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A Rising China Affects Ethnic Identities in Southeast Asia

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In this picture, festive lights are reflected on a car in Chinatown on the first day of the Lunar New Year in Bangkok on February 12, 2021. Ethnic Chinese in Thailand are considered the most assimilated in Southeast Asia, and it has been argued that Buddhism is a key factor in this process. Photo: Mladen ANTONOV, AFP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- From Zhou Enlai to Deng Xiaoping, Beijing's policy towards Chinese overseas was *luodi shenggen* (to take local roots), which encouraged them to take local citizenship and integrate themselves into local society.
- In the 21st century, following the rise of China, this policy changed with a new wave of *xinyimin* (new migrants). Beijing advocated a policy of *luoye guigen* (return to original roots), thus blurring the distinction between *huaqiao* (Chinese nationals overseas) and *huaren* (foreign nationals of Chinese descent), and urging Chinese overseas regardless of citizenship to be oriented towards China and to serve Beijing's interest.
- China began calling *huaqiao* and *huaren*, especially people in business, to help China support the Beijing Olympics and BRI, and to return and develop closer links with China.
- Responses from ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have been muted, as they are localised and are participating in local politics. Beijing's new policy did not attract the attention of some Southeast Asian governments which were too occupied with domestic issues.
- This new policy can impact on ethnic Chinese identities in Southeast Asia and cause ethnic tensions which would undermine domestic political and economic stability. It can also make it more challenging for new Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia to integrate locally. In countries such as Singapore, this policy if it continues, will cause ethnic tensions and affect the nation-building process.

INTRODUCTION

Since Deng Xiaoping introduced his four modernisation programmes in 1978, China has risen, and its impact on Southeast Asia has also been strongly felt. This paper briefly examines the impact of the programmes on the nation-building process in Southeast Asia. It will begin with a general observation of the ethnic Chinese position in Southeast Asian multi-ethnic nations, followed by a discussion about *xinyimin* or new Chinese migrants in the region and beyond, and finally an explication of Beijing's new approach towards Chinese living in five Southeast Asian countries and its impact. These countries were chosen based on the availability of information on *xinyimin* to the author.

Southeast Asian countries with majority indigenous populations regard their ethnic Chinese as 'migrants' or 'descendants of migrants'. Therefore, they are expected to be integrated, even assimilated, into the indigenous population. However, some are more integrated into their host society than others. In other words, all have adopted different degrees of local elements—which have made them different from mainland Chinese. The factors that have contributed to the intensive localisation of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia are complex. Apart from Southeast Asian government policies, Beijing's initial policy of encouraging localisation was undoubtedly relevant.

SHIFT IN BEIJING'S POLICY ON CHINESE OVERSEAS

The policy of the People's Republic of China initially followed the Kuomintang (KMT) position, treating all overseas Chinese as Chinese nationals. But at the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung (also known as the Bandung Conference), Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai introduced a new policy later known as *luodi shenggen* (settle down and take local roots) to ease cooperation with the newly independent states in Southeast Asia and beyond. He encouraged overseas Chinese to take up local citizenship and integrate into local society.¹ The majority of these ethnic Chinese have since become localised. In 1980, Deng Xiaoping issued the first nationality law based on single citizenship, which further encouraged Chinese overseas to localise and adopt local citizenship.²

The rise of the Chinese following the success of Deng Xiaoping's reform programme saw a new wave of migrants leaving China. Consequently, Beijing began adjusting its overseas Chinese policy. While the 1980 nationality law remains unchanged, Beijing started to blur the distinction between *huaqiao* (Chinese citizens overseas) and *huaren* (foreigners of Chinese descent) in 2000.³

Beijing began to advocate the concept of 'Chinese Nation' (*Zhonghua Minzu*), and exhibited this at events such as the World Federation of Huaqiao and Huaren Associations, and the Beijing Olympics. The 'China Dream' notion was also promoted to mobilise Chinese overseas regardless of citizenship to serve the interest of China.⁴ This policy can be characterised as 'luoye guigen' (return to original roots). It appears that the policy aims to halt both the localisation of Chinese new migrants and further localisation of ethnic Chinese as a whole.

