

BUILDING ON THE PAST: CHINA'S EVOLVING PRESENCE IN SAMOA

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Abstract

Over the past decade, China has increasingly attracted attention from commentators for being an 'emerging' and controversial partner in the Pacific region challenging the status quo. Despite this narrative, China has had deep-rooted connections throughout many parts of the Pacific, including Samoa. Throughout the last century, a number of external laws and policies have played a part in enabling the interactions of the Chinese in Samoa, creating the foundation for Chinese-Samoan relations at a people-to-people level. The first wave of Chinese migrants settled in Samoa in the late 19th century, with a select few becoming established business entrepreneurs prior to the influx of indentured labourers from China administered under German and New Zealand control. While Chinese migrants have continued to settle in Samoa, more recently there has been a notable increase of Chinese influence in the form of trade, investment and foreign aid.

Since becoming independent in 1962, and officially forming diplomatic ties with China in 1975, Samoa has been able to assert and navigate its own relations with China at a diplomatic level. Building on historical remnants, China's growing influence has changed the geopolitical context in the region. China's evolving influence since the late 1970s – and particularly over the last few decades in the form of trade, investment and foreign aid – has seen China become a significant partner in the wider Pacific region. China has become one of the top donors in the Pacific region, with traditional partners urging caution to Pacific recipients. This article explores how China's influence in Samoa has evolved over the last century through migration, trade, investment and in its bilateral relations.

I. Introduction

External powers have long had a history of vying for influence in the Pacific region, driven by their economic, political or strategic interests. Historically the influence that these powers attained at a global level had a ripple effect in the

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Pacific region, seeing it transform from one of independent societies involved in complex trading networks to one of being contested, colonised and influenced in a progressively globalised world. In the current geopolitical context, similar themes continue to emerge. Through renewed interests of traditional partners and the emergence of more contemporary players on the scene, the Pacific has yet again become a ‘contested space’ for partnership. These historical and current influences – and the decision making of actors involved – all play a part in shaping the ongoing development of the Pacific and its peoples.

China currently has diplomatic relations with ten Pacific countries and has become one of the top donors in the region.¹ Over the last few decades, China has drawn a lot of attention from Western commentators and governments, often regarding China as a ‘recent’ or ‘emerging’ player in the region. However, China’s presence in the Pacific is far more infused and, in some cases, goes beyond that of some of the more traditional donors that we see in the region today.

Using Samoa as a case study in the Pacific, this article explores how China’s presence has evolved through migration, trade and investment, and diplomatic relations. By 1975, when Samoa became one of the first Pacific nations to form diplomatic relations with China, Samoa already had a century of interactions with the Chinese instigated by the influence of imperial powers such as Germany, the United Kingdom and later New Zealand. These evolving interactions became a foundation for building the strong diplomatic relationship that we see between both countries today.

II. Migration

Far from being the landlocked people they are often portrayed as in history, the Chinese have been skilled and adventurous boatmen since the dawn of their civilization. Even before we can speak of “China” or the “Chinese”, Neolithic people from the mainland of Asia were ancestors of the diverse peoples of Oceania, who conquered both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific in the first millennium BC.²

- 1 At the time of writing this article, eight Pacific countries had diplomatic relations with China: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. In late 2019, a further two countries – Kiribati and Solomon Islands – switched allegiance to recognise China rather than Taiwan.
- 2 Louise Levathes *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405–33* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994) at 22.

When tracing China's long-standing relationship with the Pacific, some understanding of the origin of Pacific peoples must be considered. Most scholars agree that Pacific peoples began their migration from what is currently known as Taiwan. China's relationship with the Pacific is said to pre-date China's relationship with Europe and America.³ It is thought that people from mainland Asia settled Taiwan around 9000 BC, before migrating to the Philippines around 4000 BC, then through to east of the Bismarck Archipelago and then to Fiji by 1300 BC. Supporting this theory are the striking similarities in some of the features of boats from this era and their links to the outrigger canoes; as well as the adaptation of language throughout parts of the Pacific linking the words for "boat" to that of early Chinese equivalent words. Perhaps one narrative that is even more debated, which will not be discussed in this article, is the belief that the Chinese were able to travel through the Pacific to the Central and South Americas in its first contact with the New World.⁴ By the T'ang (618–907) and Ming dynasties (1368–1644), Chinese traders were well established in Southeast Asia, some travelling through to Mexico and returning.⁵

The Qing dynasty (1644–1912) implemented an overseas travel ban restricting Chinese migration and installing strict penalties if one was caught.⁶ Despite this ban, it became difficult to monitor and enforce. Some Chinese nationals were given permission to migrate from 1858 until the ban was lifted in 1893.⁷ Due to a number of internal rebellions, tens of thousands of Chinese were killed or became homeless, confronted with famine and dislocation.⁸ Faced with ongoing land and increasing population issues, internal migration was one response to help alleviate these issues.⁹ The lifting of the overseas travel ban can be perceived as an alternative response to these internal issues and an increasing population in China, as the population in 1850 was approximately 430 million.¹⁰

From the 1840s – 1940s, mass migration was a global phenomenon in which Chinese migration was no exception. This period saw approximately 20 million Chinese migrate from China with the vast majority (around 90 per cent) travelling to South East Asia following the trade and labour routes that traders from previous

3 Liu Shusen "China's Engagement with the South Pacific: Past, Present, and Future" in Michael Powles (ed) *China and the Pacific: The view from Oceania* (Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2016) 53 at 53.

4 Levathes, above n 2, at 25.

5 Ron Crocombe *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West* (IPS Publications, University of the South Pacific, Fiji, 2007) at 29.

6 At 29.

7 Huang Jianli "Conceptualizing Chinese Migration and Chinese Overseas: The Contribution of Wang Gungwu" (2010) 6 *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1 at 7.

