The Chinese Diaspora Population in circa-2011

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Introduction

The overseas Chinese are spread over the globe, residing in almost every country of the world, although with a heavy concentration in Asia. A famous Chinese poem states that "wherever the ocean waves touch, there are overseas Chinese" (Poston and Yu, 1990; Mung, 1998; Zhou, 2009).

An overseas Chinese person is defined here as a Chinese person who resides outside the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau; we discuss this definition in more detail later. Around 2011, there were over 40.3 million Chinese residing in over 149 countries of the world.

We mainly use the term "overseas Chinese" in this article not because we believe that the label represents a symbolic meaning signifying a foreign presence by virtue of race. Instead we use the term principally because of its continued and accepted use in the international arena (Fitgerald, 1972; von Brevern, 1988; Wang, 1991; Poston, Mao and Yu, 1994; Mung, 1998), and because there is really no convenient and short alternative phrase to refer to Chinese living

abroad.

In this paper we raise and answer several questions: How many overseas Chinese are there currently in the world? How are they distributed among the world's countries and regions? And what have been their patterns of population change in past decades? But prior to addressing these questions, we begin with a brief discussion of "diaspora," another term for persons living outside their home country. We present some recent data on the larger of the non-Chinese diasporas to enable us to better evaluate the significance and importance of the Chinese diaspora. Next, we discuss the major patterns of previous Chinese emigrations to provide an overall perspective for the later presentation of our empirical data on the overseas Chinese. This is followed by a discussion of our data and its sources. Then we present and analyze our data on the overseas Chinese around 2011 and address the three questions just raised.

If this paper is accepted for presentation at the 2014 PAA meetings, we will also include as part of our analysis a section addressing questions about the characteristics of countries with large numbers of overseas Chinese. For example, are there any noticeable regularities with respect to the locations of the overseas Chinese? Are Chinese found more in rich or in poor countries? Are they more found in small or in large countries, or in densely settled or not densely settled countries? Also, does the number of overseas Chinese in a country decline with increasing distance from China? We address this latter question by measuring on the distance of each host country from Guangzhou (Canton), the capital city of Guangdong Province, the major province from which Chinese emigration was initiated. Ecological theory and the "friction of space" hypothesis would expect that the closer the host country to Guangzhou, the larger the number of overseas Chinese.

Diasporas

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) (Second edition) states that the term "diaspora" (from the Greek διασπορά, meaning a scattering or dispersion) refers to the "whole body of Jews living dispersed among the Gentiles after the Captivity … (or) to the body of Jewish Christians outside of Palestine" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2000, vol. IV: 613). Safran (1991) has written that the term "diaspora" may be traced to the Hebrew and Yiddish (Hebrew, *Galut* גלות; Yiddish, *Golus*), and that it referred early on only to the historical exile and dispersion of Jews from Judea and later from Israel. These statements confirm Sheffer's (2003) claim that until relatively recently most definitions of "diaspora" were in terms solely of the Jewish dispersion (see also Brubaker [2005]). The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* has a similar definition, but also includes a second and broader definition, namely, "the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2013).

Brubaker (2005) has noted that in recent literatures the term "diaspora" has been extended to refer to most every nameable population that is dispersed in space. He conducted a search of books published on the topic of diasporas since the year of 1900, and found "that nearly all (17 of 18) books published on diasporas between 1900 and 1910 addressed the Jewish case; as late as the 1960s, this remained true of 15 of 20 books sampled … In 2002, by contrast, the top 20 books sampled (of 253 published that year) addressed 8 different cases; only two of the twenty addressed the Jewish case" (Brubaker, 2005: 14). These data suggest that currently, the term diaspora is used to refer to all dispersed populations, not just the Jewish population.

There is an extensive debate in the literature on the peoples that should be included in a diaspora. Brubaker (2005) covers most of the issues, but see also Anderson (1998), Sartori (1970), and Sheffer (1983, 2006). Should Country X's diaspora refer only to persons born in

Country X but now living outside Country X? Or should it refer to persons born in Country X, living outside Country X, who provide some economic, political and related support to Country X? Or should it refer more broadly to persons who claim identification via birth or ancestry to Country X? We use the third definition and refer to the diaspora of Country X as being comprised of persons living outside Country X who claim identification to Country X through birth or ancestry. Our definition does not require that the person be born in Country X, nor does it require that he/she have citizenship in Country X. We only require that the person be born in or claim ancestry to Country X.

We have gathered data from numerous sources to identify the diasporas with the largest populations. In Table 1, we list the fifteen largest diasporas as of circa-2010. Of all the countries in the world, Germany has the largest diaspora, estimated at around 95 million people (Moser 2011; Historical Boys Clothing 2012). Ireland has the second largest diaspora, at about 70 million people (Russell, 2012; Whittemore, 2013). China is in 3rd place, followed by the UK, Mexico, South Africa, Russia and India. Italy, Poland and the Ukraine share 9th place with an estimated 20 million persons in each of their respective diasporas.

It is of particular interest to point out that with one of the smallest populations in the world, Ireland has the second largest diaspora; the combined populations of the country of Ireland at 4.6 million and Northern Ireland at 1.8 million equal just over 6.4 million Irish people living on the island of Ireland. Yet an estimated 70 million people identify as Irish via birth or ancestry.

More than one-half of the Irish diaspora and more than four-fifths of the German diaspora reside in the United States, a country comprised almost entirely of immigrants or descendents of immigrants. Less than two percent (1.7%) of the U.S. population identified themselves in the 2010 census as American Indians or as Alaskan Natives (Norris, Vines, and Hoeffel, 2012). This

means that over 98 percent of Americans are immigrants or are descendants of immigrants, leading to the phrase popularized by President John F. Kennedy in his posthumously published book that the U.S. is a "nation of immigrants" (Kennedy, 1964). Moreover, nearly all white Americans are descendants of Europeans, with very few Americans born in Europe. And a very small percentage of white Americans fails to identify a European country of ancestry, with Germany and Ireland being the two most cited (Hout and Goldstein, 1994: 64).