NEW CHINESE MIGRANTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE WEST

It should be noted that these new migrants differ from the earlier migrants in a number of ways. The new migrants are better educated than the earlier ones; some of these migrants have large amounts of capital and special skills and hence are more mobile.⁵ They are often considered as “transnational Chinese” and may not settle in the country.⁶ It is particularly the case with those who come to Southeast Asia. Those with capital and the required skills often use it as a stepping stone to go to the more developed countries when opportunities arise.

The Chinese new migrants include businessmen, professionals, students, family reunion members, refugees, workers and illegal migrants.⁷ In Southeast Asia, migrant workers, who are often called foreign workers or guest workers, are legally not allowed to settle permanently in the country where they work. They are required to return to their country of origin, in this case China, once the projects are completed.

In reality, some of these workers can become settlers due to weak legal systems and rampant corruption in some Southeast Asian countries.

The number of Chinese migrants leaving China since its rise is estimated to be 5-6 million, with about 80% of these now living in developed countries (especially the West). The rest—about 20%—went to Southeast Asia.⁸ The former group has resulted in the emergence of new migrant Chinese societies in the West. In Southeast Asia, the number of new migrants in proportion to local ethnic Chinese is small and has not transformed local Chinese communities. The number of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asian countries are as follows, based on 2010 estimates.

Table 1: Number of “Chinese overseas” in Southeast Asia (2010) & *Xinyimin*

Country	Ethnic Chinese (excluding new migrants)	New Chinese Migrants
Thailand	7,513,000	200-300,000
Malaysia	6,541,000	100-150,000
Indonesia	5,000,000	100-120,000
Singapore	2,808,000	500-600,000
Philippines	1,243,000	150-200,000
Myanmar	1,054,000	100,000
Vietnam	990,000	50-100,000
Laos	176,000	10,000 or more
Cambodia	147,000	10,000 or more
Brunei Darussalam	50,000	unknown
Total	25,522,000	1,350,000

Source: Taiwan Qiaowu weiyuan hui (The Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of Taiwan) accessed 4 January 2016; excepting the figure for Indonesian Chinese.⁹ The new migrant figures are based on Zhuang Guotu (May 2007).

As shown in Table 1, the number of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia is huge compared to new migrants. The highest number of new migrants is probably in Singapore (17% when

compared to local ethnic Chinese), while the lowest number is found in Indonesia and Malaysia (lower than 2%.) In all these cases, the local Chinese are clearly dominant. This is not the case in countries such as the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where new Chinese migrants outnumber the local Chinese population (as indicated in Table 2).

Table 2: The total number of ethnic Chinese in the West, including new migrants:¹⁰

Country	1970/71	2006
Canada	124,600	1,487,585
USA	435,062	2,565,458
New Zealand	14,860	140,570
Australia	36,638	669,890

Based on the above information, the problem of Chinese new migrants in Southeast Asia should not be serious as they are only a small fraction within the local ethnic Chinese community, whereas Beijing's new overseas Chinese policy would have a greater impact on the identities of ethnic Chinese, potentially undermining socio-political stability in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, due to racial/ethnic prejudices and negative local perception of Beijing, Chinese new migrants have often become a political issue and hence have had a significant impact.

IMPACT ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN CHINESE IN FIVE COUNTRIES

Indonesia

The Chinese in Indonesia are divided into the *peranakan* Chinese (Indonesian-speaking Chinese) and *totok* Chinese (Chinese-speaking Chinese). The 32 years of Suharto rule, which experienced his assimilation policy and the elimination of the three Chinese cultural pillars¹¹ have turned the majority of Chinese Indonesians into *Peranakan* by definition. In other words, most Chinese in Indonesia have lost active command of the Chinese language and often use Indonesian or some local language for communication. About 24% still use Chinese as their home language, but these are mostly of the older generation.¹² Many successful businessmen are still able to speak Chinese.

