THE CHINESE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: CHINA COMMIT-MENTS AND LOCAL ASSIMILATION

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Introduction

A topic which has occupied considerable attention since Southeast Asian states have begun striving for some form of internal national integration is the adaptation of Chinese sub-populations to the existing and usually dominant cultures of the region. The Chinese have generally been seen as outsiders and have been the subject of various forms of discrimination. Many Chinese have either chosen to respond to discrimination by simply remaining aloof from local culture or have overtly resisted integration on their own, perhaps generating some of the criticism which seems to characterize an anti-Chinese prejudice.

Given the importance of the topic, and if one wishes to concern oneself with the relations of Chinese sub-populations in Southeast Asia with the various indigenous groups,[1] one is concerned with measurement and evaluation of their integration or assimilation by some empirical criteria. Among the criteria used in the past have been the degrees of open conflict between Chinese populations and various groups claiming priorities of culture, religion, or language. Such conflict between Chinese sub-populations and previously dominant Malay groupings in Malaysia and Singapore, for example, has been quite conspicuous in recent years.[2] Much of the antagonism which became manifest in the events surrounding the 1965 coup attempt in Indonesia seemed to be a reflection of underlying Malay-Chinese disrespect and mutual fear rather than a consequence of the coup attempt itself or even China's involvement in it. Such conflict could be considered to be an indication of limited integration.

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[1] The term "indigenous" is used to represent the major group present in the country when the primary Chinese immigration occurred. Most groups are known to have migrated into the region at one time or another, including those now referred to as indigenous.

[2] See Cynthia H. Enloe, "Issues and Integration in Malaysia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XLI, No. 1 (Spring 1968), pp. 372-385.

At the other end of the conflict spectrum, little has been heard of Chinese conflict with the dominant groups of the Philippines or Thailand. In fact, the contrary seems to be the case. Observers note the relative passivity of the Chinese populations in those states (at least a lack of open conflict) and their high degree of participation in national society.[3] Thus, a range of assimilation might be established according to the conflict criteria, with Malaysia at one end of the spectrum and Thailand and the Philippines at the other.

A violence indicator, however, would appear to be a rather gross characterization of divisions within the region and may well be a consequence of other types of relationships between the groups not specifically related to political or social integration. Other forms of commitment have been suggested as indicators of assimilation for the groups with which we are here concerned. One of these has been the question of loyalty to China,[4] which has been of interest to scholars of overseas Chinese affairs for many years and in fact has become even more pertinent and useful in the years since 1949.

Given the revolutionary ethic of the Chinese government during most of the recent period and the growth of Southeast Asian Chinese populations, governments and peoples of the region have continued to look upon the local Chinese citizens and residents with considerable suspicion. Being a culture apart, the Chinese are often viewed, too, a "solid" group, impenetrable by non-Chinese, and, as William Willmott has pointed out, it is all too easily assumed that the solid block of Chinese tend to favor recent development in China or could all be brought to toe the line of that particular government.[5]

While some observers have either indicated a division among overseas Chinese according to class[6] or have noted the possibility that

[3] G. William Skinner, "The Thailand Chinese: Assimilation in a Changing Society," *Asia,* Vol. 2 (Autumn 1964), pp. 80-92.

[4] See, for example, C.P. FitzGerald, *The Third China,* (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, Ltd., 1969), Chapter 3 and 4, and Robert O. Tilman, "Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines," in Wayne, Wilcox, Leo E. Rose, and Gavin Boyd, eds., *Asia and the International System,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1972), pp. 222-223.

[5] William E. Willmott, "The Overseas Chinese Today and Tomorrow," *Pacific Affairs,* Vol. XLIII, No. 2 (Summer 1969), p. 210.

[6] For a Marxist view of the Southeast Asian Chinese, see N. A. Simoniya, "Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia — A Russian Study," Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper Number 45, December, 1961.

