Both the PRC and ROC governments, at some time or another, have had the “primary preoccupation, if not the sole obsession” of seeking to produce their own version of Chinese cultural identity for the OC in an effort to win their political and economic loyalty. In the context of its rivalry with Taipei, the next two chapters illustrate and examine the role of qiaowu in Beijing’s construction and projection of an ideal version of OC identity in order to secure the support of the OC diaspora.

The CCP’s articulation of OC identity has mostly centred around the concept of national unity. However, modern OC demographics hinder the promotion and acceptance of this concept. Globalization, regionalization, and most importantly, diversity of socio-economic background, origin, language, and talent have increased the complexity of addressing, planning, and coordinating qiaowu policy. Hong Liu argued that because of the deterritorialized nature of migration flows, capital, and ideas, it was unlikely that the OC could ever unite into a major Chinese nationalist movement.

A primary goal of qiaowu is to challenge this argument by attempting to boost unity under two major themes. Firstly, qiaowu seeks to substitute and prevent alternative ideologies and loyalties from taking root amongst the OC by building up and exporting a singular mindset of unified ‘Chineseness’. The CCP has promoted its own version of ethnic nationalism and belonging in an attempt to articulate its hegemony over this issue. This is a CCP interpretation incorporating idealistic elements of history, civilization, tradition, culture, and common biological traits that link ethnicity with nationalism. As such,

3 Qiaowu gongzuo gailun, 55.
qiaowu exploits sentimentality for home and village, economic opportunity, and cultural needs.\(^7\)

The second theme of qiaowu work prompts the OC to contribute and benefit from a transnational relationship with a modernized China.\(^8\) Tasks include improving their understanding of China’s political and economic situation, its economic liberalization, its views and position in the international community, and socialism with Chinese characteristics.\(^9\) CCP leaders call on all OC to advance China’s interests, with the assumption that they share in these goals as a part of the Chinese family.\(^10\) The OC are reminded of their cultural or ancestral advantage in making China strong.\(^11\) Over the past two decades, increasing numbers of them have responded positively to this invitation.\(^12\)

Why has China been more successful than Taiwan in obtaining the support of the OC? Does the type of regime matter? Are policies the determining factor? This chapter examines these questions by highlighting the breakthroughs that the CCP has achieved in working with fundamental aspects of OC culture and identity, including educational, religious, and sentimental appeal. The historical background to these developments demonstrates how the CCP has taken advantage of changes in the geo-political environment and delivered a particular version of ‘Chineseness’ which appeals to a broad audience.

5.1 Theories of Ethnic Belonging

National identity, according to political economist Max Weber, refers to the nation-state and its differentiation from other states, and how its subjects are expected to demonstrate political loyalty to it.\(^13\) While most diasporic groups will recognize that they have an obligation of demonstrating loyalty to their host country (or at least their affinity with their homeland/religion without leading to acts of treason) there remains a sense of ethnic identity that serves

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\(^7\) Qiaowu gongzuo gailun, 38–41, 84–85.
\(^8\) GOCAO NZ Research Delegation, “Fu Xinxilan diaoyanhou de xinsikao,” 6.
\(^12\) Shang, Gu, and Li, Dang de gongzuo fangfa shouce, 531–532.