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Abstract: After several decades' hiatus, there has been a sustained surge of Chinese emigration and resurgent opportunities for transnational activity since 1978. In this paper, we engage with the burgeoning literature on transnationalism, focusing on the roles of immigrant agency, disaporic communities, and nation states to examine the means and consequences of diaspora-homeland interactions in different host societies. Specifically, we address the following questions: (1) How do emigration histories and receiving contexts matter in shaping diasporic formation? (2) Who is involved in diaspora-homeland interactions and what roles do different actors play? (3) What bearing do immigrants' transnational engagements have on their hostland integration? Through a comparative analysis of contemporary Chinese immigration to Singapore and the United States, we examine the interrelations among different actors and the roles each plays in cross-border activities. We find that differences in emigration histories and receiving contexts affect diasporic formation. We also find that immigrants maintain ties to their homeland, or sending state governments reach out to expatriates, through diasporic communities despite differences in diasporic formation. Moreover, varied levels of diaspora integration into the receiving countries affect how receiving states respond to immigrant transnationalism. Finally, we discuss the implications of homeland-diaspora interactions, showing that transnationalism is utilized by new Chinese immigrants as an alternative means to socioeconomic status attainment and that it facilitates, rather than hinders, immigrant integration into host societies.

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Introduction

The Chinese Diaspora, spreading in more than 150 countries, is arguably one of the largest and oldest diasporas in the world. The people of Chinese descent living outside of China (including Hong Kong and Macau) and Taiwan were estimated at about 48 million as of 2008.[1] The vast majority (nearly three-quarters) are found in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, where Singapore is a nation-state with a Chinese majority, 74 per cent of its total population of 5.31 million. Outside of Asia, the United States has the largest ethnic Chinese population, estimated at 3.8 in 2010.

History has witnessed various streams of emigration from China to the outside world since ancient times and from Chinese diasporic communities to other countries since World War II (Wang, 1991). Between 1949 when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded and 1978 when the PRC government launched its economic reform, emigration from China was reduced to a trickle, and diaspora-homeland ties severed. After several decades' hiatus, China has experienced a new surge of emigration, which has been perpetuated by China's economic transformation and relaxed control over emigration, revived disaporic networks, immigration policy reform in migrant-receiving states, and global geopolitical and economic restructuring. Since 1978 the total number of emigrants from China has surpassed the eight-million mark with little sign of slowing down (Wang & Zhuang, 2011).

However, contemporary Chinese immigrants are not distributed evenly across the vast Chinese Diaspora, rather, they are disproportionately resettled in developed countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Singapore. For example, Singapore has become the most preferred Asian destination for Chinese immigrants, where immigrants from the PRC are estimated to account for more than 20% of its foreign born resident population and half of its non-resident population (Liu, 2012). The United States, in contrast, took the lion share (about one quarter) of the total emigration from China in the past three decades, even though its ethnic Chinese population accounted for only 1.2 per cent of the total US population and only 8 per cent of the total Chinese-descent population world-wide. Parallel to the surging waves in Chinese emigration are also highly visible transnational flows between China and the states of Chinese immigrant resettlement.

In this paper, we aim to examine the patterns and consequences of transnational engagements among "new" Chinese immigrants, those emigrated from China after 1978. Through a comparative analysis of contemporary Chinese immigration to Singapore and the United States, we address the following questions: (1) How do emigration histories and receiving contexts matter in shaping diasporic formation? (2) Who is involved in diaspora-homeland interactions and what roles do different actors play? (3) What bearing do immigrants' transnational engagements have on their hostland integration? Through a comparative analysis of contemporary Chinese immigration to Singapore and the United States, we examine the interrelations among different actors and the roles each plays in cross-border activities. We find that differences in emigration histories and receiving contexts affect diasporic formation. We also

find that immigrants maintain ties to their homeland, or sending state governments reach out to expatriates, through diasporic communities despite differences in diasporic formation. Moreover, varied levels of diaspora integration into the receiving countries affect how receiving states respond to immigrant transnationalism. Finally, we discuss the implications of homeland-diaspora interactions, showing that transnationalism is utilized by new Chinese immigrants as an alternative means to socioeconomic status attainment and that it facilitates, rather than hinders, immigrant integration into host societies. In so doing, we first engage with the burgeoning literature on transnationalism, especially in the context of diaspora-state linkages. We then offer an overview of changing patterns of Chinese emigration to and contexts of reception in two migrant-receiving countries to highlight variations on diasporic formation. Thirdly, we examine the interplay of individual agency, diasporic forces, and state actions and its effects on immigrant transnationalsim. Lastly, we discuss the bearing that diaspora-homeland dynamics have on immigrant integration into host societies and the extent to which the experience of new Chinese immigrants may transform the normative assimilation story. Our data were collected from two parallel research projects by the authors between 2008 and 2012 and multi-site fieldwork in the USA, Singapore and China. Both projects relied on mixed methods that combined an in-depth survey of online listing of Chinese immigrant organizations, interviews with organizational leaders in diasporic communities and with government officials in China, participatory observations, and content analysis of major local and community newspapers.[2]

Transnationalism: Immigrants, Disaporic Communities, and Nation States

Transnationalism is an old phenomenon, inherent to the lived experiences of international migrants around the world. It is generally defined as 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch, Glick-Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1994: 6). It is also more specifically defined in terms of occupations and activities that require *regular and sustained* social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation (Portes, 1994). What is new about contemporary transnationalism is the scale, diversity, density, and regularity of such movements and their socioeconomic effects on migrants themselves, diaspora communities, and their host countries on one end, and on family members left behind, sending communities, and home countries on the other. Thus, it is the intensity of exchanges, not just individual occurrences (e.g., cash remittances, homeland trips, long-distance calls or cyberspace communication, and occasional activities) per se, and the far-reaching consequences, that become a justifiable topic of investigation (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Portes, 1994; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999).

Contemporary transnationalism takes on different forms. The most studied form includes monetary remittances that flow from receiving countries to sending communities. These tangible resources are sent by immigrants for a variety of purposes, including supporting migrant families left behind, establishing small businesses run by their families, buying land or building houses for their own transnational lives, for philanthropic work, such as poverty or natural disaster reliefs, and for development projects in migrants' native villages or communities (Durand, Parrado, & Massey, 1996; Goldring, 2002). Immigrant transnationalism also involves the transfer of intangible resources, such as social remittances, referring to the transmission of values and norms, identities, life styles, and relational patterns (Levitt, 1998, 2007), and political

remittances, referring to the transfer of democratic leadership and governance, egalitarian ideology, grassroots activism, and human rights (Piper, 2009).

While existing research has paid ample attention to the role of immigrant agency, recent studies have found that transnationalism is not merely practiced by individual immigrants. In fact, cross-border activities conducted on an individual basis are exceptional and that many such activities are channeled through institutional actors, including hometown associations and other ethnic organizations in diasporic communities as well as sister associations and civic-cultural organizations in sending villages and towns (Goldring, 2002; Moya, 2005; Portes, Escobar, & Radford, 2007). Sending states are also important actors. Many sending-country governments have long discovered that, apart from high volumes of monetary remittances, their expatriates are making significant transfer of technologies, information, and commercial know-how to their home-country counterparts and are making economic investment and philanthropic contributions in the millions of dollars to their hometowns (Saxenian, 2006; Thunø, 2001). To sustain, encourage, and guide such transfers, sending states often proactively engage with their expatriates. The most diligent sending-country governments have actually leaped ahead of scholarly research in their efforts to reform policies, establish institutions, and initiate programs in order to strengthen their ties and stimulate dialogue with their diasporas (Délano, 2011; Durand, Parrado, & Massey, 1996; Goldring, 2002; Iskander, 2010; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 2012).