Overseas Chinese are fundamentally pro-Overseas Chinese,[7] we remain without relevant data as to the direction or degree of commitment of Southeast Asian Chinese. Moreover, even the question of the utility of "China commitments" as an indicator of assimilation remains to be answered.

This paper presents a discussion of some recent data gathered through survey research in Southeast Asia which is directed at these questions and subsequently at the topic of Chinese integration into the various cultures of Southeast Asia. Two separate indicators of identity have been generated in this study. One is a direct measure of attitudinal commitment to China and the Chinese of China; the second is a degree of compatibility between attitudes of Southeast Asian Chinese and their respective indigenous groups. The first acts as an indicator of "China commitment" and the second an indicator of assimilation.

Method and Sample

Before proceeding to an analysis of the data, it is first necessary to provide some information on the methods by which the data were gathered and the nature of the respondent groups involved in the study. The data were gathered in 1970-71 through administration of two attitude tests: one of these refers to a social context and one to a political context. The tests were both of a "Bogardus" type,[8] with five-point scales enabling respondents to evaluate and rate 27 nationalities in a social distance context and 27 corresponding countries in a political context.

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[7] See Lea E. Williams, *The Future of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 21.

[8] See Emory S. Bogardus, *Social Distance*, Antioch Press, 1959. For a brief description in the context of other attitude tests, see Earl R. Babbie, *Survey Research Methods*, Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973, Chapter 14; other social distance studies which relate to Southeast Asia include Chester L. Hunt, "Social Distance in the Philippines," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (March-April 1956), pp. 253-260: Donald O. Cowgill, "Social Distance in Thailand," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (July 1968), pp. 363-376; and Joe Khatena, "Relative Integration of Selected Ethnic Groups in Singapore," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (July 1970), pp. 460-465. Forthcoming is Llewellyn D. Howell, Jr., "Attitudinal Distance in Southeast sia: Social and Political Ingredients in Integration," *Southeast Asia*, Vol. II. 4.

While the structure of the two tests did not vary, the context was distinguished by providing reference statements for each of the points in the scale which were taken from the situational context. For example, in the social context statements such as (1) "I would be willing to marry a person from this group," (2) "I would be willing to have a person from this group as a close friend," etc. were used, with target groups being evaluated by the respondent as he gave them a "check-off score of 1 ("close") ranging to 5 ("distant"). In the evaluations of countries, which I have termed "Political," the context was altered by altering the statements used to represent each category. These now indicated degrees of suggested closeness between the respondent's nation-state and other states of the region. For example, (1) was "I would like to see this country and mine joined politically," and (5) "I would like to see no cooperation with this country whatsoever." Sequential statements in both tests thus represent increasingly more distant relationships either of social or international political nature.

The two tests and a questionnaire were administered in the language of the institution from which the respondents were drawn. Available versions included English, Thai, Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, and Chinese. The respondents included more than 2500 university or college-level students from the five countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).[9] Of these returned questionnaires, 2131 were usable and these provide the primary source of data on attitudes discussed in this paper.[10]

The total number of respondents was broken down into a listing of nineteen groups for which evaluation scores have been determined in the two contexts. These groups were distinguished by four basic criteria: nationality (citizenship), ethnicity, religion, and language of education. Table 1 provides a listing of the nineteen groups, their

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[9] ASEAN members are the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

[10] Where possible, respondents were drawn from different sections of the country or from varying types of universities in an attempt to obtain something of a representative sample. For a more complete description of the data derivation process and the sample, see Llewellyn D. Howell, Jr. "Regional Accomodation in Southeast Asia: A Study of Attitudinal Compatibility and Distance" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University International Relations Program, 1973).

characteristics, and abbreviations for each group which will be used in subsequent tables and discussion.[11]