8 Jonathan D Spence *The Search for Modern China* (2nd ed, Norton & Company, New York, 1990) at 208.

9 At 208.

10 At 208.

centuries had established.¹¹ Of the few that travelled outside of Southeast Asia, the Pacific region was one such destination. Most islands of the Pacific have had a historical connection with the Chinese through indentured labour and/or as free settlers.¹²

Professor Wang Gungwu, a Chinese migration scholar, proposed four key patterns of Chinese migration as part of a global phenomenon over the last few centuries.¹³ His typology generated some criticism and ongoing periods of refining,¹⁴ highlighting the problematic nature of trying to define terminology to encapsulate diverse Chinese communities.¹⁵

Willmott applied Wang's Chinese migratory typology to the case of the Pacific,¹⁶ interpreting these four categories as:

- (1) *Huashang* – traders seeking commercial opportunities abroad, which includes cooks and carpenters on ships;
- (2) *Huagong* – overseas workers who were often contracted to non-Chinese companies in the late 19th century;
- (3) *Huaqiao*¹⁷ – sojourners, who maintained their contacts with China and established communities in the Pacific in the early 20th century; and
- (4) *Huayi* – ethnic Chinese who are no longer tied to mainland China and often re-migrate to take up new opportunities.

More specifically to the case of Samoa, Leung Wai has articulated the experiences of Chinese migration in Samoa similarly into four key waves, identifying them into key time periods and themes echoing Wang and Willmott's interpretations:¹⁸

11 Adam McKeown "Chinese Emigration in Global Context, 1850–1940" in *Proletarian and gendered mass migrations: A global perspective on continuities and discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st centuries* (Leiden, The Netherlands: BRILL, 2013) at 266.

12 Crocombe, above n 5.

13 Jianli, above n 7.

14 Leo Suryadinata *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in South East Asia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing, Singapore, 2007) at 51; Adam McKeown "Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842 to 1949" (1999) *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58 (2) 306 at 313; and Charles Hirschman "Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia: Alternative Perspectives" in Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu (eds) *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II* (Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1988) 23 at 24.

15 Jianli, above n 7.

16 Bill Willmott "The Overseas Chinese Experience in the Pacific" in Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A Porter (ed) *China in Oceania: Reshaping the Pacific?* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2010) 93 at 94.

17 In the past the term *huaqiao* has had a political connotation. The term *huaren* has often been used instead of *huaqiao*. *Huaqiao* was utilised within this paper to build on Willmott's research on Chinese migration in the Pacific.

18 Tuatagaloa Aumua Ming Leung Wai "Reflections on the Experiences of the Chinese Community in Samoa" in Michael Powles (ed) *China and the Pacific: The view from Oceania* (Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2016) 73 at 73.

- (1) 1840s–1890s – first wave consisting of free settlers;
- (2) 1900–1930s – indentured or contract labourers;
- (3) 1950s–1990s – full-blooded Chinese with links to the Chinese who migrated in the previous two waves; and
- (4) 2000 to the present – full-blooded Chinese who have familial ties in Samoa and those who have no blood connection to Samoa.¹⁹

Leung Wai, in his account, noted the absence of data around the Chinese in Samoa during the 1940s. This could be attributed to a number of instances at a global level which saw fewer Chinese migrate. Willmott noted that between 1940 and 1960 Chinese migration was interrupted.²⁰ This period overlapped the end of the Japanese occupation, the civil war between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party and the eventual establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). After the PRC was formed, it closed China's borders, making it difficult for the overseas Chinese population to maintain links with their connections.²¹ World War II, infrequent and expensive travel and a number of anti-Chinese laws in Australasia also prevailed at the time, which could have contributed to the decreased number of Chinese migrants in Samoa.

Although there are slight variances in the migration patterns proposed by Wang, Willmott and Leung Wai, a notable difference is that some Chinese migrated on their own accord, while others were contracted.²² For the purposes of this article, these four waves have been grouped into two distinct categories to explore how Chinese migration has evolved specifically in Samoa to the present day: sojourner and contract migrants.

A. Sojourners

Since their arrival in Samoa, we have seen free-settler Chinese migration evolve from *huashang* (traders) to *huaqiao* (sojourners – Chinese nationals living abroad) and, more recently in the Pacific, the *huayi* (re-migrants – those of Chinese descent migrating from one foreign country to another). Despite their differences, each group found opportunities in Samoa with a key theme around business.

The few *huashang* that settled in Samoa arrived in the late 19th century as crewmen on ships. In 1880, Malietoa Laupepa, the paramount chief at the time, put

¹⁹ At 73.

²⁰ Willmott, above n 16, at 94.

²¹ Adam McKeown "Conceptualizing Chinese diasporas, 1842 to 1979" in Anthony Reid (Ed) *The Chinese Diaspora in the Pacific* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008) 1 at 24.

²² WE Willmott "Origins of the Chinese in the South Pacific Islands" in Anthony Reid (Ed) *The Chinese Diaspora in the Pacific* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008) 277 at 278.

in place a law forbidding Chinese entry into Samoa.²³ Before this law only three Chinese men resided in Samoa and they were all successful businessmen.²⁴ It is believed that this law was passed due to the pressures from European merchants who felt threatened by the success of the few Chinese businesses.²⁵ Despite this law, a further nine Chinese men had settled in Samoa and were later granted “European” status under the German Administration.²⁶ These men were all successful in business in Samoa, contributing to the local economy, they married local women and integrated into Samoan society.

It is noted that the *huashang* generally refers to those who migrated in the late 19th century. However, with China’s increasing significance in terms of trade with Samoa, one could argue that there could be a new wave of *huashang* emerging in Samoa.

There are two types of *huaqiao* in Samoa; firstly, migrants with connections to preceding Chinese residents in Samoa (the *huashang* and *huagong*) and, secondly, migrants with no prior connections. This is evident in Leung Wai’s description of the third (1950s–1990s) and fourth (2000s to the present) waves of Chinese in Samoa.

The *huaqiao* in Samoa who already had connections to Chinese residents (1950s to 1990s), migrated to Samoa to support existing family businesses or due to political tensions in Hong Kong at the time.²⁷ Some *huaqiao* were sponsored by their part-Samoan relatives.²⁸ Some migrated back to Hong Kong or moved on to New Zealand.²⁹ Those who chose to stay in Samoa were believed to have adapted well into Samoan society, respecting Samoan culture and laws. Many married Samoans, became Christians and were supported in their applications for Samoan citizenship. It is important to note that Chinese migrants with family connections in Samoa continues into Leung Wai’s fourth wave to present date.³⁰

It is suggested that the most recent wave of *huaqiao* in Samoa (2000 to the present), predominantly have no prior familial connections to Samoa and have noticeably increased in number recently.³¹ Some migrants have established new businesses in Samoa, such as wholesale and construction. Between 2013 and 2016, 50 Chinese citizens were granted entry into Samoa for business investment purposes,³²

23 Nancy Tom *The Chinese in Western Samoa, 1875–1985: The dragon came from afar* (Western Samoa Historical and Cultural Trust, Western Samoa, 1986) at 3.