Our brief analysis of disaporas indicates that there are two diasporas that are appreciably larger than the Chinese diaspora, namely, the German diaspora and the Irish diaspora. These two diasporas, even though much larger than the Chinese diaspora, are of a much more recent historical vintage. That is, the German and Irish diasporas date from around the 18th century or perhaps slightly earlier. In contrast, the Chinese diaspora, as we note below, has a much longer history, dating back to the Qin Dynasty, which is more than 2,000 years ago. Although not the largest of the contemporary diasporas worldwide, the Chinese diaspora is third among the top fifteen, and is the largest diaspora from Asia.

Major Patterns of Prior Emigrations from China

We now discuss the major patterns of prior Chinese emigration. According to Wang Gungwu (1991), there have been four principal patterns over the past two centuries. The first is the *Huashang* (华商) (Chinese trader) pattern; it is characterized by merchants and traders and eventually their families going abroad to establish businesses in the host countries. Typically comprised mainly of males, after one or two generations many of these merchants "settle down and bring up local families" (Wang, 1991: 5). The more prosperous their businesses, the more likely that they maintain "their Chinese characteristics, if not all their connections with China"

(Wang, 1991: 5). *Huashang* migration has been the prominent model of Chinese emigration to many Asian countries, particularly to Southeast Asia before 1850 (Legge, 1886; Fitzgerald, 1965).

Lynn Pan's (1990) *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora* provides very interesting and fascinating stories, indeed mini-biographies, of the emigrations of numerous Chinese families, many of whom followed the *Huashang* pattern. For example, in 1841, a 24-year old male from Tongan County in Fujian Province left China and migrated to the Philippines accompanied by his 6 year old son Giok Kuan Co. This was the second emigration for the father (known in the Philippines as Martin Co), who as a young boy had emigrated from Fujian to the Philippines with his father. When Martin had grown to adulthood and had saved some money, he returned to his village in China, married, and had children. His second son was Giok Kuan Co, the boy who accompanied him on the emigration in 1841. In the Philippines, this son was later baptized by the Spaniards and named Jose, and later became known as Jose Cojuangco. Jose started as a carpenter in Manila, established a large business specializing in sugar and rice, and also became a money lender. He accumulated a great deal of land in the Philippines province of Tarlac. He married, had children, and they married and had children, and this Chinese-Filipino family grew and prospered. The great-granddaughter of Jose Cojuangco (Giok Kuan Co) was María Corazon Sumulong "Cory" Cojuangco-Aquino, who was born in the Philippines in 1935 and died in 2009. She served as the eleventh President of the Philippines and was the first woman ever to hold that office. Often regarded as the "Mother of Philippine Democracy," she was also the first female ever to serve as a president in all of Asia. Her ancestry may be traced to her great grandfather who immigrated to the Philippines as a young boy in 1841 following the *Huashang* pattern of Chinese emigration.

The *Huashang* pattern has predominated throughout history. The first recorded Chinese emigration followed the *Huashang* pattern (Zhu, 1991) and occurred during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC) and was to either Japan or the Philippines. Whereas the other three patterns we discuss in the following paragraphs occurred in particular time periods, the *Huashang* pattern has always occurred and continues to this very day (Wang, 1991; Redding, 1990; Poston et al., 1994).

According to Wang (1991), the second pattern is the *Huagong* (华工**(苦力**)) (Chinese coolie) pattern, which occurred from the 1840s through the 1920s, when Chinese migrated to North America and Australia. This migration involved "coolie trade" in low-level occupations that were concentrated in gold mining and railway building (Campbell, 1923; McKenzie, 1925; Stewart 1951; Kung 1962; Mei 1979). Pan (1990: 61) has written that the Chinese coolie migrants "went to work in virgin territory across the world … [and] most lived by the sweat of their brow." It was the coolie trade which "took the bulk of the Chinese to the New World, with shipload after shipload reaching Cuba, Peru and … British Guiana in the years between the 1840s and 1870s" (Pan, 1990: 67). In the late 1870s and 1880s, many Chinese went to Hawaii and to California. Pan estimates that "by 1870, one out of every four workers in California was Chinese" (1990: 94).

Poston and Luo (2007: 328) have written about *Huagong* migration, noting that "during the rapid growth period of the frontier economy in the U.S. between 1850 and 1880, thousands of Chinese immigrated, mainly to the western United States, under the indenture system as miners, railroad workers, and agricultural laborers. They also came as cooks, laundrymen, and in other jobs that American workers did not want. Later, they were instrumental in building the western part of the trans-continental railroad." Chinese emigrants under the *Huagong* pattern

were usually men of peasant origins, and their migrations were often temporary because a "large proportion of the contract laborers returned to China after their contract came to an end" (Wang 1991: 6).

The third type is the *Huaqiao* (华桥) (Chinese sojourner) pattern, one strongly comprised of well-educated professionals. This pattern was dominant for several decades after the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, and was strongly tied to feelings of nationalism. Education was largely recognized as a deep commitment to promote Chinese culture and national salvation among the overseas Chinese. Fitzgerald has written that the common belief then was that "without Chinese education, there can be no overseas Chinese" (Fitzgerald 1972: 41). Beginning in the 1920s, many teachers went to the countries of Southeast Asia to instruct the children of Chinese immigrants (Pan 1990: 206), and this trend continued until the 1950s (Poston and Luo, 2007).

The fourth pattern reported by Wang is the *Huayi* (华裔) (Chinese descent) pattern, which is a more recent phenomenon, prevalent since the 1950s. It involves persons of Chinese descent, *Huayi*, in one foreign country migrating or remigrating to another foreign country. A good example would be the Chinese in Southeast Asia, many of whom have migrated to Western Europe in recent decades, "especially since the 1950s when some Southeast Asian nations made those of Chinese descent feel unwanted" (Wang 1991: 9). The Chinese are disproportionately overrepresented in the commercial classes of most every Southeast Asian country, and in some of these countries they "are big players in the national economies" (Pan, 1990: 226). Their economic successes are all the more remarkable when one remembers that "the Chinese in Southeast Asia have always been disliked for having profited from the indigenous reluctance to make money" (Pan, 1990: 226). So when Thailand, and then the Philippines, followed by Indonesia and later Malaysia, began to explicitly lock the Chinese out of various sectors of their

economies so to promote the prosperity of the indigenous peoples, many of the Chinese simply left the countries and moved elsewhere.