TABLE 1

NINETEEN GROUPS INVOLVED IN ATTITUDE PATTERN ORIGINATION

Type	Group Description	N	Code
	Indonesian Malays, Muslims*	213	INMA
	Indonesian Javanese, Muslims	103	INJA
	Singapore Malays in Malay Schools, Muslims	109	SPMA
Muslims	Malaysia Malays in Malay Schools, Muslims	98	MMMM
	Malaysia Malays in English Schools, Muslims	123	MMME
	Malaysia Chinese in English Schools, Christians	39	MCHE
	Malaysia Chinese in English Schools, Chinese Religions	200	MCRE
	Singapore Chinese in English Schools, Christians	89	SCHE
Chinese	Singapore Chinese in English Schools, Chinese Religions	56	SCRE
	Singapore Chinese In Chinese Schools, Chinese Religions	86	SCRC
	Singapore Chinese in Chinese Schools, Christians	12	SCHC
	Indonesian Chinese, Chinese Religions	36	INCH
	Thailand Chinese, Chinese Religions	42	THCH
	Philippines Chinese, Chinese Religions and Christians	40	FICH
	Thailand Thais, Buddhists	162	THAI
	Philippines Filipinos	371	FILS
Others	Philippines Mixed	77	FIMX
	Malaysia Indians	37	MINE
	Singapore Indians	10	SINE
		1903**	

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[11] A complete listing of all social and political distance mean scores are available from the author.

* Despite the fact that narrower ethnic choices were offered to all Indonesian students (Minangkabau, Batak, for example) most of the students in Palembang, Sumatra chose the broader term 'Malay' to describe themselves. Only 8 students encountered in Java described themselves as Malay. Most instead chose 'Javanese.'

** Missing from this portion of the sample (causing the disparity between this figure and the total of usable questionnaires derived) are those who classified themselves in some way other than in these groups or who did not give the necessary information for classification.

Results and Discussion

Let me deal with the elements of analysis in the following order: first, I will discuss the results as related to the concept of "commitment" of the Chinese groups in this sample to the Chinese of China and Taiwan and to the nation-states of China and Taiwan; secondly, I will deal with the relative degrees of "assimilation" as operationalized and defined by common — or more appropriately, similar — attitudes between Chinese sub-populations and other sub-populations as provided in the social and political distance scores. Thirdly, I will deal with the relationship between the two concepts: commitments to China and/or Taiwan (people or state) as they vary with attitudinal assimilation.

In order to structure the analysis and give meaning to the discussion of results, let me pose the following propositions to be tested as a result of this study (i.e., part three above):

1. As the extent of commitment to Chinese from China increases among Chinese sub-populations in Southeast Asia, their degree of social attitudinal assimilation within their countries of residence declines.

2. As the extent of commitment to Chinese from Taiwan increases among Chinese sub-population in Southeast Asia, their degree of social attitudinal assimilation within their countries of residence declines.

3. As the extent of commitment to China increases among Chinese sub-populations in Southeast Asia, their degree of political attitudinal assimilation within their countries of residence declines.

4. As the extent of commitment to Taiwan increases among Chinese sub-populations in Southeast Asia, their degree of political attitudinal assimilation within their countries of residence declines.

a) *Strength of Commitment.*

The relative commitment of the Chinese groups in this study toward the Chinese of China and Taiwan and the states of China and Taiwan are provided in rank order in Table 2. These are mean scores for whole groups with scores closer to one (1) indicating a greater expression of commitment and scores closer to five (5) representing increasingly less commitment. The mean scores are of interest and will be discussed, but the ranks act as the indicators of relative commitment for purposes of hypothesis testing.

TABLE 2

RELATIVE GROUP COMMITMENT TO THE CHINESE AND CHINA

SOCIAL DISTANCE

China-Chinese			Taiwan-Chinese	
Group	Score		Group	Score
SCRC	1.65	High	MCRE	1.74
MCRE	1.90		SCHC	1.75
SCHC	2.00		MCHE	1.78
SCRE	2.17		FICH	1.79
MCHE	2.25		SCRC	1.84
SCHE	2.59		SCRE	1.89
INCH	2.61		THCH	1.91
FICH	3.00		SCHE	2.15
THCH	3.00	Low	INCH	2.75

