report in October 2022, revealed the Chinese has public yet unregistered police station internationally in the name of service for Chinese diaspora.²⁶ That sparked concerns especially with China's notorious human rights record. The address police stations mentioned often located in minor Chinese business, such as restaurants, owned by individuals who have moved to the host country for an extended period of time. One thing to notice is despite the official affiliation, these stations are not initiated by any Chinese officials, it was largely volunteered by the local business owner. The basic principle here is that the overseas operation of Chinese United Front is not an

²⁵ Rennie, D. (2023). Why does Xi Jinping want patriotic education to be written into law?. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/podcasts/2023/07/25/why-does-xi-jinping-want-patriotic-education-to-be-written-into-law>

²⁶ Safeguard Defender. (2022). (rep.). 110 Overseas - Chinese Transnational Policing Gone Wild. Retrieved from <https://safeguarddefenders.com/en/110-overseas>

forcible unilateral moves, in order to become this level of success, it comes bilaterally and it is not rare at all. In fact, despite a much rarer rate, that also happened to non-Han Chinese individuals and is proven by case assassination of Uyghur Yusufjan Amet in Turkey and the arrest of Tibetan Baimadajie Angwang in United States.²⁷ ²⁸Unlike Russian FSB's overseas operatives which often prefer a more direct approach, China utilise its mass immigration as a cover and collaborate with local population to plant saboteur in all sectors in targeted nations to impose influence from the inside. There is no denial that Chinese authority is deploying a cultural weapon to impose the ideology domestic and overseas, yet are the Chinese civilians collaborating or some way consent to it is a different matter. As individuals living in a society, we are always in some way, shape or form, influenced by its cultural preferences, with or without noticing. These cultural preferences often represent the value of the group which embrace it.

²⁷ Hoshur, S. (2020). Self-Proclaimed Uyghur Former Chinese Spy Shot by Unknown Assailant in Turkey. Retrieved from <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/spy-11032020175523.html>

²⁸ ABC News. (2020). NYPD officer accused of spying, arrested for allegedly acting as agent of China. Retrieved from <https://abc7ny.com/nypd-spying-baimadajie-angwang-tibetan-officer-arrested/6484676/>

3. Answering research questions: Cultural and securitisation of China

3.1 Cultural historical factor

As the time of 21st century globalism engaged, cultural exchange does seem inevitable, often even preferable to states that may project influence through economic and cultural and factors, which we now describe it as soft power. In the majority of the cases, these influence are often harmless and mutually beneficial due to the increased engagement in the global market. As much as the rest of the world find themselves opportunities to seek economic growth with cultural engagement, the Chinese authority also recognise the opportunity to emerge as a world power, part of fulfilling the mandate of the 'heavenly kingdom'. However, prequisition of these outcomes can only be built by a healthy and equal relationship. The Chinese regime with the mandate of heavenly kingdom fail to display a concrete understanding of the Westphalian order in general. The Chinese language played a huge role in that barrier of understanding. First being the contribution to the literal translation of China to 'Central state'. The idea of China being the Central state imbedded with the language through out history. Almost every conquerer of ancient China self-proclaimed to be mandated for the Central state regardless. The identity of Central State is built on the sense of superiority over neighbouring state, whether that be military or economic strength.

That idea of mandate continues to develop into the modern state of China after 1911. The May Fourth violence in 1919 showed the population, including the large tract of participated intellectuals have no regards of international order or rulings. The provocative idea of 'Century of humiliation' was introduced and continue to be utilised by current PRC regime against 'Western imperialist' and regional rivalries.²⁹ The sense of victimhood bred resentment and contribute to a hostile foreign policy that is supported by average Chinese population. That rhetoric of history founded the support

²⁹ Kaufman, A. (2011). Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy": The "Century of Humiliation" and China's National Narratives. United States–China Economic and Security Review Commission. Retrieved from <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>

base of hawkish foreign policy. That victimhood mindset also became one of the reasons of radicalisation of overseas Chinese, or at least serve as a justification to it.

Self-victimisation serve as a backbone of the justification for the aforementioned objectives. Despite China heavily benefited from the Yalta order and Globalisation in 21st century, benevolence of Western democracy is considered a sign of weakness and exploited subsequently by the Chinese state. Modern China is no doubt a legacy of countless empires existed in that location geographically, which is the same for both the people and their authorities. That is represented in both the cultural and political aspects. China has its statehood and obtain some character of a nation state, that include the common sentiment over historical trauma regardless of how relevant it is in reality. Every trauma of every existed regime could contribute to the narrative the same way where every achievement in history could be taken proud of. The only differences between China's statehood and a normal legitimate statehood is that there were continuity proven where China is clearly and conveniently missing. Their legitimacy are typically build on sole occupation over the land, both domestically and internationally. There is no distinguishing between tyrannos and legitimate rulers. The UN resolutions 2758 replaced ROC with PRC in 1971 and inherited all rights despite the continue existence of ROC regime on the island of Formosa.³⁰ China, specifically PRC in this case, was given a status of a legitimate state without clear continuity. It has publicly displaying their insecurity from the existence of the ROC regime in the cultural aspect that is heavily related to the current PRC legitimacy. That insecurity entrenched and developed into a political struggle between PRC and ROC internationally. Yet it also sparked an identity crisis not only on the ROC ruling Formosa domestically, it is also a question for Chinese diaspora.

3.1.1 Language

³⁰ Hsiao, R. (2022). Resolution 2758 and the Fallacy of Beijing's UN "One-China Principle". Retrieved from <https://globaltaiwan.org/2021/10/resolution-2758-and-the-fallacy-of-beijings-un-one-china-principle/>

There should be no surprise that the use of language serves a great proportion of cultural inheritance, which is very much intertwined with ideologies. Such character reflect as way of thinking and behaviour on a personal level and diplomacy and spirit on a state level. It also goes beyond ethnicity. Historically, Chinese language played a huge role spread of communism in the South East Asia during the Cold War. As a mean to provoke violence, insurgencies even, including Malaya Emergencies and Hong Kong Emergencies in the 60s. Out of other communist insurgencies China supported, Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) was the biggest product of the combination between Chinese diaspora and Communist ideology. Most propaganda of CPM are in Chinese and so are their members despite they did not necessarily uphold a nationalistic view over their Chinese identity.³¹ Despite their defeat, CPM resulted to be the most obdurate communist insurgencies during the period and their influence in Malaysia remained among Chinese population in the country long after the Cold War.

Similar case also happened in Soviet Russia, for example where USSR appeared to be a multi-ethnic state with their Tungusic and Turkic SSR in the Far East and Caucasus, yet the eyes of the Soviets were never away from Slavic nations of their West due to the remaining influence of Pan-Slavism rooted from days during the Russian Empire.³² The Soviets does not necessarily see it as practice of Pan-Slavism, merely deploying the influence which were inherited from their enemy. Which it was a great success for Moscow and all Slavic nations were indeed part of Comintern without exceptions. Similarly, the current ideology of Russkiy Mir of the Russian Federation is suggesting an identical border with the former USSR and Russian Empire before that. Be noted that this is not implying nations who are under the same language group would inevitably fall into the same regime or embrace the same ideology, it is only pointing out that proximity in language can also serves as a valuable weapon for those who would like to impose influence and arrange

³¹ Belogurova, A. (2019). The MCP as a hybrid Communist Party. *The Nanyang Revolution*, 83–114. doi:10.1017/9781108635059.004

³² Degirmen Dysart, B. (2021). The politics of russian 'diaspora': From compatriots to a Russian world. *Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies*, 1(1), 49–63. doi:10.52241/tjds.2021.0004

insurgencies even. Soviet strategy of their Western conquest is a prove of language-cultural interests can drive its behaviour, regardless of ideologies ruled over the land mass or the nature of that weapon.

3.1.2 Combination of ideology and language

A similar yet more ancient comparison would be pre-nation state Europe where Latin-speaking (or writing) Christendom was still very much an ultimate goal of a unified Europe, whether that be a Kaiser, Tsar or d'empereur (or a Caliph in the Islamic context). In the context of China, that would be the Huangdi, Emperor of China. Unlike Tenno, the Japanese Emperor which had traceable linear continuity, it lacks continuity of formal legitimacy in China. Whoever became the conquerer of the soil of China, became the Son of God, and are destined to promote the ideology and expand its territory, knowing no limits of it.³³ That mentality was carried through collectively till today. That is because a unified China as political entity, is very much a product of absolute monarchy, least can be dated back two-thousands years ago. The concept itself is not only authoritarianism but also in a very old fashion. Where its subject has been formatted routinely for thousands of years. It is not a simply periodic regime that happens to be authoritarian, but a deeply-rooted collective concept that is widely perceived domestically in China and foreign. It is the same way a military conquered Europe would hardly be compatible with contemporary democratic values where communities are stripped of identities, let alone individual rights. However, points mentioned above are merely conceptual representation of the inherent incompatibility between China and democratic values from a historical and geopolitical perspective, yet to explain the extra-territorial effect of the concept where not only PRC citizens but also Chinese speakers in general carried abroad, which opened the door to self-radicalisation. The combination of the ideology and the shared language can greatly influence not only state's behaviour but also individual's world view. This is particularly the

³³ Pines, Y. (2012). *The Everlasting Empire: the political culture of ancient China and its Imperial legacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

reason Chinese diaspora who still uphold this combination and inherited by generations of indoctrination through cultural inheritance are incompatible with the modern democratic value with their deep-laying feelings about the legitimacy of China. This is the origin of the conflict between two sets of value ultimately began internally.

3.2 Securitisation of China

As a Leninist society, PRC is deemed a highly securitised state and there is no doubt about it. However, it would still be very important understand how does it reflect on controlling narratives and resources overseas, relating to their group of diaspora that include civilians from all walks of life and fall out of their jurisdiction which is a much more difficult task comparing to their domestic counterpart. Methodology of it is rather straight forward, either by stick: manipulating personal connection or possession whichever falls into their jurisdiction or by carrot: strengthening their sentiment over the motherland plus providing material benefits. Legislation such as Anti-espionage law amended in April 2023, National intelligence law amended in April 2018 and National security law enacted in July 2015 are indicators of how China's attempting to securitise and legitimise their control through their nationals.³⁴

The first method can be hardly intercept as it would be described as Chinese state affair, the conditions to operate second part will be focused and described instead. To operate successfully, they would required to possess a good amount of deployable assets overseas, and they would required a strong image of China on international stage to provoke target's sense of identity, that may be through education or any public image or narrative related operations. Securitisation of two mentioned properties enabled the proceed the overseas operation of China's United Front. The

³⁴ Brussee V. (2023). Amended anti-espionage law aims to curate China's own narrative. Retrieved from <https://merics.org/en/comment/amended-anti-espionage-law-aims-curate-chinas-own-narrative>

following paragraphs will be focusing how these objectives operate on a personal level, other levels such as community and organisation will be mentioned in section 4.

3.2.1 Economic securitisation

When it comes to international trade and global economy, the Chinese market has always been a vibrant importer and exporter in comparison to other developing countries and that has been the case since 16th centuries.³⁵ The importing of technologies and exporting of low cost labour created a rapid growth of wealth yet inconsistency with the status thus created a misrepresentation. The engagement also created a large sum of Chinese diaspora owned business which is heavily rely on a strong Chinese regime to provide a stable Chinese market for their profit.³⁶ These individuals may or may not be CCP members or even Chinese nationals, yet they often still possess a sense of Chinese cultural identity to a degree due to the economic interests which allow them to condone the status quo in China.³⁷ As per rule of law serve as a foundation of market economy, protection of private property that improve economy and developments significantly, it was never deemed as a necessity for any Chinese regime, or they simply prioritised political need over economic interests. On the flip side, these individuals do not see the result of implementing rule of law is inherently beneficial to their business model as they do not rely on a rule-based environment, but rather a hegemony of connections to either bureaucrats or oligarch that offer access to cheap labour force and their production.³⁸ These international investment does not serve the purpose of market economy but an staunch supporter and assistance to China's securitisation domestically. The rationale is if unrest of chaos arise that may shaken the rule of the Chinese authority, their economic interest embedded will end with it. On the other hand, these entities can also be trustees to hold

³⁵ Pillsbury, M. (2015). *The Hundred-Year Marathon* (1st ed., p. 16). New York: Henry Holt & Co.

