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Abstract

In June 2017, a Fairfax-ABC report brought to prominence a series of allegations that the Chinese government was carrying out a systematic attempt to infiltrate Australian government and society at various levels through a multi-pronged project of political influence. Domestically, the allegations lent new impetus to a wave of discourse surrounding Australia's complicated relationship with the People's Republic of China. Australia's newfound China hysteria comes against the backdrop of what has been popularly dubbed the 'Asian Century' in Australian public discourse, one in which China's rise presents a constant dilemma for Australian policymakers — one so pertinent, in fact, that it has a name: the 'China choice' — but also, the subject of sometimes contradictory public angst.

Put simply, Australia would like to embrace the economic benefits of a trade partnership with China, already its largest trading partner, an aim that may contend with its long-standing allegiance to the United States, and what could be called the remnants of a Cold War 'fear' mentality, one in which even private investments from the People's Republic of China and its ruling Chinese Communist Party are subject to unique caution. To be sure, Chinese influence, whether that be in the form of private Australian-Chinese or Chinese citizens or simply international influence attributable to the sheer size and economic might of the Chinese nation, is real. But, as the present thesis will discuss, much of the hysteria is unwarranted, and in fact counterproductive. Ostensibly defending Australia's sovereignty and interests, proponents of the 'China threat' theory serve, in fact, to damage domestic social cohesion, turn away legitimate investments and business, and unnecessarily position the independent nation of Australia as foe to China.

This paper provides a brief overview of the possible historical, political and social explanations for the mentality that presently permeates Australian coverage of China, assesses the historical validity of what is often portrayed as a hostile relationship with the nation's largest trading partner, and suggests a possible 'way forward' for Australia in dealing with this complex relationship.

Keywords: *Sino-Australia, Chilly War* liangzhan 凉战, *Sino-US, media, discourse power* huayuquan 话语权

内容摘要

2017年6月，一次ABC和Fairfax媒体的联合报道指出，中国政府在澳洲正在进行多方面的系统性渗透（infiltration）活动。在澳洲国内，该报道引起了对复杂的中澳关系的反省和舆论。在澳洲主流社会舆论中常常称为“亚洲世纪”的当下，中国的崛起为决策人出了一道难题叫做“中国抉择”，同样，这道难题也为大众带来了令人焦虑的一种危机感。

简而言之，作为澳洲交易量最大的经济伙伴，澳政府希望从与中国的经济合作关系中获利，与此同时，担心中国的崛起以及更密切的双方关系是否会影响到常年的军事盟友的美国与澳洲的关系。这个“担忧”背后是冷战时期的“中国危机论”心态遗留下的残片，至今影响着每单生意，每届双方会谈，不分公与私，只要是来自中国大陆的资金都会引起澳方的警惕。毋庸置疑，中国在澳的影响力是真实的，无论是体现在个人还是国力方面。但是，已渗透国内舆论的威胁论对澳洲非常不利。表面上看似是以维护澳洲主权、民主、自由等核心原则为出发点的评论者，恰恰相反，引起社会分裂现象，在危害本国的经济利益，并且不必要地把中国视为敌人。

在本文中，笔者想为读者简单地探讨澳洲社会“反华”心态背后的历史、政治以及社会因素，进而剖析经常被描述被成“敌对性”的经济关系，并且根据对学术文献以及社会评论的回顾，为复杂的三方关系提出“前进之路”的方案。

关键词: 中澳关系、凉战、中美关系、媒体、话语权

Contents

ABSTRACT	V
内容摘要.....	VI
CONTENTS	VII
INTRODUCTION	1
I. BACKGROUND	1
II. JUSTIFICATION	3
III. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	4
IV. CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	6
CHAPTER I — THE AUSTRALIAN CHINA STORY	8
I. HOT, COLD, CHILLED	8
II. CHINA-AUSTRALIA TODAY	10
<i>iii. Key Events in the China Influence Debate</i>	12
IV. A NEW GELBE GEFAHR	14
CHAPTER II — BEYOND THE WAR OF WORDS	20
I. BENEATH THE SURFACE	20
<i>ii. The Who's Who of the China Influence Debate</i>	25
III. KEY MEDIA OUTLETS IN THE CHINA INFLUENCE DEBATE	27
IV. THE INTEREST GROUPS.....	28
CHAPTER III — THE WISER CHOICE	35
I. A WAY FORWARD	35
II. TAKES TWO TO TANGO	39
CONCLUSION	43
REFERENCES	47
BOOKS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE	47
PRINT ARTICLES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE	47
INTERNET AND NEWSPAPER RESOURCES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE.....	47
INTERNET SOURCES IN CHINESE LANGUAGE	57
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	60
致谢	60

Introduction

i. Background

In early June 2017, a joint ‘investigation’ report by two of Australia’s most influential media outlets, Fairfax Ltd. and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), put forward a series of allegations that China, or the Chinese government, was carrying out a systematic attempt to infiltrate Australian government and society at various levels through a multi-pronged project of political influence. Domestically, the allegations, although not new, lent new impetus to a wave of discourse surrounding Australia’s complicated relationship with the People’s Republic of China. Among Australian-based Chinese and the Chinese speaking population in Australia, the report was met with mixed reception. To a scant number of primarily anti-CCP interest groups, the report echoed old, mostly baseless, allegations of student spy activities, political sell-outs and cronyism, and the overall sentiment that Chinese-related activities in Australia should be treated with extra suspicion, and that the Chinese and Australian world-views inherently incompatible.

This is not at all a new phenomenon. This ‘sinophobia’ and the frivolously hawkish attitude toward all things China that informs the ideological biases in this year’s report and others like it are attributable primarily to the historical ostracising of China and its ruling Chinese Communist Party in mainstream Australian (or, generally, Western) education, media and politics. It is the opinion of the author that there is a dearth of legitimate, objective expertise informing Australia’s ‘China Policy’ politically, a potent and concentrated opposition to Chinese influence in its mainstream English language media, and an ill-informed attribution of domestic adversities to the rise of Chinese presence in the country, socially and economically. This potent cocktail of resentment naturally leads not

to a will to understand and act upon China's rise according to reality, or within a paradigm abreast of timely developments, but instead a sophistic effort to garble evidence in a manner that fits an anachronistic view of China as some sort of malevolent 'enemy' to cope with. The reality that many of China's institutions function in a fundamentally different manner, and that decision makers, reporters and key opinion leaders do not possess a sound understanding of the country, relationship and importantly, Chinese language, only further exacerbates this estrangement.

There are few voices of reason among the overwhelming noise of alarmism. Previous Foreign Minister Bob Carr, and the Australian National University Security Studies scholar Hugh White are among those who have ably presented more balanced views on key issues that have arisen for the Sino-Australia relationship. Those that have presented such views, however, have been brutally ostracised and labelled 'China apologists' by those interest groups pushing the anti-China agenda. It is important to note that too, the Sino-Australian relations are not (if not explicitly) characterised as a bilateral relationship in the traditional sense, but more so as a component of the trilateral Sino-US-Australia relationship. This too is related to the aforementioned phenomenon of ostracism of the PRC and the CCP, juxtaposed to Australia's formalised military alliance to the United States. In light of China's rise in recent years, foreign policy choices have been complicated by China's economic might, and the simplistic polar world view that dictated previous decision-making and public sentiment has been upset by the growing presence of a superpower that is fundamentally and ideologically 'different' from Australia. The sheer existence of this 'difference' provides enough room for free interpretations of China, its intentions, and how Australia should deal with that China. Regrettably, the China that is most often portrayed in the Australian media is distantly divorced from reality, deluding political

decisions and public opinion.

Pretending China is something it is not, or ignoring its existence, in order to fit into an outdated and simplistic notion of how the world works (or, how it shouldn't work according to that ideology, vis-à-vis Cold War era Western views of communism) will not last, and is indeed of no advantage to Australia's independent interests. At a macroscopic level, those views seek to portray China as an aggressor, create and attribute reasons to treat China with animosity, and assume that Australia must make a 'choice' (Hugh White's 'China Choice') between China and the United States — and that the choice Australia 'should' make is to contain and oppose China, reaffirming its allegiance to the United States.

ii. Justification

The hypothesis of the author of the present thesis, informed by a preliminary review of substantial media reportage relevant to this study, is that the allegations contained in the ABC-Fairfax report are overblown, insufficiently supported by evidence, and it should be considered that rather than being cause for an alarm, are more the result and an indication of a dearth of an objective understanding of China, its citizens, and its intentions in Australian society, government and mainstream media to the facts surrounding the issues addressed directly, and the Sino-Australian relationship more generally. This dearth of knowledge provides ample opportunity for the various interest groups that propound a gratuitously hawkish, negative account of China to leverage and gain prominence. Indeed, opinions contrary to those expressed in mainstream narratives of power-games at the highest level of state relations, infiltration, and possible military intentions, are overwhelmingly unheard and unwelcome. A crude review of the reportage available indicates that articles that do not challenge

this baseline are overwhelmingly accepted and disseminated with relatively little scrutiny. Huang Xiangmo, for example, was awarded victory in a defamation case against Fairfax for the slanderous allegations made against him in the aforementioned report.

It is prudent to question how, in the journalism industry, with its plentiful supply of legal advice, unverified slander could be so broadly propagated; and, furthermore, when misconduct is proven, the opposite of one's expectations for a democracy instead occurs, and the anti-China narrative gains more credibility and sympathy, despite lacking a sound factual basis.