POLITICAL DISTANCE

China			Taiwan	
Group	Score		Group	Score
SCRC	1.87	High	THCH	1.95
MCRE	2.38		FICH	2.14
SCRE	2.78		INCH	2.44
MCHE	2.82		SCRC	2.51
FICH	2.92		MCRE	2.54
SCHC	2.92		MCHE	2.56
INCH	3.28		SCRE	2.77
SCHE	3.38		SCHE	2.85
THCH	3.40	Low	SCHC	3.08

It is important to note both variation within compared rankings (e.g. the ranking for commitment of the groups toward China-Chinese as compared to Taiwan-Chinese) as well as variation between the two contexts. Let us examine briefly the social context commitment indicators. Little surprise should be generated by the order of responding groups in social distance expression. The Singapore Chinese who practice religions traditionally associated with the Chinese[12] and who are being educated in Mandarin, and who are therefore presumably more strongly imbued with Chinese culture, indicate the greatest affinity for

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[12] Various responses were included here: Buddhist, Taoist, "traditional" religion, etc. Christians were not included in this category nor were the very few Chinese who identified themselves as Muslims.

the Chinese of China. Close behind are the non-Christian Chinese of Malaysia and the Christian Chinese of Singapore who are being educated in Chinese language schools. For both groups, one element of Chinese socialization — either religion or education — remains as a part of their environment.

Following are three more groups of Malaysian and Singapore Chinese who are products of the Western-oriented English language school system. Noteworthy is the fact that Malaysian and Singapore Chinese comprise the first section of this list, then to be followed by Indonesian, Philippines, and Thailand Chinese, in that order, as the least committed.

The following observations would be in order regarding the general description of this indicator. It would appear that the question of reinforcement is of importance to the establishment of relative degrees of commitment. If one is both oriented toward the traditional Chinese religious practices and educated outside of the Western context of the English language schools, the likelihood of some retention of commitment to the Chinese is established. If one of the elements, either religion or type of education, remains "Chinese," a greater degree of commitment is also maintained that would be the case if both were absent.[13]

However, as one moves away from both the religious and educational bases of Chinese culture, the degree of commitment seems to slowly lessen. This is true particularly for the Malaysian and Singapore Chinese. As nationality moves away from Malaysia and Singapore, commitments likewise appear to lessen. In the cases of the Indonesian, Philippine, and Thailand Chinese the degree of apparent commitment declines in seeming conjunction with the decline in opposition between religious groups. That is, more conflict is known to have been generated between Muslims and Chinese (both Malaysia and Indonesia) than between Christians and Chinese (Philippines), with none between Buddhist and Chinese (Thailand).[14] This may lead to eventual conclusions regarding the impact of specific variables — religion es-

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[13] The question of causality, however, has not been dealt with effectively and cannot be answered with this data alone. Strong commitment may bring about an interest in maintaining a separate cultural identity. We can only establish that the strong commitments to the Chinese and Chinese religious and educational characeristics covary.

[14] See Skinner, op cit., Richard J. Coughlin Double Identity: The Chinese and Modern Thailand (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), Chapter 5, esp. p. 92.

pecially — on assimilation but for the moment remains simply a cha-
racteristic of this particular list.

Turning to the degree of commitment to the Taiwan Chinese, se-
veral characteristics of the ranking are of note. First, it is important
to consider that in most cases the scores generated by the target group
of Taiwan Chinese are considerably lower than those generated by
Chinese from China. Only two groups demonstrate a greater commit-
ment to Chinese from China than to Taiwan Chinese: (1) the Sin-
gapore, Chinese-religion, Chinese-educated, and (2) the Indonesian
Chinese. Both the Philippine Chinese and the Thailand Chinese show
great and almost "classic" distinctions between their expressed commit-
ments, with sympathies clearly being on the side of the Taiwan Chinese.
Important, too, is the notable variation in ranking of the groups, with
characteristics of Chinese religion and education being less of defining
factors in determination of the strength of commitments. Further va-
riation can be gleaned by the reader along with further specific analysis.
Suffice it to note at this point that expressed commitments to Taiwan
Chinese are less extreme than those for China Chinese and the order
of the groups has changed perceptibly.