Of the four major patterns, the *Huashang* is the most elementary and has been occurring for the longest period of time. Indeed, much of today's global migration of Chinese is of the *Huashang* type. Wang has speculated that with few exceptions, future Chinese migrations "will be based on the *Huashang* pattern and supplemented by the new *Huayi* pattern, with some features of the *Huaqiao* pattern surviving here and there" (Wang 1991: 12). We turn now to a brief review of our earlier demographic analyses of the overseas Chinese.

Prior Analyses

Our previous studies of the overseas Chinese (Yu and Poston, 1989; Poston and Yu 1990; Poston, Mao and Yu, 1994; Huang, Poston and Liu, 1998; Poston, 2003) have examined their distributions in the 1980s and 1990s in all the countries of the world. In our prior research just as in the present study, we defined the overseas Chinese very broadly as all Chinese persons living outside the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, and, after 1997-99, Hong Kong and Macau, including the *Huaren* (华人), (naturalized citizens of Chinese descent), and the *Huayi* (华裔) (the descendants of Chinese). We have found in our current and earlier research that the definitions of the overseas Chinese vary from country to country and from scholar to scholar. No definition is unfailingly sharp and concise because the decision on whether or not a person or a group is overseas Chinese tends to be made by governments, both Chinese and foreign, by the larger societies alongside and within which the Chinese settlers live, and often by individual scholars themselves (Williams, 1966; Poston et al., 1994). So our definition here in this paper

and previously includes all Chinese persons with any Chinese ancestry not living in China and Taiwan.

The overseas Chinese population of the world numbered between 26.8 and 27.5 million persons in the early 1980s, and 36.8 million in early 1990. In 1983, the overseas Chinese population was about three times its number in 1948, and by 1990 it was four times its 1948 count. The 1948-83 average annual growth rate exceeded 3 percent, and the average annual growth rate from 1983 to the early 1990s was 2.7 percent. From the early 1980s to the early 1990s, among the continents, Europe and the Americas had relatively high growth rates, Africa intermediate, and both Asia and Oceania low. The individual countries also had different rates of overseas Chinese population change. Between 1955 and1982, and between the early 1980s and the early 1990s, the Western European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and some of the Asian countries had higher than average annual growth rates.

Although the overseas Chinese in the early 1980s lived in virtually all parts of the world, their distribution was uneven. From the early 1980s to the early 1990s, they comprised a small minority in most countries. More than 90 percent lived in Asia in the early 1980s, and almost 88 percent lived in Asia in the early 1990s. In both periods, over 80 percent of the overseas Chinese residing outside Asia lived in more developed countries. The data we report later in this paper will take us forward another 20 years to the circa-2010. In the next section, we discuss the data on the overseas Chinese we use in this paper.

Data

In Table 2, we report for the years of 2011 and 2001 the numbers of Chinese residing in most of the countries of the world outside China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau (columns c

and g, respectively, show the numbers of overseas Chinese in circa-2011 and circa-2001). The data for 2011 are mainly from the *2011 Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book* published in 2012 in Taipei, Taiwan by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (2012). Data were not available for some countries in the published *2011 Year Book*; these were typically countries with relatively small total populations. In these instances, these countries' overseas Chinese data were provided to us directly by the Chief Data Officer of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council in Taipei, Ms. Jiang Jia Hui. In the case of a few other countries, e.g., North Korea, circa-2011 data on the overseas Chinese were obtained from other sources. The sources of all the data for all the countries for circa-2011 are listed in column (d) of Table 2.

In Table 2, we also report data for circa-2001 on the numbers of overseas Chinese in the countries of the world. Virtually all the 2001 data were provided to us directly by Ms. Jiang Jia Hui, the Chief Data Officer of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council. This was the case because between 2000 and 2002 the *Overseas Chinese Economy Year Books* only provided data on the overseas Chinese populations in thirteen countries, namely, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, United States, Canada, France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. There were no *Economy Year Books* published between 2003 and 2006. The *Statistical Yearbook of the Overseas Compatriot* published in Taipei by the Overseas Community Affairs Council (2013) also provides limited data on the overseas Chinese.

As noted, most of the data in this paper were provided by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council in Taiwan. These data are collected from foreign representatives at Taiwan overseas embassies and consulates, as well as representative and trade offices (for example, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices and World Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce) located in about 74 countries. These offices perform a wide variety of services in over 263 areas in the world.

Every year, the country offices collect data on the numbers of Chinese residing in their respective countries and most other countries without representative offices.

For example, consider the data-gathering operations in the office in India. In addition to gathering data on the Chinese in India, the representatives at the Taipei Economic Center in India are also responsible for collecting the overseas Chinese data for the countries of Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bangladesh (Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2011).

The primary sources of data are usually the national censuses of the countries, and the secondary sources include several statistical and data publications from United Nations and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

The Size and Distribution of the Overseas Chinese

In Table 2, we present the numbers of overseas Chinese for circa 2011 and for circa 2001 for every country with at least 5,000 overseas Chinese in 2011. Countries with fewer than 5,000 overseas Chinese are grouped by continent into a residual category ("Others") and are identified by name in the notes for Table 2.

We show in Table 2 that there were over 40.3 million overseas Chinese in 149 countries in around 2011, and over 35.8 million in 143 countries in around 2001, representing an increase of almost 5 million in the 10 years between 2001 and 2011, or an annual rate of growth of around 1.2 percent. In our earlier research we estimated average annual growth rates of 2.7 percent for the 1990s and 2.5 percent for the 1980s (Poston et al., 1994; Poston and Yu, 1990). If the current annual growth rate of 1.2 percent for the overseas Chinese worldwide were to remain unchanged, the number of overseas Chinese would double to about 80 million in another 58 years.