³⁶ Schäfer, C. (2022). China's diaspora policy under Xi Jinping Retrieved from <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/chinas-diaspora-policy-under-xi-jinping>

³⁷ Spalding, R., & Kaufman, S. (2019). *Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

³⁸ Spalding, R., & Kaufman, S. (2019). *Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

property, settled by the request of the authority to avoid possible sanctions and bypass monitoring. These individuals are an important part of Chinese United Front which plays the role to redeploy resources for various of operations. On the other side, supposedly privately owned Chinese business that have ties with Chinese authority also play a similar role for example Huawei's business in Iran, which will be mentioned in chapter 4 about existing threats.

3.2.2 Securitisation of international and civil affairs

A regular Chinese strategy of their international relations was full control of both their state privileges and civil liberty in the host countries. Manipulation of rights including what is normally deemed as privilege of sovereigns, with the example of diplomatic immunity, financial and monetary tools and foreign jurisdiction. These manipulation in itself does not constitute an absolute threat, undermining the sovereign integrity at its best, but rather the operation is eroding the line between civilian and states affairs. Instead of participating in international events or organisation such as the Olympics, UN, WTO, WHO as a channel of communication, their participation were seen as opportunities for political statements and a tool to purge their opposing force and advance with their ideologies.³⁹ That public display of strength attracts, convinces targets' who shares the aforementioned ideology in section 3.1.2.

PRC also presented a set of legislation which putted the burden of securitisation on its populations. Section 7 of the National Intelligence Law stated it is a responsibility of every nationals and organisation to support, assist and cooperate with the national intelligence agencies.⁴⁰ It essentially made the securitisation a responsibility of civilians and other organisations. That is by no doubt including entities which are overseas which are also on the providing end of intelligence. When an

³⁹ Spalding, R. S. (2022). War without rules: China's playbook for Global Domination. New York: Sentinel.

⁴⁰ Walton, C. (2023). The New Spy Wars: How China and Russia Use Intelligence Agencies to Undermine America. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/russia-china-intelligence-new-spy-wars-undermine-america>

authority has a clear intention to consider all individuals with ties can be potentially deployed as a proxy at dispose, this would put maximised the cost of security of the targeted state, the only adequate responses would be considering the individuals with ties will a proxy for a state. That in itself challenge the concept of civil liberties of the targeted base hence a very effective tactic against democracies. Democracies then must respond in a dilemma, which one should be considered priority: security of the entire state or is it that every individuals' civil liberties.

3.3 Geopolitical security

What shape national interest is largely a geopolitical one. While that national interest is often what shape the mentality and security need not only for the authority but also the population, hence the cultural remarks through education not only at schools but also at homes. Different regime in Chinese history are described as dynasty which took a more liberal approach to what it is defined in European history. Typically when we described dynasty, it is used to define rulers from different blood line with a degree of legitimacy, not simply by the means of conquer. That legitimacy is not necessary required in Chinese historiography to describe a regime as dynasty, that include tyrannos. Examples empire recession like the British empire and Austro-Hungarian typically consist of core nations each can retract to, to support a successful transition and the legitimacy. Despite a controversial one, that include Russia from its recession from Russian Empire and USSR. Meanwhile in the history of China, it lacks a large proportion of nation building and a stabilised core nation due to the political ambition of Sun and Liang during the transition from Manchu Empire to a Republic. That issue did not go away when a Communist PRC defeated the Nationalist ROC and conquered most landmass of it in 1949. The geopolitical security continue to exist for PRC in Korean peninsula and the McMahon line and South China Sea later on.

The exact same geopolitical security question was inherited despite not only a change of regime but also an ideological one, ultimately determined by territorial integrity. We can see that in history

where despite Russian Empire and USSR had a vastly different ideology and brutal conflict between, their interest aligned, specifically geopolitical interests drive a similar behaviour both diplomatically and militarily which dictates policies.⁴¹ The annexation of Crimea in 1783 and 2014 shares the similar goal about Russian's conquest of the Mediterranean Sea while the Western allies largely shares the same interest in participation in Crimean War of 1853 and the support in the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. However, these factors are not always understood by general population or available for open display, authorities requires a different set of language to popularise and justify the action while mobilise the public to support the effort. Which is when ideological and cultural language comes into play. Languages and speeches such as patriotism, democracy, national integrity are being deployed to support the action, not necessarily for the word itself but to serve the geopolitical interest of the state. Much like Churchill's famous speeches during the WWII shaped the modern nation of Britain, many quotes became the spirit and value for British people today, the way where it was mentioned in previous paragraph about how language and literature found the culture hence the world views for readers.

Securitisation in China is a very widely concerned topic domestically. Stability and the security of the regime triumph over all other concerns. CCP makes no mistakes about potential risk and act accordingly very efficiently and ruthlessly if deemed necessary. As it is visible to world in the 1989 Chinesische Lösung (Chinese solution, referring the massacre in Peking as a contingency plan), if they can, they will. There is no reason not to believe CCP also carry over a similar attitude towards threat internationally. In the following section, I will display how does it operate overseas in practice and possible solution to that.

⁴¹ Degirmen Dysart, B. (2021). The politics of russian 'diaspora': From compatriots to a Russian world. *Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies*, 1(1), 49–63. doi:10.52241/tjds.2021.0004

4. Answering research questions: Threat and justification

In this section I will visualise the threat democracies are facing towards China, particularly about those which relating to the conduct of Chinese diaspora, direct or indirectly relating to the Chinese authority. Be noted that Chinese diaspora range from those who are born overseas embracing the culture to those who just left China in recent years, regardless of what their purpose is, including dissident who fled from Communist rules, economic migrants or simply international students. Only thing that's common between them is their cultural identity thus the action that enforces Chinese narratives, with or without noticing.

These influences come from covert entities which have business ties to academia, mass media, technology giants even lawmakers played a key role in manipulating public opinion in the West. Each sector has its corresponding enterprises in the guise of private entity. France, UK and US has recognised the threat of Chinese overseas operations as a threat against democracies by December 2022. In fact, security chief in UK has emphasised similar repeatedly in the last few years. Without highlighting out specifically, the French National Strategic review 2022 described the hybrid operation as deploying law as instrument of power.⁴² However, the Chinese intention has been very much conspicuous from the beginning. The theory of unrestricted warfare pointed out globalism will be deployed by China as a leverage from the title of book published in 1999. Only it has been widely referenced by Spalding's *Stealth War* 20 years later.⁴³ Despite it appears to be a fresh idea to the audience in the West, it has been a common strategy of Chinese authority in the past hundreds of years, only it has been theorised in last couple of decades.

⁴² Kolesnyk, D. (2023). France Adopts New National Strategic Review. Retrieved from <https://euro-sd.com/2023/01/articles/29158/france-adopts-new-national-strategic-review/>

⁴³ Spalding, R., & Kaufman, S. (2019). *Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

The following paragraphs will range the threat in certain areas, sorting from the least to the most personal. It does not imply the severity of the threat, in fact, the severity depends on the the process and degree of radicalisation down to the individuals.

4.1 Private Business and Commercial relations

Just like most international firms, China has their own business giants and representatives deployed around the world. As the Leninist character remain for Chinese authority, these openly privately owned business like Huawei and ZTE have their own CCP party branch installed. The function of these branches are mainly to monitor and sometimes influence decision of the said business which is not limited to domestic corporations. According to Chinese data, at least 70% foreign corporation in China installed their own party branch of CCP.⁴⁴ These corporations functions as the connection between China and the rest of the world by commercial relations. They also deploy their employees to foreign countries to explore opportunities. Yet the reality is they are subjected to rules of Chinese authority hence their narratives. Their interests are held tightly by CCP, by large or small. Foreign investment may be finding it easier defy said will, while Chinese firms may not enjoy the same degree of liberty due to their nature. These firms face pressure from the Chinese authority at the least and subject to the local legal requirement no matter how arbitrary it may be. China's legislation about their securitisation mentioned in section 3.2.2 are also applicable here. What that represent is also those firms, especially with close ties of the Chinese state would be required to comply. Questionable activities conducted in contrast to the company's interest, like ByteDance's potential transaction of Tiktok and its algorithm and more renowned Huawei's state level transaction with Iran.⁴⁵ As much as there is no private ownership in China with

⁴⁴ Martina, M. (2017). Exclusive: In China, the Party's push for influence inside foreign firms stirs fears. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-congress-companies-idUSKCN1B40JU>

⁴⁵ Department of Justice. (2020). Chinese Telecommunications Conglomerate Huawei and Subsidiaries Charged in Racketeering Conspiracy and Conspiracy to Steal Trade Secrets. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/chinese-telecommunications-conglomerate-huawei-and-subsidiaries-charged-racketeering>

an orthodox definition, same goes with private enterprises who register in China which is legally required to include a party committee to allow direct control from the CCP.

4.1.1 Participation of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) provided business opportunities for the expansion of these firms. Specifically technology giants who participate in the network infrastructure in Europe. 7 EU member states joined the BRI which 6 of them are NATO members and 3 of them are also members of Visegrad Group.⁴⁶ These intermediary and end user devices in Europe manufactured by Chinese firms required to provide data for the purpose of Chinese intelligence service. This in itself a breach of GDPR and imminent threat to the data transferred. These data collected could be analysed and deployed for the use of manipulating public opinion, indirectly influencing election results. It should not be considered just a national threat but also a regional one due to the close partnership of the European Union and NATO. Chinese firms installed devices had been found before bugging and transferring data to China in the building of African Union.⁴⁷ Infiltrations as such explained these firms could just be store front for the Chinese intelligence service. Other firms benefited from BRI including DJI and Hikvision also alleged participating human right abuse in Xinjiang against Uyghur Muslim population.⁴⁸ Yet their products of drones and thermal visions remain very competitive in the Western market.

Their capabilities of the mentioned products can be proved with their appearance in in-state conflict. Many of these products designed for civilians are effectively in use by both side of the

⁴⁶ Sacks, D. (2021). Countries in China's Belt and Road Initiative: Who's In And Who's Out. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/blog/countries-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-whos-and-whos-out>

⁴⁷ Fidler, M. (2018). *African Union Bugged by China: Cyber Espionage as Evidence of Strategic Shifts*. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/blog/african-union-bugged-china-cyber-espionage-evidence-strategic-shifts>.

⁴⁸ Hazlewood, G. (2022). 'threat holding shares in Chinese company linked to Uighur atrocities'. [TheTimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk). Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hsbc-holding-shares-in-chinese-company-linked-to-uighur-atrocities-znhr032v6>.

Russo-Ukraine war. For example the DJI Mavic 3 which only cost a little bit more than 40000 czk (approximately 1800 USD, 1600 EUR or 1400 GBP), widely available all of Europe. Meanwhile there were concerns from the Ukrainian side about the firmware backdoor with these products, especially when they desperately need them to be effective on the battlefield. The reality is, there were no other options of Kyiv except the aforementioned manufacturers which can produce such as massive amount of drones supplying for the use of frontline, despite a potential compromise of SIGINT. To address the problem, Ukrainian computer engineers then removed the original system and reinstalled firmware that blocks unauthorised data transfer and it has been effective since. The solution could be referential to those of us who are in the West and shares a similar problem. Yet it should not be seen as a singular case where the decision was made by DJI but not required by official demands. Backdoors of Chinese product, both hardware and software are infamously known, along with suspicious data transfer to server locate in China. These backdoors are key to the success of the Orwellian Chinese social credit system for Chinese authority to fully control their domestic population and they did not make it covert. That proves China's infiltration and subversion of international orders are not limited to state level but also a personal level, to average voters in a society, in the name of personal liberty. Which is a clear and a direct threat particularly dangerous in a democratic society.