Placed in an international political context, the "China" scores ge-
nerated by the groups do not develop into a particularly different pattern
than did those for the Chinese of China. Singapore's Chinese-educated,
non-Christian remain as the group indicating the closest relationship to
China, as they did in the social context. Philippine, Indonesian, and
Thailand Chinese again fall in the more distant part of the list. A sig-
nificant alteration in position is noted for the English-educated. Chris-
tian Chinese from Singapore who are found to have a relatively limited
degree of commitment to China particularly when compared to their fel-
low citizens from the Chinese language stream. One might compare the
magnitude of these political distance scores to those of social distance.
The mean scores in political distance are considerably higher, indicating
less commitment in the political realm than is demonstrable in the so-
cial realm.[15]

In political distance scores for Taiwan, one kinds an almost com-
plete reversal of order. Now the Thailand, Philippine, and Indone-

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[15] This, however, is a characteristic of almost all groups surveyed
in the data collection effort. Expression of social union was easier to
make than an expression of political union.

sian Chinese indicate the greater relative commitment to Taiwan, where-as the Chinese of Malaysia and Singapore indicate considerably lower levels of commitment. A contrast in direction of identity between the two Chinas has at last become evident.

Broadly generalizing, it appears from the political distance rankings that the Chinese sub-populations of Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia are considerably more sympathetic to Taiwan, whereas the Chinese groups of Malaysia and Singapore demonstrate a slightly greater commitment to China itself. Moreover, the existence of religious characteristics which are associated with Chinese culture or a Chinese education among the Singapore-Malaysia groups seems to facilitate expression of greater commitment to China.

In sum, then, these tables indicate that there are quite widely varying degrees of commitment to the Chinese of either China or Taiwan, and to the two countries of China and Taiwan. The wide variation in scores establishes for us that generalizations regarding "all" Southeast Asian Chinese would be very inappropriate. The table also establishes that there may be some impact of Chinese education and the retention of traditional Chinese religious beliefs in deriving and maintaining some commitment to either China or Taiwan or both. Also established is the relative lack of commitment by Chinese of the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia to China in particular, and a lack of relationship between social commitment to the Chinese and political commitment to the nation-state systems under which the target Chinese groups live.

b) *Assimilation.*

Let us now turn to our second type of indicator. Tables 3 and 4 provide Pearson correlation matrices for social and political distance respectively. Each score represents the degree of covariance (i.e. similarity) between the entire pattern of mean scores for any one group as it relates to any other group.[16] From these matrices I have extracted the particular correlations of the various Chinese sub-populations and

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[16] A correlation coefficient is a numerical representation of the strength of prediction between two variables (in this case patterns of attitude expression). On a scale of -1.00 to 1.00, the negative figures represent an inverse relationship, the positive a direct relationship, with coefficients approaching one indicating more perfect relationships. Coefficients approaching .00 are considered to indicate no correlation or relationship.