Regarding the effects of transnationalism, research has focused on both 'homeland dissimilation', the process of becoming dissimilar to those left behind (FitzGerald, 2012: 1725), and to a lesser extent, and hostland assimilation, the process of becoming similar to those in a host society's mainstream. Homeland dissemilation can refer to immigrants vis-à-vis non-migrants left behind, or to migrant families vis-à-vis non-migrant families in the same migrant-sending community, or to families in migrant-sending communities vis-à-vis families in non-migrant-sending areas in the homeland. For migrant families left behind, they are likely to reap double benefits—directly from remittances beyond survival needs and become much better off than other families living in the same community, and indirectly from local or regional development fueled by migrant remittances and capital investments compared to others living in non-migrant-sending areas (Faist, 2000; Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003). Thus, transnational flows lead to greater levels of homeland dissimilation and simultaneously *reinforce* the existing social structures of inequality and uneven development in the homeland. For the immigrants themselves, transnationalism can also work as an effective means to maximize human capital returns while helping to maintain or expand social class status (Diaz-Briquets &Weintraub, 1991; Portes & Zhou, 2012). However, its actual effects on immigrantassimilation into the host society are understudied. Many immigrants, especially those who look drastically different from the host core group, are often stereotyped by the host society as unassimilable, disloyal, and forever foreign, regardless of their attachment to the ancestral homeland.

Overall, the current literature on transnationalism, disparate as it is, hasnonetheless contributed to a new field of intellectual inquiry. Two significant theoretical underpinnings are relevant for our comparative analysis of disapora-homeland interactions among new Chinese immigrant in the United States and Singapore.

First, emigration, immigration, and transnationalism are variants of the same phenomenon—human movement across national borders. Such movements involve not only individual migrants, but also diasporas and nation states. Diasporas refer to extra-territorial populations, including temporary, permanent, or circular migrants, as well as their native born descendants (Gamlen, 2008). However, diasporas are not fixed in time and space. Initially established by immigrants as a site for identity reaffirmation and re-construction and for self-help, diasporas have erected social structures recognizable to both in-group and out-group members. For example, long-standing Chinatowns across major immigrant gateway cities around the world are prime examples of the Chinese Diaspora. Some of these well-developed diasporas have become key spatial nodes and physical sites through which immigrants reconnect with one another and with their ancestral homeland.

Nation states have sovereignty and political authority over a given territory, but territoriality is not necessarily fixed nor universal, as nation states constantly engage in the negotiation and redefinition of political authority to 'the conditional exercise of relative, limited, and partial powers that local, regional, national, international, and nonterritorial communities and actors now exert' (Agnew, 2005:456). In migration studies, some scholars view that globalization limits the power of both sending and receiving states to control the movement of people, as well as capital, goods and information across borders (Massey, 1999). Other scholars emphasize the continuing role of the sending state, as in the cases of state-sponsored labor migration from Indonesia and the Philippines (Hugo, 1995; Rodriguez, 2010).

Sending states operate on a transnational scale either to reach out to include them into the nationhood or to shut them off. They also play an important role in diaspora building and diaspora integration (Gamlen, 2008). Diaspora building is through cultivating diasporic identities and reifying existing community structures via state institutions and policy intervention, while diaspora integration involves extending rights of the sending state, via dual citizenship, to emigrants while extracting obligations. Empirical studies on China, Mexico, Morocco, India, Vietnam and other countries have shown ample evidence about the proactive engagement of sending states with their diasporas (Argawala, 2012; Délano, 2011; Iskander, 2010; Huynh &Yiu, 2012; Portes& Zhou, 2012).

Second, homeland engagement and hostland assimilation are not mutually exclusive processes. In the transnationalism literature, diasporic communities represent a phenomenon at variance with conventional expectations of assimilation (Portes, Guarnizo, &Landolt, 1999). From the classical assimilationist perspective, immigrants who resettle in another country are expected to eventually assimilate into that host country's dominant sociocultural and economic institutions and become more or less the same as those positioned in the host society's mainstream, and their success in doing so depends on their detachment from the old world, abandoning old languages andbackward cultural ways. However, the actual process of assimilation has been more complicated, much unlike the conventional assumption of a natural, unidirectional, and inevitable pathway. Historical evidence has shown that assimilation has been fraught with political struggles and re-formulations of the idea of nationhood and identity that involve both natives and immigrants over the politics of 'sameness' (Nagel, 2002). The successful assimilation of yesterday's Jews, Italians, and Irish, who were once considered to be "undesirable and inferior races" but have now become indistinguishably white in contemporary

America, suggest that today's immigrants of varied racial and ethno-religious backgrounds are subjected to similar pressures of assimilation and to the powerful governance of the host nation state. Current research has shown that contemporary immigrants are now found to achieve economic success and social status, depending not exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society, but on ethnic resources mobilized within diasporic communities, as well as (at least for some) on cultivating strong social networks across national borders. In this sense, transnationalism can serve as an alternative means to social integration into, rather than disintegration from, the host society (Zhou & Lee, forthcoming).

Many immigrants have strong desire to be integrated into and accepted by the host society's 'mainstream', even as they act to preserve their ethnic identities, cultural traditions, and ties to the homeland. However, larger geopolitical factors shape the dynamics of immigrant-host society relationships, which has direct bearing on immigrant assimilation, or lack of it (Nagel, 2002). These geopolitical factors are intrinsically linked to diasporas and nation states, as well as homeland-disapora relations and international relations between migrant sending and receiving states (Gamlen, 2008).

We frame our comparative analysis of new Chinese immigrants in Singapore and the US around the dual processes of transnationalism and assimilation: Homeland engagement can both enrich and drain the holdings of resources by immigrants and their diasporic communities. We argue that contexts of emigration and reception shape diasporic formation, leading to variations on diaspora-homeland interactions, and that immigrants' homeland engagements may positively influence their hostland integration.

Changing Contexts of Emigration and Immigrant Reception: Variations on Diasporic Formation

Diasporas refer to extra-territorial populations, including temporary, permanent, or circular migrants, as well as their native born descendants (Gamlen, 2008). However, diasporas are not fixed in time and space. Diasporas Differences in emigration histories and receiving contexts lead to variations on diasporic formation.

Emigration from China

The history of Chinese emigration can be traced back to the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC-220AD). Until the mid-19th century, movements in and out of the Chinese empire largely centered on tribute missions to China as well as the trading of manufactured goods from China and of tropical goods to China. Earlier Chinese emigration was dominated by traders and merchants, mostly to Southeast Asia and rarely beyond Asia (Wang 1991). Despite fluctuating state policy on emigration restriction, more than one million of Chinese had settled in Southeast Asia by the mid-19th century, most of them originated from Fujian (Hokkien) and Guangdong (Kwangtung) provinces in South China, andthe Chinese trade diaspora had been firmly established in where the Chinese merchant elite dominated not only its own ethnic economies but also local economies.

European colonial expansion into Southeast Asia in the early 19th century changed the geopolitical order and marginalized the existing Chinese trade diaspora in the region. However, Chinese traders and merchants proactively responded to marginalization by carving out new occupational niches, expanding beyond maritime trade into cash-crop farming that yielded such products as sugar, pepper, gambier, and rubber, and other land-based industries such as tin and gold mining (Wickberg, 1999). They also served as agents for, or partners of, European colonists and other Westerns who traded in Southeast Asia, and late as labor brokers to facilitate large-scale labor migration from China to plantations, mines, and other work sites (railroads) in Southeast Asia and to non-Asia destinations dominated by Europeans colonists or settlers, such as the South Pacific, Hawaii, and the Americas (Wang, 2003; Meagher, 2008; Wickberg, 1999). Between 1851 and 1875, nearly 1.3 million emigrants (including smaller numbers of artisans and merchants) left China, about 27% (350,000) went tothe Malay Peninsula and 12% (160,000) to the United States (Pan, 1999: 62).

Large-scale Chinese labor migration started in the mid-19th century. Between 1851 and 1875, nearly 1.3 million emigrants (including smaller numbers of artisans and merchants) left China, about 27 per cent (350,000) went to the Malay Peninsula and 12 per cent (160,000) to the United States (Pan, 1999: 62). Labor migration was transient and short-lived. By the late 1920s (and the early 1880s for those bound for the U.S. and South Pacific destinations because of Chinese exclusion), large-scale labor emigration from China ended (Wang 1991). Because of the influence of diasporic networks established by Chinese traders and merchants and traders who later turned labor brokers, labor migrants of the time hailed from the same origins as the traders and merchants. They were predominantly poor and uneducated peasants migrated with a sojourning goal—to earn and save money abroad in the hope of returning home with gold and glory in a short period of time.