24 These men were Ah Sue, Ah Ching and Ah Mu.

25 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 74.

26 These men were Ah Siu, Ah Fook, Ah Soon, Ah Kiau, Ah Yen, Ah You, Ah Chong, Ah Gee and Ah Man.

27 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 80.

28 Crocombe, above n 5, at 33.

29 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 80.

30 At 81.

31 At 81.

32 At 81.

although it is not known how long these 50 Chinese nationals remained in Samoa. This wave of *huaqiao* will continue to evolve.

The recent migrants have been criticised by the “older” Chinese residents as they have been creating controversy amongst Samoan locals with their perceived aggressive business tendencies and alleged disrespect for Samoan laws and culture. It is believed to have made life difficult for the more established Chinese communities as, at times, Samoan locals find it difficult to distinguish between the different communities. For example, one more established Chinese migrant commented on a situation shopping at the market where he was taunted by Samoans until he spoke Samoan to them, which is when they usually stop and apologise to him.³³ He often did not like leaving his home to prevent situations of confrontation with locals.

In comparing the *huaqiao* with no familial connections in Samoa, the same could be said about the *huashang*, as they had no connections in Samoa prior to their arrival. However, there is one noticeable difference in how they assimilated into Samoan society. The *huashang* that arrived in the late 19th century married local Samoan women, learnt Samoan and were few in number; we continue to see this today. For the most recent wave of *huaqiao*, there are a number of different factors at play; firstly, the presence of Chinese women is more visible with the numbers of Chinese migrating increasing on a global scale. Secondly, China had experienced policy reforms which motivated and supported Chinese migration and investment opportunities abroad. The latter will be discussed further below.

One notable difference between the earlier waves of Chinese migration in Samoa is the absence of Chinese women. Globally, Chinese women had the lowest emigration rate accounting for only 16 per cent of migrants from Hong Kong between 1858 and 1939.³⁴ From 1923, the proportion of women migrants began to grow.³⁵ In the wider Pacific, Chinese intermarriage with locals declined from the 1930s as it became more accessible for Chinese men to bring over their Chinese wives.³⁶ In Samoa, there have been instances where Chinese men have been able to save up in the past to bring over their families, in which they are part of the *huaqiao* group, or Leung Wai's third wave, of Chinese with existing connections in Samoa.³⁷ With the most recent *huaqiao* - that have no familial ties in Samoa - Chinese men and women have been able to migrate together and some with their families. We are yet to see whether these communities will integrate like the previous waves or whether they will maintain their own culture and communities in Samoa.

33 At 82.

34 McKeown, above n 11, at 284.

35 McKeown, above n 11.

36 Crocombe, above n 5, at 29.

37 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 81.

The fourth wave of Chinese migrants are labelled as the *huayi*, re-migrants or those of Chinese descent born overseas who then migrate to another country. Although it is believed that the *huayi* began to emerge in the Pacific in the 1990s,³⁸ there is little data available around specific cases of *huayi* migrants in Samoa from the 1990s. Commentators on overseas Chinese migration have often noted the diversity of Chinese communities and how limiting the term Chinese can be. In Leung Wai's account of the history of Chinese in Samoa, there is no mention of this specific *huayi* population in Samoa. The term Chinese is often used broadly in published documents in Samoa and news media making it difficult to distinguish between the different groups.

After long periods of migration there have been an increasing number of migrants choosing to identify with the nations in which they were born or raised, rather than their ancestral home land.³⁹ With a growing Chinese diaspora and an increased self-identification of one's own identity in such a globalised world, the ability to "categorise" the evolving nature of Chinese migration will become even more complex. After all, how Chinese does one have to be to be categorised as an ethnic Chinese?

In the case of Samoa, due to the numerous waves of migration, Crocombe noted in 2007 that it is believed that one third of Samoans at that time were part-Chinese.⁴⁰ In the past, many would not acknowledge this part-Chinese connection, however, increasingly, it is something that is acknowledged, especially with China's growing status globally.⁴¹ Many leaders in Samoa across various sectors such as business, politics and government have been identified as having part-Chinese connections.⁴² As Chinese migration continues to evolve in Samoa, and with increasing opportunities for Samoans to travel to China, will the numbers of Samoans with part-Chinese ancestry grow? Only time will tell.

B. Contract Labourers

Another pattern of migration evident in Samoa is the *huagong*, or indentured labourers, which emerged in 1903. One complete wave of the *huagong* and its effects has already unfolded in Samoa. Currently, the second wave has presented itself through large Chinese infrastructure companies in Samoa contracting labourers from China. Despite the variables at play in which both of these waves have occurred,

38 Paul D'Arcy "The Chinese Pacifics: A Brief Historical Review" (2014) *Journal of Pacific History* 49:4 396–420 at 398.

39 McKeown, above n 21, at 21.

40 Crocombe, above n 5, at 32.

41 Crocombe, above n 5.

42 Crocombe, above n 5, at 33.

there have been similar reactions from the public. The full impact of this second wave has yet to be realised, but history can provide a base to learn from.

The Chinese had a long history of indentured labour in Southeast Asia, before shipments of labourers were sent out of the region to other parts of the world: “Chinese had for centuries been working throughout Southeast Asia in mines and agricultural enterprises, recruited and organized through a wide variety of debt bondage and profit sharing schemes”.⁴³ The first significant flows of Chinese labourers outside Southeast Asia were sent to Cuba and Peru in the 1840s.⁴⁴ The rise of Chinese labour coincided with the gradual abolishment of African slavery, the establishment of a Hong Kong outpost for the British and the expansion of world markets into the Pacific.