Case 4A : Huawei and Iran

The arrest of Huawei's Meng Wanzhou has exposed Huawei's trades with Iran to the eyes of general public. Huawei alleged to have trade with Iran which is a US sanctioned target with embargoed good and technologies such as computers that is allegedly to be use in military technologies or even nuclear programme in Iran.⁴⁹ However, Huawei's commercial activities is a clear violation of US sanction law regardless of the end-user usage. Despite there is no direct

⁴⁹ Department of Justice. (2020). Chinese Telecommunications Conglomerate Huawei and Subsidiaries Charged in Racketeering Conspiracy and Conspiracy to Steal Trade Secrets. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/chinese-telecommunications-conglomerate-huawei-and-subsidiaries-charged-racketeering>

evidence of such transfer of technologies will be use in the area of military or surveillance, Huawei's background of Chinese military cooperation and its notorious record of surveillance in Xinjiang against Uyghur population should serve as a supporting evidence that Huawei and its subsidiaries have no hesitation to engage in Chinese state's project and surveillance with concern of human rights abuse. Meng's witness and financial tracing have shown that both parties realise the transaction involved a sanctioned target and decided to proceed. Regardless if it is politically motivated, it is a threat to the rule-based international system with Chinese big-tech companies such as Huawei operating in the West believed that the company can override international law.

Case 4B : Chinese participation in North Korean nuclear programme

According to report from Institute for Science and International Security, there are evidence that Chinese trading firm, Shenyang Machine Tools Company. The company has violated the terms of sales and deliver European machinery to North Korea which is related to North Korea's nuclear development. Author of the report David Albright also suspect that this is not a singular case where Chinese government has been deploying similar strategy to support North Korea's nuclear programme and evading international sanctions which only discovered in 2016, after launching Unha-3.⁵⁰ In fact, North Korea have also established an international arms sales network with their weapons of SRBM(Short range ballistic missile) namely Hwasong-5 as Iran being one of the end-user along with Syria.⁵¹ That signifies that even China does not participate international arms trade in this case, the transfer of technology is indeed stabilising and jeopardising the peace effort in the region.

4.1.1 Loans and Investment

⁵⁰ Albright, D. (2017). Report - Shenyang Machine Tools Company. Isis-online.org. Retrieved 12 December 2021, from https://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Shenyang_Machine_Tools_13Apr2017_Final.pdf.

⁵¹ Ryan, M. (2012). *China assisting North Korean missile program: Panetta*. Reuters. Retrieved 12 December 2021, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-northkorea-china-idUSBRE83I1JQ20120420>.

As the infamous Belt and Road initiative (BRI) launched in 2013, China has been actively seeking for transit and ports to strengthen their logistical power internationally. China have also set up loans for developing countries in Asia and African and investments in Europe and Americas to establish their influence in the respective region. However, it has also come to the attention of international society about Chinese debt trap to forcibly seize control of ports or railway in the country, particularly in African and Asia which fail to repay the debt.⁵² Numbers of ports have fallen into Chinese control. The predatory economy of China have been facing backlash from not just international society but also local population as it has severely changed their way of life in an undesirable way. Cases such Solomon Island, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Tanzania have already sparked civil unrest against Chinese investment in the country.⁵³ I will raise a few cases of Chinese control port and the related issue to illustrate the security issue that comes with it.

Case 4C : Port Darwin, Australia

Darwin is a crucial strategic location in Northern Territory of Australia, also the closest port to Asia. Chinese Landbridge group have won the bid to lease Port Darwin and granted control of the port for 99 years in 2015.⁵⁴ Despite Landbridge is a privately owned company in the paper, the ownership of the company has a close tie with the Chinese government and with a military background. The transaction have also raised the concern from the US since the port is also being deployed as a garrison of US Marines. The argument is reasonable found as Chinese economic activities are often predatory by nature but also the background of the company itself have shown a reasonable chance that it will serve the interest of Chinese government.

⁵² Seibt, S. (2021). *Djibouti-China marriage slowly unravelling as investment project disappoints*. France 24. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210409-djibouti-china-marriage-slowly-unravelling-as-investment-project-disappoints>.

⁵³ Pillsbury, M. (2015). *The Hundred-Year Marathon* (1st ed., p. 16). New York: Henry Holt & Co.

⁵⁴ Greene, A. (2019). *Push to 'nationalise' Darwin Port to end Chinese ownership of strategic asset*. Abc.net.au. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-05/push-to-nationalise-darwin-port/11382422>.

Case 4D : Port Piraeus, Greece

As one of the biggest ports in the Mediterranean, the port is managed by Chinese state-owned company COSCO shipping from 2016 until 2052. However, the local population has not been entirely welcome such investment and the style of management.⁵⁵ COSCO shipping have been largely focusing on international shipping and that is what raises the concern of the local population. The exploitive management style has sparked protest from the workers as well. Subsidiary of COSCO, Piraeus Container Terminal (PCT) has largely hired temporary workers to avoid the benefit and welfare outlined in the agreement, EU and local legislation. The result of the COSCO management is also disastrous towards the environment in Piraeus. The infrastructure created pollution and traffic that brings nuance to the local population. City councillor Nikos Belavilas explained that the living condition of Piraeus has not been improved nor is it for employment and sustainable development.

Case 4E : African investment and debt trap diplomacy

Africa has been a long-standing supporter of China on international organisation since the 1960s. China was actively seeking support from Africa since the Sino-Soviet split, with material and financial support in return. Djibouti, as the first overseas Chinese military garrison on another sovereign state, has marked the Chinese influence in Africa. As a long-term top investor of various African countries, China has no doubt established a significant influence in the regional politics. However, instead of creating political stability and economic prosperity, Chinese investment has actually done more harm than good in the African countries who received loans and investments. Other than the predatory economy that I have mentioned in cases above, loans provided from China often conclude a short repayment period with a high interest rate, which most of the

⁵⁵ Kidera, M. (2022). *'Sold to China': Greece's Piraeus port town cools on Belt and Road*. Nikkei Asia. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/Sold-to-China-Greece-s-Piraeus-port-town-cools-on-Belt-and-Road>.

African countries would not be able to repay as agreed. China will then collect sovereign asset as an alternative to the repayment. The tactics is simply explained as dept-trap diplomacy.

4.1.2 Money laundering

As mentioned in the Huawei Iranian deal, service from international banking system played a crucial part in the transaction. HSBC knowingly facilitate the transaction between the de facto Huawei subsidiary. HSBC have also held account of the sanctioned individuals in Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List). HSBC have also hold share of Xinjiang Tianye, a subsidiary of a Chinese paramilitary group that operate Uyghur Muslim concentration camp.⁵⁶ As one of the biggest banks in UK and with arguably the most connected international banking network, HSBC openly defies sanctions against human right abusers construct a serious threat in the international banking system and risking the collapse of the rule-base international system. HSBC has been playing an important role in the Chinese overseas network and has been a staunch supporter of the BRI of China, including cases mentioned above. The fact that the bank aided financing Chinese predatory BRI tactics and human right violation have shown its true intention of China of manipulating the modern banking to serve the Chinese expansionism. Both UK and US parliamentarian slammed HSBC for its financing for human right abusers.

Given the incidences occurred, activities of private-own Chinese enterprises in the West is as just questionable as state-own enterprises. However, given the large number of business profile in the past, it is unrealistic to monitor every single questionable activity conducted in an open-market with thousands of international transaction per year. Let alone a much bigger number of data transfer.

⁵⁶ Hazlewood, G. (2022). *HSBC holding shares in Chinese company linked to Uighur atrocities*. *TheTimes.co.uk*. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hsbc-holding-shares-in-chinese-company-linked-to-uighur-atrocities-znhr032v6>.

4.2 Cultural and Education

As the least covert operatives within the network, the operations carried are often visible to the public but yet often remain in low profile not to jeopardise the effort as a whole. A classic strategic concept of United Front is being deployed here with instruments like Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) which is main installed upon universities of Western countries to support the operation need.⁵⁷ As the name suggest, the CSSA is an association designated for the purpose of gathering Chinese student and scholars in universities. The CSSAs often disguised to be a legitimate student union for Chinese students. However, the representatives of the CSSAs are not necessarily elected but appointed by the Chinese embassies at the host countries. The Chinese embassies also remain an extremely close relations with the CSSAs, by financially supporting the CSSAs operations in a covert fashion. Unlike other international students associations, CSSA is highly organised and directly responsive to the Chinese diplomatic missions in the host country. Considering the populations of Chinese international students in universities, they are given instructions through CSSAs to support the candidates in student union elections to keep students representatives that adopt the Chinese narratives to remain in power to either suppressed unfavourable opinion against China or to simply promote Pro-China narratives in universities. Various CSSAs across the world has been either warned or on the watchlist of host countries for espionage activities or impose threat to academic freedom on university campuses.

4.2.1 Interference of academic freedom

University of California, San Diego have invited Dalai Lama for a commencement address in 2017. However, the CSSA have made objection to the university decision where numbers of Chinese students were triggered due his political affiliation. The Cambridge CSSA have also been making political statements towards it's member during the Hong Kong uprising began 2019,

⁵⁷ Corr, A. (2017). Ban Official Chinese Student Organizations Abroad. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anderscorr/2017/06/04/ban-official-chinese-student-organizations-abroad/>

meanwhile Chinese student were mobilised in a counter-protest against demonstrations supporting Hong Kong in UK. Individuals have also involved in activities such as online attacks to personal harassment towards participants of pro-Hong Kong demonstrators.⁵⁸ These activities can also be seen across the world especially democratic countries where tolerance and diversity are made possible. Despite these activities have made the national intelligence services alerted, the problems were some universities are also usually heavily funded by Chinese investments or rely on tuition fee income from Chinese students. Some universities chose to down play such incident, prevent a possible backlash from Chinese students.⁵⁹ As a registered organisation of university in most cases, they are given the power to represent their members, hence influencing the policy of student unions or even the school itself, depending on the structure of different institutions. The main task of CSSAs are imposing Chinese narratives in the respective school and mobilising their members to support it. Bigger the ratio of Chinese student in university compare to others, the easier the task become.

4.2.2 Espionage in campus

Another activity that Chinese students and scholars participate is espionage of key technologies of host countries. Particularly for students and scholars studying and researching in STEM subjects.⁶⁰ That include inciting the naturalised citizens originally from China to contribute to the contemporary research in relating topics. Publicly announced initiative called the ‘Thousand Talents Plan’ was to provide financial support to researchers which the Chinese authority consider talents

⁵⁸ Mannerling, L. (2019). *Hong Kong students in UK call for action over pro-China threats and harassment - Hong Kong Free Press HKFP*. Hong Kong Free Press HKFP. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://hongkongfp.com/2019/11/26/hong-kong-students-uk-call-action-pro-china-threats-harassment/>

⁵⁹ Johnson, J. (2021). *The China Question*. King’s College London. Retrieved from <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/china-question.pdf>

⁶⁰ Shirbon, E. (2020). UK to exclude Chinese students from sensitive subjects - Times. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-china-students-idUSKBN26M5YY>

and award them for providing sensitive material that contributes to the Chinese scientific research, particularly in the defence sector.⁶¹

4.2.3 China's Confucius Institute (CI)

Difference from what I have mentioned above, which are activities mainly conducted by Chinese students and scholars. Confucius institutions are instruments mainly for non-Chinese students. These institutions are established usually by partnering universities and schools, providing education for foreign student who are interested in the culture or language of China. However, due to the partnership concern, it have become an instrument of Chinese authorities to impose pressure on teaching staff and material to the students for whats Chinese related.⁶² Materials or staff that are deemed unfavourable or oppose to the Chinese narrative will be suppressed and censored which is an infringement towards academic freedom on a foreign soil.⁶³ These Chinese-funded institutions have made universities increasing rely on the Chinese resource hence damage the reputation of academic research as a whole. Report from Lord Jo Johnson have made a justification of securitisation in the academic field, emphasising the infiltration damage the environment of the higher education and the financial benefit coming from Chinese student should not be overweight public security. ⁶⁴

4.3 Politics and Identity

⁶¹ Truex, R. (2021). *What the Fear of China Is Doing to American Science*. The Atlantic. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/02/fears-about-china-are-disrupting-american-science/618031/>.