Subsequent emigration waves were severely disrupted during the Sino-Japanese War, World War II, and the Chinese civil war in the 1930 and 1940s and further constrained by post-war geopolitical developments. For example, post-war decolonization and nation-state building in Southeast Asia created new legal entry/exit barriers for cross-border flows. The People's Republic of China (PRC), founded in 1949, became the target of international sanctions as the West joined force to cut China off from the outside world in order contain communism. China itself was caught in incessant political strife. Migration to and from China was strictly prohibited by the Chinese state. Overseas Chinese and their relatives left behind in China were treated with disdain and distrust. Communications among family members across national borders were mainly through letters and mailed packages (containing food and goods for daily necessities) or monetary remittances, which were regulated by the government.

China has revived itself to be a major sending country since it implemented its open-door policy and launched its economic reform in the late 1970s. It has relaxed its policy on emigration, which, interacted with changing immigration policies in receiving states, has set off massive emigration with little sign of slowing down over the past three decades. China's centuries-old diasporic networks have been responsible for much of contemporary emigration as the majority of new Chinese immigrants obtain immigration visas from family sponsorship. However, contemporary student migration has become a growing trend since early 1990s. China is one of the largest source countries of foreign students. About 2.25 million students were sent abroad

between 1978 and 2011, and more than 60 per cent obtain employment and immigrant visas upon completion of their studies.[3] Once they secure their residency or citizenship status, they have formed an important link in family-chain to perpetuate subsequent migration. As they are resettled in their new homelands, new Chinese immigrants have actively sought out various social mobility strategies for their betterment, with transnationalism being one of them.

Contrasting Contexts of Immigrant Reception

While earlier patterns of Chinese emigration influence the composition of subsequent migrant flows, contexts of reception further institutionalize different diasporic formation. Singapore and the United States, both nations of immigrants and former British colonies, offer two contrasting contexts of reception for Chinese immigrants, which can be seen in two main aspects: One, the host society's 'mainstream' to which immigrant groups are expected to assimilate and the diaspora's position in it; and two, historical and contemporary immigration policies which influence immigrant selectivity and diaspora building.

<u>The host society's mainstream and diaspora positionality</u>
Singapore is a city-state located at the southern tip of the Malay Archipelago in Southeast Asia, but geopolitically East Asia (Kwok, 1999). It was a part of the British Straits Settlements between 1826 and 1963 and gained independence from the British in 1963 as a part of the Federation of Malaysia. But it was separated from Malaysia in 1965 to establish an independent nation state—the Republic of Singapore, arguably due to ideological differences in party politics and racial tension between Malays and Chinese.

Singapore is the only one in the world that is both a Chinese-majority society and a multiethnic society, currently comprised of 74.1 per cent Chinese, 13.4 per cent Malays, 9.2 per cent Indians, and 3.3 per cent other (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2010). The constitution stipulates four official languages—Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Tamil, and English.[4] But English has been used as the main official language, as in administration, international commerce and business, and technology and science, for promoting its integration into the global economy and bridging the gap between diverse ethnic groups within the nation.

Nation-building in Singapore is deeply influenced by the British colonial past and immigration history, where West meets East in a multiracial, multicultural setting. Singapore's governing structure is patterned on the British parliamentary democracy, but it is not so much administered by elected politicians as by bureaucrats who gain positions of authority and power through a system of meritocracy. The society's mainstream is arguably a melting pot, where a unified national identity is prioritized over other ethnic identities and meritocracy is the guiding principle for ensuring fair treatment to all races. Even though Chinese culture does not define Singaporean culture, Chinese Singaporeans occupy positions of power in society, and the ethnic Chinese are well integrated into the society's mainstream.

The United States is one of several largest countries in the world in population size but has the absolute dominance in the global geopolitics and economy. It is founded on the moral and philosophical wisdom of Christianity. At the founding of the nation, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP) and their language and culture defined the national identity and the

mainstream. For a long time in American history, racial minorities of non-European origins were excluded from the American nation. Due to major structural changes, such as civil rights movements, immigration reform, and multiculturalism, the American mainstream is now redefined as one that encompasses 'a core set of interrelated institutional structures and organizations regulated by rules and practices that weaken, even undermine, the influence of ethnic origins per se,' that it may include members of formerly excluded ethnic or racial groups, and that it may contain not just the middle class or affluence suburbanites but the working class or the central-city poor (Alba & Nee, 2003: 12). Even though the American mainstream is segmented by class, successful assimilation entails the incorporation into the middleclass core, not the segments of the mainstream occupied by working or lower classes.

The United States is home to the largest concentration of people of Chinese descent outside Southeast Asia. It is also a racially diverse country. As of 2010, non-Hispanic whites maintained its numeric majority, comprised of 65 per cent of the total population (308.7 million); African Americans, 13 per cent; Hispanics, 16 per cent; Asians, 5 per cent; and native Americans, less than one per cent. Until 2010, ethnic Chinese has comprised less than one per cent of the total American population. The American society has a highly stratified racial hierarchy with the non-Hispanic white race on top, black at the bottom, and others (including the Chinese) in between.

Unlike their counterparts in Singapore, however, the Chinese encountered a hostile host society in which they became the only immigrant group in American history that was singled out for legal exclusion based on race (Chinese) and class (labor). Even though merchants were not barred from immigration, they were too segregated in ethnic enclaves along with their working-class coethnics, and were blocked from participating in the American mainstream and integrating into the American economy. At present, Chinese Americans have continued to be marginalized in the society's racial hierarchy even as they have made tremendous progress in observable measures of socioeconomic status (SES)—education, occupation, and income (Zhou, 2004).

Immigration policies and diaspora building

Historically, Singapore's immigrant policy was particularly receptive to Chinese immigration. Earlier waves of Chinese immigration to Singapore were an integral part of the earlier Chinese trader/merchant migration to Southeast Asia, which predated the British arrival in 1819. British colonization in the early 19th century allowed Singapore to grow into an entrepôt city with a free port and an unrestricted immigration policy (Tan, 2007). As it emerged as a global port city after 1870, Singapore became a key destination for Chinese immigrants. The flows from the existing Chinese diasporic communities in Southeast Asia were predominantly traders and merchants, while those directly from China constituted a disproportionate larger number of laborers of rural and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Thanks to immigration, the Chinese population grew exponentially, from 28,000 in 1849, making up 52 per cent of the population, to 730,000 in 1947, making up the absolute majority (78 per cent) (Ee, 1961). Due to its unique immigration history, a significant Chinese merchant/trader elite became well integrated into the colonial society and dominated the local economy even before independence.

Beginning in the late 1980s, Singapore confronted two urgent challenges: the need for talent to keep its global economy competitive, and the need to deal with problems associated

with its below-replenishment fertility.[5] The nation state constituted a multi-fold immigration policy to meet these challenges. First, the government encourages and works with companies, educational and research institutions, and recruitment agencies, to recruit foreign talents, pay special attention to Chinese students who have obtained advanced training and degrees from universities in the West. Second, the government would acquire foreign talent via its own educational system by offering full scholarships to Chinese students and easy routes for permanent immigration after graduation. Third, the Singaporean state has provided financial assistance for new immigrant entrepreneurs to invest in China and encouraged mainland Chinese firms to invest in Singapore (Liu, 2008; 2012).

As a result of the liberal immigration policy, the foreign permanent resident population represents the fastest-growing segment of Singaporean population. As of mid-2012, Singapore's total population was 5.31 million, 10 per cent were permanent residents (533,000) and 28 per cent (1.49 million) 'non-resident' foreigners who were on various work permits or long-term visas.[6] Although Singapore's foreign talents initiative was aimed at no particular ethnic group, China has become a main source since the early 1990s. Most of the new Chinese immigrants were highly educated and highly skilled, and such immigrant selectivity change the dynamics of the existing diasporic community.

Immigration to the United States was free prior to Chinese Exclusion in the early 1880s. The Chinese immigrants arrived in the US in the late 1840s in response to labor demand of the American West, working first in gold mines, then in railroad construction, and later in manufacturing industries. When economic recession hit in the late 1870s, they became easy scapegoats. Even though they comprised less than 4 per cent of the total immigrant influx between 1860 and 1879, Chinese immigrants were targets of a well-organized anti-Chinese movement, which contributed to Congress passing the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. The act prohibited importation of Chinese labor for ten years and was subsequently extended indefinitely until it was repealed in 1943.