During the late 19th century, entrepreneurs and companies from the United States, Great Britain and Germany showed great interest in Samoa's agricultural potential. This saw the development of copra, cocoa and rubber plantations in Samoa. When the German Administration took control of Samoa in 1900, they continued to support the development of the plantations. Governor Solf, the first Governor of the German Administration of Samoa, passed a law requiring landowners to plant a fixed number of coconuts each year. As the number of plantations grew in Samoa, so too did the demand for a cheap and reliable labour source. There were attempts to seek labour from the local population, Cook Islands and Solomon Islands, although these attempts proved to be unsustainable. In 1903, Governor Solf reluctantly passed a law superseding the 1880 law, allowing Chinese entry as indentured labourers who were to be repatriated at the end of their contract.⁴⁵ It is estimated that 3,868 Chinese labourers were transported to Samoa under the German Administration between 1903, the first shipment, and 1913, which was the final shipment under German control.⁴⁶

When the New Zealand Expeditionary Force took control of Samoa in 1914, it had a very strict stance on repatriation compared to Germany. There were 2,184 Chinese indentured labourers working at the time. By 1918, they had reduced the number of Chinese labourers to approximately 832.⁴⁷ Faced with criticism from the planters, like the German Administration, New Zealand reluctantly permitted the hiring of Chinese indentured labourers. During the New Zealand Administration, 3,116 Chinese labourers were brought to Samoa between 1920 and 1934.⁴⁸

43 McKeown, above n 21, at 10.

44 McKeown, above n 21.

45 John A Moses “The Solf Regime in Western Samoa: Ideal and Reality” (1972) *New Zealand Journal of History* 6:1 42–56 at 49.

46 Tom, above n 23, at 3.

47 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 77.

48 Tom, above n 23, at 36.

The Chinese labourers faced very strict and harsh working conditions. They were paid low wages, experienced long work hours and flogging was permitted for the slightest offences.⁴⁹ Working conditions for the Chinese labourers improved under the New Zealand Administration in the 1920s, due to criticism from the Labour Party occurring in New Zealand at the time.⁵⁰ During this time until 1936, indentured labourers were able to leave the plantations for urban work as mechanics and artisans if approval was granted.⁵¹

Forced repatriation of Chinese labourers recommenced in 1937, with 326 Chinese remaining in Samoa. After the final repatriation shipment to China in 1948, there were approximately 90 Chinese labourers remaining in Samoa. They became permanent residents and, later on, gained citizenship alongside established Chinese (*huashang*) who were granted free-settler status prior to the influx of Chinese indentured labour. Leung Wai noted that 160 Chinese were eligible to vote for European seats in Parliament in 1951 and, by 1985, only 32 Chinese indentured labourers remained in Samoa.⁵²

The repatriation of Chinese indentured labourers had an immense impact on some Chinese-Samoan families. Samoa had become home to some Chinese indentured labourers who had chosen to renew their contracts over the years. Furthermore, despite laws put in place to prohibit Chinese-Samoan relationships,⁵³ some Chinese labourers married or were in relationships with Samoan women, with many having children. The nature of repatriation meant that many Chinese-Samoan children grew up without their fathers.

Post Samoan independence, Samoa has seen a new wave of Chinese contract labourers take place. This is a result of a number of changes in China's foreign policy, with an increase in Chinese projects and investment seeing an increasing number of Chinese workers travel to Samoa. This has generated some criticism among Samoan locals, with similar reactions to those of the previous wave of Chinese indentured labour.

Between the 1970s and the 1990s, China's policies towards migration and overseas Chinese began to change.⁵⁴ Philip Kuhn describes the evolution of Chinese migration as the following:⁵⁵

49 At 4.

50 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 77.

51 Leung Wai, above n 18.

52 Leung Wai, above n 18.

53 The German Administration and New Zealand Administration passed ordinances to prohibit Samoan women from entering Chinese labourers' quarters. In 1962, the Marriage Ordinance was passed recognising and legitimising Chinese-Samoan marriages.

54 James Jiann Hua To *Qiaozu: extra-territorial policies for the overseas Chinese* (Leiden, Bostin, 2014) at 278.

55 Philip A Kuhn *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 2008) at 364.

In the background of the New Migration has been a turnabout in Chinese government policy toward travel abroad: from fear to caution to encouragement, from treating foreign travel as a political issue to classing it as a normal, legitimate human activity.

The recent policies for Overseas Chinese have tried to promote a “win-win” situation, with an aim of improving the status of Chinese abroad and its international image.⁵⁶

The “Going Out” policy, was one such change which influenced Chinese migration abroad, including to Samoa. Beijing’s policy encouraged *huaqiao* migration and investment in resource-rich countries.⁵⁷ This has seen a number of Chinese companies become established in Samoa, with the support of the Chinese government, contracting labourers from China. In 2007, Crocombe noted a Chinese-owned cashmere garment factory that had brought Chinese women to Samoa as factory workers. The number of Chinese women brought over from China for that particular factory is not recorded, neither are details of their contract.

While there is little academic research published on the most recent wave of Chinese contract workers in Samoa, news media outlets have been able to provide some narratives around this phenomenon. For example, in 2015, the Shanghai Construction Company was contracted to upgrade the Apia Park facilities for the All Blacks test that year. Michael Field noted that 100 Chinese labourers were brought to Samoa to see this work through alongside 40 locals.⁵⁸ Workers faced long work days, in some cases just under 12 hours, and long work weeks during the Christmas and New Year period with only the statutory days off. These sentiments echo those of the experiences of Chinese indentured labourers during the time under the German and New Zealand Administrations.

Between 2012 and 2016, it was estimated that 1,573 Chinese nationals were granted permits to Samoa. Amongst the 1,573 Chinese nationals, 723 people were entering to work on Chinese government funded projects, 442 entering for employment purposes and 50 for business investment purposes.⁵⁹

Furthermore, within the data listed above, due to China-Samoan strengthening bilateral relations, the notion of Chinese contract work has also evolved. This category could include technical assistance of workers from China contracted to work in Samoa in areas such as health. For example, in 2015, a Memorandum

56 To, above n 54, at 278.

57 At 254.

58 Michael Field “Chinese labourers help get Apia Park up to scratch ahead of All Blacks test” (14 January 2015) Stuff <www.stuff.co.nz>.