⁶² Joske, A. (2016). *The 'patriotic education' of Chinese students at Australian universities*. Smh.com.au. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.smh.com.au/education/the-patriotic-education-of-chinese-students-at-australian-universities-20161003-gru13j.html>.

⁶³ Peterson, R. (2017). *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*. The National Association of Scholars. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580866.pdf>

⁶⁴ ⁶⁴ Johnson, J. (2021). *The China Question*. King's College London. Retrieved from <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/china-question.pdf>

Realising China has no intention to uphold international order and to manipulate every way possible for their own advantage is crucial to understand the relations between the strategy and the embedded cultural preferences. Unlike the Soviet Union which predominately deploying ideology as the leverage to recruit collaborators, China has developed a much more diverse recruitment strategy range from socialism to chauvinism, from greed to fear. Which leaves the West extremely vulnerable to identify the threat in the age of globalism and political correctness. Anti-China opinion has been portrayed and labelled as racial discrimination against Asian as a whole.⁶⁵ Events such as singular violence against Asian population in the West are fear-manipulated into rhetoric that fuel chauvinism domestically and help increase cohesion of overseas Chinese diaspora looking for security guarantees. In the most cases, the key feature is to amplify feebleness of individuals particularly those with Chinese ties and lure them into heavily state-reliance, which has been the case in the past in China domestically. The closer the ties are and the bigger the fear becomes, the easier to manipulate individuals into complying the national intelligence law which have almost no effect to those who refuse to comply overseas. Ultimately, it is still a personal decision, however, we cannot ignore that cultural norm plays a big part in an individuals decision making, even if we overlooked China's manipulation of cultural programme to achieve United Front in an overseas context.

The Chinese authority know it full well of their advantage given their mass diaspora population that flooding is the most effective way to overload intelligence service in the West and to achieve their goal whether that be imposing propaganda or obtaining classified information. It is a common practice to use civilian as cover to evade countability for the overseas operation and excuses it is an personal behaviour.⁶⁶ It is safe to say that the mere existence of Chinese civilians whether that be wrong-doing, it in one way or the other assisting Chinese unrestricted warfare. Another realisation

⁶⁵ Spalding, R. S. (2022). *War without rules: China's playbook for Global Domination*. New York: Sentinel.

⁶⁶ Walton, C. (2023). *China has been waging a decades long all out spy war*. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/28/china-has-been-waging-a-decades-long-all-out-spy-war/>

is that these private individuals are just as violently capable as any others, it would be dangerous to isolate violent events like 2022 Laguna shootings, which the motive is clearly identity related. Nevertheless, the relationship remain doubtful between Chou, the suspect and Chinese authority, despite born in Taiwan.⁶⁷ However, if we look at previous event where violence of pro-China counter protest took place, it was directly linked and organised by the Chinese diplomatic service, with aids from local Chinese groups. Violence event result in death are relatively rare but not unheard of. Similar incident of the assassination of Henry Liu in San Francisco, 1984, organised by the ROC intelligence service, operated by the local Bamboo Union gang in the United States, showed that it is not just a PRC practice, but a tendency that both regime shares.⁶⁸ Argument could be made of both ruling parties of CCP and KMT are indeed Leninist and these actions of assassination and sabotage are indeed quite common for authoritarian regimes, such as assassination of Jamal Khashoggi and The Salisbury attack in 2018 and the Vrbětice explosion in 2014. An obvious counter argument is both mentioned espionage activities are not conducted or affiliated with civilian population. In fact, both Chinese activities required non-official assistance including the capture of Sun Yat-sen took place in London, 1896, who then was an exiled dissident of Qing Empire. Through the lens of history, we can see that similar model of Chinese operations not only their disregard of the international order but also the separation between officials and civilians. Neither of the mentioned Chinese operation could happened without the involvement of the local Chinese network.

4.3.1 Settlements activities

As widely spread as the Chinese diaspora and as early it has begun back in 18th century, some of the early settlers with clear language barrier have established overseas Chinese association for the

⁶⁷ Dotson, J. (2022). The California Church Shooter and His Connections to China's United Front System. Retrieved from <https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/06/the-california-church-shooter-and-his-connections-to-chinas-united-front-system/>

⁶⁸ Hughes, C. (2005). Taiwan and Chinese nationalism: National identity and status in International Society. London: Routledge.

purpose of self-helping in the community. These associations itself does not construct a security concern. However, they are often being close related to the Chinese authority in modern days to provide intelligence or conduct covert espionage activities and influence campaign in exchange of wealth or material support.⁶⁹ These associations are closely related to the members and their business which come from all of traits of lives. The only in common for them is their connections are often within the Chinese community and it can quite difficult to notice as outsiders.⁷⁰

Historically, as the overseas Chinese are often worker class in the host countries, these Chinese settlements have also conduct sabotage and successions on a foreign soil, aided by Chinese authority to overthrow government of the host countries in 1950s to 60s.⁷¹ As China progressed to be economically influential, violence activities are often replaced by espionage, political donations where some countries do not allow foreign political donations like Germany, and also money laundry.⁷² The dangerous of settlements in the host country is also arguably correlate to the total population of the diaspora. Unfortunately there is not enough consistent data points and population consensus to provide a fully scrutinised quantitative result especially during the time post WWII. The cases here related will be mainly focus on historical incidents, yet it will be reinforced with recently collected data.

Case 4F: Malayan Emergency 1948-1960

Malayan Emergency is a proxy conflict happened in the Malayan Peninsula between British administration with the newly founded government of Federation of Malaya and Malayan National

⁶⁹ Benner, T., Weidenfeld, J., Ohlberg, M., Poggetti, L., & Shi-Kupfer, K. (2018). *Authoritarian Advance: Responding to China's Growing Political Influence in Europe*. Global Public Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://merics.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/GPPi_MERICS_Authoritarian_Advance_2018_1.pdf

⁷⁰ Mattis, P. (2011). China's Amateur Spying Problem. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://thediplomat.com/2011/12/chinas-amateur-spying-problem/>

⁷¹ Corera, G. (2018). Looking for China's spies. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Looking_for_Chinas_spies

⁷² Tatlow, D. (2019). *The Chinese Influence Effort Hiding in Plain Sight*. The Atlantic. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/07/chinas-influence-efforts-germany-students/593689/>.

Liberation Army (MNLA) supported by the China and Soviet Union from 1948 to 1960 at the beginning of decolonisation process after the Second World War. The majority of the MNLA members are Malayan Chinese.⁷³ There were about 3 millions of Malayan Chinese reside in the territory during the conflict where approximately 500 thousands of Malayan Chinese supported the MNLA which was commonly called Min Yuen (People's movement). Min Yuen comply with underground communication, supporting the MNLA with logistics and intelligence. The conflict resulted in a the defeat of MNLA and the Malayan Communist Party. The smooth transition of power between British administration eventually happened in 1960.

Case 4G: Hong Kong emergency 1967

The conflict between British administration against the pro-China trade unions happened in May 1967, shortly after the 12-3 incident in Macau where the Communist claim victory. Before the conflict, there were 174 trade unions had close tie with China and all of them were members of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union (HKFTU) established in 1948. The tactics deployed by the HKFTU include assassination including civilian targets and IED attacks. At the meantime, the Chinese side mobilised a protest at the border between Hong Kong and China comply with militias. The armed militias briefly crossed the border and exchanged fire with the security force deployed in Hong Kong. The militias were defeated. The local population who supported the British administration and denounce the extremism have been portrayed as traitors and being targeted. The conflict end with a total crackdown from British side, destroying insurgencies compound. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai have also ordered a ceasefire in December, 1967.⁷⁴ It was later revealed that China had planned an invasion against Hong Kong during that time but the plan was rejected.

⁷³ Chu, Yingchi (2003). Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self. Routledge Publishing. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.

⁷⁴ Chu, Yingchi (2003). Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self. Routledge Publishing. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.

4.3.2 Espionage and infiltration in the settlements

As we have mentioned Chinese amateur espionage in the paragraph about the role of Chinese students in the overseas Chinese intelligence network, the settlement of Chinese population have also played an important role other than sabotage in the 60s. As the opportunity cost of violence increases after the Cold War, China has realise the problem and shift focus on their strategy of their intelligence network. Direct confrontation remain an option but not the only one. Alternative strategy also deployed to increase the Chinese influence in foreign politics through political donation and covert lobbying. Employed agents often wear disguise of multiculturalism and diversity to create a false representation of Chinese people hence the agenda of Chinese government. A prime example would be Christine Lee Ching Kui whose is under a security alert of MI5 that she have been acting on behalf of the Chinese United Front Work Department (UFWD).⁷⁵

4.3.3 Political donations

Christine Lee Ching Kui is an immigration law specialist in UK and she has covertly worked with UFWD of China to push a "diversity" agenda in the UK, in order to apply the CCP agenda on British MPs on behalf of China. She is closely related to the Labour Party, Chinese community in London and the Chinese embassy which have previously held an assembly in Chinatown, themed in Stop Asian Hate yet violently attacked counter protesters from Hong Kong who questioned their intention and agenda back in November. As a leading figure of London Chinatown and Chinese community in UK, she campaigned on British Chinese Project which claimed to be promoting diversity and equality yet it was a political agenda of CCP to interference UK parliamentarian by disguising Chinese political donation.⁷⁶ Such activities interlinked with Chinese student and Chinese business, aiming to set up a pro-CCP narrative while taking democracy as a protection to

⁷⁵ Corera, G., & Scott, J. (2022). MI5 warning over 'Chinese agent' in Parliament. BBC News. Retrieved 18 January 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-59984380>.

⁷⁶ Ibid

attack the democratic value itself. The CSSA often received disproportionate resources and financial support from Chinese embassy and local business, in exchange of their influence in election that is possible favouring Chinese narrative. The rhetoric was to promote economic achievement to override the human right and international law violation of China, while attempt to keep overseas ethnic Chinese to remain loyal to the motherland. By financing and market access, so the overseas Chinese community remain a closed circle to be manipulated on CCP disposed. It has also raised the concern UK whether it shall be necessary to suggest legislation similar to US Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

4.8 Justification and counter threat

With the cases mentioned above, it is rather clear that the overseas Chinese network has been a longstanding security issue. Chinese agents infiltrate and recruit local population and ethnic Chinese to achieve their goal to impose a Chinese narrative. The main problem is the Chinese narrative does not fit in the civilised world with their human right abuse and predatory tactics around the world. However, it has developed a counter-measure to overtake the liberal narrative such as diversity and anti-discrimination in order to disguise and displace. The ultimate challenge is finding the balance between eliminating security threat that diminished a democratic society and upholding the value of it. Cases are, there will never be a definite answer, but as long as the threat is being recognised and dealt with accordingly, in a fashion that is consider adequate in our democratic tradition, that I have no doubt the threat shall be neutralised. After the MI5 alert took place in 13th Jan, 2022, British Parliamentarian Tom Tugendhat MP and Iain Duncan Smith MP expressed their concern on the increasing threat of democracy from the hostile activity from China. In Pillsbury's Hundred Years Marathon, it is rather clear that China has been taking measures to overtake US leading role in international organisations, namely the influence on African countries to secure support in UN bodies. The Chinese support of WHO's general secretary Tedros and his covering of the origin of the outbreak in the current pandemic have shown the intention and

relations of Chinese activities to diminish the current international system. The Chinese threat is not merely an attempt to infiltrate certain democracies or sovereign states, but a full-scale silent invasion to take over the international system. Hence like-minded allies must be informed and cooperate to counter such threat on a global scale. Namely the recent diplomatic pressure on EU good over Lithuania should be seen as a discrimination on EU product and violation of trade agreement of EU as an entire entity.