It is the concern of the present thesis, then, to attempt to understand this series of events, in the context of Australia-China relations more broadly, and to suggest the best possible way forward for Australian society, policy, and its citizens, in dealing with China.

iii. Scope and Methodology

1. Can any of the aforementioned allegations be proven to be true? If so, to what extent, and how should the Australian government and society deal with them? If not, why have they been so aggressively pushed? If inconclusive, where have they come from, and why is this the only 'acceptable' narrative in the eyes of the overwhelming masses?
2. In whose interest is it to portray China in such a way? Why are their ideas endowed such a large platform and audience, and seldom challenged? Who is pushing the anti-China agenda, to what ends?
3. How can, and how should these issues be dealt with, in Australia's best interests, as an independent nation?

These questions are to be answered through a thorough examination of

domestic Australian and Chinese media reports as published between early 2015-present (two years) in the preceding chapters.

The language used, portrayal of events, portrayal of China, and public reception or media response (where available) in the nominated time period have been contrasted to that of the Chinese media's portrayal of or response to major events (for example, the ABC-Fairfax report, among others). The findings are contrasted to the hypothesis that the attitudes toward China expressed in these reports are descendants of the Cold War era perceptions of the country and its relationship with Australia (and the West more broadly). Typical cases prior to the primary research period (2015-2017) and after normalisation of relations with the People's Republic of China (1973) have been broadly considered as comparative case studies for the present data set, in order to reach some general conclusions on the nature of Australian attitudes to China historically. On the basis of this, the present thesis attempts to explain the possible reasons for these attitudes, and assesses their merits. Clear distinctions have been made between the interest groups identified in the analysis section, based on their attitudes towards China, and what the evidence suggest motivates them to hold and propagate these opinions. These groups can be broadly categorised based on media outlet and ideological alignment.

On the basis of the aforementioned findings, the final chapter is a formulation of the author's own understanding of the data, and conclusion that the author has come to in conducting this research. The author also suggests some possible countermeasures that Australia might undertake to deal with this phenomenon.

iv. Chapter Outline

The first chapter consists primarily of a review of the opinions and representations of China and major China-related events in the mainstream Australian media for the period 2015-2017. These are contrasted to the responses as expressed in the Australian media, Chinese media, and where available, social media sources as gauges of public opinion in both languages. The data synthesised in this section serves as the basis for analysis in Chapter II.

The second chapter consists primarily of an analysis of the opinions and representations of China and major China-related events in the mainstream Australian media for the primary research period. An attempt will be made to address the merits of these opinions, and on the basis of this, trace or infer the reasons why these opinions exist. Interest groups are categorized on the basis of the views expressed in the articles examined. A general interpretation of the nature of Australian views on China, Sino-Australian relations, and China-related events is made by contrasting these findings to the broad nature of Australian perceptions of China since the normalisation of PRC-Australia relations. This is achieved through case comparison to the views expressed in several major media sources on a select number of major events prior to the primary research period. The findings in this section serve as the basis for the opinions and suggestions made in Chapter III.

The third chapter consists primarily of the author's own opinions of the data and the findings, and a series of suggestions for Australia in dealing with its 'most important foreign policy decision in the 21st century', the 'China Choice'.

The conclusion reviews the hypothesis tested, the data examined, the findings made, and makes suggestions for the future. Inferences about the future

of Sino-Australia relations, overall perceptions of China, and possibilities for further research are made.

Chapter I — The Australian China Story

i. Hot, Cold, Chilled

Australia established its first diplomatic mission to China in 1941, but withdrew a short eight years later following the victory of the Chinese Communist Party over the Nationalist Kuomintang in 1949. Cold War era fears of Communism characterised Australia's relationship with China over the following two decades, which saw Australia's refusal to recognise the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as the Kuomintang government. It was not until 1973 that, under the Gough Whitlam government, the Taipei embassy established some seven years earlier was closed and diplomatic relations were formally established with the PRC.¹

Since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, the Sino-Australia relationship has been a volatile one at best, popularly described as a post-Cold-War 'Chilly War' 凉战,² one perhaps most aptly summarised by the former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott as characterised by 'fear and greed'.³ In terms of foreign policy, there have been periods of optimism and co-operation, including most recently the establishment of a free trade agreement in 2015; but there have also been times in which the remnants of a hostile us-them 'China threat' mentality overwhelmingly clouds political decisions, most notably, fears of domestic infiltration, including the blocking of Huawei's bid to build the National Broadband Network, citing intelligence that suggested this would compromise national security;⁴ the recent blocking of a bid to control the electricity distributor Ausgrid by the Chinese government state-owned State Grid and the privately owned Hong-Kong-based Cheung Kong Infrastructure.⁵

Despite an acute awareness among policymakers of China's economic

importance for Australia and the need to balance the delicate Sino-US-Australian trilateral relationship, public discourse is evidently restricted by ‘politically correct’ and often (unnecessarily) alarmist rhetoric. This is particularly so in periods of relative unrest, for example, in relation to issues perceived to be potential threats to ‘core’ national security, like the South China Sea disputes,⁶ or the alleged infiltration of Australian universities by Chinese ‘spies’.⁷ To even question the rationality of unconditional allegiance to the US, despite not being a claimant, is to be a ‘China apologist’,⁸ or to be ‘inappropriately supporting the Chinese government’.⁹ Allegations that institutions such as the Confucius Institute or the China Students and Scholars Association serve to infiltrate universities (or are even spy agencies, as the Fairfax Media has claimed on numerous occasions) are commonplace,¹⁰ as are accusations that recipients of endowments from private citizens or enterprise are propaganda mouthpieces for the Chinese Communist Party, including most notably Bob Carr’s Australia-China Relations Institute at the Sydney University of Technology.¹¹ In response to his critics, Carr points out that pro-US voices are not subject to the same scrutiny as those who call for even simply a more nuanced balance of the trilateral relationship. The former Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Fraser has similarly argued that Australia’s geopolitical position is inherently different to that of the US, and that in the ‘Asian Century’ — one in which China’s economic strength is building and the US is occupied with the Western Pacific — Australia should not be led into the restrictive position blind allegiance to the US, but instead needs to be ‘conspicuously independent and constructive’.¹²

Polarising, extreme and often unfounded claims are presented with relatively little opposition in domestic English language media, playing into an overarching ‘China threat’, or Sino-Western ‘Chilly War’, one in which China is ostracised as a potential aggressor, forcing the Australian reading public and policymakers to

consider its formal allegiance to the United States in every China-related decision.¹³ This is, indeed, what the prominent Strategic Studies scholar Hugh White refers to as the ‘China choice’, a conundrum he deems to be the foremost important foreign policy issue for Australia in the 21st century.¹⁴

ii. China-Australia Today

Against the aforementioned backdrop, Australia’s relationship with China, and predominately Anglo-Saxon Australian society’s relationship with a formidable domestic population of ethnic Chinese has been complicated and turbulent. Australian society’s ethnic tensions are by no means confined to the Chinese demographic, but in recent years, economic dependence at the macroscopic level, widespread social segregation between the Chinese and non-Chinese community, coupled with the sheer rise in the presence and importance of China for Australia and the world, have provided the necessary conditions for extreme sentiment to take a dominant position in Australia’s China discourse.

As the proverb states, ‘fear sells’, and in the frank words of Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Australia’s China policy, as it stands, is one guided by two things: ‘fear and greed’. The country’s resource exports to China arguably saved its economy during the Global Financial Crisis; its second and third largest export commodities (education and tourism) are, to date, dominated by the Chinese market; and, businesses, property developers and infrastructure projects have been happily bought up by Chinese investors. Australian migration policy encourages this economic activity, and recognises the value of Chinese migrants as skilled workers and investors; but, at the same time, China’s sheer size, speed of development, and the challenge it presents to Australia’s traditional perception of an Anglo-Saxon dominated international order contribute to the country’s simultaneous embracement of things familiar and needed — money and skills —

and scepticism for things foreign and threatening — a changing international and domestic dynamic, reservations to do with nominal ideological disparity and unfamiliar mode of governance.

Broadly speaking, each sector of Australian society reveals part of a bigger picture in this complicated relationship. Business and investment serves as the basis for a productive collaboration, and provides a realistic platform upon which two different governments and societies can slowly gain a deeper understanding of each other, and discover opportunities to work together for better mutual outcomes. The Australia-China free-trade agreement is a stellar example of the role of bilateral trade in informing productive policymaking.

Things become complicated, though, when the roles are reversed. When government intervenes in business, and vetoes investments that make sense economically (most notably, the NBN bid by Huawei, and the Ausgrid bid by State Grid), investors become confused, and onlookers worry about the implications of these interventions for both bilateral relations and the future of economic collaboration between private companies and citizens of the two nations.