59 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 77.

of Understanding was signed between Samoa and the Huizhou Central People's Hospital in Guangdong, China to promote health cooperation. This resulted in a Chinese medical team travelling to Samoa to perform free cataract surgery on Samoan patients.⁶⁰ By 2017, it had been estimated that there had been 14 medical delegations working in Samoa over the last 30 years, with the 15th arriving that year. In June 2018, another six highly experienced doctors commenced a two-year tenure in Samoa providing medical services⁶¹.

When comparing the two waves of Chinese labour migration, we have seen it diverge to include more specialist roles as well. The influence of Chinese government migration policies has meant that "unskilled" labourers have a more rigid set of rules in comparison to "high-skilled" migrants. On a global level, developing countries continue the importation of unskilled or low-skilled Chinese labour in large quantities to work on aid funded projects.⁶² A number of policy changes in China helped facilitate this further. From 1992, any Chinese individual was able to explore overseas job opportunities through an "individual overseas employment" category and, in 2002, privately-owned companies were able to expedite international labour recruitment.⁶³ In comparison to contract workers, the high-skilled migrants or those in "specialist" type roles are fewer in number. They have been known to change visa categories with ease.⁶⁴

Unlike the previous wave of Chinese indentured labourers, it is difficult for this new wave of Chinese labour migrants to permanently remain after their contract. Companies and recruitment agencies are heavily fined or banned if their worker overstays or goes missing. Despite this ban, in 2011, the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry president, Sina Retzlaff, commented that the Chinese workers were not returning to China at the end of their contract and noted an increase in new Chinese owned retailers.⁶⁵

As this wave of contract workers is a recent phenomenon, it is unclear at this stage how many have chosen to reside in Samoa after their contracts expired, though it has been suggested that some have remained.

60 Funefe'ai Dikaosune Atoa Tamaalii "Chinese hand over medical equipment for Samoa" (6 February 2017) Government of Samoa <www.samoagovt.ws>.

61 Wang Xuefeng "Samoa China links continue to grow" *Samoa Observer* (online ed, Apia, 30 September 2018) <www.samoobserver.ws>.

62 Biao Xiang *Emigration Trends and Policies in China: Movement of the Wealthy and Highly Skilled* (Transatlantic Council on Migration, Migration Policy Institute, 2016) at 12.

63 At 13.

64 At 13.

65 Sean Dorney "Samoans worried about Chinese workers" (19 March 2011) <www.abc.net.au>.

III. Trade and Investment

Samoa – and the Pacific more generally – had a deep structural engagement with Asia before it had an obvious human or social engagement. Before many Samoans and Asians had even met, their markets had.⁶⁶

Before the Chinese first settled in Samoa and the wider Pacific region, both parties had a more indirect history through trade as a result of the British elite's fondness for tea. Willmott details the impact that the 1784 Commutation Act had enabling tea to be much more accessible to the wider public.⁶⁷ At the time, China was the only source of tea, which meant British merchants sought products to be sold to the Chinese market. The British East India Company controlled cotton and opium, which meant merchants had to find an alternative product. Sandalwood was a reliable alternative for making incense which was in high demand in China.

The success of sandalwood then enabled other items from the Pacific such as nacre, tortoise shell, whale oil and *bêche-de-mer* to be sold on the Chinese market. In the late 18th century, European traders travelled across the world to the shores of Samoa, and the wider Pacific, to extract these resources to sell in the Chinese market. Continuing on from successful experiences in sandalwood and whale oil, by the early 1800s the *bêche-de-mer*, a sea slug or *lōli*, was a thriving commodity.⁶⁸ These early experiences of trade saw the beginning of new connections and the opening of markets in the Pacific. Building on these commercial relationships through trade, we then saw the beginning of Chinese migration in Samoa through the *huashang*, *huagong* and the *huaqiao* to the present day.

Since their arrival from the 1840s, Chinese migrants in Samoa invested locally by setting up their own businesses contributing to the local economy. The first known Chinese free-settler, Ah Sue, was a cook, box maker and shop owner.⁶⁹ There are many more examples of the rich histories and narratives of successful Chinese businesses set up by the first few waves of Chinese entrepreneurs. These businesses contributed to the local economy, paved the way for Chinese entrepreneurship in Samoa and instilled the value of entrepreneurship through generations of Chinese-

66 Toeolesulusulu Damon Salesa "Chinese-Samoan Interactions – Influences Both Ways: Entangled and Intimate Histories" in Michael Powles (ed) *China and the Pacific: The View from Oceania* (Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2016) at 123.

67 Willmott, above n 22, at 279. Willmott states that it is the Computation Act. However, it was the Commutation Act: Hoh-Cheung and Lorna H. Mui "The Commutation Act and the Tea Trade in Britain 1784-1793" (1963) *The Economic History Review* 16:2 234-253 at 234.

68 Salesa, above n 66, at 123.

69 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 74.

Samoan families in Samoa and abroad.⁷⁰ Families descended from Ah Liki, Chan Mow and Ah Mu continue to succeed in business in Samoa. Another example is Ah Fook, who was granted European status under the Solf Administration. His descendants have been successful in business in Samoa through the generations and have diversified in services that they provide in places like Christchurch and Dunedin in New Zealand.⁷¹ Much like the Samoan diaspora in New Zealand and elsewhere, it was in the past common practice for the Chinese to send remittances back to family members in China.

Agricultural development in areas such as coconut, cocoa and rubber were key exports during Samoa's colonial period under the German and New Zealand Administrations. The Chinese significantly contributed to the development of these crops and the Samoan economy by acting as a reliable source of labour for the plantations. Without this source of labour, it would have been detrimental for the plantations. At one point, under New Zealand control, the repatriation of Chinese labour saw a decline in the development of these crops leading the plantations into bankruptcy. This saw swift action from the Governor at the time who recommenced shipment of Chinese indentured labourers to Samoa. From the time of Samoan independence in 1962, coconuts continued to be a major income source for those living in rural areas until the 1980s, when there was a decline.⁷² Despite the decline, in 1981, coconut products continued to make up more than half of Samoa's exports. The decline can be attributed to reduced planting of new coconut palms since the 1960s, the minimum returns in income for the time and effort required for harvesting, and damaged palms due to cyclones in the 1990s. After many attempts to develop its agricultural exports, by the 1990s it became clear that its reliance on the export of agricultural products was limited and difficult due to high competition from lower-cost suppliers and being located far from markets.