Of the approximately 40.3 million overseas Chinese in 149 countries in 2011, about 29.6 million, or 73.3 percent, were in 35 Asian countries; the percentage of overseas Chinese residing in the Asian countries was 74.9 in 2001 (see the top row of Table 2). In circa 2011, 18.6 percent of the overseas Chinese lived in 40 countries of the Americas, as compared to 17.1 percent in circa 2001. With respect to the European countries, they contained 5.0 percent in 2011 and 5.5 percent in 2001. In 2011, the countries of Oceania contained 2.4 percent of the overseas Chinese, versus 2.1 percent in 2001. And, the African countries in 2011 had just 0.6 percent of the overseas Chinese, compared to 0.4 percent in 2001.

Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the 40.3 million overseas Chinese resided in four countries in 2011 (see Figure 1): there were 8.0 million Chinese in Indonesia (19.9 percent of the total overseas Chinese population), 7.5 million (18.6 percent) in Thailand, 6.5 million (16.2 percent) in Malaysia, and 4.2 million (10.3 percent) in the United States. Three of the four countries with the largest numbers of overseas Chinese are in Asia. In addition to these three Asian countries, the ten countries with the largest overseas Chinese populations include four more Asian countries, namely, Singapore, the Philippines, Myanmar and Vietnam, and three countries in the Americas, namely, the U.S., Canada, and Peru. These top ten countries contained 86.3 percent of the total overseas Chinese population in 2011. The remaining 13.7 percent, a little more than 5.5 million Chinese, resided in 139 other countries.

Among these 139 remaining countries in 2011, sixteen of them each have at least 100,000 Chinese residents: 754,900 in Australia, 675,900 in Japan, 447,200 in Russia, 441,800 in France, 401,000 in the U.K., 252,300 in Brazil, 201,700 in Italy, 176,500 in Laos, 149,000 in New Zealand, 147,000 in Cambodia, 136,000 in Panama, 130,000 in India, 110,000 in the U.A.E., 140,600 in Spain, 111,500 in the Netherlands, and 110,200 in South Africa (see Table 2).

In only one country, Singapore, the Chinese comprises the majority. Figure 2 depicts the percent of the total population that is overseas Chinese for those 12 countries with the largest percentages of Chinese. More than 53 percent of Singapore is Chinese, followed by Malaysia at 23 percent, Kenya and Brunei at 12 percent each, and Thailand at just under 12 percent. In the 137 host countries not shown in Figure 2, the overseas Chinese represent less than 3.2 percent of their total populations.

Changes between 2001 and 2011 in the Size of the Overseas Chinese Populations

In the top panel of Table 3 we present data on the size of the overseas Chinese by continent for various time periods through circa 2011. The bottom panel of the table presents average annual growth rates for various time intervals from 1948-1952 to the 2000s. We calculated the growth rates using an exponential rate of change based on continuous compounding, the preferred method when assuming constant rates of change (Rowland, 2003: 53). The average annual growth rates reported for the continents and for the world for the 2000s have been weighted by the size of the overseas Chinese population circa 2001.

We see that the size of the overseas Chinese population has increased from 8.7 million in 1948 to over 40.3 million in 2011. As always, the largest numbers of overseas Chinese are in Asia.

In the world as a whole, the highest rate of growth of the overseas Chinese population occurred during the 1948-52 period, which was right before and after the birth of the People's Republic of China. The size of the overseas Chinese population increased from 8.7 million in 1948 to 12.5 million in 1952, an annual rate of increase of 9.1 percent. It is likely that the major portion of this increase was attributable to emigration from China right before and after Mao

Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party assumed control of China on October 1, 1949. The rate then dropped to 2.6 percent for the period 1952-60, and was even lower for the next two time periods. In the next period, the decade of the 1980s, the rate increased to 2.7 percent.

The decade of the 1990s shows a decline of 0.3 percent in the size of the overseas Chinese population worldwide; the numbers of overseas Chinese dropped from almost 36.8 million in 1990 to 35.8 million in circa 2001. This is due almost entirely to a change in the definition of China that occurred in the late 1990s. That is, Chinese people living in Hong Kong and in Macau prior to the late 1990s were considered to be overseas Chinese because up until 1997, Hong Kong was an independent political entity, and Macau was independent until 1999. In 1997 and 1999, respectively, Hong Kong and Macau were returned to China by Great Britain and Portugal, and then officially became part of China. Thus persons residing in Hong Kong after 1997 and Macau after 1999 were no longer defined as overseas Chinese. In 1990, Hong Kong numbered 5.9 million people and Macau around 400 thousand. In the count of the overseas Chinese in 2001 these 6.3 million persons were no longer included, resulting in a negative rate of change for the 1990-2000 period. This effect of dropping Hong Kong and Macau residents from the count of the overseas Chinese is seen more dramatically in the negative rate of change for the 1990s for Asia (-1.8 percent).

In the most recent period, from circa 2001 to circa 2011, the numbers of overseas Chinese have increased from 35.8 million to 40.3 million, an annual rate of increase of 1.2 percent. We noted earlier that if this rate continues unchanged, the number of overseas Chinese would double to over 80 million in another 58 years.

With regard to variation in the growth patterns of the overseas Chinese by continent, from the late 1940s to the early 1950s the Chinese population increased in Asia and Africa and

declined somewhat in Europe, Oceania and the Americas. But since the 1960s, the numbers have increased in every continent in every period (except, as already mentioned, in Asia in the 1990s, which was an artifact of the changing geography of the country of China). The European Chinese population had a negative rate between late 1940s and the early 1950s (-38.6 percent), but then a very rapid increase in the 1960s (19.6 percent) and 1970s (15.4 percent). In the 1980s, the European population of overseas Chinese recorded a moderate increase of 3.2 percent, and then a greater increase of 9.9 percent in the 1990s.