Chinese Embassy officials are able to maintain close ties with some Chinese-speaking groups,¹³ but not Chinese Indonesians in general. When prominent Indonesian Chinese businessmen were invited to China to attend *Huaqiao Huaren* businessmen gatherings, few participated. Some chose to avoid such gatherings.¹⁴ During the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay in Jakarta, very few old Chinese Indonesian businessmen participated. The majority stayed away. It is also worth noting that only a small number of Chinese Indonesians served in the Beijing Olympics as volunteers.¹⁵

In 2012, the chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO), Li Yinze, visited Jakarta and spoke at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. He was quoted to have urged young Chinese Indonesians to learn the Han language (*Hanyu*) so that they could identify themselves with the Chinese nation. He even said that Chinese Indonesians should not be afraid as they had an assertive China as the backer. Some local Chinese criticised his speech, and he was told that as a guest he should know how to behave.¹⁶ In 2015, a Quanzhou local government contacted the most affluent Chinese Indonesian family, the Oey family,

congratulating them on the success of their business, and informing them that their ancestral house had been identified. The family was welcomed to Quanzhou to develop it into an ancestral memorial home. In response, however, the Oey family called for a press conference at which they announced that they did not have any ancestral house in Quanzhou.¹⁷

It is also important to note that the so-called Mandarin fever did not establish full-fledged Chinese-medium schools in Indonesia. Mandarin is only studied in Indonesia as a foreign language, and many non-Chinese have also studied the language.¹⁸ Unlike in the past, anti-Chinese groups in Indonesia focused their recent opposition and attacks on local Chinese tycoons and mainland Chinese workers whom they claim to have stolen Indonesian jobs.¹⁹

According to the Indonesian Manpower Ministry, in 2020, there were only 35,781 Chinese workers in Indonesia, constituting 36.18% of the total foreign workers.²⁰ They worked in Mainland Chinese companies that engaged in various projects, from mining to industrial parks. They were supposed to cover gaps in expertise unavailable in Indonesia, but opposition politicians and Indonesian workers federations have insisted that the majority of mainland Chinese workers were ordinary workers whose work could have been undertaken by Indonesians.²¹

There are also hundreds of Mainland Chinese students and teachers in Indonesia as well as many Mainland Chinese businessmen present in various parts of Indonesia. China's chambers of commerce have also been established in Indonesia.²² Their presence has been felt by the local population.

Malaysia

Malaysians of Chinese origin tend to possess a much stronger Chinese cultural identity. Most of them, with the exception of the *peranakan*, are still able to speak Chinese dialects.²³ Where identity is concerned, they tend to be locally oriented, and those who feel an orientation towards China are very few, and of advanced age.

In 2015, Chinese Ambassador Huang Huikang visited Chinatown in Kuala Lumpur and encouraged Chinese Malaysians to stand up against racism; in another speech, he mixed the terms *huaqiao* and *huaren* and said China was their "maternal home".²⁴ Many intellectuals criticised Huang for being insensitive and Malay youths expressed anger over his statement.

Malaysia has in place a successful retirement and residence scheme for foreigners which attract, among others, Mainland Chinese.²⁵ It is worth noting that a Mainland China university branch has been established in West Malaysia in 2015. This was arranged when Najib Razak was prime minister.²⁶ It is interesting to note that the presence of this university and mainland Chinese students in the country were not made into an issue by the UMNO youth and other radicals.

Nevertheless, the BRI projects became a political issue during the 2018 General Election. During the election campaign, for instance, Mahathir criticised the Forest City project which "will leech money and jobs to foreign companies while bringing in hundreds of thousands of immigrants."²⁷ After Mahathir re-emerged as the new prime minister, some of the BRI

projects were renegotiated.²⁸ The topic of China and new immigrants can easily be made into an issue in Malaysia.

Singapore

Singapore is unique for being a migrant state, and ethnic Chinese making up the majority. Like the two country examples above, the ethnic Chinese in Singapore are also divided. The peranakan Chinese community is small in number, and the Chinese-speaking group is large. Nevertheless, because of the national education system, the working language in Singapore is English.

Singapore was officially established in 1965, and initially, the concept of the nation was based on the melting pot, but since 1995, Lee Hsien Loong, then deputy prime minister, adopted the “salad bowl” idea and stressed the importance of shared values for Singaporeans.²⁹

China’s soft power is thought to be influential in Singapore. However, the Singapore government is eager in promoting its own culture. Even in the promotion of Chinese language and culture, the emphasis has been its local characteristics. The Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre was established to develop a local form of Chinese culture.³⁰ Singapore’s political identity has also grown strong, and young Singaporeans have a much stronger sense of national identity than their forefathers.