It is at sensitive times like these that the media plays a pivotal role in determining the tone and trajectory forward for policymaking, and for widespread sentiment in society. The following section briefly outlines the significant events in the bilateral relationship, and media reactions in both countries over the past several years. It is evident that the relationship has experienced moments of triumph, like the signing of the FTA, but also moments of extreme tension. Media coverage, and selective emphasis, has played in an important role in determining the perceptions of citizens in both nations vis-à-vis the actual events and evidence.

iii. Key Events in the China Influence Debate	
Date	Event
March 2012	- Huawei's bid to build Australia's national broadband network is blocked, due to cyber security concerns. ¹⁵
April 2014	- Fairfax Media alleges in an article by John Garnaut that the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at tertiary institutions across Australia is an informant network for the Chinese government. ¹⁶
December 2015	- The Australia-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is signed. ¹⁷
June 2016	- Alleged 'strings-attached' donations to the University of Technology Sydney and other tertiary institutions by the Chinese Communist Party are scrutinised as '[part of] a concerted campaign to promote Beijing's strategic interests in Australia through deals covering all key areas of society'. ¹⁸
July 2016	- Australia backs Hague ruling on South China Sea territorial dispute, leading the Global Times to call Australia an 'offshore prison on the verges of civilisation' and a 'paper cat'. The stage is set for hostile media coverage in both countries. ¹⁹
August 2016	- Outrage at Australian swimmer Mack Horton for labelling the Chinese swimmer Sun Yang a 'drug cheat' following tribunal ruling and Australian criticism of China leads to further tension in both countries' coverage. ²⁰ - Scott Morrison announces blockage of Ausgrid sale to the Chinese government-owned State Grid Corporation and the Hong Kong-based company Cheung Kong Infrastructure, citing national security. ²¹ - Fairfax Media in an article by Philip Wen reports that a propaganda video, allegedly officially sanctioned by the Chinese government, was directed by a student at the Australian National University, Lei Xiyang. ²² - The Founding Director of the Australian Centre on China in the World, Geremie R Barmé, writes to ANU Vice Chancellor and voices concerns about academic freedom and ignorance of activities going on outside the Anglophone context in Australian universities. He encourages more attention and scrutiny to activities such as those of the CSSA and Mr. Lei. ²³
September 2016	- ANU student newspaper Woroni reports on intervention by pro-China CSSA members in on-campus freedom of speech. Reportedly, a member of the executive threatened shop-owners distributing the Epoch Times and demanded that the paper be removed, or there 'would be consequences'. ²⁴ The story was picked up on by the Sydney Morning Herald, and later, the Epoch Times, as evidence for the earlier 'spy' reports and setting the stage for a series of meddling allegations against the Chinese embassy.
October 2016	- Fairfax Media in an article by Philip Wen and Alex Joske alleges that Chinese students in Australia are being 'patriotically educated' based on race, and having their freedom of speech in Australia restricted through a multi-pronged attempt to monitor and control ethnic Chinese-Australians, supposedly led by the Chinese Embassy in Australia. ²⁵
June 2017	- Four Corners and ABC report on Chinese influence alleges that agents of the Chinese Communist Party assert domestic influence in Australia through donations, media control and surveillance activities. This report initiates widespread alarmism in Australia, reactionary reportage and victimised sentiment

	in China, and a series of political fallout in Australia. ²⁶
September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The New Zealand scholar Anne-Marie Brady and Chinese propaganda specialist publishes comprehensive report on United Front influence work, using New Zealand as a primary case study, attracting international attention to ‘China’s global influence campaign’.²⁷ - New Zealand Member of Parliament Yang Jian accused of links to Chinese government, and past in training spies.²⁸
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clive Hamilton publishes a series of articles accusing Australian universities of (unwittingly) collaborating with the People’s Liberation Army to advance Chinese military capacity.²⁹ - Vision Times publishes ‘The Giant Awakens’, a series of essays on Chinese influence in Australia.³⁰
November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairfax Media publishes correction to allegations against Huang Xiangmo. The correction is not widely publicised in the Australian media, but picked up on by the Global Times as a ‘victory for overseas Chinese’.³¹ - Allen & Unwin cancels plans to publish Clive Hamilton’s book on Chinese influence, Silent Invasion, citing litigation risk, in light of the successful defamation case against Fairfax Media in response to June’s reports. Clive Hamilton claims that it is the Chinese government that has blocked his publication, and seeks parliamentary immunity, as well as public sympathy, to ensure the publication of his book, with a publisher ‘with balls’.³²
December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labor Minister Sam Dastyari resigns from Parliament, under pressure for his ‘China ties’.³³ - Malcolm Turnbull says in Mandarin ‘the Australian people have stood up’, an allusion to Cultural Revolution High Maoist rhetoric, attracting a stern response from the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang and widespread criticism in the Chinese media.³⁴ - Chinese Embassy in Australia slams ‘Cold War mentality and ideological bias... [reflecting] a typical anti-China hysteria’ in Australian media coverage.³⁵ - Poll finds Australia seen as the ‘least friendly’ country to China in 2017.³⁶ - Celebrations ‘put on hold’ for the 45th anniversary of diplomatic ties, and no Australian ministers are present at the commentary luncheon. China Daily suggests that this is directly attributable to an ‘anti-China chorus in Australia’.³⁷ - People’s Daily publishes signed editorial on the ‘anti-China chorus’ in Australia.³⁸
January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian government attacks China’s infrastructure and aid projects in Papua New Guinea.³⁹ Chinese Embassy dismisses unjust criticism.⁴⁰
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - China’s Ministry of Education issues a warning to Chinese students in Australia, ‘in light of a number of cases of violations of the personal safety of Chinese students studying in Australia’. This move is labelled in Australia as a retaliation of the introduction of foreign interference laws and the ‘China influence’ threat. Chinese students, to date, account for the largest consumption demographic for Australia’s education industry. Any decrease in Chinese student enrolments would severely impact the bottom-line for many tertiary institutions, and the Australian economy at large.⁴¹ - Australian media and education industry responds by slamming Chinese government attempt to sabotage education for political gains.⁴² - Assistant to Clive Hamilton, Alex Joske, publishes an article in the New York Times, alleging that the Chinese government actively silences dissent in the Australian Chinese diaspora.⁴³

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kevin Rudd slams Turnbull government's China policy, for inciting 'unnecessary anxiety'.⁴⁴ - Clive Hamilton finds a publisher 'with balls' to go ahead with the publication of <i>Silent Invasion</i> in March 2018.⁴⁵
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iv. A New Gelbe Gefahr

The Anglo-Saxon Occident, inclusive of Australia, has a long-standing tradition of hysteria, xenophobia and explicit social exclusion policies with regard to those ethnicities and countries deemed to be a threat to Western hegemony.⁴⁶ Throughout the past century, Sinophobia, Russophobia and Islamophobia have been the most prevalent, at different points in time, with respect to the relative level of perceived threat to Western hegemony and the standing world order. This gelbe Gefahr (or yellow peril) is linguistically rooted in German fascist thought,⁴⁷ but perhaps reached its peak in the West in a series of mass emigrations of ethnic Chinese to various locations, including the US, the UK and Australia. In the US, Chinese Racial Exclusion Acts were passed,⁴⁸ and in Australia, a similar sentiment of Sinophobia overwhelmed discourse among policymakers. In debating the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Bill (1901), Australia's first Prime Minister Edmund Barton is recorded to have said, verbatim, '[t]he doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of an Englishman and the Chinaman'.⁴⁹

Of course, as with any progressive society, policies and views have transformed considerably since the that those archaic, highly categorical views were acceptable and mainstream. Comparable sentiments of unsophisticated racism do exist,⁵⁰ to be sure, but it would be naïve and anachronistic to attribute the present phenomenon of 'China fear' to merely historical racist tendencies, though social segregation and superficial categorisation based on ethnicity certainly play a role. The social question that the present thesis is concerned with,

too, is inherently different to the concerns that informed archaic racist views. Media portrayal of the ‘China threat’ does have a real impact on racial tensions domestically, but far more-so than traditional yellow journalism, it is concerned both with people and a foreign power — and tends to equate one to the other. This has profound implications for bilateral relations, the economy, and interpersonal relations.

The underlying emotion — fear — that overwhelmed Western countries with the arrival *en masse* of Chinese migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries and the perceived threat that was presented to the way of life that their inhabitants had become accustomed to, is an appropriate comparative case for the present phenomenon.

In the following chapters, the hypothesis that hysteria more-so than warranted concern is to blame for the deterioration of bilateral relations will be tested through a review of the media coverage, official statements, and the facts available. An attempt will be made to interpret these opinions in the context of their proponents’ vested interests, and other possible underlying factors for their prominence.

¹ The National Archives of Australia provide ample detail of the nation's historically hostile policies toward China. See: ‘Australia's diplomatic relations with China – Fact sheet 247’, The National Archives of Australia, online at: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs247.aspx>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

² Geremie R Barmé (2015), ‘Foreword’, in *China & ANU*, William P Sima (eds), The Australian National University Press; and: Kevin Rudd, ‘A subtle defrosting in China's chilly war with America’, *The Financial Times*, 11 June 2013, online at: <https://www.ft.com/content/594776d2-d1ba-11e2-9336-00144feab7de>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³ John Garnaut, ‘Fear and greed' drive Australia's China policy, Tony Abbott tells Angela Merkel’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 April 2015, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/fear-and-greed-drive-australias-china-policy-tony-abbott-tells-angela-merkel-20150416-1mmdty.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴ Jonathan Swan, ‘Joe Hockey says no to Huawei investment in NBN’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October 2013, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/joe-hockey-says-no-to-huawei-investment-in->

nbn-20131029-2wflf.html. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁵ Sean Nicholls, 'Bob Carr accuses Scott Morrison of 'economic populism' over Ausgrid ruling', Sydney Morning Herald, 11 August 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/bob-carr-accuses-scott-morrison-of-economic-populism-over-ausgrid-ruling-20160811-gqqj93.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁶ Fergus Hunter, 'US 'threatens to involve Australia in war with China'', Sydney Morning Herald, 13 January 2017, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/us-threatens-to-involve-australia-in-war-with-china-paul-keating-condemns-us-secretary-of-state-nominees-comments-20170113-gtqy0k.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁷ John Garnaut, 'Chinese spies at Sydney University', Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April 2014, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-spies-at-sydney-university-20140420-36ywk.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁸ See, for example, the author's writing on this subject (and its critics): 高林, 澳不能再像盲人一样跟从“大国”, 环球时报, 8 August 2016, online at: <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/1152/2016-08/9276506.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also:

Callum Smith, 'No room for fear, greed in Sino-Australian ties', Global Times, 11 August 2016, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/999926.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

See also the section on the author, his writing, and his alleged motivations in: Clive Hamilton, Chapter 12: Friends of China, Silent Invasion, Melbourne: Hardie Grant Books (2018).