The numbers of overseas Chinese have increased in the 2000s in all the continents of the world. By far the largest percentage increase is in Africa (6.1 percent). This is due mainly to the tremendous expansion by China in the past decade or so of its economic and political ties with African countries. China is now Africa's largest trading partner, having edged out the United States in 2010. China's trade with Africa reached $114 billion in 2010, up from $10 billion in 2000 and $1 billion in 1980. In 2010 Chinese firms accounted for 40 percent of all the corporate contracts signed in African countries, compared to 2 percent for U.S. firms (Wonacott, 2011). In 2011 there were less than 250 thousand overseas Chinese in Africa, the smallest number in all continents (Table 3). But if the annual population growth rate of Chinese in Africa of 6.1 percent remains unchanged, the numbers will double every 11 years, to 500 thousand in 2022 and to 1 million in 2033. The numbers of Chinese in Africa will never reach the levels of Chinese in Asia, but it is Africa where the greatest relative increases will likely occur in the next few decades.

Conclusion

Chinese emigrants began to move to other Asian countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, more than two thousand years ago. Large numbers of Chinese migrated from China to virtually

every other country of the world during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As of circa 2011, over 40.3 million overseas Chinese resided in 149 countries. The overseas Chinese are the minority in all the countries with the exception of Singapore where they comprise just over half of the population. More than 73 percent of the overseas Chinese live in Asia, especially in the Southeast Asian countries, and over 80 percent of the Chinese who live outside Asia reside in more developed countries. There is no reason to believe that the distribution of the overseas Chinese in the world as described in this paper will change dramatically in the near future. The percentage growth rate in Africa will likely continue to be high, with the other continents maintaining their lower albeit positive rates of change.

Today, the direction and magnitude of Chinese international migration are very much influenced by the migration policies of the sending and receiving countries. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States are the main host countries for Chinese immigrants. Immigration today, however, is strictly limited and enforced in most countries of the world. The mortality rates of the overseas Chinese have declined in recent decades in the developed countries and in most of the developing countries. Chinese fertility in most countries is as low as, or lower than, the fertility rates of most other groups in the host countries. These low fertility and mortality rates, for the most part, suggest that unless stringent emigration laws are implemented in the People's Republic of China and in Taiwan, and, more importantly, unless restrictive immigration laws are imposed in all of the host countries, the growth patterns of the overseas Chinese will likely tend to be more affected by international emigration and immigration policies than by the demographic processes of fertility and mortality.

The overseas Chinese population in the world as of 2011 numbered over 40.3 million people, a population size larger than the total population of Poland (38.2 million) and Canada

(34.9 million), and almost as large as the population of Argentina (40.8 million). The Chinese diaspora is the third largest in the world, behind those of Ireland and Germany. Nevertheless, the overseas Chinese have had, and continue to have, important and significant influences in many host countries and are certainly not an inconsequential population.

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Table 1

Fifteen Largest Diasporas in the World, Circa-2010

Rank	Diaspora	Population Size ('000)	Sources of Data
1	Germany	95,000	German Heritage USA (2013), Historical Boys Clothing (2010), Moser (2010)
2	Ireland	70,000	Russell (2012)
3	China	40,300	this paper
4	United Kingdom	38,000	IPPR (2006), World Bank (2011)
5	Mexico	35,000	OECD (2009), World Bank (2011)
6	South Africa	30,600	Ratha and Plaza (2011)
7	Russia	28,500	Russian Diaspora (2007)
8	India	21,900	Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (2012)
9 (tie)	Italy	20,000	Radizione (2012), World Bank (2011)
9 (tie)	Poland	20,000	Pieslak (2001), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Poland) (2012)
9 (tie)	Ukraine	20,000	Ukrainian World Congress (2004)
12	Nigeria	17,000	Nigeria Formations (2012), Idowu (2013)
13	Lebanon	14,000	National Archive (2007)
14	Israel (Jewish)	13,500	DellaPergola (2011)
15	Philippines	9,500	Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2010)

Table 2. Distribution of the overseas Chinese in the world: circa 2001 and circa 2011

Continent and country or area	Year (circa 2011) (a)	Total population (millions) (*1*) (b)	Number of overseas Chinese (thousands) (*2*) (c)	Source (d)	Overseas Chinese per 10,000 total population (e) = 10×(c)/(b)	Year (circa 2001) (f)	Number of overseas Chinese (thousands) (*4*) (g)	Average annual growth rate: 2000s (percent) (*5*) (h)
Asia (N=35)			29,597.22				26,832.89	
Indonesia	2011	248.00	8,010.72	3,4	323.01	2001	7,163.32	1.12
Thailand	2011	64.26	7,512.60	3,4	1,169.06	2001	6,861.82	0.91
Malaysia	2011	28.73	6,540.80	3,4	2,266.47	2001	5,749.00	1.30
Singapore	2011	5.26	2,808.30	3,4	5,344.05	2001	2,565.30	0.91
Philippines	2011	95.83	1,243.16	3,4	129.72	2001	1,073.65	1.48
Myanmar	2011	62.42	1,053.75	3,4	168.82	2001	1,006.00	0.46
Vietnam	2011	89.32	992.60	3,4	111.13	2001	1,216.34	-2.01
Japan	2011	127.92	674.87	3,4	52.76	2001	335.58	7.24
Laos	2011	6.56	176.49	3,4	269.20	2001	168.51	0.46
Cambodia	2011	14.43	147.02	3,4	101.87	2001	313.96	-7.31
India	2011	1,206.92	129.74	3,4	1.07	2001	177.72	-3.10
United Arab Emirates	2011	5.38	109.50	3,4	203.73	2001	25.13	15.86
Brunei	2011	0.41	51.00	3,4	1,231.88	2001	40.00	2.46
Turkey	2011	72.15	41.20	3,4	5.71	2001	50.10	-1.94
Korea (South)	2011	48.39	24.06	3,4	4.97	2001	20.60	1.57
Saudi Arabia	2011	28.17	23.00	3,4	8.17	2001	26.58	-1.44
Nepal	2011	28.46	10.38	3,4	3.65	2001	0.20	48.42
Korea (North)	2009	24.45	10.00	6	4.09	2003	10.00	-
Israel	2011	7.59	8.07	3,4	10.62	2001	0.04	70.43
East Timor (Timor-Leste)	2011	1.15	7.56	4	65.49	2001	12.80	-5.13
Mongolia	2011	2.80	6.67	4	23.81	2005	0.00	-
Others (N=14)[7, 8]		557.51[9]	15.76	3,4	0.28		16.25	
Americas (N=40)			7,503.38				6,124.31	
United States	2011	313.89	4,160.43	3,4	132.54	2001	3,014.00	3.28