The number of new migrants in Singapore was estimated by Beijing to be between 500,000 and 600,000.³¹ Some of them have become Singapore’s permanent residents and new citizens. During the past few General Elections, migration was a hot election issue.³² This resulted in the government tightening up its migration policy whilst continuing to recognise that new migrants are needed for Singapore’s continuous prosperity and development.

As the relations between *xinyimin* and Chinese Singaporeans are sometimes less cordial, the government has emphasised multi-cultural education for Singaporeans and created mechanisms to facilitate the integration of new migrants into the main streams of Singapore society.

The Philippines

The Chinese in the Philippines are diverse, with some being well-integrated and even assimilated. This community is known as Chinese mestizos. These are offsprings of a Chinese male and a Filipino female, quite like the peranakan Chinese. But while peranakan Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia are still considered as a separate group from the indigenous population, Chinese mestizos are regarded as Filipinos.³³ Former President Cory Cojuangco Aquino and the late Manila Archbishop Cardinal Sin Jaime are Chinese mestizos.

Most Philippine Chinese are colloquially referred to as Tsinoy,³⁴ and many have embraced Catholicism, just like most Filipinos.

In the 21st century, however, the Chinese Embassy established close ties with the Philippine Chinese community, especially those who still speak Chinese.³⁵ Although rising China

attracts those who have business links with China, most Tsinoyes still identify with the local population.

The number of new Chinese migrants in the Philippines is estimated at around 250,000 to 300,000. A considerable number of the new Chinese migrants, the *xinyimin*, are mainly businessmen and workers in certain commercial sectors, especially in the gaming industry.³⁶ This gaming industry contributed significantly to Philippine economy. Nevertheless, it also gave ample opportunities for crime syndicates to operate. While many *xinyimin* have high economic status and often display their wealth, there is also an increase of illegal new migrants, their presence often give rise to ethnic tension in society. This tension could be found not only between the *xinyimin* with indigenous Filipinos, but also between *xinyimin* and Tsinoyes who complained that these Chinese new migrants have spoiled the good relationship between Tsinoyes and Filipinos.³⁷ The *xinyimin* issue is further complicated with the South China Sea dispute, which often impacted Chinese-Filipino relations.

Thailand

Ethnic Chinese in Thailand are the most assimilated in the region, and it has been argued that Buddhism is a key factor in this process. The number of new Chinese migrants in Thailand are estimated at between 350,000 and 400,000.³⁸ They live separately, mainly in so-called new Chinatowns. They are better educated than the older Chinese migrants with many holding a university degree. Many others are students as it is generally easier to get into Thai universities than those in China.³⁹ Overseas Chinese Affairs Office officials have also visited Bangkok to promote overseas Chinese collaboration with China.⁴⁰ They encourage Thai Chinese to learn Chinese. In fact, there are numerous Confucius Institutes in Thailand.

But since ethnic assimilation of people of Chinese origin is very high in Thailand, the government is convinced that these Thais would not become China-oriented. The Thai authorities also believe that these new migrants would eventually be assimilated into Thai society.

However, some scholars do not think that it would be the case. One scholar noted that there was no need to assimilate the new Chinese migrants but to make them have a sense of belonging to Thailand.⁴¹ How to make these new migrants have a sense of belonging to their adopted land in a globalising world remains a big challenge.

CONCLUSION

Beijing's policy towards Chinese living overseas, and ethnic Chinese populations in other countries, has recently changed. After China's rise, although maintaining a single nationality is still upheld, China is attempting to blur the distinction between *huaqiao* and *huaren*, urging Chinese overseas to be oriented towards China, and increasingly disregarding their difficult position in Southeast Asia. Beijing might not be fully aware that Southeast Asian ethno-nationalism remains strong and ethnic Chinese are facing these pressures.

Inter-ethnic tensions in Southeast Asia between ethnic Chinese communities and indigenous majorities are a reality. China's new policy may inadvertently affect ethnic Chinese

identities in the region and create tensions, undermining political and economic stability. Moreover, the presence of *xinyimin* has also complicated the local socio-political landscape. China's new policy may slow down the integration of *xinyimin* into local communities. If this was the intention of the new policy towards the *xinyimin*, then Beijing may have achieved its objectives.

¹ Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking's Changing Policy 1949-1970* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1972) p. 134.