Immigration policymaking was part of the nation-building project to determine who should be included into, or exclude from, the American nation. The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act was a prelude to constructing a gatekeeping ideology and establishing state apparatus and bureaucracy to exercise control over its geographic borders and national boundaries (Lee, 2003). In 1924, Congress passed the Immigration Act (also referred to as the Johnson–Reed Act), setting up a national origins quota system for immigrant admission. Closing the door to keep away undesirable and unwanted immigrants was for the purpose of preserving the ideal of American racial homogeneity and reaffirming a distinct American identity based of the WASP character.

In 1965, the United States implemented the immigration policy reform, passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 (also called the Hart-Celler Act). The act abolished the national origins quota system that had structured American immigration policy since the 1924, favoring family reunification and encouraging employer-sponsor migration of immigrants with needed skills. However, new waves of Chinese immigration to the US had not occurred after China's open door in 1978. Nonetheless, new Chinese immigrants in the US are commonly referred to as 'post-1965' immigrants. As a result, Chinese American population grew

exponentially, from 237,000 in 1960 to 3.8 million in 2010 by official census count. As of 2009, foreign born Chinese accounted for 61 per cent of the ethnic Chinese population, 59 per cent of the foreign born arrived after 1990, and 61 per cent of the foreign born were naturalized U.S. citizens. Due past discriminatory immigration policies and present policy relaxation prioritizing family reunification, new Chinese immigrants in the US becomes much more diverse socioeconomically, comprising a significant working-class component, than those in Singapore.

Diasporic Formation

Diasporic communities are products of immigrant resettlement, and simultaneously, they serve as institutional bases for diaspora-homeland interactions and immigrant integration. Because of different emigration histories and host-society receptions, Chinese diasporic communities in Singapore and the US experienced different patterns of development impacted by changes in the socioeconomic composition of members and organizational structures of diasporas.

Changing socioeconomic composition
Historically, Chinese immigrants to Singapore were from Fujian and Guangdong provinces, with the Fujianese being the largest group. In contrast, those to the United were predominantly from the Si Yi and Pearl River Delta regions of southern Guangdong, with the Taishanese being the largest dialect group. In the earlier days of community formation, both diasporas were populated by male sojourners, who left their families behind to work aboard with the intention to return. However, the skewed sex ratio in the community in Singapore evolved gradually into a family community because of increasing female migration and intermarriages (Freeman, 1957). In contrast, the community in the US had remained a bachelors' society until after World War II, because Chinese (men and women) were excluded from immigrating and where intermarriages with whites were legally forbidden, and with blacks were internally sanctioned (Loewen, 1988).

From the very beginning of diaspora formation, two classes of Chinese immigrants, bounded by kinship and place of origin, coexisted in both communities. The laboring class was made up of uneducated, unskilled peasants while the trader/merchant class dominated economic and ethnic life. However, the trader/merchant class in Singapore was distinct in several respects. First, it had a much longer migration history and formed a trade diaspora long before labor migration. Second, it was not simply confined geographically to run retail trade in local communities, but operated and dominated transnational or overseas trade and commerce. Third, it served a middleman role, both in trade and local affairs, between Western colonists and Chinese and between Chinese immigrants and indigenous people (Frost, 2003). Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, some of the businesses later evolved into international banking, shipping, and import/export industries and became the backbone of Singapore's national economy. The merchant class and the laboring class were divided, much unlike the situation in the US, where the two classes were both isolated from the host society, had to be bonded into interdependence in Chinatowns, and developed an ethnic enclave economy for survival.

New Chinese immigrants to Singapore and the United States have hailed from all over China rather than from the traditional sending places in South China, but they are diverse in

different ways in terms of socioeconomic status (SES). New Chinese immigrants in Singapore are disproportionately well educated with the many holding post-graduate degrees from the United States, U.K, Japan, Australia, and other Western countries, have 'portable' or 'transferable' jobs skills and work experience, and generally hold high-paying professional occupations, as the government applies stringent criteria in terms of applicants' educational credentials and salary levels when granting permanent residency (Liu 2012). The dominant mode of socioeconomic integration into Singapore is through occupational achievement via education rather than through the entrepreneurial route as earlier Chinese immigrants. The entrepreneurial route, however, remains a viable pattern of local integration in Singapore. These new Chinese entrepreneurs have displayed two distinctive characteristics in comparison with their predecessors and local counterparts: many are 'technopreneurs' who have the capacity to mix their scientific know-how with business acumen tend to concentrate in high-tech sector; and their business has characterized by a high degree of transnationality in terms of its operation, corporate management, and mindset. They have also developed close personal and institutional ties with the state in both Singapore and China (Liu, 2008).

New Chinese immigrants in the US are of much more diverse SES, including the well-educated who earned advanced degrees from the U.S. and secured professional employment, and those low-skilled and less educated from traditional sending regions whose migration was sponsored via family ties, as well as sizeable groups of undocumented immigrants from rural areas of Fujian and Zhejiang provinces and urban areas in China Northeast where widespread unemployment ran rampant due to privatization of state-owned enterprises. The modes of integration are more varied, including the time-honored path of toiling in low-wage jobs in the ethnic enclave economy, professional jobs via educational achievement, and ethnic entrepreneurship via small business as well as technopreneurship (Zhou, 2009).

Changing organizational structures

The Chinese diasporic community in Singapore was originally formed on the basis of the place of origin rather than on the homogeneity of a common ethnicity. It was not as geographically concentrated as the Chinatowns found in the US and other Western colonies beyond Asia, and it was internally organized along the lines of social classes and dialect groups. The Hokkiens from southern Fujian province formed the largest group, followed by the Cantonese from southern Guangdong, the Teochews from eastern Guangdong, and the Hainanese from Hainan island.[7] These dialect groups organized themselves on the basis of a clan, hometown, district, or a region/province into family or district associations called *huiguan*, such as Hokkien Huay Kuan (Fujian Huiguan) and Guangdong Huiguan. The merchant elite formed the leadership of these organizations. Together with the Chinese language media and Chinese schools, these traditional associations become pillars of the diasporic community (Liu, 1998).

The Chinese community in the US followed an organizational pattern similar to that of the diasporic community in Singapore, with ethnic businesses serving as its base on which a range of ethnic organizations, the Chinese language press, and Chinese schools were established (Zhou & Lee, forthcoming). However, the diasporic community in the US was excluded from the larger American society. Traditional ethnic organizations, including family and kin associations, hometown associations, and merchant-labor associations, or *tong* emerged as mutual aid societies. Unlike that in Singapore where the Chinese Protectorate was established by the colonial

government to manage Chinese affairs, the US state basically isolated the Chinese community and left it alone to be self-governed by an overarching organization, called Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), which acted as a quasi-government in Chinatown.

New waves of Chinese immigration have created a visible impact upon the organizational structures of diasporic communities. The age-old concept of the 'hometown' has been deterritorialized and transformed from representing a specific locality (e.g., a sending village or township) to being a cultural/ethnic symbol representing the Chinese from the mainland collectively and China as a nation state (Liu, 2012).

In Singapore, traditional kinship- or hometown-based organizations, run by earlier Chinese immigrants or local-born Chinese, have gradually evolved into civic organizations and integrated into Singapore's civic life. New Chinese immigrants are not tied to existing traditional hometown-based organizations by earlier Chinese immigrants or local born Chinese, but tend to establish organizations of their own. For example, the Singapore Tianfu Hometown Association, founded in 1999, represents the 'hometown' in a more inclusive and symbolic manner. Tianfu is an alias of Sichuan province, and the association's membership is not confined to those born in Sichuan and who speak a particular local dialect, but those who had studied or worked in the province or had business/ cultural contacts with Sichuan prior to emigration. The word 'Hometown' was dropped from the name of the association in 2006, and the Tianfu Chamber of Commerce was established as an affiliated entity with members hailing from every part of China. The Singapore Huayuan Association (later renamed the Hua Yuan General Association of New Immigrants from China) was established in 2001 by mainland-born Chinese professionals. Its membership includes those who have become Singaporean citizens or permanent residents as well as those who are on long-term student visas or employment permits. The association's main missions is: to assist members in better integrating into the multi-ethnic society of Singapore; to promote information exchange and communication; and to promote commercial and trade relationships between Singapore and China.