To address this issue, it must be handled delicately to avoid de-stabilisation especially in states where there are significant number of Chinese population, such as Taiwan. Unfortunately, I could not provide a well-rounded, detailed solution here, the purpose of this paragraph is merely pointing out the which direction to continue in order to conclude this threat domestically. Rooting up the Chinese state from afar would be a costly yet direct approach to address the issue, however, it would be safe to prepare or at least expect a radical renewal of international order regardless.

5. Methodology: Empiricism-Political

By the methodology of empiricism, it is suggesting the result of civilians involving China policies overseas is a top-down procedure, initiated by authority in Peking. Each of the individuals are presumed to be Tabula Rasa, born in clean state, accumulate sense and knowledge through education and experience. They are not inherited with anything hence nothing could be reference for the prediction of their future behaviour.

As for the hypothesis, the primary actor of threat is the Chinese authority, regardless how the Chinese diaspora presented. The existence of Chinese diaspora itself does not construct a threat, only when authority in Peking decided to utilise these assets for regional or global influence. Cultural aspect of the diaspora group itself is not conflicting democratic values, these individuals shares a similar sentiment to other diaspora group which is quite common. Suggesting the current influence is a result of CCP Psychological operation (PSYOP) verified by defected CCP officials. Especially when Chinese value-based policy are not always consistently enforced. The inconsistency is reflecting in their territorial claim and nationality law. It explains the Chinese policies are dominated by interest but not by cultural values. Historical and cultural factors certainly shape the outlook Chinese values, yet it is motivated by interest in practice.

5.1 Arguments

One of the arguments is, Chinese diaspora are not always part of China's interest. The poor conditions in Overseas Chinese Farms (OCF) set up by CCP during the 1960s to accommodate Chinese refugees previously settled in South East Asia and the purge against them in the Cultural Revolution can prove that point.⁷⁷ Since China do not recognised dual nationality, China's agreement with Indonesia on dual nationality signed in 1955 subsequently cut ties with Chinese

⁷⁷ Lim, L. (2015). *The People's Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen revisited*. New York: Oxford University Press.

settlers in Indonesia once they chose to become Indonesian national. However, that stance quickly change when Chinese nationality law applying in Hong Kong and Macau, CCP arbitrarily interpreted Chinese nationality law and allow dual nationality in the mentioned jurisdiction to accommodate the Chinese nationality forced upon the population with Chinese ancestry, subjecting them to become Chinese nationals despite majority of them already posses British or Portuguese nationality.

The same arbitrary is also reflected in their territorial claim. It is rather clear the motivation behind PRC territorial approach, including Chinese authority before them has always been a geopolitical one, which has little to do with ideology, it is well defined and displayed among the authority on the official stance on Vladivostok against Taiwan or Hong Kong. The cultural or ideological references are merely a form of indoctrination to obtain popular support to reinforce the mandate of the rule.

That being said, the residue of centuries of indoctrination remain significant among Chinese diaspora, it became part of their identity even when the geopolitical interests is no longer affecting them on a daily basis. I will display in detail of the methodology step by step of how the current regime utilise their historical influence and the core of their PSYOP.

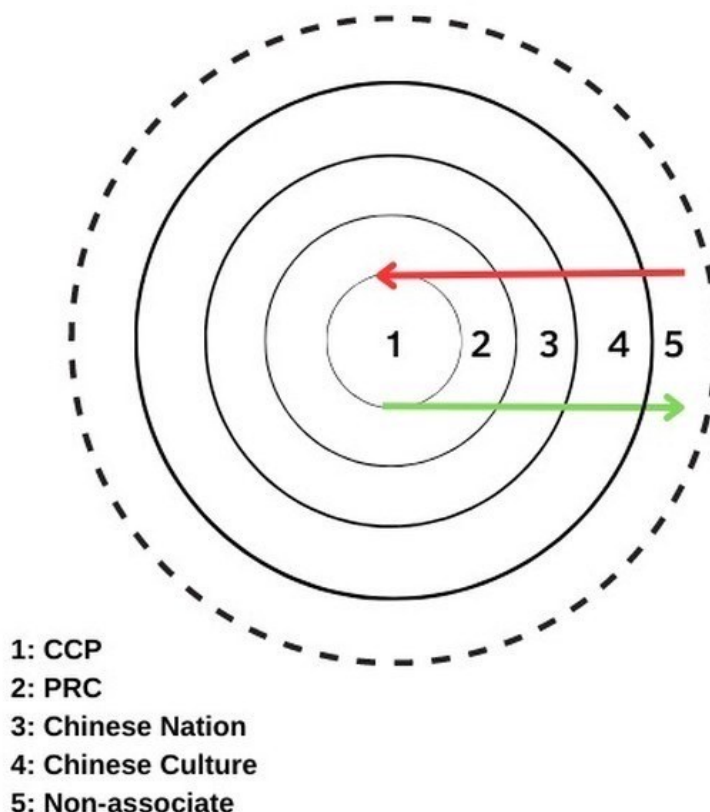
One of the other argument founded with empiricism was the variety of ethnicities who were founded as Chinese agents through out the years. These individuals often are distanced with Chinese cultural influence. They were not born in China, family history is not connected with any Chinese person and does not speak the language from the beginning. They merely developed from sympathisers of Chinese policies and become apologists of it. That including the case of Canadian citizen Cyrus Janssen and American citizen Nathan Rich. And in the recent arrest of Canadian citizen William Majcher, a retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer alleged of gathering intelligence, targeting Canadian parliamentarian and Chinese dissidents in Canada for the

Chinese authority, shows that recruitment of Chinese agents are not limited to those who have direct or indirect link with China, but in a much boarder spectrum. ⁷⁸

5.2 United Front

The Chinese authorities, both currently and in history, has been proved to take full advantage of this to establish proxies overseas, whether that be for intelligence gathering or sabotage. This process of United Front of China (UF here after) is not only creating a temporary political alliance but also introduce cohesion to assimilate during the process. It serves not only as a general direction to approach valuable assets but an expected outcome of propaganda. To make the explanation easier to understand, I will illustrate with a graph (see below).

ILLUSTRATION 1: CIRCLE OF UNITED FRONT



⁷⁸ Major, D. (2023). Who is William Majcher? A closer look at the ex-Mountie charged with foreign interference. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/william-majcher-rcmp-foreign-interference-1.6916512>

Each numbers in graph represent a subject of interest where individuals align themselves to. The ultimate goal of UF is to enlarge every circle by absorbing outer layer to an inner layer in the direction of red arrow in order to achieve a larger circle in general and strengthening the mandate of CCP rule. Be also noted, the layer 1 and 2 are exchangeable as ruling Chinese authority and Chinese state, have it be also applicable to the rule of Leninist rule of KMT of the Republic of China (ROC). Mission of UF varies depending on different level of operation. For example, from layer 2 to layer 1, it would require to associate the interest of PRC to the leadership of CCP, institutionalised as the CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) and NPC (National People's Congress); from layer 3 to layer 2, specified in the design of One Country Two Systems (1C2S) for the “Grand Unification” on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau where were not typically seen as part of PRC, another point to note is that Taiwan, Hong kong and Macau have representatives in both CPPCC and NPC mentioned, proving a linear correlation of UF; from layer 4 to layer 3, is institutionalised as Confucius Institute and other diplomatic communication in modern days, that is not directly affiliated or portraying the more radical ideology, yet serve as an initiate indoctrination of the UF circle. One important point to note to that those who accept the UF circle does not necessarily possess certain conditions, for example affiliation with China in language or ethnicity, it is only easier to operate on targets whom are already in layer 3 or 4 to begin with and the circle itself is easier to get in rather than getting out.

There are plenty of examples in history gone the full circle of UF like Israel Epstein, Ruth Weiss and Richard Frey. It is in fact, much more effective to attract and recruit collaborators, convince them with their known cultural background, examples being the Thousands Talents Program (TTP). Overseas Chinese diaspora are somewhat expected to keep their cultural identity, especially when

they locate in host countries which are taking a rather liberal sense in immigration.⁷⁹ These countries are also happens to be typically considered more democratic and have more concern about individual liberty.

In the case of *United States v. Ma (2020)*, Hong Kong-born main defendant Alexander Yuk Ching Ma and his older brother, China-born co-conspirator David Ma, both former CIA operatives are accused of spying for Chinese authority from 2001. Point worth noting is Mr David Ma has been an important member of varies organisations for Chinese dissidents. He have also been an immigration consultant for Chinese nationals. Another case of *United States v. Wang (2022)*, where naturalised US Citizen Mr. Shujun Wang alleged of spying for Chinese authority, using his cover as leader of diaspora and democracy activists, operate within his community since 2011.⁸⁰ In case *United States v. Ji (2022)*, the convicted Chinese national Ji Chaoqun, 31, entered the US on a student visa and enlisted in the US Army reserves in 2016, acting as an agent for PRC.⁸¹ These series of events are not singular, showing a tendency of what the United Front Work Department (UFD) and Ministry of State Security (MSS) would typically consider assets. It is hard to argue the current security measure is sufficient to counter Chinese intelligence operatives, as long as we still believe cultural identity is entirely harmless.

In the green arrow illustrated above, it shows a general direction of what should be the expected result when addressing this particular security issue. The de-coupling of layer 1, 2 and 3 is rather simple, yet de-coupling of layer 3, 4 and 5 will be a challenge since it is rather controversial in liberal society where diversity is concerned. It is foreseeable that could spark backlashes in public

⁷⁹ Heath, T. (2018). Beijing's influence operations target Chinese diaspora. Retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/beijings-influence-operations-target-chinese-diaspora/>

⁸⁰ Chinese National Convicted of Acting Within the United States as an Unregistered Agent of the People's Republic of China. (2022, September 26). Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndil/pr/chinese-national-convicted-acting-within-united-states-unregistered-agent-people-s>

⁸¹ Fisher, L. (2020). Chinese students face ban amid security fears. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chinese-students-face-ban-amid-security-fears-nmp7plwch>

opinion, which perhaps is the greatest weakness when democracies facing security challenges such as hybrid and unrestricted warfare.

As the graph illustrated above, the weaponisation and manipulation of cultural values are simply part of UF evidentially. There is no other apparent evidence proving it otherwise.