⁹ Fergus Hunter, 'Bob Carr hits back at allegations he is inappropriately supporting Chinese government', Sydney Morning Herald, 23 September 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/bob-carr-hits-back-at-allegations-he-is-inappropriately-supporting-chinese-government-20160923-grmyih.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁰ John Garnaut, 'Chinese Spies at Sydney University', Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April 2014, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-spies-at-sydney-university-20140420-36ywk.html>; see also: Alexander Joske and Philip Wen, 'The 'patriotic education' of Chinese students at Australian universities', Sydney Morning Herald, 7 October 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-patriotic-education-of-chinese-students-at-australian-universities-20161003-gru13j.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹¹ Sarah Martin, 'Bob Carr's think tank 'operating as a China propaganda arm'', The Australian, 9 September 2016, online at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/bob-carrs-think-tank-operating-as-a-china-propaganda-arm/news-story/a6ed1b9355937b7cfa86301f58cd13f6>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹² Malcolm Fraser, 'Australia has been captured by the US policy of containing China', Arena Magazine, online at: <http://arena.org.au/australia-us-relations-in-the-asian-century/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹³ The Australian National University scholar Hugh White has been a prominent voice on the issues Australia faces in dealing with a rising China, at the same time delicately balancing the intricately related US relationship. See: Hugh White, 'Choosing Between the US and China', East Asia Forum, 5 October 2016, online at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/10/05/choosing-between-the-us-and-china/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also:

Hugh White and the China Choice, The Australia-China Story, online at: <http://aus.thechinastory.org/archive/hugh-white-and-the-china-choice/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁴ Hugh White, 'America or China: one day, we will have to choose', Sydney Morning Herald, 28 May 2016

online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/america-or-china-one-day-we-will-have-to-choose-20130527-2n7a0.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁵ Maggie Lu-YueYang, 'Australia blocks China's Huawei from broadband tender', Reuters, 26 March 2012, online at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-huawei-nbn/australia-blocks-chinas-huawei-from-broadband-tender-idUSBRE82P0GA20120326>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁶ John Garnaut, 'Chinese Spies at Sydney University', The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 April 2014, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-spies-at-sydney-university-20140420-36ywk.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁷ Australia-China Free Trade Agreement, Department of Foreign Affairs, online at: <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/chafta/Pages/australia-china-fta.aspx>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁸ David Matthews, 'China accused of buying influence over Australian universities', Times Higher Education, 9 June 2016, online at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/china-accused-buying-influence-over-australian-universities>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁹ 'Paper Cat Australia Will Learn its Lesson', Global Times, 30 July 2016, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/997320.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁰ 'Smug Aussie Swimmer Won't Cloud Rio', Global Times, 8 August 2016, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/999237.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²¹ James Massola, Sean Nicholls, 'Scott Morrison Confirms Decision to Block Ausgrid Sale', The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 August 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/scott-morrison-confirms-decision-to-block-ausgrid-sale-20160819-gqwwkm.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²² Philip Wen, 'The Australian connection behind China's ultra-nationalist viral video', The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 August 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/the-australian-connection-behind-chinas-ultranationalist-viral-video-20160803-gqkiki.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²³ Geremie R. Barmé, 'Re: ANU, Lei Xiyong and his Nationalist Online Video', 15 August 2016, online at: <http://chinaheritage.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Lei-Xiyong-and-Free-Speech.15.viii.2016.pdf>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁴ Alex Joske, 'Incident at University Pharmacy Highlights a Divided Chinese Community, Woroni, 26 August 2016, online at: <https://www.woroni.com.au/words/incident-at-university-pharmacy-highlights-a-divided-chinese-community/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁵ Alexander Joske and Philip Wen, 'The 'patriotic education' of Chinese students at Australian universities', The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 October 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-patriotic-education-of-chinese-students-at-australian-universities-20161003-gru13j.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁶ 'China's Operation Australia', Fairfax Media, 5 June 2017, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2017/chinas-operation-australia/hard-power.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁷ Philip Matthews, 'Academic Anne-Marie Brady confronts the power of China', Stuff NZ, 25 November 2017, online at: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/99121572/academic-annemarie-brady-confronts-the-power-of-china>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

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³¹ James Laurenceson, Twitter, 5 November 2017, online at: https://twitter.com/j_laurenceson/status/927300475430387712. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

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³⁶ Yang Sheng, 'Australia least friendly country to China in 2017: poll', Global Times, 27 December 2017, online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/dec/06/chinese-influence-on-australia-is-fabricated-by-media-china-claims>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

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³⁸ 澳方对华认知须从事实出发(钟声), 人民日报, 11 December 2017, online at: http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2017-12/11/nw.D110000renmrb_20171211_4-03.htm. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁹ Mark Wembridge, 'Australia lashes out at China's 'useless' Pacific projects', The Financial Times, 10 January 2018, online at: <https://www.ft.com/content/9bd0cb6a-f5a6-11e7-8715-e94187b3017e>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴⁰ Kirsty Needham, 'China lodges diplomatic complaint following Australian minister's comments', The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 January 2018, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-lodges-diplomatic-complaint-following-australian-ministers-comments-20180110-h0gj8m.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴¹ Bill Birtles, 'China's embassy in Canberra issues safety warning for Chinese nationals in Australia', ABC, 20 December 2017, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-20/chinese-embassy-issues-safety-warning-for-australia/9277202>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴² Sian Powell, 'China pressures Australia through higher education sector', *The Australian*, 21 February 2018, online at: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/china-pressures-australia-through-higher-education-sector/news-story/17344b0df8b59a560ff48431a5fcd2a3>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

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⁴⁸ Kitty Calavita, 'The Paradoxes of Race, Class, Identity, and 'Passing': Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882-1910', *Law & Social Inquiry* (2002) 25:1, pp. 1-40.

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Chapter II — Beyond the War of Words

i. Beneath the Surface

Formulating a China policy for Australia is complicated not because China is a foe, though alarmist punters like Peter Hartcher and Paul Dibb might like us to think of it as such.¹ It is complex because Australia has reaped the benefits of trade with China, but is simultaneously entangled by pressure from its allies, ideological reservations and domestic prejudices that it must also accommodate. Australia's two-way trade with China forms the nation's largest, accounting for a per household income of AUD\$16,985 in 2013² — a five-fold increase compared to the same figure for 2009 — the importance of which was finally recognised with the finalisation of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement in November 2014. After coal and iron ore, education — Australia's third largest export, worth AUD\$20 billion per annum³ — is overwhelmingly consumed by Chinese international students, with a reported 46,400 new enrolments, and a total of 140,000 Chinese students (29.4% of international students) in 2016.⁴

Suggestions that Australia should join the US in 'containing' China are therefore not only impractical, but not in the interest of any party involved. Hugh White's 'China choice' is not a simple binary selection between the US and China — indeed, as federal politicians repeat tirelessly, this is not a choice Australia has to, nor should it make. The choice is simple: the Australian government needs to ensure that this choice never needs to be made. At a foreign policy level, in the simplest terms, that would mean to act as a mediator in the delicate Sino-US relationship, and encourage what Hugh White describes as a concert of powers in Asia, one in which China and the US would share primary influence. Domestically, however, Australia's rational 'China choice' is hindered by the prejudices, xenophobia and protectionism that permeate the nation's public

opinion. Anecdotally, there are at least several obvious reasons behind the prevalence of a uniquely Australian ‘sinophobia’:

- 1) **The ‘China threat’** —the prospect of this ‘Chilly War’ evolving into a ‘cold’ or even ‘hot’ war. China is perceived, though evidence is certainly not concrete for this claim,⁵ as a potential aggressor. Australia is obliged by the ANZUS treaty to back the US in conflict, one which might eventuate ostensibly in terms of protecting Taiwan (though Australia does not recognise Taiwanese sovereignty) or over the South China Sea.⁶
- 2) **Ideological conflict** — Hypocritical as it could be seen, many Australians appear to embrace the economic opportunities presented by trade with China, but are averse to any allegiance beyond this, often on the grounds of unease to do with China’s status as (what is understood to be) a non-democratic power. This serves to alienate China as an Orientalist ‘Other’, and feeds allegations of domestic infiltration,⁷ while making evident that Australia overwhelmingly believes its security depends on the domination of the Western Pacific by a Western (Anglo-Saxon) power.⁸
- 3) **Generational gap** — Although Foreign Minister Julie Bishop recently met with her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, declaring that Australia-China relations are progressing soundly,⁹ many publications continue to put forward views that paint an outdated picture of a repressive state, serving to mislead the unwitting reader. This is not surprising, given the weight that the Murdoch press and similar pro-US media behemoths have in Australia. In the Chinese language press, anti-CCP publications such as the Epoch Times cater primarily to the some several-hundred-thousand pre-1990 migrants,¹⁰ creating a generation divide between those — particularly international students — recent migrants, beneficiaries of the country’s opening up and economic reform, who hold a vastly different view of the

country and how Australia should engage with it.