In the US, traditional organizations have continued to exist to offer resettlement assistance to immigrants from original sending villages or towns. Three types of modern organizations have been developed rapidly in old Chinatowns or new Chinese ethnoburbs (middleclass suburbs with a visible Chinese presence in population and ethnic business), as well as in cyberspace: Extended hometown associations, professional organizations, and alumni associations. New patterns of organizational development are similar to those found in Singapore but vary much more in type and size. Extended hometown associations are deterritorialized to be more inclusive, and their constituency is not bound by primordial ties such as locality and kinship. Professional organizations are based on a wide range of professions, ranging from sciences, technology, engineering, medicine, law, among others. Alumni associations are formed on the basis of college and universities and, to a lesser extent, high schools from which immigrants graduated in China. The main missions of these new organizations are similar to those organizations organized by new Chinese immigrants in Singapore, with the explicit dual goals of assisting immigrants to integrate into the host society and to maintain ties to China.

Multiple Actors in Diaspora-Homeland Interactions

Diaspora-homeland interactions involved multiple actors—immigrants, diasporas, and nation states. However, these actors do not unilaterally initiate, or regulate, cross-border activities; they often interact with one another to exert significant effects.

Reaching out to the Diaspora: The Role of the Sending State

China's economic reform and its changing geopolitical position in the post-Cold War era have also opened door to diaspora-homeland interactions. The state has changed its attitude toward its diasporic communities—from regarding them with indifference, fear, and hostility to proactively reach out to them. Since 1978, China has put overseas Chinese affairs back on its top development agendas by reactivating its dual-track bureaucracy in charge of overseas Chinese affairs. Operating along the two pillars of the state (the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council) and the Party (the Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese), this complex bureaucracy has offices at the national, provincial, city, county, and district levels. These government agencies are staffed permanently by paid officials, have sizeable budget allocations, function mainly to intersect with the vast web of Chinese diasporic networks and communities worldwide and to promote their transnational activities.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the official policy regarding overseas Chinese has shifted further, from attracting remittances and capital investment to attracting Chinese talents from abroad while nurturing homeland-diasporic relations. The policy also emphasizes helping overseas Chinese become naturalized citizens, participating in the mainstream society of their countries of residence, and growing roots in their new homelands. For example, in 2006-07, the strategic plan of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Guangzhou included: support for new overseas Chinese associations to integrate into their host mainstream society; training for a group of young individuals to become leaders of local overseas Chinese communities; inviting individuals of overseas Chinese communities abroad to Guangzhou to attend activities aimed for friendship building; organizing summer camps for youth and teenagers from around the world.[8]

The Chinese state not only creates an open and welcoming institutional environment but is also proactively involved in the transnational field. Some of the state-sponsored activities include building infrastructure to attract foreign capital investment, facilitate joint ventures and economic cooperation, and advance scientific, technological, and scholarly exchange (Zhou & Lee, forthcoming). For example, the Chinese government set up four special economic zones (SEZ) in 1980 to permit the entry of foreign capital while serving as 'bridges for introducing foreign capital, advanced technology and equipment and classrooms for training personnel capable of mastering advanced technology'.[9] Because of the need to tap oversea Chinese resources, all four SEZs were located in Guangdong (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou) and Fujian (Xiamen), hometowns to the majority of the people of Chinese descent all over the world. Indeed, between 1979 and 1987, 90 per cent of foreign investments in SEZs came from the Chinese Diaspora.[10] Since 2000, the Chinese state and local governments have changed the SEZ model to knowledge-intensive development models, building hi-tech industrial development parks, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) laboratories, and other research and development (R&D) facilities and crucibles, to attract new generations of diasporic Chinese to

invest in China. The hi-tech investors and technopreneurs have been disproportionately new Chinese immigrants who have resettled in the US, Singapore, and other advanced Western countries.

The Chinese state has also attempted to reverse the brain drain through innovative programs and initiatives. Policy toward students abroad, that initially emphasized 'return,' was relaxed in the 1990s to recognize that returning to China is not the only way to serve the country (Zweig, 2006). The Chinese government now considers returned students and scholars a leading force in areas like education, science and technology, high-tech industries, finance, insurance, trade and management and a driving force for the country's economic and social development. It also supports students and scholars staying abroad to resettle abroad permanently but return to make contributions in various ways, such as giving lectures during short-term visit to China, having academic exchanges, conducting joint research, bringing in projects and investments and providing information and technical consultancy.[11] Since the mid-1990s, the Chinese government has launched a variety of programs to lure the permanent or temporary return of highly-skilled migrants in the fields of science and engineering. For example, the Ministry of Educationhas implemented several exemplary programs to attract Chinese students to return to China or to facilitate their career growth in their countries of residence, including 'The *Chunhui*(literally, spring bud) Program', targeting those returnees with doctoral degrees and with outstanding achievements in their respective fields; and 'The *Changjiang* Scholar Incentive Program', providing general financial support and research funds to well-established scholars and researchers already employed in universities in foreign countries and invite them to China be Special Professors or Chair Professors at Chinese universities.

While it continues to establish innovative programs to tap into the economic prowess of its expatriates by attracting their investment capital and remittances, the Chinese state has started to shift its overseas Chinese policy since the turn of the 21st century to focus on attracting talents from abroad in reversing the brain drain, stimulate dialogues with its diasporic communities to nurture homeland-diasporic relations, integrating existing diasporas into the ancestral nation and cultivating their ethno-national loyalty. The state policy also emphasizes helping overseas Chinese become naturalized citizens, participating in the mainstream society of their countries of residence, and growing roots in their new homelands. In her keynote address to the 6th Conference of World Federation of Overseas Chinese Associations, which was attended by 570 "influential" delegates from 110 countries and took place in Beijing in April 2012, Li Haifeng, Director-General of the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, urged the Chinese diaspora to be integrated into the mainstream society, to actively contribute to hostland's socio-economic development, and to become "good citizens/residents" of the host countries.[12] Similar efforts have been undertaken at the provincial level. For example, in 2006-07, the strategic plan of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Guangzhou included: support for new overseas Chinese associations to integrate into their host mainstream society; training for a group of young individuals to become leaders of local overseas Chinese communities; inviting individuals of overseas Chinese communities abroad to Guangzhou to attend activities aimed for friendship building; organizing summer camps for youth and teenagers from around the world.[13]

At present, China's policy toward overseas Chinese has shifted further, aiming not only at exploiting the financial capital, human capital, and social capital resources from the Chinese

diaspora to fuel China's economic development, but also at strengthening networks with immigrant organizations, fostering technological and cultural exchanges, and supporting the development of Chinese communities abroad as a means of promoting China's 'good image' and facilitating its 'peaceful rise' (Liu, 2011a; Xiang, 2011).

However, the PRC does not recognize nor promote dual citizenship. Based on the PRC Nationality Law, China will not admit the dual nationality of a Chinese citizen; as soon as a Chinese becomes a naturalized citizen of another country, he or she will automatically lose his/her Chinese citizenship. It is also quite hard to apply for a green card in China if one does not intend to live there permanently.[14] Chinese immigrants who have become naturalized U.S. citizens face a bureaucratic hurdle when they attempt to conduct regular transnational activities. The Chinese government is considering the country's first immigration law to better manage international migration and transnational flows, but the issue of dual citizenship appears to remain off-limits.[15]

Renewing or Maintaining Ties to the Ancestral Homeland via Diasporic Organizations

The actions of the Chinese state have created an unparalleled synergy between China and diasporic Chinese. However, unlike the old form of transnationalism, which involves migrant remittances sending, present-day diaspora-homeland interactions have seldom occurred at the individual level. Despite differences in diasporic formation in Singapore and the US, both people of Chinese descent and new Chinese immigrants reconnect or maintain ties to their homeland via diasporic organizations.

As we have shown in the previous section, Chinese diasporic communities are developed on a complex array of organizations whose leadership is taken up by the business elite. Responding to China's open door and economic reform, the business elite and traditional organizations in both countries are better positioned than individual immigrants to engage in transnationalism because of their well established and long-standing institutional basis in the diasporic communities.