5.3 Migration as weapon

Migration as weapon or Weapon of Mass Migration (WMM) is a newly emerged, sharp strategy operated by hostile states or NSA (Non-State Actors) to influence or sabotage host countries' policy. Operator of WMM organise or allow a certain number of agents, disguised as civilian, migrating to target states in order to operate from within. WMM could enter targeted state with any method, whether that be legitimate tourist visa, academic research exchange programme or less-legitimate entry method like refugees or even US-Mexico border migration.⁸²⁸³⁸⁴ In fact, over six thousands of Chinese nationals already entered the United States through US-Mexican border illegally since October 2022, according to report from Reuters. This is particularly alarming due to China's heavily-handed controlling of outflowing migration, yet the instructions of accessing key route entering US through the Mexican border remain accessible and made popular by Tiktok.⁸⁵ Be also noted, this is not limited to Chinese passport. Some Chinese citizens acquire other citizenship by fast track through investment programme. Usually from countries which are exempted from visa requirement to Western countries. The recent change of immigration rules of UK announced in 19 July, 2023, targeted Vanuatu and Dominica passport holders which both have a investment

⁸² Chang, G. (2023). China's saboteurs are coming to America. Retrieved from <https://voz.us/chinas-saboteurs-are-coming-to-america/?lang=en>

⁸³ Corera, G. (2021). UK expelled Chinese journalists 'working as spies'. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55956245>

⁸⁴ Corera, G. (2018). Looking for China's spies. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Looking_for_Chinas_spies

⁸⁵ Rosenberg, M., & Wang, E. (2023). Migrants find tips on Chinese version of TikTok for long trek to U.S.-Mexico border. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-immigration-china/>

migration scheme, alleged being abused by personnel who impose security risk to UK.⁸⁶ The statement is not only remind us it is a transnational security alert, it is also a recall to the arrest of Meng, Huawei's chief financial officer who obtained HKSAR passport questionably, which enjoy visa free in many developed countries.

The main differences between espionage and WMM, is espionage typically require highly skilled and disciplined individuals with a specific plan and target, operate based on deceptions and secrecy; while WMM utilise the status of migrants and their mass population in host countries to achieve a similar result. WMM do not possess any knowledge in tradecraft, or secret communication with handler for instruction like espionage activity typically required, they rely on their habit and freedom given in the host country to sabotage their target. Instead of covert communication, WMM operate overtly to communicate, tools such as propaganda or fabricated news in a specific language, controlled narratives through leader or migrant community and the last but foremost important, internet. Without internet, tactic of WMM would have been much less relevant due to the higher cost required and much slower speed of passing informations. With the benefit of internet, population of WMM can received propaganda and fabricated information thousands of miles away from host country, just within a few seconds. Not only it can be conducted overtly, the extremely high number of internet article published made it almost impossible to stop, let alone tracing. Especially in the case of China, where various type of softwares like WeChat, Xiaohongshu, Douyin (or Tiktok), Wish or hardwares such as Huawei device are so frequently used among Chinese population, WMM population never have to detach from China, habitually or ideologically while being physically present in the host country, enjoying the entitled freedom and rights at the same time.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Braverman, S. (2023). Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules. Retrieved from <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-07-19/HCWS979>

⁸⁷ Spalding, R. S. (2022). War without rules: China's playbook for Global Domination. New York: Sentinel.

On the other hand, these mass data received from the users, whether they be WMM population or not, are kept in the Chinese servers, held by Chinese companies, accessible and largely controlled by Chinese authority, to understand the user behaviour to push contents that keep the narratives of the users to be aligned with their own. This is precisely where the actual threat lies, the enemy is no longer half a globe away, but domestically, living among us, physically presence in houses and buildings we see everyday. It is would be over-simplifying the situation to describe every individual of WMM is in fact an agent. In fact, there are a small portion of them who do possess the determination to sever all ties and start a new, quiet and peaceful life, away from Chinese influence, and not everyone who are exposed to such information will immediately become a Chinese amateur spy.⁸⁸

Traditionally, WMM were largely mobilised by diaspora leaders whether they are representing, for example a church fellowship or townsman associations. These leaders were organised by the OCAO (Overseas Chinese Affairs Office) under the command UFWD.⁸⁹ It function as part of the United Front strategy as mentioned in previous paragraphs. They remained part of a vital role in physical contact with the WMM, for example organising protests or counter protests etc. They offer employment opportunities for Chinese student in host countries and arranging social and entertainment events around every six month. They appears as a connection point and civilian counterpart of Chinese diplomatic service to extend their network to infiltrates various of targets. In fact, some of the townsman associations had a longer history than the PRC itself and have switched political allegiance throughout history. They have played a vital roles in the early establishment of Sun's ROC, as a channel to contribute resources from underground economy but also served as a contact point of the Manchus to hunt down revolutionaries. They also helped bypass sanction

⁸⁸ Mattis, P. (2011). China's Amateur Spying Problem. Retrieved 10 January 2022, from <https://thediplomat.com/2011/12/chinas-amateur-spying-problem/>

⁸⁹ Heath, T. (2018). Beijing's influence operations target Chinese diaspora. Retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/beijings-influence-operations-target-chinese-diaspora/>

against Mao's PRC and assassination of Chiang's operatives in US during the Cold War.⁹⁰ These townsman association does not necessarily favour one ideology over the other, the main rationale that they engage in Chinese politics from distance was to maintain their leverage domestically and connection to the Chinese mainland.⁹¹ Their survival relies on WMM and their authority over them, often delivered by OCAO. It would be inaccurate to see them as dedicated agents of any regime from the track record, perhaps machiavellianists that exploit options to remain in power.

The similar model continue to develop in modern days where Chinese companies disguised as privately owned yet remain a strong governmental background for example Huawei. It represents the interests of China while keeping it covert. The sanctioned trade between Huawei and Iran is prime example where supposedly privately owned corporates with state-level technology conducting deals that could embarrass China internationally.

5.4 Quantitative research

As mentioned, numbers of population contribute to the success of WMM. Here after I will display significant with the collected data from other institution and research facilities on the espionage cases related to China, the population of Chinese migrants and total population of Chinese diaspora in the United States. Despite the most popular location of Chinese migration was Hong Kong, yet the data displaying below are mainly post-1997, after Hong Kong fell into Chinese control where Chinese migrations benefited from the change of immigration policies. As part of Chinese sovereign, neither Hong Kong SAR raise attention to Chinese espionage activities in the territories, there was simply no data available for comparison, neither it is considered a Western democracy. Therefore the data will be focusing on the next most popular destination which is the

⁹⁰ Chu, Yingchi (2003). *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self*. Routledge Publishing. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.

⁹¹ González, F. (2023). *Situ meitang, patriotic overseas Chinese?* *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 19(1), 119–146. doi:10.1163/17932548-12341481

United States. Despite the espionage incidents are not always openly available and reported, thankfully there are still data could be collected from news reports and public statements.

TABLE 1: DATA COLLECTED AND ESTIMATED

	Espionage related incidents	Migrant population (per 100 thousands) (x-1 annum)	Total Diaspora population (Per 100 thousands) (x-1 annum)	MP/TDP %
2000				
2001	1	11.92	28.65	41.65%
2002	0			
2003	2			
2004	2			
2005	5			
2006	9	15	34.375	43.63%
2007	5			
2008	9			
2009	7			
2010	8			
2011	11	18.08	40.1	45.08%
2012	11			
2013	13			
2014	12			
2015	10			
2016	4	22.6	49.48	45.69%
2017	11	23.2	50.61	45.85%
2018	20	23.8	51.74	46%
2019	19	24.4	52.865	46.15%
2020	26	25	53.99	46.30%
2021	22	24.4	50.64	48.18%
2022	16	23.8	47.3	50.30%

The first set of data about espionage related incident related to China was collected by CSIS, from open sources that is available to the public.⁹² The second set of data about Chinese immigrants in US was retrieved from Migration Policy Institute (MPI), where the primary source came from U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2021 American Community Surveys and Decennial Census 2001⁹³. It also specified that the term immigrants is defined as non-citizens and non-foreign born. The third set of data was retrieved from Pew research center about total Chinese diaspora population in the United States, that include both foreign and native born, US citizen and non-citizens.⁹⁴ The fourth set of data is the ratio between immigrant/migrant population (MP) and total diaspora population (TDP) to assist calculating the estimate and understand the bigger picture. They will not be included in the line chart below. All of the retrieved data is marked in green while the estimating are marked

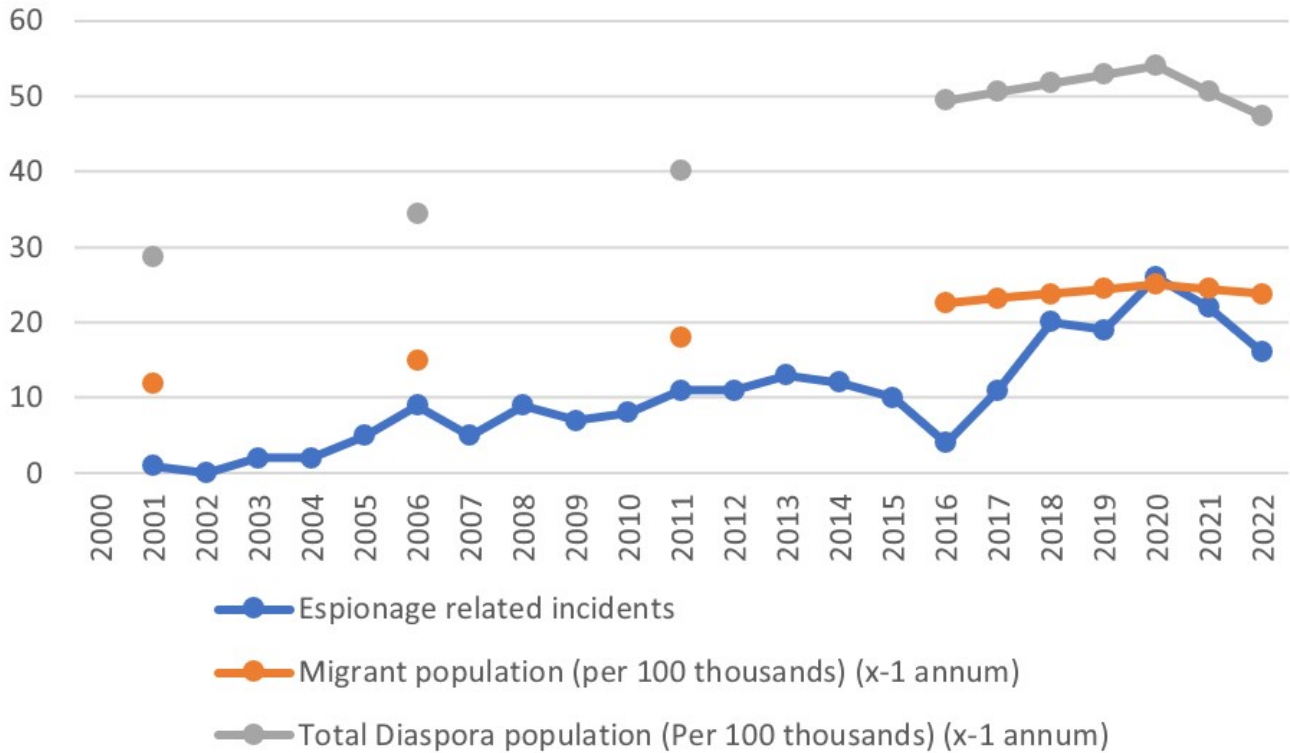
⁹² CSIS. (2023). Survey of Chinese Espionage in the United States Since 2000. Retrieved from <https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/archives/survey-chinese-espionage-united-states-2000>

⁹³ Rosenbloom, R., & Batalova, J. (2023). Chinese Immigrants in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>

⁹⁴ Budiman, A. (2021). Chinese in the U.S. Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-chinese-in-the-u-s/>

in red, that include the percentage of MP/TDP. The estimated numbers are to assist the drawing line graph for readers to understand the correlation. The second and third set of data are also in x-1 annum due for a more accurate comparison.