Canada	2011	34.38	1,511.22	3,4	439.51	2001	1,159.10	2.69
Peru	2011	30.01	989.77	3,4	329.82	2001	1,300.00	-2.69
Brazil	2011	194.93	252.25	3,4	12.94	2001	143.00	5.84
Panama	2011	3.59	135.96	3,4	378.71	2001	130.00	0.45
Argentina	2011	40.90	85.48	3,4	20.90	2001	40.00	7.89
Venezuela	2011	29.77	78.36	3,4	26.32	2001	65.00	1.89
Mexico	2011	109.71	60.00	3,4	5.47	2001	20.50	11.34
Costa Rica	2011	4.72	43.70	3,4	92.67	2001	47.17	-0.76
Ecuador	2011	15.01	26.80	3,4	17.86	2001	36.00	-2.91
Jamaica	2011	2.74	23.11	3,4	84.46	2001	22.50	0.27
Dominican Republic	2011	10.06	19.08	3,4	18.98	2001	16.35	1.56
Guatemala	2011	14.71	16.00	3,4	10.88	2001	17.32	-0.79
Chile	2011	17.40	14.57	3,4	8.38	2001	3.72	14.63
Surinam	2011	0.53	13.00	4	245.75	2001	40.00	-10.63
Guyana	2011	0.76	11.56	4	152.92	2001	6.50	5.93
Belize	2011	0.34	10.00	3,4	294.99	2001	7.50	2.92
Trinidad & Tobago	2011	1.35	9.10	4	67.57	2001	9.00	0.11
Cuba	2011	11.25	5.89	3,4	5.23	2001	6.00	-0.19
French Guiana	2011	0.24	5.51	4	232.57	2001	7.50	-3.03
Netherlands Antilles	2006	0.20	5.50	4	270.94	2001	5.50	-
Paraguay	2011	6.53	5.06	4	7.75	2001	6.78	-2.88
Others (N=18)[10, 11]		91.22[12, 13]	21.05	3,4	2.31		20.88	
Europe (N=29)			2,016.41				1,970.59	
Russia	2011	142.41	447.20	3,4	31.40	2001	998.00	-7.71
France	2011	63.09	441.75	3,4	70.02	2001	226.50	6.91
United Kingdom	2011	62.64	401.02	3,4	64.02	2001	271.04	4.00
Italy	2011	60.62	201.74	3,4	33.28	2001	64.50	12.08
Spain	2011	46.14	140.62	3,4	30.47	2001	30.90	16.36
Netherlands	2011	16.69	111.45	3,4	66.78	2001	135.00	-1.90
Germany	2011	81.44	91.51	3,4	11.24	2001	102.50	-1.13

Sweden	2011	9.45	27.43	3,4	29.03	2001	13.19	7.60
Austria	2011	8.42	20.00	3,4	23.76	2001	40.00	-6.70
Ireland[i]	2011	4.58	17.91	3,4	39.09	2001	3.22	18.72
Portugal	2011	10.66	14.46	3,4	13.57	2001	2.73	18.13
Norway	2011	4.96	14.44	3,4	29.10	2001	5.51	10.12
Hungary	2011	9.99	12.65	3,4	12.67	2001	15.16	-1.79
Demark	2011	5.54	12.07	3,4	21.79	2001	8.08	4.10
Switzerland	2011	7.84	10.83	3,4	13.82	2001	13.95	-2.50
Belgium	2011	10.95	9.01	3,4	8.22	2001	24.80	-9.63
Greece	2011	11.19	7.47	3,4	6.68	2001	5.50	3.11
Romania	2011	21.41	7.05	3,4	3.29	2005	0.00	-
Ukraine	2011	45.55	6.56	3,4	1.44	-	-	-
Finland	2011	5.40	6.14	3,4	11.37	2001	2.00	11.87
Bulgaria	2011	7.43	5.00	3,4	6.73	-	-	-
Others (N=8)[14, 15]		58.77	10.09		1.72		8.02	
Oceania (N=18)			962.49				745.52	
Australia[16]	2011	22.50	754.87	3,4	335.44	2001	556.55	3.09
New Zealand	2011	4.42	149.00	3,4	337.41	2001	140.00	0.62
French Polynesia	2011	0.27	20.26	3,4	739.42	2001	20.00	0.13
Papua-New Guinea	2011	6.66	15.83	3,4	23.76	2001	9.07	5.73
Fiji	2011	0.89	5.55	3,4	62.04	2001	4.94	1.17
Guam	2006	0.18	5.18	4	284.62	2001	5.18	0.00
Others (N=12)[17]		1.42[18]	11.81		83.03		9.78	
Africa (N=27)			248.89				137.22	
South Africa	2011	50.59	110.22	3,4	21.79	2001	45.00	9.37
Mauritius (Molixisi)	2011	1.29	30.00	3,4	232.74	2001	30.29	-0.10
La Réunion	2011	0.83	28.00	3,4	338.57	2001	25.00	1.14
Nigeria	2011	160.34	25.42	3,4	1.59	2001	4.14	19.90
Malagasy (Madagascar)	2011	21.85	18.00	3,4	8.24	2001	28.00	-4.32

Zimbabwe	2011	12.75	6.10	4	4.78	2001	0.20	40.75
Gabon	2011	1.53	5.64	4	36.77	2001	0.10	49.67
Kenya	2011	0.04	5.13	4	1,233.84	2001	0.10	48.27
Others (N=19)[19, 20]		323.93	20.37		0.63		4.39	
World total (N=149)			40,328.39		3.91		35,810.54	

Sources (as cited in the column headings and in col. D):

