CHAPTER 4

Targets and Subjects of Qiaowu

Given the importance of the OC for China’s national interests, this chapter examines exactly how the Chinese diaspora is defined. Some use the term OC as casual shorthand to describe both Chinese nationals living outside of China, as well as ethnic Chinese of foreign citizenship. Such ambiguity has led to disagreement amongst academics, given the patriotic and nationalistic connotations which the term may carry. As such, political scientist Flemming Christiansen argues that although the OC share common origins of a ‘community’ based upon their race, history, economic situation, culture, personalities, and social behaviours, boundaries marking the distinction of belonging to the group are obscure, and hence make formalistic categorization of the OC a difficult process.

In addition, Beijing and Taipei’s own definitions have developed over subsequent periods. While Taiwan has moved away from its traditional position of embracing all OC to focusing only upon Taiqiao during the DPP period, the PRC has become more confident in connecting with ethnic Chinese no matter what their origins. Post-colonial theories suggest that such participation in politics, negotiation of membership, and assertion of identity can all take place despite territorial displacement, and without a necessary reference to shared nationhood. In an age of globalized transnationalism, formations for allegiance and identity are shaped by non-sovereign and non-physical social formations. This chapter shows how the CCP has successfully targeted certain cohorts of the OC by adapting to the changes in the geo-political environment, responding quickly and effectively to their concerns, and by capitalizing on Taipei’s weaknesses and mistakes with its own rival qiaowu policies.

1 Those of Cantonese origin (particularly the older generation) use the term huaqiao loosely to include all ethnic Chinese of any nationality but perhaps adding their country of residence. See Wang, China and the Chinese Overseas, 257; Low, “The OC Connection,” 96.
5 Ogden, “Diaspora Meets IR’s Constructivism,” 1–10.
4.1 ROC Definition of the OC

A diaspora’s ascription to a definitive identity is the product of complex social construction relating to migration processes, domestic politics, and negotiation between both state and non-state actors based upon rational interests. From 1911 until the late 1990s, under the principle of *jus sangunis*, the ROC criteria for classification as an OC was largely based on ethnicity, and included all people of Chinese descent regardless of their citizenship. This definition came into question in the 1970s when Vietnamese refugees claimed that they were ROC nationals based on the fact that they were ethnic Chinese. Until 1990, the ROC automatically granted citizenship to all ethnic Chinese upon their ‘return’ to Taiwan as part of the great Chinese diaspora. Even into the early 1990s, Taipei continued to define the OC as “any person of Chinese descent living outside the borders of the ROC,” and accommodated them in its *qiaowu* policy as it felt a “historical debt of gratitude” and sought to serve their interests in “whatever ways deemed appropriate and feasible.”

However, Taipei’s answer for separating ROC nationality from actually being allowed to live in Taiwan lay in its *Domicile Act 1973*. Under this legislation, there is no automatic right for ROC nationals who live overseas to enter or reside on the island. Such legislation spared Taipei from having to deal with a massive influx of refugees seeking to enter Taiwan based on their ethnic

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