CHART 1: DATA DISPLAY IN LINE CHART



From chart 1, we can see the correlation is generally positive. It is not enough to justify a correlation. The chart is also suggesting that TDP has a stronger correlation to espionage related incidents (ERI) than MP from the year 2016-22. Therefore I will run the T-test separately for set 2 (MP) and set 3 (TDP), comparing to set 1 (ERI), with the respective year available for input. There will be totally three different tests: first, the green numbers only, except TDP in 2016 since it was isolated and inputting it will invalid the test. Second, both red and green numbers and third, the data from 2016 to 22. Both R and p value will be displayed. Null hypothesis here is there is no correlation between MP/TDP and ERI, alternate hypothesis is there is a positive correlation. Tests result varies in test 1 and test 3, regarding green numbers and year concerning respectively. In test 1 regarding data MP, R value is high yet p-value is also relatively high. Believable due to a

smaller sample size. When the sample size increased to 10 in Test 2, with the estimating numbers which simply calculated by the mean between annum plus and minus, which have no apparent effect of isolated data points, the null hypothesis is rejected, same as the TDP. In fact, the R value is higher comparing to the result of TDP in test 2. And in test 3, the r value of MP raised to the highest and p value is the lowest in tests for MP. However, also in test 3, null hypothesis for TDP is

TABLE 2: TEST RESULTS

	R	p-value	sample size	Null hypothesis
Test 1 (MP)	0.9488	0.051	4	Accepted
Test 1 (TDP)	0.9888	0.011	4	Rejected
Test 2 (MP)	0.7496	0.013	10	Rejected
Test 2 (TDP)	0.7294	0.017	10	Rejected
Test 3 (MP)	0.9622	0.001	7	Rejected
Test 3 (TDP)	0.583	0.17	7	Accepted

accepted with an apparently lowest R value and the highest p-value of all.

Limitation of these test and research as a whole is obvious. The data points are lacking which I have tried to insert without influencing the outcome. The datas of espionage cases only include direct espionage, but excluding petty espionage and smuggling, which are one of the main features of WMM. Including data of petty espionage and smuggling will have a much strong arguments for WMM. Tests designed and expansion provided above could not overcome the natural defect of the data collection, yet it still output a very interesting result to evaluate.

The revelation these results provide are worth considering the exact differences of migrants and diaspora in the case. In the data of 2022, it was the first time since 2000 that percentage of migrants reached 50% of total diaspora population. There is no definitive answer which data set correlate more to espionage incidents in US. However the strong R value across all tests except TDP in test 3,

shows there is general positive correlation between two sets of comparing data. Despite an isolated result, diaspora population is not completely innocent due to the result of test 1 and 2. If there has to be a comparison, diaspora population is less correlated to the migrant population by a very thin margin. In relations to that, the only thing this is confirming in recent years from 2016-2022, is that migrant population is increasingly more correlated to espionage activities due to the increase of percentage in total diaspora population and the increases of cases reported. It does not prove the innocent of diaspora population yet the guilt of migrant population is relatively clear.

5.5 Summary

Summarising the empiricism arguments and evidence supporting the claim, it is rather clear where culture and diaspora stop being a threat to a democratic society. These proxies are not entirely subjecting to Chinese authority as they enjoy the freedom here to a certain extent despite the remote surveillance through the internet. Majority of the issue lies on the Chinese authority which conducted these irregular, hybrid activities, attempting to control and recruit these diaspora and other assets. The quantitative research provide a supportive argument for WMM and an important point where population, whether that be migrant or diasporic is in someway correlate to espionage incidents at least in the case for China. That also paves the way to the next chapter where cultural and ideological values are being investigated, the core that turns regular migrants into Trojan horses.

6. Methodology: Annales School- Cultural significance

Annales School would consider the threat in a different approach where they focus on a longer historical period, the observation begin before the CCP came to power, and even before China abolished the House of Aisin Gioro in 1911, long before the theory of UF was developed by the Bolsheviks in 1917. Contrasting empiricism's focus on evidential high politics, Annales School focus on the interpretation of similarities of events through out the time period and root cause of the events beyond politics and administrative decisions. This school of thought is particularly applicable to the thesis since it is the engagement, behaviour and tendency of Chinese diaspora in the West and subsequently their developed network required investigation and observation which actually goes beyond history of CCP and Communism itself as mentioned in chapter 5.3. The migration history is indeed much longer than the establishment of modern China, in fact, without the assistance of Chinese diaspora, the modern republic will never come true.

The hypothesis here, is by viewing Chinese diaspora a separate entity which in a certain degree a political actor on itself. They may not be consider a very cohesive group of diaspora, yet the community political doctrine has in some way, shape or form, influencing the political decisions of the individual, at least those who sees themselves part of it, hence gathered and becoming a political power foreign to China yet take Chinese interest by heart, whether that be common values or simply habitual behaviours, such as entertainment, language, business or cuisines. Regardless of ethnicity, when an individual is habitually placing oneself close to a certain cultural environment, while one increases the understanding of that particular culture, one also becomes more accepting or at least sympathising to the value of that culture, even when it is apparently isolating from the mainstream society in the host country. Especially when China has been in the state of *Bellum omnium contra omnes*, level of machiavellianism is relatively high which became a norm in the society. It only would be natural to bring that behaviour to the new residing country when entire social values are surrounded by it. It could not simply go away overnight. That particular trait, is what separated the

civilised world and the rest. It is also what dominate between the interaction of Chinese authority and their people overseas.

6.1 Early ideological implication of Chinese diaspora

Chinese overseas network operate began long before the invention of internet. That include all spectrums of business ranging from legitimate miners and workers to human-traffickers or hired assassins, which was fairly common in the 18th century. Due to the constraint of technology and economy, most migrants are young single male leaving China for opportunities. The United States became the most popular destination of Chinese migration due to rather liberal conditions for migrations outlined by Burlingame Treaty in 1868. However, influx of mass of number labour threatened the stability of labour market in North America, hence the background of various restrictive legislations barred any Chinese origin person with a few exceptions from entering US and Canada.⁹⁵ These policies began in late 18th century and largely abolished in the mid 19th century, after the end of WWII. Interesting point to note is the Emperor of China at the time in 18th century supported the exclusion policies due the lost of labour force in China. Those who are already resided in North America may continue to stay, but may be refused when re-entering. These migrants formed secret society as they were in China, that engage in violence activities. These triads and outlaws gained monopoly of human trafficking due to the high risk nature of the business. They accumulated wealth and power in the West swiftly and became the spine of early Chinese diaspora. One of early Chinese migrants were Sun Yat-Sen, who was an activist who lobbied and collect donations against the Imperial rule of China. And of course, by the nature of being a revolutionary, he engaged with different triads leaders to rally for support (note: Chee Kung Tong). Triads leader who found themselves unfit in the West naturally interested in Sun's initiative to expand their power across the oceans. That marked the early marriage of between Chinese

⁹⁵ Miles, S. (2020). The Chinese state and the politics of Diaspora, 1860s–1940s. *Chinese Diasporas: A Social History of Global Migration*, 136–167. doi:10.1017/9781316841211.005

nationalism and triads activities. As KMT and ROC decayed in the 1960s, many of these triads began to switch sides and incorporate into the UF of CCP and PRC. These triads continues to carry the colour of Chinese chauvinism originated by Sun's and his colleagues, the same way the CCP did to legitimise their rules.⁹⁶

6.2 Active interaction with Chinese authority

Active interaction often motivated by apparent common interest instead of value. That include business relating opportunities in China, or simply direct with any Chinese institutions. Triads mentioned in the last paragraphs were by no means subordinates of Chinese authorities, partnership at best. Which is due to they saw their opportunities in a Chinese republic. As they were not widely accepted in the mainstream society in the host countries, they turned to find legitimacy elsewhere. Notable triad figure Situ Meitang who was also a leader in Chinese diaspora played an important role representing the Chinese identity overseas.⁹⁷

As monarchy was abolished in 1911, Situ became an important stakeholder in the newly born republic. His overseas network became the most valuable political assets. That continues after he defected to the Communist, his ability to obtain large amount of foreign exchange was a vital tool for the sanctioned communist to obtain Western assets.⁹⁸ Situ was the prime example how the politically ambitious Chinese diaspora participated in Chinese politics from afar. Many Chinese entrepreneurs in Hong Kong like Henry Fok and Yue-Kong Pao who invested in China through out the Cold War, provided important assets to the war-torn PRC and lay down the foundation of a modernised Chinese industry. Especially for Fok, who provide important logistic support to the

⁹⁶ González, F. (2023). Situ meitang, patriotic overseas Chinese? *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 19(1), 119–146. doi:10.1163/17932548-12341481

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

then-sanctioned PRC during the Korean War despite he was born and educated in British Hong Kong.⁹⁹

6.3 Passive interaction with Chinese authority

Passive interactions means entity involved in the Chinese culture, assuming detached from politics, whether that by birth or by choice. That include approval of a strong and unified China, regardless of what ideology is in charge. Part of the Anti-CCP dissents possess this value, despite they may have severed ties with regime, the ideology they possessed continue to grow whether that be Han-supremacism or other ideologies which in one way or other endorse the cultural China and its exploitation and expansion towards other neighbour entities. This could refer to chapter 2.2 where it described Chinese dissidents who fell into a dilemma, witnessing the success of Olympic games in 2008. The findings is also mentioned in chapter 5.2 where Chinese dissidents arrested for spying fellow dissidents for China. This is a rather difficult point to argue since it is much more covert and it is not a criminality for having certain beliefs without committing an illegal act. The result of such belief cannot be simply materialised nor criminalised, despite it is inherently exploitive, since it is not supporting a certain foreign entity. Yet these passive interactions still strengthen the legitimacy of the Chinese authority. Dissidents who are also public figures continue to promote the mentioned ideology by default subconsciously which is not conducive to public good nor their own activism to overthrow the CCP. Chinese diaspora who sympathise these dissident and accept these arguments will naturally continue to be trapped in this ideology. Which still makes them a supporter of Chinese exceptionalism, which still fundamentally challenging the current rule-based international system.

⁹⁹ Chu, Yingchi (2003). *Hong Kong Cinema: Coloniser, Motherland and Self*. Routledge Publishing. ISBN 0-7007-1746-3.

There is yet to be retaliations against passive activities, since criminalising it would be violating fundamental liberty of the democratic values. Yet by the result of it, it is worth concerning. The ultimate solution of it would be having China Balkanised yet it is extremely costly and outcome of it would be much harder to predict compare with having a dictatorship in China. A complete decoupling with China such as removing all connections internationally would be a moderate answer to this question, yet it will still be a long and painful process due to the new height of globalisation in 21st century, while the risk remain high due to the reaction of China may varies, especially when they possess nuclear weapons. The Chinese problem shares a similar dilemma when we are dealing with Russian assets after 2022, except China accumulated much more wealth and access to our society through globalisation which is proportional to the unpredictability.

The differences between China and Russia is that, China heavily invested in the tactic due to the enormous overseas population size. China has more resources and points of connection to establish its own network that other states can only dream of. The overseas population of Chinese by ethnicity aboard were 49 millions in 2021, among them there were approximately of 33 millions who still speak Chinese as their first language and only 10 millions of them possess PRC nationality.¹⁰⁰ Even when the individuals who possess PRC nationality and 16 millions of ethnic Chinese who no longer possess the skills of Chinese language that can be easily identify, there are still about 23 millions who are naturalised and possess the security clearance and language skills required to communicate effectively. It would be a drain of resources to designate and investigate all 23 millions as security breach. Even when only fraction of them are indeed Chinese agents with mission to sabotage, there are still hundreds of thousands of them that need to be investigated. The numbers are not realistic enough to launch a campaign and criminal procedure. China understand it in full capacity and it construct part of the reason of its confidence on a successful petty espionage

¹⁰⁰ Budiman, A. (2021). Chinese in the U.S. Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-chinese-in-the-u-s/>

on the West. Population is uniquely a Chinese advantage especially when Russia or Iran do not possess an adequate number of overseas population to operate on the same scale. The retaliation and resistance of investigation are also expected to be quite high and inefficient due to the challenge may face in current political climate, even higher risk when it is a outright restrictive policy.