TABLE 3

PEARSON CORRELATION* OF SOCIAL DISTANCE MEAN SCORES FOR GROUPS

		THAI	INJA	INMA	FILS	THCH	INCH	FICH	SPMA	FIMX	SINE	SCRC	SCHC	SCRE	SCHE	MMMM	MMME	MCHE	MCRE	MINE
1.	THAI	100																		
2.	INJA	44	100																	
3.	INMA	43	92	100																
4.	FILS	56	69	59	100															
5.	THCH	85	27	28	41	100														
6.	INCH	23	55	47	33	41	100													
7.	FICH	52	60	55	89	57	32	100												
8.	SPMA	37	67	84	39	30	47	39	100											
9.	FIMX	53	69	59	97	37	38	87	41	100										
10.	SINE	41	57	66	40	30	41	45	71	44	100									
11.	SCRC	-01	-22	-08	-28	37	40	03	21	-25	30	100								
12.	SCHC	08	-03	05	-06	40	42	21	32	-02	46	93	100							
13.	SCRE	35	19	26	23	57	63	49	42	28	64	82	86	100						
14.	SCHE	46	26	31	36	60	57	54	45	39	71	71	80	96	100					
15.	MMMM	49	79	87	56	33	52	55	88	59	-11	-03	24	28	100					
16.	MMME	52	87	92	62	37	57	61	87	66	68	-05	07	35	40	97	100			
17.	MCHE	36	14	19	29	53	48	49	37	33	70	72	85	92	95	14	20	100		
18.	MCRE	30	06	18	19	55	54	44	35	25	59	82	90	95	93	11	24	96	100	
19.	MINE	62	54	54	64	44	34	61	54	67	82	09	31	54	67	53	63	68	57	100

* Results have been rounded to two decimal places.

TABLE 4

PEARSON CORRELATION* OF POLITICAL DISTANCE MEAN SCORES FOR GROUPS

		THAI	INJA	INMA	FILS	THCH	INCH	FICH	SPMA	FIMX	SINE	SCRC	SCHC	SCRE	SCHE	MMMM	MMME	MCHE	MCRE	MINE
1.	THAI	100																		
2.	INJA	78	100																	
3.	INMA	68	94	100																
4.	FILS	82	88	78	100															
5.	THCH	93	64	57	71	100														
6.	INCH	66	76	69	73	72	100													
7.	FICH	78	74	64	92	77	77	100												
8.	SPMA	56	88	89	74	48	75	67	100											
9.	FIMX	72	83	69	95	66	80	92	72	100										
10.	SINE	73	83	76	85	65	76	78	85	84	100									
11.	SCRC	-05	-04	-05	-01	15	37	19	25	14	31	100								
12.	SCHC	36	48	36	53	39	71	52	58	63	71	66	100							
13.	SCRE	54	63	50	75	60	82	81	72	85	83	58	81	100						
14.	SCHE	74	74	60	90	74	83	92	71	93	88	35	73	94	100					
15.	MMMM	54	84	86	71	47	66	66	97	71	77	07	45	66	65	100				
16.	MMME	63	87	86	78	55	70	73	95	76	81	07	48	70	73	98	100			
17.	MCHE	63	57	51	71	69	76	79	55	74	77	41	68	90	92	57	65	100		
18.	MCRE	42	42	37	53	54	74	65	44	62	64	64	75	91	83	47	52	95	100	
19.	MINE	73	75	69	82	71	76	81	75	81	87	13	63	83	92	74	81	92	82	100

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* Results have been rounded to two decimal places and multiplied by 100 for easier interpretation.

the major indigenous sub-populations[17] for the two contexts. Tables 5 and 6 provide a ranking of the assimilation or compatibility indicators.[18] That is, those dyads of indigenous and Chinese populations which are listed close to the top of the list, which have correlations closer to 1,000 are considered to be more similar and thus more integrated. Where attitude patterns expressed either in the social context or in the political context are approaching identity, we might assume that a source of possible conflict is removed and assimilation has occurred.[19]

Quickly summarizing Table 5, which relates to social attitude compatibility, the important characteristics of the ranking are as follows: first, the now familiar grouping of three appears at the top of the compatibility list — Thailand, Philippine and Indonesian Chinese. Philippine and Thailand Chinese in particular have high compatibility scores (.89 and .85 respectively). The scores of the next seven groups decline in a rather regular fashion, then drop off significantly to the final score in the ranking, a low .21 for the SCRC-Singapore Malays. The latter would indicate little, if any, similarity between the attitude patterns of these two groups.

In Table 6, the international political attitude scores and ranking indicate little change from those provided in the social context. While the order is changed somewhat, the basic pattern within the grouping remains the same. Thailand and Philippine Chinese are again in the top ranks with scores significantly above those of the remaining paired groups. In a middle category, we find the same basic grouping as was

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[17] The choice was made according to what the author perceived to be the group projecting the primary national image. The choice of English-educated Malays rather than Malay-educated Malays, in particular, is one that can be questioned. The choices are indicated in Tables 5 and 6.