² Leo Suryadinata, "China's Citizenship Law and the Chinese in Southeast Asia", in M. Barry Hooker, ed. *Law and the Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002). pp. 169–202 (particularly p. 182)

³ Leo Suryadinata, "Blurring the Distinction between *Huaqiao* and *Huaren*: China's Changing Policy towards the Chinese Overseas," *Southeast Asian Affairs 2017*, Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2017, pp. 101-113.

⁴ For a detailed discussion on these points, see Leo Suryadinata, *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas: A Study of Beijing's changing Policy in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2017) pp. 3–20, 143–51, 154–79.

⁵ For a discussion on these new migrants see Liao Jianyu (廖建裕), *Quanqiuhua Zhong de zhonghua yimin yu huaqiaohuaren yanjiu* (全球化中的中华移民与华侨华人研究), *Huaqiao huaren lishi yanjiu* 华侨华人历史研究 No.1 (2012), pp. 1-17; Leo Suryadinata, *Chinese Migration in Southeast Asia: Past and Present*, in *CHC Bulletin* Issue 9 (May 2007), pp. 1-7.

⁶ Liao Jianyu (廖建裕), *Xian dangdai de zhonghua yimin ji qihouyi: guigen, shenggen, shigen yu wugen*, (现、当代的中华移民及其后裔：归根、生根、失根与无根), *Asian Culture* 亚洲文化, no. 39 (August 2015), pp.45-60.

⁷ Liao Jianyu (廖建裕), *Quanqiuhua zhong de zhonghua yimin*.....p. 15.

⁸ Zhuang Guotu, 庄国土, *Zhongguo xinyimin yu dongnanya wenhua* (中国新移民与东南亚文化), *CHC Bulletin*, Issue no.9 (May 2007), p. 10.

⁹ Regarding the number of Chinese in Indonesia, the figure given by Taiwan's sources was 8,011,000. Zhuang Guotu, writing in the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO) publication, gave a higher figure of over 10 million. (Zhuang Guotu 庄国土, *Huaqiao huaren fenbu zhuangkuang he fazhan quxiang* (华侨华人分布状况和发展趋向), 《研究与探讨》, 中华侨务第一刊, 2010年 No. 4. (Accessed 4 January 2016) In fact, the Indonesian Census of 2010 reported that the Chinese constitute about 1.2% of the population, which puts their total at less than 3 million. My study shows that a more likely figure is around 2% of the population, i.e. just under 5 million. See "How many ethnic Chinese are in Indonesia?", in *Asian Culture* (June 2004), pp.63-74.

¹⁰ Based on tables published in Leo Suryadinata, "New Chinese Migrants in Developed 'Migrant States': Five Case Studies. *CHC Bulletin*, Issues 16 & 17 (November 2010 & May 2011), pp.2-5.

¹¹ This usually refers to Chinese-medium schools, Chinese mass media and Chinese organizations.

¹² Aris Ananta et.al. *Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015.

¹³ Benny G. Setiono. "Beberapa catatan mengenai perkembangan organisasi-organisasi Tionghoa di Indonesia", *Yinni Jiaodian* 印尼焦点 (Indonesia Focus) HKSIS, July 2008, pp.74-77.

¹⁴ For instance, The Djarum Group and the Lippo Group were not present at the World Huaqiao Huaren Entrepreneurs Conference held on 6-7 July 2015 in Beijing.

¹⁵ To my knowledge, from Jakarta only the president of Yinhua Writers Association served as a volunteer.

¹⁶ Beijing shi qiaoban zhuren Li Yinze fang yinni jianghua yinqi qiaojie buman“ 北京市侨办主任李印泽访印尼讲话引起侨界不满。Guoji Ribao 国际日报, 21 April 2012.

¹⁷ Fei Teli (费特利), ZhenJi shouxi yunying zhang Huang Zhi Sheng chengqing, Huang Jia Quanzhou wu zuwu 針記首席運營長黃志勝澄清·黃家泉州無祖屋, Qiandao Ribao 签到日报, 9 May 2016.

¹⁸ Aimee Dawis, “Chinese education in Indonesia: Developments in the Post-1998 Era,” in *Ethnic Chinese in contemporary Indonesia* edited by Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2008) pp.75–96; Personal observation.

¹⁹ Leo Suryadinata, “Anti-Ethnic Chinese Groups in Indonesia Likely to Strike Again”, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Perspective, Issue no.8 (3 February 2020); Leo Suryadinata, “Tensions in Indonesia over Chinese Foreign Workers during Covid-19 Pandemic”, *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective*, issue no.73 (6 July 2020).