A reform of Chinese foreign policy in late 1999 led to changes in Chinese investment globally. These policy changes enabled overseas Chinese to contribute to the expansion of the Chinese market and partnerships through trade and investment increasing China's GDP over the past few decades.⁷³ For example, at the time when China and Samoa formalised their bilateral relations in 1975, bilateral trade levels were very minimal. The volume of trade increased to USD 1 million in 1995, before

70 AS Noa Siaoisi "Catching the Dragon's Tail: The Impact of the Chinese in Samoa" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 2010) at 41.

71 At 41.

72 Felise Paulo Saigo Va'a and others "Aspects of Economic Development" in Meleisea and others (eds) *Samoa's Journey 1962–2012: Aspects of History* (Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2012) 97 at 99.

73 Shusen, above n 3, at 54.

soaring to USD 56 million in 2014.⁷⁴ China's main exports to the Pacific are in the form of electronics, instant food, machinery, clothing, footwear, furniture and construction materials.⁷⁵ Exports from the Pacific are in the form of raw materials, such as seafood, minerals and timber.

From 2002–2006, Samoa began to transition its focus from projects and development plans to strategic planning. The basis of this shift was to support economic development through capitalising on the private sector.⁷⁶ During this time there was a focus on encouraging investment, generating income and job opportunities and providing goods and services. Tourism saw a notable growth rate of 20 per cent in one year during this period, with advancement of infrastructure, human resource development and improved international air transport.

The Strategy for the Development of Samoa (2008–2012) emphasised six key strategic outcomes: strengthening the private sector, agricultural development, tourism development, community development, educational development and health development.⁷⁷ From the late 1990s to the present, infrastructural diversification and expansion has occurred through local businesses and companies partnering with overseas investors. This is evident in the visible and rapid increase of infrastructural projects, as well as the increase of Chinese businesses and investors in Samoa. The changes in Samoa's development strategy have complemented China's Going Out policy reform, providing an enabling environment for Chinese investment and trade in Samoa. The purchase of Samoan businesses such as the Sheraton Aggie Grey Hotel chain in Samoa is another example.⁷⁸

When analysing how trade and investment has evolved in Samoa, it can be linked back to three key policies which impacted on trade and investment in Samoa. The first being the 1784 Commutation Act, which initially saw the opening of the Pacific market to the Chinese market through British Merchants and Chinese men working as crewmen on ships. The second policy was Governor Solf's law in 1903 permitting Chinese indentured labour in Samoa. The third policy reform was China's Going Out policy in 1999, exacerbated by Samoa's renewed focus on capitalising through the private sector, which together enabled the platform for a scaled-up version of Chinese investment in Samoa. The latter is closely intertwined with China and Samoa's bilateral relations and foreign aid.

74 HE Wang Xuefeng "China Remains a Lasting True Friend of Samoa" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (7 November 2015) <www.fmprc.gov.cn>.

75 YU Changsen "China's Economic Relations with Pacific Island Countries" (12 August 2014) *New Zealand Contemporary China Research Centre* <www.wgtn.ac.nz>.

76 Va'a and others, above n 72, at 102.

77 At 103.

78 "Samoa promotes Chinese investors" (12 January 2018) RNZ <www.rnz.co.nz>.

IV. Diplomatic Relations

Like the evolution of Chinese migration, trade and investment in Samoa, bilateral relations between both countries have continued to strengthen over the years. Samoa gained independence in 1962, and in 1975 it became one of the first Pacific countries to form diplomatic relations with China. Prior to this official relationship, the Chinese government had a presence in Samoa under both the German and New Zealand Administrations.

As a result of an increasing number of complaints of the ill-treatment of the Chinese indentured labourers, the Chinese government followed up to ensure that the complaints were investigated. In 1908, two Chinese officials arrived in Samoa. The first official Chinese representative sent to Samoa, Lin Shu Fen, arrived in March 1908, followed by Lin Jun Chao four months later.⁷⁹ Both officials provided substantial evidence of the ill-treatment of the Chinese labourers in Samoa and, as a result, decided to have a more established presence. A Chinese consulate was first established in Samoa in 1909 to support the rights of Chinese indentured labourers at the time. China's first resident Consul, Lin Jun Chao, lobbied and advocated for the improvement of conditions for the Chinese indentured labourers.⁸⁰ By 1920, Chinese labourers saw better living conditions, an increase in wages, the removal of flogging as a form of punishment and some Chinese labourers were successfully granted European status. Following on from his predecessor during a period of strict repatriation for Chinese labourers, Consul Cheng Chia Hua, saw through the recognition of Chinese-Samoan marriages, citizenship of children of these marriages and the granting of Chinese free settler status.⁸¹ In 1948, the Chinese Consulate was closed; Consul Cheng was the only foreign representative serving in Apia at that time.

In 1975, 13 years after independence, Samoa became diplomatic partners with China, which saw its relationship evolve into one of "equal" merit at the diplomatic level. Although Chinese officials may have had strong rapport with Samoan *matai* in the past,⁸² its diplomatic and foreign matters were officially dealt with by its Governors during the colonial period. During this time, Chinese migrants and the Samoan population would have outnumbered Europeans and, despite colonial attempts to prohibit interaction between both populations, it was the ordinary exchanges which transformed everyday life in Samoa.⁸³ These interactions created a foundation for China and Samoa bilateral relations.

⁷⁹ Tom, above n 23, at 82.

⁸⁰ At 83.

⁸¹ At 83.

⁸² *Matai* is a Samoan chief elected as the head of a family or village.

⁸³ Salesa, above n 66, at 125.

Throughout the Pacific, there have been an increasing number of Pacific peoples with Chinese ancestry. With the rise of China's influence in the region – and its status in the world – Pacific peoples have increasingly acknowledged this heritage, whereas in the past it was quite the opposite. To argue that some people have been able to utilise their Chinese heritage to their own political advantage. To note that:⁸⁴

Sir Thomas Chan and son Laurie Chan of the SI, Sir Julius Chan of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Jim Ah Koy of Fiji have all used their 'Chineseness' to benefit their political careers. While their ethnicity might work to facilitate their government's relationship with China and/or Taiwan, they themselves are clearly not political pawns for either Beijing or Taipei.