[18] Assimilation, of course, entails considerably more than having similar attitude patterns. While "compatibility" is the better term, such attitude similarities would likely represent considerable interaction between the groups and exposure to similar experiences. True assimilation is therefore likely to accompany the compatibility expressed here.

[19] As Jacob and Teune have indicated, "Similarity in peoples's expressions of social distance toward one another and toward persons and groups outside their community is taken as evidence of a feeling of social homogeneity ... The closer the readiness to associate, the stronger the presumption of political cohesion within the community." Philip Jacob and Henry Teune, "The Integrative Process: Guidelines for Analysis of the Bases of Political Community," in Philip E. Jacob and James V. Toscano, eds., *The Integration of Political Communities* (New York, Lippincott, 1964), p. 19.

TABLE 5

RANKED CORRELATIONS OF CHINESE AND
INDIGENOUS GROUP SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Chinese Group	Indigenous Group	Score	Rank
FICH	FILS	.89	1
THCH	THAI	.85	2
INCH	INJA	.55	3
SCHE	SPMA	.45	4
SCRE	SPMA	.42	5
SCHC	SPMA	.32	6
MCHE	MMME	.30	7
MCRE	MMME	.24	8
SCRC	SPMA	.21	9

TABLE 6

RANKED CORRELATIONS OF CHINESE AND INDIGENOUS
GROUP INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Chinese Group	Indigenous Group	Score	Rank
THCH	THAI	.93	1
FICH	FILS	.92	2
INCH	INJA	.76	3
SCRE	SPMA	.72	4
SCHE	SPMA	.71	5
MCHE	MMME	.65	6
SCHE	SPMA	.58	7
MCRE	MMME	.52	8
SCRC	SPMA	.25	9

found with the social distance scores. Last in the list, again, are the Singapore, Chinese-religion, Chinese-educated respondents.[20]

In contrast to the degree of commitment to China, we find that in Tables 5 and 6 the general level of compatibility, as compared to commitment, is somewhat reduced — although in a uniform fashion —

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[20] If we had included dyads for Malaysia involving the Malay-educated Malays as the indigenous group, their compatibility with Malaysian Chinese groups would be even lower, reminding us of the two sided nature of these scores. Particularly for Malaysia, the question of Western and Asian (in this case Malay) educational emphasis is important in the determination of the national culture into which the Chinese are being presumably assimilated.

in the case of political attitudes. For all groups, greater political compatibility is indicated than for social attitude compatibility.

Table 7 provides a summary means of comparing the social distance and political distance commitments to the level of attitudinal compatibility and provides a test of the propositions given above. These scores were derived by correlating the rank order of groups as they appear in Table 2 with the rank order of the same groups as they appear in Tables 5 and 6.[21]

TABLE 7

RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS FOR CHINA
COMMITMENTS AND ATTITUDINAL COMPATIBILITY (N=9)

Proposi tion	Target	Context	Correlation	Significant at .05
1	China Chinese	Political	-.94	Yes
2	Taiwan Chinese	Political	-.57	No
3	China	Social	-.79	Yes
4	Taiwan	Social	.45	No

c) *Propositional Tests*

The scores in Table 7 represent the relationship between commitment to China and what we have referred to as the assimilation indicators — i.e. attitudinal similarity as expressed in the data employed in this study. Of the two correlations which are significant, we find that both are highly negative. That is, as the degree of commitment to China or the Chinese of China increases, the similarity in attitude pattern with the indigenous group decreases (a confirmation of propositions 1 and 3). While the negative relationship is high for both social and political distance, it is of worth to note that the correlation is somewhat more extreme, and near perfect, for political distance.

Although the propositions relating to Taiwan and Taiwan Chinese are not confirmed, it is of theoretical value to consider the relatively high correlations (for social science) and particularly the positive score for proposition 2, which provides a convincing disconfirmation of that proposition and suggests that the opposite may be true.