1. Total population estimates for the countries (2011) are provided by the United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division, "World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Highlights and Advance Tables." Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP.220) and other sources (see #9, 12, 13 & 18), if there were no estimates reported by the Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee (華僑經濟年鑑 2011).
2. Countries with more than 5,000 overseas Chinese are reported individually. Countries with less than 5,000 overseas Chinese are grouped into the "Other" category.
3. Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee, Taiwan (華僑經濟年鑑 2011).
4. Data were provided to us directly by Jiang JiaHui, Chief Data Officer, Overseas Chinese Affairs Council, Republic of China (Taiwan).
5. The rates are exponential rates (see discussion in the text).
6. The Chosun Ilbo (estimates of North Korea 2011 total population) October 10, 2009 (http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/10/10/2009101000229.html).
7. The 14 other Asian countries are: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Oman, Jordan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Sikkim, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syrian, Bahrain and Qatar.
8. Hong Kong and Macau became a part of China after 1997 and 1999, respectively. The number of overseas Chinese in these two areas as well as Ryukyu and Cyprus were not reported by the Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee or recorded by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (circa 2000 and 2010).
9. Distribution of Population, Decadal Growth Rate, Sex-Ratio and Population Density, Provisional Population Totals: Sikkim (2011 total population; http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/prov_data_products_sikkim.html).
10. The other American countries or territories are: Columbia, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Bahamas, Haiti, Uruguay, Barbados, Bolivia, St Lucia, St Christopher and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, St Martin Island, Martinique, Aruba, Dominica and Micronesia.
11. The number of overseas Chinese in the British Virgin Islands were not reported by the Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee or recorded by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (circa 2000 and 2010).
12. Federated States of Micronesia 2010 Census Preliminary Population Counts (Pohnpei 2011 total population). Office of Statistics, Budget and Economic Management, Overseas Development Assistance, and Compact Management (http://www.sboc.fm/index.php?id1=Vm0xMFlWWXhWWGhTYmxKV1YwZFNUMVpzV21GVk1WbDNXa2M1VmxKdGVGbGFWVnBoVlVaV1ZVMUVhejA9).
13. Population 2011 (Saint Martin 2011 total population), Data Bank. The World Bank (http://databank.worldbank.org/databank/download/POP.pdf).
14. The 8 other European countries are: Czech Republic, Poland, Luxembourg, Iceland, Latvia, Macedonia, Lithuania, and Estonia.
15. The number of overseas Chinese in Malta was not reported by the Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee or recorded by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (circa 2000 and 2010).
16. Australia includes Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Island, and Norfolk Island.
17. The 12 other Oceania countries or territories are: Nauru, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga, Marshall Island, Palau, Kiribati, Tuvalu, American Samoa, Guam and Saipan.
18. Population of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) by Village (Saipan 2011 total population): 2010 with 2007 Election Districts. CNMI Department of Commerce (http://commerce.gov.mp/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2010-Census-CNMI-Population-Statistics-by-Village-with-2007-ED-Sorted-by-2007-ED.pdf).
19. The 19 other African countries are Lesotho, Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe, Egypt, Swaziland, Malawi, Uganda, Togo, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Angola, Ivory Coast, Libya, Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Namibia, and Gambia.
20. The number of overseas Chinese in Congo, Liberia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, Botswana, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Niger, Cameroon, and Zaire were not reported by the Overseas Chinese Economy Year Book Editorial Committee or recorded by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Council (circa 2000 and 2010).

Table 3.
Numbers of Overseas Chinese and their Annual Growth Rates, in the World and by Continent, for Various Time Periods between 1948 and circa 2011

	Number of overseas Chinese (thousands)							
Continent	1948	1952	1960	1970	Circa 1980	Circa 1990	Circa 2001	Circa 2011
Asia	8,379.7	12,228.5	14,880.1	18,342.6	24,764.0	32,287.8	26,832.9	29,597.2
Americas	209.0	203.9	406.6	711.2	1,333.0	3,226.6	6,124.3	7,503.4
Europe	53.8	11.5	15.8	112.1	622.0	769.5	1,970.6	2,016.4
Oceania	63.8	60.9	42.2	68.5	176.4	373.9	745.5	962.5
Africa	14.9	31.3	40.6	59.4	76.9	108.0	137.2	248.9
World	8,721.2	12,536.2	15,385.2	19,293.8	26,972.4	36,765.8	35,810.5	40,328.4

Rates of Annual Population Change of the Overseas Chinese

	1948—52	**1952—60**	**1960—70**	**1970—80**	**1980s**	1990s	2000s
Asia	9.4	2.5	2.1	2.0	2.4	-1.8	1.0
Americas	—0.6	8.6	5.6	7.8	8.0	6.6	2.1
Europe	—38.6	4.0	19.6	15.4	3.2	9.9	0.2
Oceania	—1.2	—4.6	4.8	4.3	8.5	7.1	2.6
Africa	18.6	3.3	3.8	2.3	2.1	2.4	6.1
World	9.1	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.7	-0.3	1.2

SOURCE: Numbers from 1948 to 1980 are taken from Poston and Yu (1990); numbers for circa 1990 are taken from Poston, Mao and Yu (1994); other data are from Table 2; all rates are computed using exponential rates of increase.