- 4) **Xenophobia** — Historically, Australia has not always been an egalitarian society. In the late 19th century, Chinese gold-miners were the target of racial hostility, amidst fears of ‘yellow peril’ invasion.¹¹ During the ‘White Australia, Red China’ period of Chinese communism post-1949 and prior to formalising diplomatic relations, many Australians were terrified of Chinese military potential and an imminent war against the Communist bloc.¹² Now, having realised the economic benefits, the fear of military threat remains, but is accompanied by the more fundamental domestic economic grievances of the working class — foreign investment affecting housing affordability, and the foreign workers influencing employment prospects.¹³ Of course, Chinese are not the sole target of xenophobic and racist rhetoric, but for the (perhaps recently) disenfranchised working class that helped bring Donald Trump to presidency in the US, Chinese money and influence presents an easy (though not technically correct¹⁴) target. Most recently, the Taiwanese-Australian Shan Ju Lin ran her political campaign for the far-right One Nation Party on an anti-CCP basis, urging Australians to make the distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Asians.¹⁵ Short-lived though her career was, she is symptomatic of a real and prevailing trend of nationalistic xenophobia, not just towards generalised groups (like ‘Asians’ or ‘Chinese’) but among them (ie. Falun Gong practitioners and sympathisers; pro-independence Hong Kong, Taiwan expatriates).¹⁶
- 5) **US cronyism and Neo-McCarthyism** — There is an overwhelming amount of US influence in Australia. News Corporation is fully owned by naturalised US citizen Rupert Murdoch. Australia is formally bound to a military agreement with the US, one that could very well result in direct

conflict with China or North Korea. Numerous institutions and think tanks receive funding or co-operate with US organisations. The Australian intelligence and defence agencies co-operate closely with the US, and the US has military bases in Australia. Couple all of this with the long-standing bilateral alliance, and perception of reliance on the US for security and stability, and the result is an overwhelmingly US-centric, US-favouring foreign policy. If any of the aforementioned conditions entailed an involvement with Chinese businesses or private citizens, let alone government agencies, the media would cry foul play and undue influence. At a government level, Australia has historically, and presently continues to act as ‘deputy sheriff’ for the US in the region.¹⁷ Chinese commentators have repeatedly criticised Australia’s blind and unconditional allegiance to the US on all issues — some of which the US has not even taken leadership in, such as practicing freedom of navigation in the South China Sea post-arbitration. By no means should Australia entirely abandon its relationship with the US. But it should seriously consider on a case-by-case basis, which issues concern Australia, and how Australia can best benefit itself in balancing its relationship with these two superpowers. Under the current climate, opinions that contradict the traditional view that the US is friend and China is foe (albeit a fine business partner) are unwelcome and quickly shot down by the powers that be. This is a dangerous precedent, not in line with Australian values, democratic values, or even Australian interests.

- 6) **Opportunism** — Beneath the gunfire and supposed struggle for influence at a governmental level, there are a handful of individuals that stand to build their career, or attain ‘discourse power’ 话语权 as an authority in the field of national security. One need not look far to discover that the several prominent commentators on China influence have quickly become experts

on the topic, with either scant prior publication, or a past career in an entirely different field. Readers should question the legitimacy and objectivity of the views these supposed authorities propound.

There are a growing number of Australia's China influence alarmists, capitalising on widespread China 'illiteracy'. These include Peter Cai, who has labelled "Beijing's effort to control and shape overseas Chinese-language media" a "hidden disease, largely invisible to the Australian public and English-speaking population",¹⁸ and Clive Hamilton, who has on numerous occasions made allegations against the Chinese Communist Party for interfering in Australian politics, and attempted to 'control' the Australian-Chinese community. Of course, there are impartialities and political agendas to be wary of — not unlike any other press — in Australia's domestic Chinese language publications. But there is not sufficient rationale to generalise and ostracise all non-hostile public opinion — and even donations¹⁹ — on the basis of an unproven and unlikely political plot to infiltrate Australia, an accusation to which a Global Times editorial amusingly responded: "China spying on Australia? Why? Tell us, Australia, who do you think you are? What have you got in Australia that is remotely worth spying on, apart from the Opera House, the Great Barrier Reef, clean air and killer ultra-violet sunshine?"²⁰

Fond of taking the moral high-ground, the Australian press is at least as guilty in pushing nationalistic rhetoric — because alarmism sells, and it's easy to lash out at the 'new kid on the block' at the crossroads of a major change in the world order Australia has become comfortable with. John Garnaut, previously a Fairfax media journalist, was the first to write on the subject of 'Chinese spies' in 2014. His evidence, like those who have followed him to build careers on China

alarmism, is largely anecdotal. He is now an advisor to the current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. One could speculate that alarmist journalism without due cause is merely an attempt to play into the tried-and-true Orientalist ‘Us-Them’ mentality.²¹ In doing so, however, authors like Garnaut ostracise the not insignificant number of Chinese-Australians, as well as some hundred-thousand non-resident students. Without even taking into account the direct social and individual impact of such poisonous discourse, protectionism in the education and migration industry could serve to harm Australia’s economic interests in the long-term. After coal and iron ore, education is after all, Australia’s third largest export, worth AUD\$20 billion per annum,²² and is currently is overwhelmingly consumed by Chinese international students, with a reported 46,400 new enrolments, and a total of 140,000 Chinese students (29.4% of international students) in 2016.²³

In a nation that prides itself on being multicultural and cosmopolitan — especially given its economic dependence on migrants and foreign investment — attention-seeking and malicious writing that does not adequately consider the validity of the facts informing it, and uses sweeping terms of animosity, likening Chinese students to ‘pests’ and ‘sinister agents’,²⁴ or calling Chinese migrants ‘dangerous allegiants to a foreign power’,²⁵ are allegations at least as worthy of critique as the often emotional Chinese op-eds that the Australian press wons of citing as evidence of Beijing’s ‘new assertiveness’ or rising aggression.²⁶

ii. The Who’s Who of the China Influence Debate	
Individual	Significance
Malcolm Turnbull	Following media coverage, initiated inquiries into Chinese influence in Australia. Made retaliatory public statements against Chinese influence, attracting a hostile response from the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman,

	embassy, and tabloid media. ²⁷
Kevin Rudd	Well-known for being a ‘Sinophone’, and a history of nuanced comments on Australia’s ‘China policy’. Although reportedly hawkish during his tenure as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Rudd has positioned himself as a ‘candid friend’ 诤友 to China and a critic at home. ²⁸ In early 2018, Rudd directly attacked Turnbull’s China policy, echoing the less audible voice of balance, instead of a tendency to polarise between pro-China 亲华 ‘panda huggers’ and anti-China 反华 ‘dragon slayers’. ²⁹
Sam Dastyari	Former Labor minister, who fell from grace at the climax of the China influence hysteria for accepting ‘bribes’ and making statements on foreign policy issues, contrary to the Labor (or ‘official’) line. Portrayed widely in the media as a sell-out China ‘hack’. ³⁰
Bob Carr	Former Australian Foreign Minister, controversially heading up the ACRI institute at UTS. Accused frequently of having his opinion bought by Chinese agents of influence. ³¹ Carr has retaliated to criticism on numerous occasions by slamming polarizing, and often US-centric views that leave no room for dissent and balance. ³² He questions why donations from private Australian citizens of Chinese descent are labelled as ‘sell-out’, yet directly US-backed think-tanks are far from scrutiny.
Hugh White	Australian National University Professor of Strategic Studies. Best known as the proponent and theorist behind the ‘China choice’, a foreign policy question for Australia in balancing its relationship with the US and China, as a new superpower becomes eminent. ³³
Clive Hamilton	Charles Sturt University Professor of Public Ethics. Best known for op-eds that allege alarming Chinese influence in Australia. Author of the book <i>Silent Invasion</i> , first pulled from publication amidst litigation fears, later pursued Parliamentary immunity, and following a high-profile media campaign, was accepted for publication due March 2018. ³⁴ Arguably plays a key role as the tone-setter in Australia on the China influence debate, and the trajectory of the country’s China policy. ³⁵
Rory Medcalf	Head of National Security at the Australian National University. Frequent commentator in the Australian media on Chinese influence in the country. ³⁶ Appeared in the climatic Four Corners investigation.
Chen Hong	Director of Australian Studies Centre at East China Normal University. Often quoted in Australian and Chinese newspapers on Sino-Australia issues. ³⁷

Lu Kang	Foreign Ministry Spokesman for the PRC. Has made numerous statements critical of the Australian media and government's position. ³⁸
Julie Bishop	Foreign Minister of Australia. Has made numerous comments critical of alleged Chinese interference in domestic Australian affairs. ³⁹
'Straight-Looking Bro' 耿直哥 (nom de guerre)	An opinion writer for the Global Times. Best known for his explosive responses to 'anti-China rhetoric'. ⁴⁰
Huang Xiangmo	High-profile political donor at the centre of the China influence controversy. Has typically declined comment, but published an opinion piece in the Global Times following allegations that he was an agent of the Chinese government for his role at ACRI. ⁴¹ Received an apology from Fairfax Media following a defamation ruling in his favour.
iii. Key Media Outlets in the China Influence Debate	
Outlet	Significance
Fairfax Media (Sydney Morning Herald etc.)	Co-producer of the climatic Four Corners investigation. History of publishing investigative reports on China influence in Australia, including allegations of spying, political influence, military collaboration, among others. Arguably deficit in sufficient evidence, prematurely publishing allegations for maximum commercial effect. Currently involved in multiple defamation cases with those singled out in the Four Corners report, and lost a case brought against the outlet by Huang Xiangmo in November 2017, though scantily reported.
News Corporation (The Australian etc.)	Relays reports, many of which originate from Fairfax or its frequent commentators, including the outspoken China influence critic Clive Hamilton.
ABC	Co-producer of the climatic Four Corners investigation. Left-leaning government funded media outlet. Claims to be a balanced source of information, but has on at least several occasions silenced opinions contrary to the line being run, after directly soliciting them. Questionable impartiality.
The Guardian	History of presenting a range of opinions. Accurately portrays statements from major media outlets with minimal artistic interpretation.
The Global Times	Barometer of public sentiment, often zealous, jingoistic, reactionary, and attention-hungry. Go-to source for fiery responses to allegations made in the non-Chinese media, reliably providing sufficiently nationalistic statements that, when quoted in English language media, are put into the context of a fragile, embarrassed, brazen and emotional Chinese state. In actuality, the Global Times does not echo government sentiment, or indeed wide public sentiment as much as the Australian media has portrayed it to. It could be just

	as validly understood as a commercial tabloid publication, that prides itself on ‘enraging foreigners’ and getting press for its often extreme viewpoints. ⁴²
People’s Daily	The most accurate barometer, apart from Foreign Ministry and Embassy statements, of the Chinese government’s response to allegations. ⁴³ Decidedly less emotional than the Global Times that overseas reports often quote.
The Epoch Times	Anti-CCP international newspaper, financially supported by Falun Gong. Consistently critical of all things PRC and CCP related, often without verifiable evidence. Allegedly boycotted by ‘agents’ on Australian university campus.