In the past, any individual or organizational ties to China were treated with suspicion by the receiving state governments (both Singapore and the US), and were suppressed or met with opposition within diasporic communities. For example, San Francisco's Suey Sing Association (founded in 1867) was marginalized in Chinatown because of its support for the PRC, and some of its leaders were black-listed by the FBI as communists prior to 1970. It played a crucial role in promoting the entry of the PRC into the United Nations and the normalization of Sino-US diplomatic relations in the 1970s. It was the very first organization in the Chinese community in the US to fly the flag of the PRC in 1994. Regarding the association's renewed mission, Mr. Honghu Chi, the former president of Yuey Sing Association, made the following remark at the 13th Suey Sing Association Convention in Guangzhou in 2007:

> *…The American Suey Sing Association is moving in tandem with changing times. We continue to foster stronger fellowship and mutual assistance among our members, to cultivate stronger coalition with other ethnic organizations in and out of the Chinese American community, to help build*

stronger ties between China and the US, to promote a more balance Sino-US trade, and to unequivocally oppose the notion of 'two Chinas' and support a peaceful China's reunification.[16]

Many traditional organizations that were formerly anti-PRC have abandoned their political missions of overthrowing the communist government and reestablished relations with China. For example, the CCBA, which has remained loyal to the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), no longer prohibits its leaders and members from renewing contact with China. Leaders of the CCBA have been frequently invited on official visits to China by the Chinese state.[17] There are several reasons for traditional organizations to engage the homeland: (1) to help members locate disconnected family members and reclaim lost land and properties due to past government policy against overseas Chinese; (2) to seek economic opportunities for their members, to renew old social ties and build new ones; and (3) to contribute to hometown development. For example, the president of the Ng Family Association, whom we interviewed, made half a dozen trips to China on behalf of the association to negotiate with the local government in reclaiming the ownership of a family ancestral hall in one of the villages in the Si Yi region.

Similar trends of reconnecting with the ancestral homeland and reclaiming Chinese ethnicity also took place among traditional Chinese associations in Singapore. For example, the first World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention was held in 1991 in Singapore, which was organized by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI, established in1906) and was based upon the notion of 'the commonality of our Chinese ethnicity'.[18] In this and subsequent conventions up to the most recent 11th convention held in Singapore (in October 2011), there has been a constant emphasis on Chinese culture and ethnicity and their effects on business success, which has been linked to an emerging China in the global stage. The SCCCI President Teo Siong Seng claimed that '[W]ith the rise of China through accelerated economic development… and with the economic centre of gravity shifting to Asia, the dominance of ethnic Chinese in the business arena has been elevated worldwide' (cited in Liu 2012).

The Singapore Futsing (Fuqing) Association (established in 1910) is a representative of locality associations' involvement in establishing new hometown and intra-diaspora connections. Following the 1988 Fuqing World Convention, the International Federation of Futsing Clan was formed with headquarters in Singapore. The Federation aims at providing "planning, organization, and leadership" for its constituent members. And it publishes *Rong Qing*, a quarterly newsletter containing detailed information on social and economic activities of the Fuqingese worldwide. With a circulation of 4000 copies each issue, it was widely distributed and read. The association also organizes an annual 'Visit Futsing' program to provide an avenue for members to have in-depth knowledge of the culture and history of the hometown, to understand the past development and future progress of Futsing city, and to get to know the Futsing government officials.[19]

New Chinese immigrant organizations have mostly been established after 1990 in both Singapore and the US. These modern organizations share similar goals with their traditional counterparts, aiming to facilitate member socializing and networking, to help members establish themselves, and to advance the ranks of its members. The modern organizations differ from

traditional ones in that their members are more educated, skilled, and assimilated and more likely to be internal migrants to major urban centers in China before emigrating overseas. As individuals, they are anonymous and unknown to institutional actors of the Chinese state. When interacting with the homeland, their membership and/or leadership statuses in diasporic organizations would confirm their identity and legitimacy. In fact, some of these new immigrants establish organizations in order to involve in transnational activities. Also, their homeland engagements tend to be at the regional (municipal or provincial) or national level rather than at the village or township level. For example, professional and alumni associations would rarely be present at events in China concerning overseas Chinese in migrant sending places at or below the county level. In contrast, they are recognized by higher levels of government in China and well represented at conventions held in state-level or provincial-level science parks or high-tech industrial parks, which were established by the Chinese government to attract investment by and/or the return of highly skilled immigrants.

Organizational Transnationalism in Action

Both traditional and modern Chinese immigrant organizations have engaged their ancestral homeland through five main types of transnational activities: (1) hometown development projects; (2) philanthropic work; (3) conventions and conferences; (4) community events and holiday celebrations; and (5) business partnerships. The first two types are oriented mainly toward the homeland and the other three are transnational.

First, hometown development projects are usually place-specific projects, based on a sending village or a township that a traditional immigrant organization represents. Organizational fund-raising is typically project-specific, such as building a new village gate, a roadside altar, a temple, a park, a library, and an elderly activity center; or upgrading a school, an ancestral hall, and a clinic; or paving or repairing a village road. Traditional family and hometown associations play a central role in this type of activity. Some traditional organizations work in tandem with local governments in China, such as proposing public works projects in accordance with the overall city planning and collaborating with the local government in project implementation. Modern immigrant organizations are unlikely to contribute to these types of development projects because they have no affiliation with a particular sending village or local hometown.

Second, philanthropic work includes fund raising for major disaster relief, such as severe floods and earthquakes. For example, immediately after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan Province (measured at 8.0 M_s and claimed 68,000 lives), the CCBA in New York established the Sichuan Earthquake Relief Program and raised a total of $1.32 million (with the largest single donation of $50,000) donation money and delivered it to the American Red Cross within a four-month period.[20] Singapore's Tianfu Association collected donations of more than S$200,000 (US$160,000), mostly from its members, within ten days after the Earthquake.[21]

Third, conventions and conferences are important organizational activities, which may be held regularly in China, the US, Singapore, or somewhere in the greater Chinese Diaspora. Traditional family, hometown, or merchants associations hold these conventions globally, reflecting the organizational efforts to connect with other Chinese communities in the diaspora (Liu 1998). These major events are published in commemorative editions, in Chinese or

bilingually, that are circulated in China and the Chinese Diaspora worldwide. In contrast, modern organizations usually hold annual conventions in the US. Professional organizations, for example, will hold annual conventions with distinguished keynote speakers and relevant themes in the profession, such as "Semiconductor — Embracing Our Life, Leading our Future" (the 2011 convention of the Silicon Valley Chinese Engineers Association). The chief purpose of these regular conventions, initiated and organized by both traditional and modern Chinese immigrant organizations, is for information exchange, social networking, relationship building, and achievement recognition.

Fourth, community cultural events and holiday celebrations are composed of an integral part of ethnic life. Chinese immigrant organizations usually take the lead in organizing in the form of parades, street fairs, or banquets. Local politicians and community leaders make their presence in parades or on center stages at street fairs before cultural performances by traditional and contemporary Chinese singers and dancers. These cultural events and street fairs attract Chinese immigrants, long-term residents, people of Chinese descent, as well as non-Chinese locals and tourists. Some of the modern organizations, utilizing their transnational ties with various levels of homeland government and top-notched cultural institutions in China, organize and sponsor professional artists and other cultural workers to tour and perform in Singapore and in Chinatowns or Chinese ethnoburbs in the US. Many Chinese immigrant organizations also participate in major international and domestic cultural events in Beijing as well as in local areas in China.

Lastly, both traditional and modern organizations are engaged in building transnational business partnerships or acting as "go-betweens" to better capitalize on economic opportunities in China and the US. For many new immigrant organizations, business interests are one of the most important goals because they do not need to rely on serving the survival needs of members, as traditional organizations did in the past. Rather, the leaders are either successful entrepreneurs or established professionals aspiring to become entrepreneurs or technopreneurs, and possess strong bilingual and bicultural skills. They voluntarily form nonprofit civic organizations and claim leadership positions to buildup identity and credibility. They travel back and forth between China and the US to build *guanxi* with government officials and business people in China and help facilitate Chinese companies entering the Singaporean or US market and vice versa. On the home front, these organizational leaders are actively involved in domestic politics and community affairs, supporting local politicians by making campaign donations and sponsoring community events, which in turn, add more credibility to the organizations. Once they firmly establish a foothold or reputation in the community and earn the trust of Chinese government officials and entrepreneurs, they enter into partnerships with businesses on both shores or offer their services as consultants or brokers to promote transnational trade and investment. For example, transnational professional organizations help many Chinese companies go public in the US stock market.