²⁰ Jumlah tenaga kerja asing di Indonesia 98.902, TKA China terbesar - Page 2 (kontan.co.id) (13/5/2021)

²¹ This may not be true. Nevertheless, until recently, many trade union leaders still hold this view. See <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/05/11/12292611/tka-china-masuk-indonesia-saat-pandemi-covid-19-kspi-ironi-pemerintah?page=all>. (Accessed 20 May 2021)

²² Leo Suryadinata, New Chinese Migrants in Indonesia: An Emerging Community that Faces New Challenge. *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspective* No. 61 (11 June 2020).

²³ In Malaysia, Chinese-medium schools have never been banned and a large number of Chinese Malaysians still go to these schools, and hence are able to speak and write Chinese.

²⁴ For a discussion on this event, see Leo Suryadinata, *The Rise of China and the Chinese Overseas: A Study of Beijing’s Changing Policy in Southeast Asia and Beyond*. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2017) pp. 111–120.

²⁵ Danny Wong Tze Ken, “The Xinyimin Presence in Malaysia: A New Transnational Experience”, Webinar in ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 8 December 2020. Why there was no strong opposition from the Malays is a question that requires further investigation.

²⁶ Peter T.C. Chang, “China’s Soft Power and the Overseas Chinese, Case Study: Xiamen University in Malaysia”. ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute webinar, 8 December 2020.

²⁷ Read more at <https://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/look-east-policy-not-about-selling-land-foreigners-dr-mahathir-tells-sultanonly> brought the benefit was considered as creating the Chinese enclave.

²⁸ China, Malaysia restart massive 'Belt and Road' project after hiccups | Reuters (Accessed 15 May 2021)

²⁹ “No Melting Pot, Singapore”, 29 January 1995. Reported by the Associated Press. Both melting pot and salad bowl are metaphors used in the United States. The former refers to “cultural assimilation”, i.e. an American Culture without cultural diversity, while the latter refers to an American culture with cultural diversity, i.e. cultural pluralism. However, Lee Hsien Loong used the term “pluralism” to describe the “new” policy.

³⁰ Ho Yikai, “China Cultural Centre and Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre: A Comparison”, Webinar at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 8 December 2020.

³¹ This figure cannot be verified. See Wang Wangbo (王望波) and Zhuang Guotu (庄国土), 2009 nian haiwai huaqiao huaren gaishu (2009年海外华侨华人概述, Beijing: shijie zhishi chubanshe 世界知识出版社, 2011, p. 23.

³² In most of the general elections from 2011 to 2020, migration has always been an issue. It should be noted that it was not confined to Chinese new migrants, but as the Chinese were the

largest in number, the impact was most significant. In the last general election, the issue still prevailed. See Singapore GE2020: Jobs, immigration, cost of living are key issues in party political broadcast, *Politics News & Top Stories - The Straits Times* (Accessed 20 May 2021).

³³ Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in the Philippine History*, *Asia* no.18 (Spring 1970) pp. 1–15.

³⁴ Teresita Ang See and Carmelea Ang See, “The Rise of China, New Immigrants and Changing Policies on Chinese Overseas: Impact on the Philippines”, in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2019*, Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2019, p. 275-276.

³⁵ Interview with a Philippine researcher on the ethnic Chinese, Guangzhou, 12 November 2019.

³⁶ Teresita Ang See, “Xinyimin in the Philippines: Issues and Challenges”, Webinar at ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 7 December 2020.

³⁷ Teresita Ang See, Webinar at ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 7 December 2020.

³⁸ “New Wave of Chinese Coming to Live in Thailand”, Bangkok”, New wave of Chinese coming to live in Thailand (bangkokpost.com) (Accessed 20 January 2021).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Guowuyuan Qiaoban fuzhuren Tan Tianxing zoufang taiguo qiaotuan zuotan tu 国务院侨办副主任谭天星走访泰国侨团座谈。 www.gqb.gov.cn/news/2016/1123/41229.shtml (Accessed 20 January 2021).

⁴¹ Yos Santasombat holds this view, see New wave of Chinese coming to live in Thailand (bangkokpost.com) (Accessed 20 January 2021).

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