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[21] Using Spearman's rho.

Conclusion

In summary, then, we have reached the following conclusions: first, from table interpretation we find that *Thailand and Philippine Chinese have and demonstrate the least commitment to the Chinese of China itself* and *have the greatest similarity to attitude patterns of their own respective indigenous groups.* For Thailand Chinese, this is a confirmation of a commonly held hypothesis on Chinese-Thai integration[22] and support for the assimilation policies pursued by the Thailand government. Despite a reported "anti-Chinese" sentiment in the Philippines, there has been considerable Chinese-Filipino social, educational and marital intermixture and we can confirm a high level of attitudinal integration, at least, of Philippines Chinese and Filipinos.[23]

Indonesian Chinese are close behind in this limitation of commitment to China and degree of similarity to attitude patterns of Japanese, As with the case of the Philippines Chinese, this may be partly reflective of the sample. The Chinese respondents were studying in an integrated social and language situation. This linkage between educational context and attitudinal similarity is important, however.

Secondly, *the Chinese of Malaysia and Singapore indicate a considerably greater commitment to China than do the three above mentioned groups* and, with some variation, *lower compatibility with the attitude patterns of their respective indigenous groups.* In both countries the size of the Chinese cultural community is large and this may have assisted in the maintenance of a "China identity." Singapore still maintains a complete Chinese educational system, including the respected Nanyang University. Chinese education in Malaysia is now being limited but may still have had its impact in the recent past on the attitudinal development of today's college-level students.[24]

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[22] See Ken Turner, "The Overseas Chinese of South East Asia: National Integration and Alien Minorities," in Roger Scott, ed. *The Politics of New States*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970, pp. 97-102; and David W. Chang, "Current Status of Chinese Minorities in Southeast Asia," *Asian Survey* Vol. XIII No. 6 (June 1973), pp. 591-2, 598.

[23] The reader should be reminded that the Philippines Chinese in this sample were in the English language educational system. However, this is certainly partly a result of Philippine governmental policy regarding limitation of Chinese education. See Chang, *op. cit.,* pp. 594-5.

[24] Nevertheless, the young are likely to be more forward thinking and concerned with local integration than their elders. See Chang, *op. cit.,* p. 596.

Thirdly, *among the Singapore and Malaysian Chinese, as the influence of Chinese religions or Chinese education, the expressed commitment to China increases and the compatibility with the indigenous groups appears to diminish.* This conclusion is supportive of attempts by local governments to affect the manipulable variable of these two, Chinese education. Chinese students studying in English in Malaysia and Singapore, where students studying in English in Malaysia and Singapore, where they also intermix with students from other ethnic groups, demonstrate a distinctly higher level of attitudinal integration than those studying in the Chinese language.[25]

These results provide empirical support for the proposition that *there is a relationship between the retention of ties with China and the ability to assimilate with or be absorbed by national cultures in Southeast Asia.* Some Southeast Asian Chinese groups do retain a strong identity with China but, clearly some do not. And those that do not appear to be much further along the way toward integration with the broader population of the Southeast Asian states in which these Chinese sub-populations reside.

While these results are interesting and useful, the reader should be cautioned that although the sample is representative in many respects, in one it is not. All respondents were university or college level students, and while the Chinese often have a greater percentage of educational enrollments than is merited by their percentage in the population alone, these respondents may not accurately represent the attitudes of the Chinese population at large.[26] The results do, however, give a good picture of attitude patterns and the assimilating capabilities of tomorrow's elites and these are likely to be in directions which the larger Chinese populations will follow.

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[25] As a unique approach to maintaining language priorities but also bringing about social intermixture of students, Singapore's National Junior College offers a curriculum in both English and Mandarin.

[26] Similarly, attitudes of more distinct elites may be not fully representative. A completely random sample of the entire Southeast Asian Chinese population is virtually impossible to obtain.