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**Promoting Overseas Chinese Nationalism to Filipinos? Taiwan's
Educational Practices in Philippine-Chinese Schools**

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Promoting Overseas Chinese Nationalism to Filipinos? Taiwan's Educational Practices in Philippine-Chinese Schools

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1 Introduction

In 2016 the Taiwanese government under President Tsai Ing-wen launched the 'New Southbound Policy' to improve Taiwan's cooperation and exchanges with the southeast Asian countries. To fulfil the policy agenda, all existing business, political and cultural networks that Taiwan has established in Southeast Asia are mobilised to pave the way for extending Taiwan's influence. Under the banner of 'Republic of China (ROC)', Taiwan's long-term connection to overseas Chinese in this area via overseas Chinese education is also seen as a valuable asset in facilitating the expansion into this area.

When the Chief Secretary of the Overseas Community Affairs Council (OCAC), Chang Liang-min, delivered a report titled 'the Strategy and Outcome for the New Southbound Policy' in the 9th of March 2017, for example, the connection with overseas Chinese Schools (僑校) and overseas Chinese students (僑生) are also taken into account. Chang highlighted two strategies. For one thing, the OCAC aims to enhance the assistance for overseas Chinese schools to foster the new 'pro-Taiwan' generations. For another, the OCAC also intends to encourage overseas Chinese students to be employed by Taiwan-funded enterprises. The rationale behind these overseas Chinese policies is to exploit the reservoir of the overseas Chinese who are equipped with knowledge of Chinese culture and Mandarin and have a sense of familiarity to Taiwan. Thus, overseas Chinese potentially can serve as the bridge between ambitious Taiwanese businessmen and southeast Asian societies.

OCAC' S EFFORT ON THE NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY

中華民國僑務委員會
Overseas Community Affairs Council
Republic of China (Taiwan)

僑委會新南向政策工作項目

主辦項目1： 人才培育	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 辦理高職僑生建教專班（3年高職+4年科大）• 辦理海外青年技術訓練班（海青班）	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manpower cultivation• Financial supports• Overseas businessmen networks• Tourism promotion
主辦項目2： 金融支援	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 擴大海外信用保證基金規模• 提供貸款信用保證，協助僑臺商取得融資	
主辦項目3： 僑商網絡	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 提升臺商組織功能• 媒促商機交流	
協辦項目1： 基建合作	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 建立僑臺商產業資料庫• 媒介華商人脈	
協辦項目2： 觀光促進	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 結合僑界資源，宣傳臺灣觀光• 辦理相關活動，鼓勵返國觀光	

The current overseas Chinese education policies and the organisation of the OCAC itself are, despite significant reforms, are still under the influence of overseas Chinese nationalism which is employed by the Taiwan government to maintain the transnational ties to overseas Chinese. Therefore, these educational practices, in a sense, function to promote what I refer as ‘Huaqiao Chineseness’, which aims to direct overseas Chinese’s loyalty toward, and make contributions to, the ROC, as the ‘fatherland’. In other word, overseas Chinese education serves to instil a sense of being Huaqiao into the younger generations who in fact have acquired the citizenship of countries of destination. Yet, how can the ‘Huaqiao policy’ with Chinese nationalistic ideology that transgresses the notion of national citizenship and sovereignty fit the New Southbound Policy that aims to improve Taiwan’s cooperation and exchanges with the southeast Asian countries? Can the current Chinese education aided by the OCAC can really enforce the New Southbound Policy in terms of manpower cultivation?



The

Overseas Chinese Policy for the New Southbound Policy

By looking into the case of the OCAC's educational policy for the Chinese in the Philippines based on my one-year field work in a Philippine-Chinese school as a Mandarin teacher, the aim of this article is to examine the compatibility of the educational policies of the OCAC with the New Southbound Policy. First, I will indicate the nature of the current Chinese education in the Philippine-Chinese schools with the educational aids by the OCAC. Second, I will discuss how the overseas Chinese educational policy contradicts the New Southbound Policy and produces a negative effect on Taiwan's international relations.



中華民國僑務委員會
Overseas Community Affairs Council
Republic of China (Taiwan)

僑委會新南向政策工作項目

主辦項目1： 人才培育

- 辦理高職僑生建教專班（3年高職+4年科大）
- 辦理海外青年技術訓練班（海青班）

主辦項目2： 金融支援

- 擴大海外信用保證基金規模
- 提供貸款信用保證，協助僑臺商取得融資

主辦項目3： 僑商網絡

- 提升臺商組織功能
- 媒促商機交流

協辦項目1： 基建合作

- 建立僑臺商產業資料庫
- 媒介華商人脈

協辦項目2： 觀光促進

- 結合僑界資源，宣傳臺灣觀光
- 辦理相關活動，鼓勵返國觀光

2 The Nature of the Chinese Education in the Philippines

Compared to the Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries, who lost Chinese citizenship as early as the 1950s, Philippine-Chinese were legally ROC citizens and Huaqiao until the 1970s. Still in charge of Chinese school affairs, a number of the old-generation Chinese are still particularly eager to revive Chinese education by inviting educational aids Taiwan. Given that Taiwan formed such a close bond with Philippine-Chinese schools in the context of the Cold War, since the 1990s China has been committed to replacing Taiwan's influence to ensure its status as the sole representative of China. The struggle between China and Taiwan for hegemony in the Chinese community thus not only accelerates the revival of Huaqiao Chineseness but also prolongs Philippine-Chinese people's sense of being Huaqiao, and therefore to be taken care of by the two fatherlands. As a result, Huaqiao Chineseness has been revitalised in Chinese schools and has become an essential feature in the following four forms.