In the case of Samoa, in 2016 it was estimated that 20 per cent of Samoa's Members of Parliament are part-Chinese.⁸⁵ Furthermore, it is argued that, since independence in 1962, Samoans with Chinese ancestry have held seats in each Parliamentary term.⁸⁶ Anecdotally, it could be speculated that remnants of these cultural connections can be used favourably in strengthening China and Samoa's bilateral relations.⁸⁷

By 1978, China established an embassy in Apia to further develop mutual interests. In 2009, Samoa established an embassy in Beijing. The establishment of the Samoan Embassy in Beijing opened new markets and provided more opportunities for Samoa to better facilitate Chinese trade and investment.⁸⁸ As well as the increased number of projects and investments that we have seen in Samoa, there have also been a steady number of scholarship recipients from Samoa studying at tertiary institutions in China.⁸⁹ This has seen an increased number of Samoan students learning Mandarin while abroad and more recently in Samoa, the Mandarin language is also being taught in schools and the National University of Samoa.⁹⁰ Learning Mandarin enables an increased shared understanding between both Samoan and Chinese cultures. In the previous waves of Chinese migration, language acquisition tended to be one-sided, where migrants in Samoa learnt the

84 To, above n 54, at 205.

85 Leung Wai, above n 18, at 83.

86 Leung Wai, above n 18.

87 Iati Iati "China and Samoa" in Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar Porter (eds) *China in Oceania: Reshaping the Pacific?* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2010) 151 at 156.

88 "Samoa – China Relationship" Samoa Embassy Beijing China <www.samoambassy.cn>.

89 Funefe'ai Dikaosune Atoa Tamaalii "Samoan Scholarship Students off to China" (19 August 2016) Government of Samoa <www.samoagovt.ws>.

90 Sarafina Sanerivi "Chinese language students awarded" *Samoa Observer* (online ed, Apia, 1 July 2016 <www.samoaoobserver.ws>).

Samoan language. While this continues to occur, through strengthening bilateral relations, we now see cultural diplomacy occur both ways. Furthermore, it was recently reported by Zhang and So'oa'emalelagi that, since 2017, the Beijing Foreign Studies University in China has included the offering of seven Pacific languages, including Samoan, within its four-year programme.⁹¹ These increased language competencies and cultural knowledge in both Samoa and China will strengthen future bilateral collaborations.

Recently China's increasing influence in the region has stirred controversy amongst "traditional" partners as a result of its foreign aid. Although China has been categorised as an "emerging" or "new" partner in the region, China has in fact provided financial assistance to other countries since the 1950s.⁹² China's strategies have evolved over the years due to its economic and political conditions and, as a result, its aid outflows have been differentiated by commentators such as Nowak and Brant into three key phases: (i) 1950–1979, (ii) 1979 to the mid-1990s and (iii) the 1990s onwards.⁹³

A number of academics have articulated that China's increasing interest in the region is driven by its economic, strategic, political and military interests.⁹⁴ China is one of the largest developing countries in the world, and is seen to provide assistance as a means to improve its national image and to support its own economic growth. China's political interests includes side-lining Taiwan, in which "cheque book diplomacy" has been evident in the Pacific region in the past. In the case of Samoa, Iati correctly points out that the Taiwan rivalry did not faze Samoa as it continued to support China.⁹⁵ In addition to the Taiwan factor, strategically, China is perceived to be increasing its influence in different developing regions as a means of strengthening alliances at international fora such as the United Nations. Brant notes that these interests are no different to any other partner in the region, traditional or contemporary.⁹⁶ These general interests are reflected in all other donors, such as

91 Denghua Zhang and Setope So'oa'emalelagi "A new trend: Pacific island language teaching as part of the Belt and Road Initiative" (2 August 2019) DevPolicyBlog <www.devpolicy.org>.

92 W Nowak "China's Development Aid Strategies" (2015) *Chinese Business Review* 14 (4) 201 at 203.

93 Nowak, above n 92; and Phillipa Brant "Chinese aid in the South Pacific: Linked to Resources?" (2013) *Asian Studies Review* 37 (2) 158 at 160.

94 Nowak, above n 92; Tamara Renee Shie "Rising Chinese Influence in the South Pacific: Beijing's Island Fever" in Anne-Marie Brady (ed) *Looking North, Looking South: China, Taiwan and the South Pacific* (World Scientific, Hackensack NJ, 2010) 137 at 140; Anne-Marie Brady and John Henderson "New Zealand, the Pacific and China: The Challenges Ahead" in Anne-Marie Brady (ed) *Looking North, Looking South: China, Taiwan and the South Pacific* (World Scientific, Hackensack NJ, 2010) 189 at 201; Brant, above n 93; Terence Wesley-Smith "China's Pacific Engagement" in Terence Wesley-Smith and Edgar A Porter (ed) *China in Oceania: Reshaping the Pacific?* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2010) 27 at 31; and Phillip C Saunders "Chinese Foreign Policy in Asia: Implications for the South Pacific" in Anne-Marie Brady (ed) *Looking North, Looking South: China, Taiwan and the South Pacific* (World Scientific, Hackensack NJ, 2010) 227 at 247.

95 Iati, above n 87, at 156.

96 Brant, above n 93, at 162.

New Zealand, Australia and even contemporary donors like Indonesia, dependent on their contexts.