iv. The Interest Groups

The individuals and institutions detailed above can be comfortably allotted into several categories, each of which has a distinct purpose in propounding a certain viewpoint. Namely, there are three broad motives behind the words of commentators:

- 1) **Profit, Funding** — Those that stand to benefit financially by taking a certain standpoint, either because that standpoint allows them to (in theory) attain funding (for example: ACRI director Bob Carr may have a vested interest in refraining from expressing anti-China views, where ASPI director Peter Jennings may express pro-American views in the interest of his institution’s sponsors;⁴⁴ likewise, those doing business with China or integrated into the Chinese community will hold different interests and views to those that primarily deal with the US), or because the information they publish is novel and will attract viewership, whether factual or not. Fairfax Media could be said to have ‘jumped the gun’ on some of the allegations it made in its report, many of which have resulted in on-going lawsuits, for maximum media exposure. Similarly, the Falun Gong backed newspaper Epoch Times cannot be expected to present a favourable picture of China, its ruling Chinese Communist Party, or its intentions, because the entire premise of this organisation (and therefore, its financial viability) is

to oppose that authority. Likewise, as a commercial publication, Global Times stands to benefit financially from publishing explosive, often offensive jingoistic responses that elicit a response from the international media and its formidable viewership. It would be naïve not to assume that there are commercial interests behind every statement made by every party concerned.

- 2) **Relevance, Attention** — Beyond commercial gains, there are intangible benefits that public commentators stand to reap in lending their voice to the debate, particularly if they intend to, at some point, convert the influence that they attain into funding of some kind. Clive Hamilton has made somewhat of an authority of himself as the ‘lone warrior’ against the supposed malevolent Chinese infiltration of Australia. Kevin Rudd has lent his voice of reason on numerous occasions in criticism of Malcolm Turnbull’s anti-China agenda, despite being on record as hawkish toward China during his tenure. It can be at times difficult to make an absolute distinction between relevance and profit as a motive, as the two often go hand-in-hand.
- 3) **Patriotism, Nationalism** — Comments, individuals and publications can easily be labelled ‘nationalistic’. The Global Times and its commentators like Straight-Looking Bro have, on numerous occasions, been labelled, ridiculed and dismissed as jingoistic on numerous occasions by the Australian media. Indeed, it is true that there is an obvious element of nationalism involved in their comments — but to dismiss them as such would be to miss the tangible benefits that each of these individuals and institutions stand to gain in expressing those viewpoints. There may be a handful of private citizens that express their views simply out of affection for their country, but it is more likely that they have some vested interest

in doing so. It is more useful to consider the aforementioned criteria in interpreting their actions and rationale.

¹ Peter Hartcher, 'The Chinese interests power struggle is about sovereignty', Sydney Morning Herald, 6 September 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-chinese-interests-power-struggle-is-about-sovereignty-20160905-gr94hs.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; and; Paul Dibb, 'Chinese nationals in Australia 'with Beijing allegiance'', The Australian, 5 September 2016, online at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/chinese-nationals-in-australia-with-beijing-allegiance/news-story/14d88ec1b05a5e4c9776cecae2daf6ba>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

² The 2014 Australia-China Trade Report, Australia China Business Council, online at: http://acbc.com.au/admin/images/uploads/Copy2ACTradeReport_WEB_v4.pdf. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³ Tim Dodd, 'Education revenue soars to become Australia's \$20 billion', Australian Financial Review, 3 February 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/education-revenue-soars-to-become-australias-20-billion-export-20160203-gmke3k>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴ Tim Dodd, 'Chinese student boom hits new record', Australian Financial Review, 10 May 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/the-chinese-student-boom-50000-new-enrolments-in-2016-20160510-goqfkd>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁵ Apart from, obviously, anxiety about its military developments in the South China Sea, though Chinese spokesman have made clear that while China may act against the aggression of others, it will not be an aggressor. See: 'Australia must manage China's new military assertiveness', Australian Financial Review, 29 May 2015, Online at: <http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/australia-must-manage-chinas-new-military-assertiveness-20150528-ghc6ed>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁶ 'The Australian Government recognised the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legal government of China through the Joint Communiqué with the PRC of 21 December 1972. As a consequence, Australia does not recognise that the authorities in Taiwan, who claim to be the government of the Republic of China, have the status of a national government. This is the basis of Australia's one-China policy. All Australian governments since 1972 have adhered to this policy.' Department of Foreign Affairs statement online at: <http://dfat.gov.au/geo/taiwan/Pages/taiwan-country-brief.aspx>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁷ Tom Iggulden, 'Government warned Chinese investment could threaten Australia's national security interests', ABC News, 13 April 2016, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-13/security-expert-issues-warning-on-chinese-investment/7323352>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁸ 'Australia between China and the US', East Asia Forum, 18 August 2008, online at: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2008/08/14/australia-between-the-us-and-china/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁹ 'Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop of Australia Jointly Meet the Press', The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 9 February 2017, online at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/activities_663312/t1437164.shtml. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁰ See Wanning Sun's article on the composition of the Chinese language media in Australia: Wanning Sun (2016), 'Chinese Language Media in Australia: Developments, Challenges and Opportunities', The Australia-China Relations Institute. See also the popular view that Chinese media in Australia is controlled by Beijing, as reported

in *The Australian*: Rowan Callick, 'Australia's Chinese community: inscrutable ties to another China', *The Australian*, 27 August 2016, online at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/rowan-callick/australias-chinese-community-inscrutable-ties-to-another-china/news-story/c5f3ee164d73d8044a9cdb09c6233654>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹¹ Simon Dalby (1996), 'Security Discourse, the ANZUS Alliance, and Australian Identity', in *Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers*, G. Cheeseman and R. Bruce. St Leonards (eds.), Alan and Unwin Press; see also: David Walker (1999), *Anxious Nation*, Queensland University Press.

¹² 'Our complex relationship with Chinese Australians', *Australian Financial Review*, 9 January 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/business/our-complex-relationship-with-chinese-australians-20151227-glvglm>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹³ Daniel Hurst, 'China free trade agreement should be renegotiated or blocked, say unions', *The Guardian*, 7 September 2015, online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/sep/07/china-free-trade-agreement-should-be-renegotiated-or-blocked-say-unions>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁴ 'Why Chinese investment is nowhere near as big as you think', *The Australian Financial Review*, 26 May 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/opinion/why-chinese-investment-is-nowhere-near-as-big-as-you-think-20160525-gp3kzi#ixzz4VRHQNmGX>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁵ 'Australia: Chinese candidate runs on anti-Chinese platform', *Time*, 21 December 2016, online at: <http://time.com/4608804/australia-one-nation-chinese-right-shan-ju-lin/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁶ John Fitzgerald, 'Beijing's guoqing versus Australia's way of life', *Inside Story*, 27 September 2016, online at: <http://insidestory.org.au/beijings-guoqing-versus-australias-way-of-life>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also the breakdown and brief history of Chinese language media in Australia in: Wanning Sun (2016), 'Chinese Language Media in Australia: Developments, Challenges and Opportunities', *The Australia-China Relations Institute*. Earlier (pre-1990) migrant-run media services are overwhelmingly Cantonese. 'Pro-China' media outlets are a post-1990 migrant phenomenon, and according to Sun, primarily run by overseas students and graduates.

¹⁷ 'Bob Carr urges diplomacy in South China Sea dispute', *SBS*, 14 July 2016, online at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/bob-carr-urges-diplomacy-in-south-china-sea-dispute>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

¹⁸ Kelsey Munro and Philip Wen, 'Chinese newspapers in Australia: Beijing controls messaging, propaganda in the press', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-language-newspapers-in-australia-beijing-controls-messaging-propaganda-in-press-20160610-gpg0s3.htm>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also the only comprehensive, but highly anecdotal, study on Chinese language press in Australia: Wanning Sun (2016), 'Chinese Language Media in Australia: Developments, Challenges and Opportunities', *The Australia-China Relations Institute*.

¹⁹ Matthew Knott, Heath Aston, 'Don't become 'propaganda vehicles' for China: universities warned over donations', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 September 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/dont-become-propaganda-vehicles-for-china-universities-warned-over-donations-20160908-grcl1as.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁰ Wanning Sun, 'Beyond the War of Words: How might the Australian media's coverage of China affect social cohesion?', *The Conversation*, 22 September 2016, online at: <http://theconversation.com/beyond-the-war-of-words-how-might-the-australian-medias-coverage-of-china-affect-social-cohesion-65553>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²¹ Edward Saïd (1975), *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books.