2.1 Quasi-state/citizen Relationships through Education

The term 'Huaqiao' has a long-term historical link with the symbol of the ROC, so Taiwan government has never discontinued the usage of Huaqiao in reference to overseas Chinese. The OCAC policy thus considers those Chinese with the memory of having been Huaqiao as potential compatriots, and does not take their true citizenship status into account at all. The ROC's unilateral entitlement to Huaqiao status is based on common, pre-1970s historical memory, imagining that the ROC is still the nominal and symbolic homeland of the Philippine-Chinese. To extend the memory and imagination of being Huaqiao, the OCAC continues to play role of the provider of educational services as if the Philippine-Chinese are still ROC citizens and Huaqiao.

2.2 Fatherland-centred Textbooks and Teacher Supplies

To preserve a minimum degree of Huaqiao Chineseness, textbooks provided by the OCAC for Philippine-Chinese students also have agendas to deliberately build links between students and the so-called fatherland. There are two forms of Huaqiao Chineseness in the textbooks. First, the presence of a textbook from the fatherland itself is a form of Huaqiao Chineseness. Since the textbook is edited by the fatherland rather than a local publisher, students are reminded of their paradoxical situation: that, although they are Filipino citizens, a special link exists between them and the ROC. Second, the political agendas of the fatherland, as expressed in the content of the textbooks, also imply that the Philippine-Chinese are still Huaqiao and that their support is crucial to the national interests of both governments. Through the content of textbooks, Taiwan government can publicise respective policy objectives.

The contents of the ROC textbook, *the Philippine Version of Chinese Reading*, focuses on promoting a positive image of Taiwan. The ROC textbook also introduces some Taiwan sceneries and customs, such as Yangmingshan National Park (p.50, v.11) and Taiwanese toys (p.14, v.12). There is also a lesson called 'My Taiwanese Friends' (p.22, v.12) describing the passion, hospitality,

good manners, generosity, and happiness of Taiwanese people and their friendship with Filipino people.

These textbooks can serve as a reminder for the Philippine-Chinese of the fatherland's existence. No matter how removed the 'ROC' is for students, the textbooks still attempt to fill them with admiration for the fatherland and create a sense of familiarity. As long as students study a textbook from Taiwan, it is inevitable that the book serves as a medium to direct students' identity to the fatherland, rather than the country of residence. Therefore, the impact of Huaqiao Chineseness remains.

Teachers sent by the fatherland are the incarnation of Huaqiao Chineseness. They are on a mission to confirm ties between the Philippine-Chinese and the fatherland that are beyond education. The ROC government program 'Substitute Military Service Teachers' comes with its political agenda, one which seeks to counterbalance the influence of the Teacher Volunteers from the PRC. As long as the Chinese schools take receiving textbooks and teachers from the 'fatherland' for granted, their sense of being Huaqiao would remain to a degree.

2.3 Teaching Mandarin as a National Language

By and large, current Mandarin teaching resembles Huaqiao education of the Huaqiao period. To a certain degree, the Chinese schools still view Mandarin as a national language. I refer to the traditional approach of Mandarin teaching based on the pedagogy of Huaqiao education as 'teaching Mandarin as a national language'(TMNL) which stresses memorisation of Chinese historical and geographic knowledge and classic literature rather than practical communication skills. As the Chinese school system is still dominated by former ROC citizens in their sixties or seventies, they tend to believe that the best way to preserve students' Chinese identity and to improve their Chinese-language ability is to teach Mandarin as if they were still Chinese citizens. As a result, they still insist on the pedagogy of TMNL and refute that of 'teaching Mandarin as a

second language' by which students can acquire practical Mandarin communication skills. In other words, Huaqiao education has extended to the post-Huaqiao period up to now.

3 Two Concerns for the New Southbound Policy

3.1 Devastating Effect on Manpower Cultivation

In general, the current Chinese education is unable to foster Mandarin communication skills because the pedagogy of TMNL is unsuitable for the Philippine-Chinese students. The teaching approach which teaches students as genuine Huaqiao overlooks the fact that the students have learned Mandarin as a second, even a foreign, language, neglecting their cognitive ability and the linguistic context of the Philippines. The unfit pedagogy makes Philippine-Chinese turn away from Mandarin learning, let long the knowledge about Taiwan. Thus the educational practices of the OCAC cannot reach the target of the New Southbound Policy that cultivates Mandarin-speaking, pro-Taiwan Filipino citizens to enhance the cooperation with the Philippines.

3.2 Threat against the national security of the Philippines

As the aim of the current Chinese education is to instil a sense of being Huaqiao and the ideology of overseas Chinese nationalism, it tends to invite suspicion concerning the national security of the Philippines.

First, as the PRC is an opposing force in Southeast Asia, fostering Huaqiao may arouse association that the hidden agenda of Chinese education is to organise 'the fifth column' in the Philippines. Philippine-Chinese used to suffer from the association with communism during the cold war. Hence, the educational policy by the OCAC with a hint of overseas Chinese nationalism may cause confusion that Taiwan also plans to turn Philippine-Chinese into Huaqiao and jeopardise the sovereignty of the Philippines, thus affecting the international relations between these two countries and the outcome of the New Southbound Policy.

Second, as the Chinese education partly aims to maintain Philippine-Chinese Chinese national identity, it may also build a barrier for the students to integrate into the mainstream, creating distrust between the Philippine government and Taiwanese government.

Third, there is a territorial dispute between the PRC and the Philippines over the issue of Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, so China might become a negative symbol among Filipinos. Therefore, the gesture that Taiwan upholds itself as 'authentic China' might arouse suspicion, thus causing problems with its relations with the Philippines.

Conclusion

Although the OCAC considers its overseas Chinese policy as a crucial part of the New Southbound Policy, the underlining presumption of its Chinese nationalism is likely to contradict policy agenda based on positive relations between Taiwan and the Philippines.

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