6.4 Summary

To summarise the issue of Chinese diaspora particular ideologically hence culturally, it is rooted from the irredentism and Chinese exceptionalism. These are not necessarily originated by CCP not even uniquely Chinese, but definitely beneficial hence preferential to CCP due to it contribute to legitimacy of the regime. The mentioned ideologies are the product of an incomplete dissolution of the former regime, often an empire. The threat of it is much less visible than a politically one, since these ideologies imbedded in the cultural values are merely assistance to actual activities. Yet that construct a support base of Chinese narratives in democratic states while being incompatible with democratic values. The severity of this issue to the host state is proportionate to the diaspora population, which is part of the key for this issue. There are both soft and hard solution to address this issue, as it has already been outlined briefly in chapter 5.2, yet it will be illustrated further in the next chapter.

7. Findings

Despite the fundamental differences between two methodologies, they both point to the same result, where the cultural significance is still considered an important instrument whether that be individuals channeling their identity or for the authority to keep both the diaspora and their narrative under control. This has a lot to do with Chinese exceptionalism, rooted from their historical perspective. There could be no reliable evidence presentable to quantify the feeling of identify hence the direct relations between it and behaviour of community as a whole. Mainly due to the complexity the identity itself. Culture as a weapon is the point where both methodologies connect which indeed are also open to interpretation and often alternation to be deployed as a weapon. Level of threat is correlating to the number of population, the number of migration in specific when we are looking into trends after 2016.

7.1 Identity of diasporas and its threat

Traditionally, ethnicity, language and nationalities are the factors to define whether a person define by identity. Each represent bloodline, cultural and political identity not only for individuals but also community and organisation. The ethnic factor also serves a greater significance in community and organisation that are multiplied by individuals. Due to the fact that an individual cannot simply choose one's ethnic background, yet when an organisation shows tendency to recruit specific ethnicity and sometimes nationality, it is self-explanatory on the ideological and political tendency, particularly the sovereign state related to the group, if there is any. These groups that either display their allegiance to the sovereign state, covertly and overtly, can be deployed as agents to influence domestic politics, which it will become a national security breach when hostility appears in the bilateral relation between the hosting state and state of allegiance. Similar tactics can be seen through out history and it is certainly not a Chinese origin.

It began since the Westphalian order first introduced in Europe, where the Turks and Russian provoke with their identity in Europe and Caucasus and spread their influence abroad, which can be dated back to the beginning of WWI.¹⁰¹ One thing to note is that neither Turkey nor Russia were nation state, and in fact, similar approach has continued until now, a portion of overseas population that hold strong identity has the tendency to mobilise themselves for purpose of the state related.

These strategy naturally fit in democracies where civil rights are put in constant check, it duplicate the ideology of the Chinese state in individuals as a lingo-cultural presentation which distribute the responsibility down to an individual level, protected as a personal liberty instead of a state behaviour. It is difficult to visualise every actual connection that is heavily rely on acquaintances down to an individual level and that is precisely the where the WMM contribute. It blurs the line between operatives by involving massive amount of civilian intentionally or unintentionally and puts the burden on the individual, clearing responsibility from the official stance, as the Chinese official statement on overseas police station suggested. As small as an individual decision such as using the Chinese application or even purchasing Chinese products online, shipping to the front door which are not a rare scene in the age of globalisation might seem neglectable, it still serves as a valuable data point where China could conduct research on individual behaviour to influence democratic result to a favourable one. Let alone a Chinese speaker, culturally and emotionally attached to China, residing on a foreign soil, with or without right to vote, whom can easily influence other Chinese speakers as they have been easily influenced. Voluntarily or not, those individuals decision results in promoting Chinese influence and incorporated in the spectrum of UF, with or without realisation.

¹⁰¹ Rubinstein, A. Z., & Smolansky, O. M. (2016). The Russian Federation and Turkey. *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*, 15–37. doi:10.4324/9781315481616-8

It would be politically wrong to generalise the entire lingo-cultural influence along with the related ethnic group, while it would be security irresponsible to overlook the relevance and the hybrid tactics employ by enemies, pulling the strings which jeopardise and potentially overthrowing the democratic society. McCarthyism was the answer to contain the spread of Communism during the Cold War, while Kissingerism was the answer to win the West in the Cold War. Now the stage of conflict might have switched, yet the method remain largely similar. The body of hybrid warfare is composed by deception and confusion, while the message convey is relatively straight forward.¹⁰² If every activities are point to the same direction with the same effect, it is likely an organised attempt to achieve an unspoken target: to overthrow and reverse the current international order, which is the point where identity should start being identified as a threat.

7.2 Identifying the ideological issue

Despite the arbitrary definition of Chinese authority, there are still indicators available on this side of the world to determine who and what is considered Chinese or Chinese related. These factors not only applicable to Chinese population but it serve the purpose to determine the security parameter in order to reduce national security risks, these are not hardline indicators which should be consider as a range of spectrum to fit the realistic need according to the resource can be deployed to manage national security risks. It may be influenced by orientalism and both ways yet it is what we could currently rely on to minimised the threat.

Value of cultural are typically seen as simple positive, supported by the devotion of an identity towards a community with genuine motives and execution of that ideal. Its a process of composing that weave the social fabric. While value of machiavellianism in Chinese culture is simple negative of exploiting the existence to an extreme until there is nothing left but chaos due to the ideologies

¹⁰² Spalding, R. S. (2022). War without rules: China's playbook for Global Domination. New York: Sentinel.

imbedded. It will continue to do so until brute forces intervene to re-establish order of China, then it will repeat again when the order has corrupted. Its a process of decomposing. If there is any continuation of spirit or habitual behaviour involve, it is a continuation of piggybacking and power worshipping. It is a combination of every human traits but only taking it to an extreme. Since continuity has never been a concern, there is no past nor future, a lot more consideration could be left out and push the current to an unimaginable extreme. This specific status of human being is not uniquely Chinese, it could happen anywhere on anyone in any societies. Only that Chinese society has been in this circumstances for an extended period of time. The reaction runs deep inside the cultural product it developed from and even more so to those who lived and educated there, that it becomes a second nature. It shares a very similar process of radicalisation, only it is indoctrinated in historical narratives, in textbooks or media which are openly available and it is projected to the entire population instead of only the selected few. It is understandable where mobilising the whole diaspora community is not a realistic projection, yet we must understand the WMM tactic does not required a total mobilisation. As we can see in the case of Hong Kong and Malaya emergency, it only required a portion of the total diaspora population to inflict grave destabilisation.

7.3 Addressing the issue

What is essential is that criminality in this matter of identity is completely based of personal choice and actus reus, which is extremely difficult to prove and scrutinised. However, tendency on the other side only require mens rea, which is more significant as preventive measures than punishment as aftermath. If we cannot simply remove a cultural identity from an individual, then the next option would be fragmentised the original identity to an extent where the centralised authority lose the hegemony over an identity. The debate around AB1726 of the Californian

assembly serves a good indicator of how it has limited Chinese influence among the overseas population and their strategy to manipulate the “Asian identity”.¹⁰³

The myth of Asian or Chinese identity was debunked especially when Taiwanese is no longer be considered a sub-group of Chinese identity, sparked political cohesion among Taiwanese population not just in the US but also in Taiwan. The 2022 shooting of a church in Orange county by Chou Wenwei, a Taiwan-born, and identify himself as a loyal Chinese has prove the point.¹⁰⁴ The rise in rank of former sub-identity is considered a serious threat to the Chinese influence overseas, that fear to lose control of a large track of population that can serve as cover for their petty espionage activity. If the same can be introduced in different states where large amount of Chinese population reside, the threat of Chinese petty espionage can be significantly reduced and be easily identifiable hence controllable. In simple words, divide and rule. The disassociation of sub-identity to China will simply debunk the myth of Chinese nation with a significant effect that destroy the cohesion of a vaguely constructed Chinese identity. The only limitation being the lengthy process required for each sub-identity to construct and with a sovereign state each have to associate with. This will result not only a fragmentation of Chinese identity but also the fragmentation of the Chinese state itself, similar case to the dissolution of USSR and Yugoslavia. This may invoke a certain level of armed conflict for extended period of time in the region, as we are expecting a possible escalation between PRC and Taiwan. But by liquidating Chinese identity and replacing it with a more localised, cohesive and substantial identity that is also reluctant to Chinese rule would at least release the pressure and danger of a unified China and its populated diaspora in other countries for an extended period of time.

¹⁰³ Fuchs, C. (2016). California Governor Signs Bill to Disaggregate Asian-American Health Data. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/california-governor-signs-bill-disaggregate-asian-american-health-data-n655361>

¹⁰⁴ Dotson, J. (2022). The California Church Shooter and His Connections to China’s United Front System. Retrieved from <https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/06/the-california-church-shooter-and-his-connections-to-chinas-united-front-system/>

Understanding the issue is a long-standing machiavellian nature, bred by the Chinese history is the key to to predict and be precautious about the Chinese threat in the West and the existing rule-based international system. From the intelligence and data openly available and collectable at this stage, it is only a tip of the iceberg which the current vetting system and legislation as inadequate to naturalise this hybrid threat. For example in the case of Christine Ching Kui Lee where security warning has been made publicly, no prosecution has been made so far and we are just watching them operating under our eyelids. Even though I agree this must be handled delicately, resources and legal tools available to enforce national security and protect democracy is not sufficient. We can see that in case of Ukraine that poor preparation costs lives. Especially when NATO officials are predicting an invasion of Taiwan is happening in a short future, a mass operation of sabotage and destabilisation of the states who will be supporting Taiwan is foreseeable. With a better preparation, we can target the key saboteurs in the network of the host countries with clear evidences and act swiftly to avoid backlashes by targeting the wrong individuals, taking political risks unnecessarily during war time. This chapter is aiming to provide a thorough analysis and constructive advice to de-risk and pin-point the core of the issue.

8. Conclusion

This thesis is exploring and answering a complex and sensitive topic about one of the most problematic issue contemporarily. China and Chinese diaspora specifically has its uniqueness in the current political stage and their role in the age of globalisation is significant. This thesis is merely a concise explanation of the most important element in the debate. The concept of securitisation and hybrid threat has been well explained with context to assist the illustration of the particular issue. The solutions and answer in this thesis merely represent a personnel opinion, with the data and methodology available at this moment. In fact, during the writing, there are numbers of significant development that required reviewing and incorporation to the thesis. As Chinese factors continue to develop and becoming the priority of NATO allies facing possibly in a near future, this thesis should contribute to the planning of strategies that are responding to the issue. The thesis generalise the West and democratic state was to make it as applicable as possible for our NATO allies and partners that require some understanding of the issue. Meanwhile the effectiveness of solutions also require general cooperation between democratic states, due to the widely distributed network of diasporas. It is important to establish a common understanding to allow our allies to synchronise in operations. As we already understand some relevance of the process in de-radicalisation, the cultural-ideological-physchological aspects that bridged up Chinese operations overseas required to responds with the similar cultural-ideological-physchological operation, at least until a total war we all trying to avoid, broke out.

This thesis only outlined one aspect of the Chinese threat, but there are still considerable amount of uncertainty on other types of threat for example conventional military threat, unconventional operation such as CBRN and outer space technologies. The China question is a difficult one to answer, as it always has been. And the threat imposed has never been so integrated thats incoming from all aspects of life. There is an absolute necessity to respond not only by conventional forces, but a complete mobilisation and it require understanding from the general public. Hybrid threats can

only be dealt with hybrid method, as China is the leading expert on hybrid warfare, answering it would provide us an answer and peace for at least decades to come.

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