The Role of the Receiving State

So far we have shown that the main actors involved in transnationalism are immigrants, diasporic organizations, and the sending state. We have also shown that, despite variations on diasporic formation, new Chinese immigrants in Singapore and the US renew or maintain ties to

their homeland, or sending state institutional actors reach out to expatriates, through diasporic organizations. What about the role of the receiving state? Unlike the United States where the government plays no role in renewed connections between Chinese diasporic communities and China, the Singapore state has been proactively promoting the homeland ties for the purpose of establishing and maintaining business networks as a means to promote the nation's economic growth. As the then Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared in the Second World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention in 1993, 'We would be foolish not to use the ethnic Chinese network to increase our reach and our grasp of these opportunities' (cited in Liu 1998). Trade and Industry Minister George Yeo also remarked, 'Singapore's most profound links to China, India and Southeast Asia were not just economic, but also cultural. If Singapore was able to nourish its cultural core, its economic trunk would be strong and its branches would spread wide'.[22] It seems that levels of diaspora integration into receiving countries and binational relations between sending and receiving countries affect how receiving states respond to immigrant transnationalism.

Homeland Engagements: Facilitating or Inhibiting Hostland Assimilation?

From our interviews with immigrants and organizational leaders, we find that the majority of new Chinese immigrants strive to get settled in their new homeland, whether Singapore or the United States. As time goes by, they are growing roots in their new homelands even if they retain strong ties to the ancestral one. In both Singapore and the US, we find only a small number of them are routinely in practice. Those who actively participate in the transnational field tend to be the socioeconomic mobile—entrepreneurs and professionals alike—who look to the ancestral homeland for *better* opportunities that would take them to a *higher* ground. In the US, first generation immigrants are more likely than US-born Chinese Americans to engage with the homeland, but this is not the case in Singapore, where Chinese Singaporeans of second or higher generations (including the mixed race) are as likely as new Chinese immigrants to do so. Transnationalism is a choice, serving as one of the alternative means to status attainment for those who choose it.

However, whether transnationalism is perceived and accepted as a viable means of hostland integration by the host society is quite a different story. Again, we discern some striking paradoxes in two different national contexts that may not be caused by immigrants' engagements with their ancestral homeland.

Singapore: The Singaporean vs. Chinese Divide

The Singapore state aims to mobilize its citizens and permanent residents (PRs) for nation-building, which has two key inter-connected components: to sustain economic growth and global competitiveness through controlled immigration and socio-political solidity through integration. The state has not merely called on new immigrants to seek integration and assimilation into the host society and a shared national identity, by learning English, interacting with locals, and taking part in civil society, so that in time they will become truly Singaporean in terms of their socio-political outlook and behavioral ways. It has actively involved in the integration project. The government has implemented a series of measures to differentiate theentitlements and benefits in education, public housing and healthcare the state provides to citizens and to PRs and citizens, so as to address citizens' concerns about negative effects of

immigration and encourage PRs to take up citizenship. Moreover, it has established mechanisms, top-down and bottom-up, for immigration integration via state sponsored activities to bond native citizens with new citizens and PRs. Furthermore, it has engaged local Chinese institutions to assist with assimilation (Liu, 2011b).

Despite the fact that Singapore is a Chinese-majority nation and that the state proactively engages integration project, there are undercurrents of public anxiety and xenophobia quite similar to those in other migrant-receiving states. For example, Chinese Singaporeans see new Chinese immigrants as different – both from themselves and from their forefathers who migrated to Singapore in past centuries from South China. A mainstream media columnist lamented,

> *For a moment, I felt like a stranger in my own country. It was the same feeling I got last Saturday night when I went to Geylang [a popular neighborhood for locals and tourists in downtown Singapore] ... Making my way there, I was struck by the sheer number of Chinese nationals milling around me... Everywhere I turned I heard Chinese being spoken with accents that sounded strange to me.[23]*

Chinese Singaporeans also resent being categorized as the same kind of people as the new Chinese immigrants. One Singaporean write in Chinese to voiced his complaint in a mainstream newspaper,

> *I am a local-born Singaporean, and I have never migrated to anywhere. I would be angry if someone addresses me as an old immigrant, or considers me to be 'someone who came earlier'.[24]*

On the ground, the public discourses on new Chinese immigrants rarely make reference to ethnic solidarity and a shared cultural identity of the sort that mainland Chinese or non-Chinese often assume, which is different from what is seen in the transnational field (see the example of the SCCCI cited above). Locals dispute the idea of a common immigration heritage or cultural connections and invoke instead the national identity and political allegiances as points of reference vis-à-vis new Chinese immigrants. It is interesting to note that Chinese immigrants comprised less than half of new immigration to Singapore, but it is they rather than other foreigners that have created a sense of 'Singaporeans vs. Chinese', which is even beginning to blur the old racial divide between Chinese and Malays (and Indians). As one local Chinese put it,

> *I am a Singaporean Chinese. Any Chinese foreigner who dares to assaultmy Malay Singaporean brother will have to answer to my fist. We Singaporean Chinese and Malays did NS [national service] together. Chinese or not Chinese, the fact is we are Singaporeans.[25]*

New Chinese immigrants, in contrast, generally embrace the state's calls for integration and consider Singapore their new home. For example, the Hua Yuan Association launched a 'New Immigration Contribution Award' in tribute to the integrative efforts. However, many new Chinese immigrants feel that integration should be a two-way process that requires locals to

accept newcomers and understand them and that identity-building is a long-term process requiring efforts on all sides.

Because of recency of immigration and the geopolitical location of their receiving state, new Chinese immigrants' responses to assimilation are also shaped by the rise of China and by Singapore's significant position in a realigned regional geopolitical order with China playing a central role. Seeking transnationalism as a means of improving the socioeconomic status on the part of new Chinese migrants does not appear in conflict with the state's dual goal of economic growth and integration. In fact, going global and engaging China are what exactly what Singaporeans and their institutions, including big or small businesses, have been doing and are encouraged to do.

In the process of engaging the ancestral homeland, something paradoxical is emerging: Singaporeansgoing to China invoke their Chinese ethnicity and reaffirm it as a result while Chinese immigrants engaging with China via transnationalism reaffirm their newly acquired Singaporean identity with a distinct Chinese flavour. Transnational Singaporeans and Chinese immigrants look to China as a way of construct a sort of hybrid identity as both Singaporean and Chinese, which may, over the long run, ease the Singaporean v. Chinese divide or change the dynamics of it. The government has also taken note of the increasing anti-foreign sentiments in the nation and its negative impact. For example, in his speech at the 2012 National Day Rally, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong not only reaffirmed the 'Singaporean First' policy, but also reiterated the need for Singaporeans to show a generosity of spirit to newcomers and for newcomers to embrace Singaporean values and make an effort to integrate into Singaporean society.[26]

The United States: The Model Minority vs. the Perpetual Foreigner

Assimilation has been an unspoken national ideology in the United States. Unlike Singapore, however, assimilation has rarely been on the top agenda in immigration policy-making; if anything, it would be advocated for the purpose of immigration restriction. For example, during the congressional debate over the 1924 National Origins Act that targeted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, Senator Ellison DuRant Smith of South Carolina spoke with passion on 'shut the door',

> *Without offense, but with regard to the salvation of our own, let us shut the*
> *door ... and develop what we have, assimilate and digest what we have*
> *into pure Americans, with American aspirations, and thoroughly familiar*
> *with the love of American institutions, rather than the importation of any*
> *number of men from other countries.[27]*

Of the few state-sponsored 'Americanization' programs that were developed to assist immigrant assimilation in the 1910s and 1920s, all ran under the assumption that immigrants' cultures and ways were backward, uncivilized, and incompatible with American democracy. Immigrations were urged to abandon anything attached to the old world in order to assimilate. At the wake of the immigration reform in the 1960s, the seemingly unassimilable immigrants and their offspring had been integrated into mainstream America and became indistinguishably white. Assimilation seemed to work for European immigrants without much direct policy integration. Even among Americans of Asian ancestry, outcomes of integration was remarkable as Chinese

and Japanese Americans made impressive inroad into the American mainstream and were thus applauded the 'model minority'.