²² Tim Dodd, 'Education revenue soars to become Australia's \$20 billion', *Australian Financial Review*, 31

February 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/education-revenue-soars-to-become-australias-20-billion-export-20160203-gmke3k>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²³ Tim Dodd, 'Chinese student boom hits new record', Australian Financial Review, 10 May 2016, online at: <http://www.afr.com/news/policy/education/the-chinese-student-boom-50000-new-enrolments-in-2016-20160510-goqfkd>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁴ Peter Hartcher, 'The Chinese interests power struggle is about sovereignty', Sydney Morning Herald, 6 September 2016, online at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/the-chinese-interests-power-struggle-is-about-sovereignty-20160905-gr94hs.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁵ Paul Dibb, 'Chinese nationals in Australia 'with Beijing allegiance'', The Australian, 5 September 2016, online at: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/chinese-nationals-in-australia-with-beijing-allegiance/news-story/14d88ec1b05a5e4c9776cecae2daf6ba>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁶ 'Paper cat' Australia will learn its lesson', The Global Times, 30 July 2016, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/997320.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁷ 'Meddle Kingdom: Australia battles Chinese political influence', The Economist, 15 June 2017, online at: <https://www.economist.com/news/asia/21723454-it-will-be-uphill-struggle-australia-battles-chinese-political-influence>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: 'Turnbull mends his broken heart by targeting China', The Global Times, 3 June 2017, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1049803.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; Kirsty Needham, 'China criticism grows over Australian 'foreign interference' stance', Sydney Morning Herald, 11 December 2017, online at: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/china-criticism-grows-over-australian-foreign-interference-stance-20171211-h02in1.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁸ Rudd has previously professed relatively hawkish opinions in regard to Australia's 'China policy', including a number of leaked less-than-chummy comments, but, despite this, Rudd has consistently expressed both the importance of China, and the importance of nuance in dealing with it. He outlines his views in two key essays: Kevin Rudd, 'A New Sinology for the Future', An Address to the Seventh World Congress on China Studies, 10 December 2017, online at: <http://kevinrudd.com/blog/2017/12/10/kevin-rudd-speaks-to-the-seventh-world-congress-on-the-study-of-china-a-new-sinology-for-the-future/>; see also: 'Kevin Rudd and Australia-China Relations', The Australia-China Story, online at: <http://aus.thechinastory.org/archive/kevin-rudd-and-australia-china-relations/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

²⁹ Ibid. See also: Geremie R. Barmé 'Watching China Watching XVII: Saying the Unsayable', China Heritage, 8 February 2018, online at: <http://chinaheritage.net/journal/saying-the-unsayable>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁰ Rosie Lewis, 'Sam Dastyari's Chinese donation 'cash for comment' says PM', The Australian, 2 September 2016, online at: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/sam-dastyaris-chinese-donation-cash-for-comment-says-pm/news-story/d9d2cdd2308eecd9745ef953dbd9506d>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: Amy Remeikis, The Guardian, 11 December 2017, online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/dec/12/sam-dastyari-quits-labor-senator-china-connections>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³¹ 'Australian universities the latest battleground in Chinese soft power offensive', ABC, 14 October 2016, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-14/universities-latest-battleground-in-chinese-soft-power-offensive/7931958>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³² Fergus Hunter, 'Bob Carr hits back at allegations he is inappropriately supporting Chinese government', Sydney Morning Herald, 23 September 2016, online at: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/bob-carr-hits-back-at-allegations-he-is-inappropriately-supporting-chinese-government-20160923-grmyih.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³³ Hugh White, The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013).

³⁴ Dylan Welch, 'Chinese agents are undermining Australia's sovereignty, Clive Hamilton's controversial new book claims', ABC, 22 February 2018, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-22/book-reveals-extent-of-chinese-influence-in-australia/9464692>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁵ Clive Hamilton, Alex Joske, 'Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Inquiry into the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017', online at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Intelligence_and_Security/EspionageInterference/Submissions. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁶ Medcalf has professed the view that the 'censorship' of Hamilton's book is evidence of undue influence in Australia. See: 'Australian Furor Over Chinese Influence Follows Book's Delay', New York Times, 20 November 2017, online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/world/australia/china-australia-book-influence.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁷ Rowan Callick, 'Handling China ties with care', The Australian, 19 December 2017, online at: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/handling-china-ties-with-care/news-story/18e7b2f94047e8753e7a1feb399f11b0>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁸ 2018年1月10日外交部发言人陆慷主持例行记者会, 中华人民共和国外交部, 10 January 2018, online at: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/fyrbt_674889/t1524690.shtml. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: 中国外交部发言人陆慷就澳大利亚发表外交政策白皮书等报道回答记者提问, 中华人民共和国驻澳大利亚使馆, 23 November 2017, online at: <http://au.china-embassy.org/chn/sgfyrbt/t1513634.htm>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³⁹ Rowan Callick, 'China responds to Julie Bishop's 'non-democracy' speech', The Australian, 15 March 2017, online at: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/foreign-affairs/china-responds-to-julie-bishops-nondemocracy-speech/news-story/9f7df19f41da29824cc9d4e8b5e9e011>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: Andrew Greene, Stephen Dziedzic, 'China's soft power: Julie Bishop steps up warning to university students on Communist Party rhetoric', ABC, 16 October 2017, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-16/bishop-steps-up-warning-to-chinese-university-students/9053512>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴⁰ 耿直哥, 再这么下去, 咱中国人真没法再和这个国家相处了!, 环球时报, 31 October 2017, online at: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/1x5Pcan3-e0u6YCKAjA5BQ>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴¹ Huang resigned from his role at ACRI following a series of allegations against him and his relationship with the Chinese Communist Party. See: Jamie Smyth, 'Huang quits Sydney think-tank amid concerns over Beijing influence', Financial Times, 23 September 2016, online at: <https://www.ft.com/content/f449c862-8088-11e6-8e50-8ec15fb462f4>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: Huang Xiangmo, 'Chinese donors have role in Oz politics', Global Times, 30 August 2016, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1003731.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; 他为全体华人在国外赢了一个重要官司, 可西方媒体却不敢报……, 环球时报, 4 November 2017, online at: <http://world.huanqiu.com/article/2017-11/11356623.html>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴² Peter Cai, 'The Global Times and Beijing: A nuanced relationship', The Lowy Interpreter, online at: <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/global-times-and-beijing-nuanced-relationship>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also: 'How Seriously Should You Take Global Times?', China Digital Times, online at: <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2016/08/seriously-take-global-times/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴³ The statement issued in December 2017 via People's Daily is of far greater significance as a measure of the Chinese leadership's discontent with Australia, its media and its government than the popularised Global Times editorials that the Australian media wons of quoting. See: 澳方对华认知须从事实出发(钟声), 人民日报, 33

December 2017, online at: http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2017-12/11/nw.D110000renmrb_20171211_4-03.htm. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

⁴⁴ Sandi Keane, 'Agents of Influence: What About the Australian Strategic Policy Institute?', Michael West, 6 December 2017, online at: <https://www.michaelwest.com.au/agents-influence-australian-strategic-policy-institute/>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

Chapter III — The Wiser Choice

i. A Way Forward

The climatic Four Corners reports that brought the ‘China threat’ hysteria examined in the present thesis to prominence was aired under the premise of uncovering ‘how China's Communist Party is secretly infiltrating Australia’, by ‘tracking the activities of Beijing-backed organisations and the efforts made to intimidate opponents of the Chinese Communist party’.¹

As we have observed, the overwhelming position presented in media reportage is that the Chinese government somehow controls media and information in Australia, runs elaborate spy agencies that bully dissidents into silence, and buys influence through donations or promise of reward in return for pro-China policies and opinions.

Here, the author will provide a series of recommendations, based on the data examined in the thesis, and personal views informed by the author’s prior work on this topic:²

1. It seems simplistic to allege that organisations such as the CSSA serve as a front for espionage-related activities in the context of an information-dominated reality, in which cyber espionage has rendered other forms of spying somewhat redundant.
2. Chinese-Australians that the author has dealt with to date have a sense of pride in their identity and background. They should not be relegated to a ‘fifth column’ for publicly displaying these sentiments. Chinese students abroad act in a similar cultural ambassadorial capacity as New Colombo Plan scholars, who are awarded scholarships for precisely the purpose of becoming ‘young ambassadors’ for Australian values abroad — and are

important intermediaries in fostering better relations between nations. It would be hypocritical to deny Chinese students the same opportunity to act as ambassadors for their home country, heritage or values.

3. One controversial component of the Fairfax report included an interview with a representative from the CSSA who claimed that they would, ‘for China’, report activities such as a human rights protest to the embassy, citing security concerns. Obviously, if it were proven that such suppression of freedom of expression were proven to exist, it should be scrutinised and addressed. The use of a student association as a means for silencing dissent is inappropriate and contrary to the values that, I hope, underpin Australian society. I would also hope, however, instead of cherry-picking weak bits of evidence to fit a certain narrative, and seeking very little in the way of contrary opinion, that the media outlets involved in the production of this report might practice prudence and impartiality, to the best of their ability, in the future. As a result of the use of this interview, perhaps out of context, perhaps elicited inappropriately, or perhaps merely the views of an individual that has grown up in a certain environment, that individual has been embarrassed, and the Chinese student population victimised. Incidents like these will only serve to further silence important contributions to the debate, for fear of public shame and hatchet-jobbery. If indeed that student’s comments reflect her own opinions, the answer is not to blame her, the CSSA, the Chinese embassy, or any other agency for attempting to infiltrate Australian society, and thereby socially exclude those persons. Instead, Australian universities are favourably placed to edify Chinese students (and indeed the general populous) of the fundamental values that this nation is built on.
4. Australia is a democratic nation that (supposedly) celebrates diversity. It is to be expected that Australians of Chinese ethnicity or origin would be

interested in topics related to China, and even hold favourable views, possibly contrary to the popular narrative presented in the Australian mass media. However, contrary to the assertions made in recent reportage, having an opinion does not make someone a foreign agent. To call the expression of contrary opinions an orchestrated ‘invasion’ only exacerbates the denigration of social cohesion in the Australian-Chinese community. It might very well prove to be a useful narrative for opportunistic academic careerists seeking relevance, though.