Figure 1

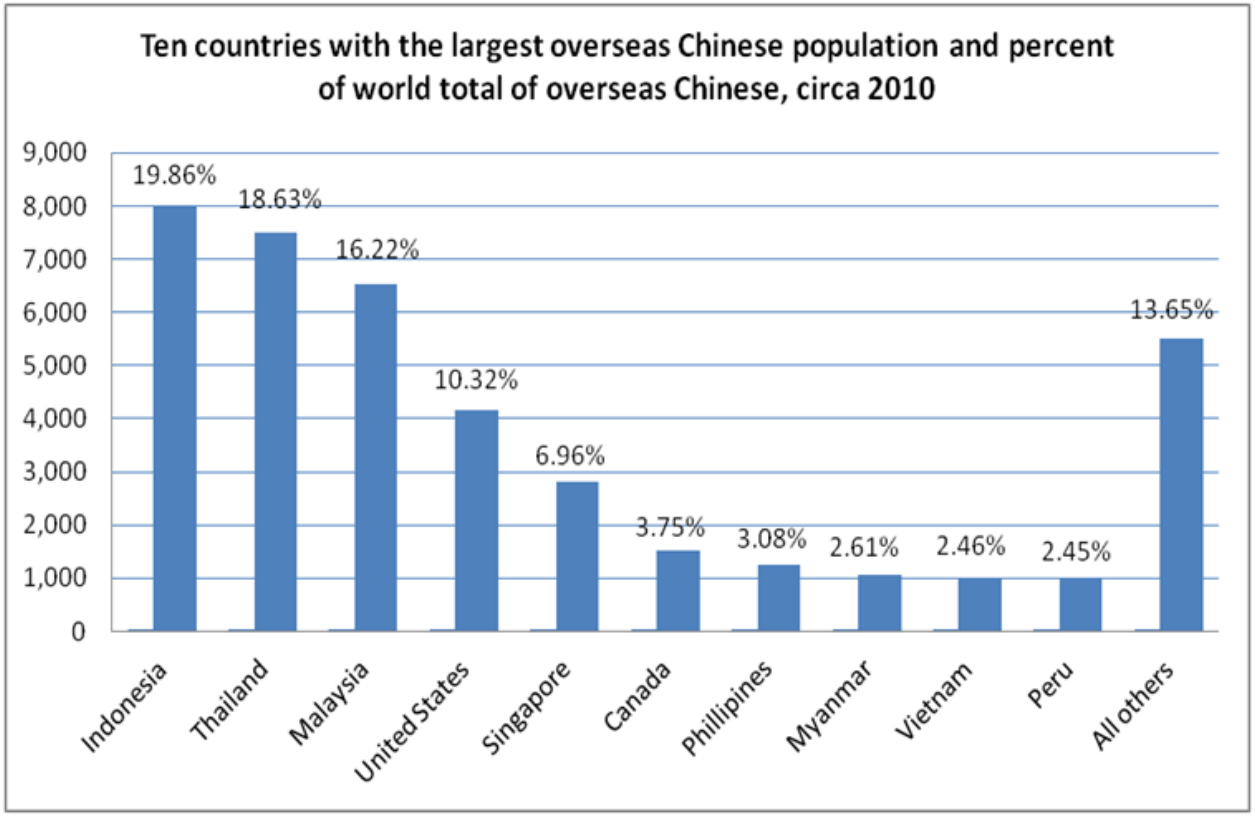
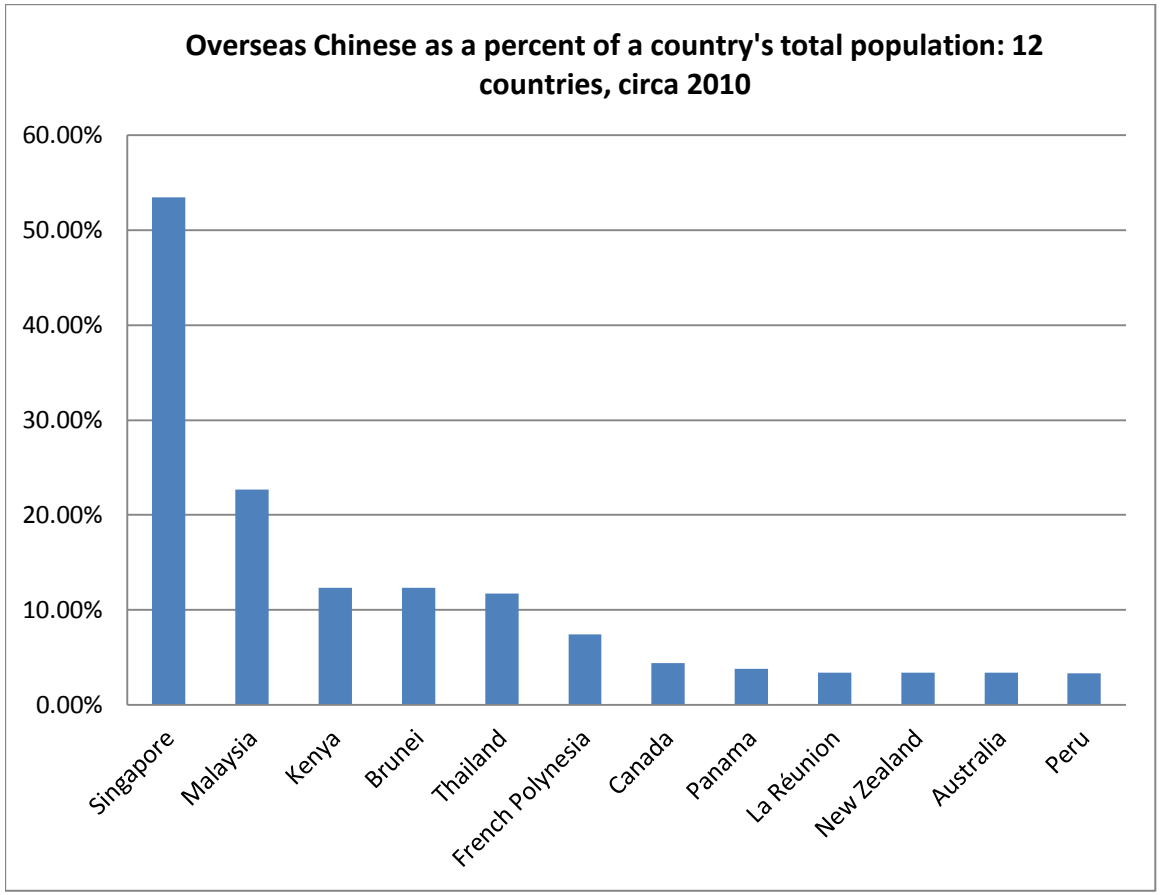

Ten countries with the largest overseas Chinese population and percent of world total of overseas Chinese, circa 2010
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
19.86%
18.63%
16.22%
10.32%
6.96%
3.75%
3.08%
2.61%
2.46%
2.45%
13.65%
Indonesia
Thailand
Malaysia
United States
Singapore
Canada
Phillipines
Myanmar
Vietnam
Peru
All others

Figure 2


Overseas Chinese as a percent of a country's total population: 12 countries, circa 2010
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Singapore
Malaysia
Kenya
Brunei
Thailand
French Polynesia
Canada
Panama
La Réunion
New Zealand
Australia
Peru