The US immigration reform of the 1960s brought about massive influx of non-European immigration, but again no policies to help integrate America's newcomers. Integration is entirely left to market forces and immigrant's own agency along with their right value and work ethics. This stands in sharp contrast with the Singapore state. Chinese immigrants and their US-born and US-raised children experience a different type of paradox as they strive to integrate into mainstream America. Although they have attained levels of education, occupation, and income equated with or even surpassing, those of non-Hispanic whites, and although many have moved near to or even married whites, they still remain culturally distinct and suspect in society (Zhou, 2004). As a Chinese American woman pointed out from her own experience,

> *The truth is, no matter how American you think you are or try to be, if you have almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, and a yellow complexion, you are a foreigner by default…You can certainly be as good as or even better than whites, but you will never become accepted as white (cited in Zhou, 2004).*

This remark echoes a common-felt frustration among US-born Chinese Americans who detest being treated as immigrants or foreigners. Their experience suggests that America racializes its own people. Speaking perfect English, effortlessly adopting mainstream cultural values, and even intermarrying members of the dominant group may help reduce this 'otherness' at the individual level, but have little effect on the group as a whole who is affiliated with the foreigner image.

The China factor affects Chinese Americans differently that it does Chinese Singaporeans. Transnationalism in Chinese America was very much a first generation phenomenon. This is not merely because the members of the second generation have been thoroughly assimilated and lack bicultural and bilingual skills, but also because of the possible ramifications of delicate US-China relations. The historical stereotypes, such as the 'yellow peril' and 'Chinese menace,' have found their way into contemporary American life, as revealed in the highly publicized incident about the trial of Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-born nuclear scientist suspected of spying for the Chinese government in the mid-1990s (eventually proven innocent). Ironically, the ambivalent and conditional acceptance by American society have prompted Chinese Americans to align with other Asian Americans to organize pan-ethnically to fight back— which consequently heightens their racial distinctiveness while simultaneous distancing themselves from their ancestral homeland. But they must consciously prove that they are truly loyal Americans, especially in times where US-China relations are in the spotlight.

At this point in time, only a small fraction of the Chinese diaspora is actively and routinely engaged in transnationalism. It is still too early to tell whether transnationalism will ever become a main mode of socioeconomic integration in Singapore or the US in the future, but it seems clear that contemporary diaspora-homeland interactions are transforming the normative assimilation story, a story that immigrants understand better than natives.

Conclusion

Our comparative analysis of Chinese immigration to Singapore and the United States and patterns of diaspora-homeland interactions leads to the following observations. First, the Chinese government perceives diasporic-homeland interactions not merely for extracting untapped resources from its expatriates and diasporas for economic development, but also for promoting national image-building and nurturing its compatriots' loyalty and commitment to the homeland. However, while the Chinese state enthusiastically supports immigrant transnationalism, its role is more to facilitate than to dictate the means and outcomes. Diasporic communities tend to operate independently with the dual purposes of development in the ancestral homeland and integration into the new homeland.

Second, Chinese diasporas in Singapore and the United States have been more or less uniformly affected by the Chinese state, but patterns of diaspora formation and transnationalism have been different owing to significant differences in receiving contexts. Singapore has a long history of doing business in and with China, and the state perceives China as a trading partner. While it aggressively searches for new investment opportunities in the PRC and recruiting talent there (at least up to 2011), the state has also proactively encouraged Chinese Singaporean associations, both traditional and modern, and their members, people of Chinese descent and new immigrants alike, to utilizes its Chinese heritage in renewing or establishing cultural and economic ties with compatriots in the ancestral homeland—all for the agendas of its own nation-building and economic growth. In contrast, the United States considers China an economic rival and the Chinese ethnic economy as trivial and marginal to its enormous global economy. The state has also done little to interact with immigrant communities, either for transnationalism or for integration purposes, and has left these tasks in the hands of immigrants or markets. As a result, patterns of immigrant transnationalism diverge. Chinese transnationalism in Singapore involves the state and multigenerational participation and has become an integral part of the national economy, whereas Chinese transnationalism in the US is primarily an immigrant phenomenon and has remained part of the diaspora's ethnic enclave economy.

Third, homeland engagement and hostland assimilation do not necessarily constitute a zero-sum game. Traversing the two homelands smoothly entails constant interaction and negotiation between individual migrants, diasporic communities, and nation states via transnational organizations. New Chinese immigrants in both countries, for example, have simultaneously engaged with both the hostland and homeland in their social, cultural and economic works. Organizational transnationalism in turn leads to dual embeddedness that simultaneously contributes to capacity building of the diasporic community and the individual. In this sense, transnationalism is utilized as an alternative means to socioeconomic status attainment by immigrants, which facilitates, rather than hinders, integration to host societies.

Overall, we show that studies on diaspora-state interactions benefit from a comparative angle, which in turn will enrich theoretical formulations. Comparison can be undertaken at different levels, as thematically centered (e.g., diaspora's role in diplomacy in different nation states such as Israel and India) or as spatially oriented (e.g., the Chinese experiences in two or more geopolitical regions). This comparative approach will help unveil different dynamics, processes, and consequences of transnationalism and complex factors behind variations.

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Notes

[1] See http://www.chinanews.com/zgqj/news/2010/05-20/2293574.shtml, accessed on May 6, 2012.

[2] In the US, we examined relevant contexts in two major Chinese language newspapers, the *Chinese Daily News* and *China Press*, and in Singapore, one major Chinese language national paper, *United Morning News*, and one English language national paper, *The Straits Times*. The US project was partially supported by funds from the Walter and Shirley Wang Endowed Chair, UCLA and from the Comparative Immigrant Organizations Project (CIOP), Center for Migration and Development, Princeton University, to which we expressed gratitude. The Singapore project was funded by a research grant from Nanyang Technological University (grant number: M58000159). We also thank Alexandra Délano for her helpful comments and suggestions.

[3] See http://edu.china.com.cn/2012-10/31/content_26954835.htm, accessed on October 28, 2012

[4] Constitution of the Republic of Singapore http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/home.w3p, accessed on October 20, 2012.

[5] Singapore registered one of the lowest total fertility rates in the world: 1.57 in the mid-1990s and 1.2 in 2009, far below the population replacement level of 2.1 children born per woman.

[6] http://www.singstat.gov.sg/stats/themes/people/popnindicators2012.pdf, accessed on October 9, 2012.

[7] Hainan island is a part of Guangdong province until 1988 when it became Hainan province.

[8] Interview with officials of Guangdong Qiaoban, July 2010.

[9] See http://www.bjreview.com.cn/nation/txt/2009-05/26/content_197576.htm, accessed on January 22, 2010.

[10] See http://qwgzyj.gqb.gov.cn/qwhg/146/1346.shtml, accessed on January 22, 2010.

[11] See http://www.moe.edu.cn/english/international_2.htm, accessed on January 25, 2010.

[12] http://www.chinanews.com/zgqj/2012/04-09/3804837.shtml, accessed on October 2, 2012.

[13] Interview with officials of Guangdong Qiaoban, July 2010.

[14] See http://www.china.org.cn/english/LivinginChina/184914.htm, also see http://www.china.org.cn/e-news/news040820.htm, accessed on February 9, 2011.

[15] See http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-05/22/content_9881622.htm, accessed on February 9, 2010.

[16] *The 13th Suey Sing Association Convention and 140th Birthday Celebration Special Issue*, Guangzhou, Dec.3, 2007, p. 6 (translated by Zhou).

[17] The former president of the CCBA in Los Angeles, Mr. Peter Ng, paid 7 visits to China in 2009, including the one invited by the Chinese government to attend the celebration of the PRC's 60th birthday parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

[18] Words of Tan Eng Joo, chairman of the Convention's organizing committee.

[19] http://www.futsing.org/futsing_eng/index.php/visitfutsing, accessed on October 9, 2012.

[20] http://ccbanyc.org/enews0809.html, accessed on July 5, 2011.

[21] http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2008-05/25/content_8246555.htm, accessed on October 9, 2012.

[22] Cited in *The Straits Times*, March 26, 2004.

[23] Tan, Sumiko, 'I felt like a stranger in my own country', *Straits Times Sunday Edition*, July 10, 2011.

[24] Wu Dadi, 'Those who came earlier, please raise your hands' [Na xie xian lai de ren, qing ju shou], *United Morning News [Lianhe Zhaobao]* (in Chinese), September 24, 2009.

[25] Quoted in Seah Chiang Nee, 'It's Singaporean vs. others', *The Star*, June 25, 2011.

[26] Cited in *Straits Times*, August 26, 2012.

[27] Excerpt from the speech by Ellison DuRant Smith, April 9, 1924, *Congressional Record,* 68th Congress, 1st Session (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1924), vol. 65, 5961–5962.