As China has become one of the top partners in the region, some commentators have increasingly promoted the discourse of China posing a threat to the region. China's foreign aid objectives ensure that it does not interfere with the internal politics of a nation, and this 'no strings attached' approach leads to mutual win-win benefits for both the donor and the recipient.⁹⁷ Academics such as Windybank and Reilly have noted concern about China's growing influence and the security risks this may exacerbate in the region.⁹⁸ This perceived threat is based on a perspective where China challenges the norms and current power dynamics in the region.⁹⁹ China's increased influence in the region has continued to spark controversy, particularly by triggering anxiety among the region's traditional aid partners. In the media, at the end of 2018, there continued to be a flow of articles around Australia and United States perceived dwindling of power in the region, countered by renewed commitments and policies by traditional partners to realign, reinvesting or repositioning itself in the Pacific. For example, the Australian government signalled a "step up" and the New Zealand government was to "reset" its approach in the Pacific. Britain also announced in early 2018 the opening of new posts in the Pacific echoing this sentiment.¹⁰⁰ Despite the renewed interests of traditional partners, China's relations with the Pacific have remained constant. In his field interviews in Samoa, Iati describes participant responses towards New Zealand and Australia's renewed interest in the region as being somewhat insincere and as a result of China's influence.¹⁰¹

Pacific leaders have often spoken out in support of China and its approaches to aid in the Pacific. Some Pacific leaders have commented on a number of occasions how China treats them as equal partners, with respect and, in response to increasing numbers of infrastructure projects, China fills a gap left by traditional partners. There has also been a notable number of high-level visits in the Pacific from Chinese leaders, in comparison to those from traditional partners. As Iati notes, China's aid is often seen positively by Pacific leaders, as China does not interfere with the internal politics of a country; compared to donors such as Australia, New Zealand,

97 *China's Foreign Aid* (Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, White Paper on 'China's Foreign Aid', April 2011).

98 D'Arcy, above n 38, at 402.

99 Terence Wesley-Smith *China in Oceania: New Forces in Pacific Politics* (East-West Center, Honolulu, 2007).

100 Latika Bourke "UK to open diplomatic posts in the Pacific, citing security concerns" *The Sydney Morning Herald* (online ed, Sydney, 20 April 2018) <www.smh.com.au>.

101 Iati, above n 87, at 158.

the United States and the European Union, which tend to have prescribed demands such as good governance.¹⁰²

In the case of Samoa, of the three types of aid provided by China,¹⁰³ aid to Samoa is predominantly in the form of concessional loans. Brant highlighted that Chinese aid was mostly used for projects in education, government, civil society, and other social infrastructure sectors.¹⁰⁴ In terms of aid percentage, the majority of Chinese aid was spent in the Government and civil society sector, health and education sectors. When analysing the sector type, it is evident that the majority of the Chinese projects in these sectors occur in the form of infrastructure such as a new government or school building, technical expertise or equipment.

China's foreign aid is often perceived to be linked to the rising levels of debt in the region, as a result of its concessional loans. While the issue of debt is rightfully of valid concern, the allegation of China being primarily responsible for this is not borne out. Fox and Dornan's research has attested to this, highlighting that currently it is loans from multilateral organisations that are higher.¹⁰⁵ Other negative perceptions of China's aid include the loss of independence, poor-quality projects and the importation of Chinese labour.¹⁰⁶ However, when analysing aid of traditional partners, these very same issues can be raised.

More recently the development of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has sought to boost infrastructure connectivity between the Pacific and China. A number of Pacific countries have signed up to the BRI to expand cooperation with China on trade, tourism and climate change. The implications that this will have on the region will be on the horizon. With countries over the past year signing a Memorandum of Understanding with China, it is unclear how these relationships will evolve and the impacts they will have, both positively and negatively, in the Pacific.

V. Conclusion

At an international level, the more recent economic growth of developing countries such as China has seen the geopolitical balance of power shift to include Asia. This power shift has been highly visible in the Pacific over the last few decades, generating concern, renewed commitment and policies from the region's traditional

102 Iati, above n 87.

103 China provides three types of aid financing: grants, interest free loans and concessional loans.

104 Phillipa Brant "Chinese aid in the Pacific: Samoa Snapshot" (Lowy Institute For International Policy, Sydney, 2015) <www.lowyinstitute.org>.

105 Rohan Fox and Matthew Dornan "China in the Pacific: is China engaged in 'debt-trap diplomacy'?" (8 November 2018) DevPolicyBlog <www.devpolicy.org>.

106 D'Arcy, above n 38, at 401.

partners. Despite the concern of former colonial powers, some Pacific leaders have often welcomed China's continued support. During the colonial period, China and Samoa's relations occurred at a local level through its people-to-people connections and as a result of laws passed by external actors. The 1784 Commutation Act and Governor Solf's 1903 law allowing Chinese indentured labourers to Samoa are two examples.

Over a century, China's influence in Samoa has evolved through varying cycles of migration, trade and investment and its diplomatic relations. As each new cycle approaches, the evolving context and environment ensures that the impact of each cycle differs from before. Through migration, the first wave of Chinese in Samoa consisted of predominantly men, allowing for intermarriage and Chinese assimilation into Samoan society. The more recent waves of Chinese migrants in Samoa have been inclusive of women. The evolving trends of migration from *huashang*, *huagong*, *huaquio* to *huayi*, and its new cycles and variations, will dictate how Samoans and Chinese will respond and interact with one another in the future.

As China and Samoa went through their own periods of colonisation and independence struggles, both countries continued to gain political standing at an international level. Since 1975, China and Samoa formally engaged at a diplomatic level, dictating a power shift in their bilateral relations. Since this time, both countries have reformed their own policies enabling progressive development in Samoa and China. China's Going Out strategy has facilitated this increased engagement, seeing a renewed cycle of the entanglement of aid, trade and investment. In the past, China's presence was highly visible in terms of local people and social influences.¹⁰⁷ This visible presence has diversified in many regards in Samoa to include, for example, infrastructural projects, Chinese products, technical assistance and medical equipment.

China's BRI builds on the Going Out strategy from the 1990s and, as it continues to gain momentum in the Pacific, time will tell how this will build on the previous waves of influence in Samoa. How will new cycles of migration, trade, investment and diplomatic relations continue to play out in the years to come? How will local Samoans and the Government respond to these changes? What are the unintended effects on Samoan society and the wider Pacific?

In the case of Samoa, when reflecting on the past, these historical intersections and remnants of Chinese-Samoan relations have built a strong and enduring foundation for diplomatic relations today. As we look to the future, amid the diverse

107 Such as intermarriage, Samoans of part-Chinese heritage, Samoan food influenced by Chinese cuisine such as *oka* (raw fish salad), *sapasui* (chopsuey), *keke saiga* and *masi saiga* (Chinese biscuits).

perspectives of China and the changing geopolitical context in the region, one thing is certain, Samoa will continue to be a strong supporter of China for years to come.