5. It is unsurprising that some media outlets ostensibly hold ‘pro-Beijing’ views. An opinion that apparently aligns with the perceived pro-Beijing view is not proof that Beijing is meddling in public opinion in Australia, though. No news source is completely unbiased, however transparent they may claim to be. The idea that the ‘fourth estate’ is an unbiased ‘watchdog’ is a great ideal, but unfortunately, reality falls short of this. Rupert Murdoch and his empire of influence are case in point. News Limited has single-handedly swayed elections by means of its level of penetration, yet despite this well-known fact, remains a reputable news source. To single out Chinese language news sources as exceptional in the biased presentation of facts is to miss the issue at hand, that being, that all media outlets have the ability and likely the will to influence opinion. This is a far deeper question for Australia, and other nations for that matter, to do with the way the media economy interacts with society and politics, and the implications that has for both freedom of expression, and transmission of information.
6. Prominent political donors were described in the report as possible agents of the CCP in Australia, supposedly with the power to influencing party positions, such as, for example, Huang Xiangmo’s withdrawal of a previously promised AUD\$400,000 donation when the Labor party issued a

party statement that did not agree with his ‘pro-Beijing’ position on the South China Sea arbitration. It is acknowledged in various reports (not my words) that *guanxi* is an accepted practice in the Chinese conceptualisation of business. Of course, this is hardly exclusive to Chinese businesspeople either. From the businessperson’s point of view, fostering positive relationships is important. These businessmen make *investments*, and, that’s what they likely see them as, not *donations* — without an alignment of agenda or values. It is also far from evidence that they are government agents. To be sure, political donations and their corrupting potential are important issues to be addressed in our democratic system, but they are hardly exclusive to supposedly China-related persons. There is something seriously wrong if a political party can be ‘bought’ (if they have any conviction in the values they supposedly stand for), whether the ‘buyer’ is Chinese, American, or Australian for that matter. This is not to legitimise the actions of political donors — who can blame them for wanting ‘bang for their buck’, especially when their activities are well within the rules? All too often we see individuals scapegoated instead of dealing with the actual root of the problem. It’s time Australia did something about its democratic shortcomings rather than play victim — it’s well within the power of Parliament, if they have the will to get over the political sideshows that have for too long occupied their attention. If, after all, *anyone* could waltz into an Australian political party and buy their loyalty for a mere \$400,000, there is something far more wrong with how this country is being run than foreign interference.

7. It’s public knowledge that ‘China’ – whether that means its government, business or citizens — is expanding its influence abroad rapidly. In fact, this aim is publicised fairly obviously in terms of its One Belt One Road (OBOR) policy, which it claims aims to strengthen relationships and dependence on

China among the nations that fall upon its planned trail. Australia already relies on China substantially in economic terms. The extent to which our nation allows foreign money, *of any origin, not just China*, to exert influence on our way of life, government, economy and access to information is a legitimate point of concern raised by the China influence discourse, and hopefully, we will see positive debate and reform in light of the attention that discourse has demanded. This question falls into the broader context the aforementioned ‘China Choice’, to do with how Australia negotiates its historical relationship with the US and current economic dependence on China, hopefully to its best advantage, forming what could be said to be 21st century Australia’s most important foreign policy question. Australia should negotiate this relationship in terms of what is best for Australia, and at the same time, instead of taking position as a pawn in a polarising ideological contest, promote the values that the Australian nation would like to see implemented and protected not just at home, but across humanity.

ii. Takes Two to Tango

In the author’s opinion, these ‘China fear’ reports do raise legitimate concerns to do with the way our current democracy functions. There should be serious public debate on these issues. The author of the present thesis does not take issue with the voicing of concern, or constructive debate to do with Australia’s future policy. Indeed, Australia should remain critical of phenomena that do not align with its values — but this does not mean silencing dissenting opinion, and certainly does not mean that an overwhelming voice of alarmism should be allowed to bully nuanced analysis out of existence.

In the media, we are told that China is orchestrating some sort of espionage operation in Australia — dubbed by Fairfax China’s ‘Operation Australia’. The

irony of this is that there is nothing ‘silent’ about China’s so-called ‘invasion’, or indeed its foreign policies in general. As we have seen, it is not difficult to gauge Chinese public or official opinion on a particular issue — this information is so readily available, in fact, that one might very well make a journalistic career out of merely engaging in a provocative dialogue with the *Global Times*. China’s foreign policies and strategies are also stated in fairly obvious terms, such as the aforementioned OBOR framework it has openly promoted for some years now.

Against this backdrop, what Australia needs is certainly not another round of ‘Asian invasion’ rhetoric. Instead, what we need is a better understanding of China today, and detailed, rational assessment of how Australia might best deal with that China. The Australian government has for some time now been trumpeting on about being part of the ‘Asian century’ — it’s time now to live up to those words, and manage the most important regional, if not international relationship of the present century in a productive and nuanced manner that serves Australia’s interests best, if nothing else.

China and its media, too, have a role to play in remedying the deterioration of bilateral relations that has ensued as a result of this war of words. Flaming responses from popular tabloids like the *Global Times* only serve to exacerbate tensions. To be sure, the frustration expressed in such editorials is understandable — but the propagation of emotional, often angry, sentiments of victimisation do little for the bettering of mutual understanding, and instead play into the narrative that China is frail. I have attempted in my own writing to express more nuanced views in various forums. I would hope that my opinions might be viewed in this light, and hope that other authors, both Chinese and Australian, might refrain from inciting further conflict and instead offer constructive comments. This is particularly important in sensitive times.

Despite the critical tone of this thesis in regard to the portrayal of China the Australian media and government policy, the author does believe that Australia has in fact taken several constructive initiatives to remedy the aforementioned shortcomings and cultivate a generation of scholars, businesspeople, policymakers and civilian ambassadors. The Colombo Plan, and the New Colombo Plan are both stellar examples of long-sighted investment in the deepening of understanding and cross-national ties. The author encourages the Australian government to continue its exercise of this variant of ‘soft power’, if it may be so called, to transmit the values Australia would like to see adopted worldwide (not just in China). In addition to this, instead of ostracising Chinese international students, viewing them purely in terms of a financial bottom-line and spitting chips when the Chinese government decides to put ‘political pressure’ on Australia through this large and important demographic, Australia should do just the same, and better integrate these students into Australian society. This demographic can be seen as economic leverage for the Chinese government, but could just as easily be utilised as a powerful tool of influence for Australia. If treated as such, instead of being seen in the light of animosity, Chinese students could easily become international ambassadors for Australian values, enrichen Australian society, and contribute to the healthy progression of bilateral relations.

As Clive Hamilton might put it, though, we’ll have to wait for politicians ‘with balls’.³

¹ ‘Power and influence’, *Four Corners*, 5 June 2017, online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/power-and-influence-promo/8579844>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

² 澳不能再像盲人一样跟从“大国”，环球时报，8 August 2016, online at: <http://w.huanqiu.com/r/MV8wXzkyNzY1MDZfMzcxXzE0NzA1OTE0MjA=>. Last accessed 27 February 2018; see also:

高林看中澳：澳大利亚该独立了？，SBS 广播，24 February 2017, online at:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/mandarin/zh-hans/content/高林看中澳:澳大利亚该独立了?language=zh-hans>. Last accessed 27 February 2018 ;

澳媒“恐华症”为何反复发作, 环球时报, 5 June 2017, online at: <http://m.huanqiu.com/r/MV8wXzEwNzgzMTkzXzI1XzE0OTY2MTg4MjA=>. Last accessed 27 February 2018;

Callum Smith, ‘Fears of Chinese Infiltration Overblown’, *Global Times*, 8 June 2017, online at: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1050738.shtml>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

³ To ‘have the balls’ to do something is a vulgar turn of phrase meaning to have the conviction to carry out a demanding and likely controversial task. Hamilton said that he would have to find a publisher that ‘has the balls’ to publish his book, in light of the supposed threats of litigation he received from ‘Beijing’. See: <https://www.ft.com/content/f98ece24-c82d-11e7-ab18-7a9fb7d6163e>. Last accessed 27 February 2018.

Conclusion

As it stands, Australia's 'China policy' is regrettably one hindered by popular xenophobia, anachronistic remnants of Cold War era hostility, unfortunately restricted by the prevalence of a 'fear and greed' dichotomy, one in which ill-founded assumptions of ulterior motives inform a continued Cold-War-era scepticism, distrust and lack of 'due diligence' on the potential mutual benefits of more balanced ties, and complicated by a dangerous, unconditional allegiance to the US and its interests under the ANZUS agreement — a key interest of which may eventuate in conflict with China, regardless of Australia's direct interests. Hopefully, voices of reason like those of Hugh White, Bob Carr and Kevin Rudd will guide Australia-China relations to build on the economic successes that have been achieved, and a more independent approach to superpower allegiance will prevail over the Sinophobic fear-mongering that plagues discourse and restricts decision-making today.

Both the Chinese and Australian media have important roles to play in shifting the paradigm for dialogue to one of facts-based criticism and praise, constructive debate, and better mutual understanding. Playing arbitrator with information asymmetry, publishing non-factual allegations, and frivolous reactionary op-eds that aim to incite conflict rather than point out error are all major contributing factors in the demise of bilateral relations, and the retardation of rational cognition. The media owes it to their viewership to do better, and in the information age, readers owe it to themselves, and their country, to seek truth to the best of their ability, and to take into consideration the impure motives that pollute their information channels.

For Australia, the rise to prominence of the People's Republic of China has, particularly over the past decade, become perhaps the most pertinent foreign

policy question of the present century. At once, Australia has embraced the economic benefits brought by its relationship with its largest trading partner. But increasingly this is coupled with fear — to an extent, fear of the unknown, fear of the unfamiliar, and the fear of a shift in the global balance of power.

The fear-greed dichotomy was most aptly described in precisely those terms by the former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, and for quite some time, it has been obvious that discourse was headed in the dangerous direction of nationalism, even racism. Over the period examined in the present thesis, it is evident that the Australian media and a handful of ‘key opinion leaders’ have had a profound impact on public opinion, and indeed led politicians to engage and thereby legitimise as policy-guiding information the concerns that have been raised.

To what extent this has been driven by opportunism on the part of would-be public figures of influence, political convenience, or, more worryingly, a legitimate social tendency towards exclusion and profiling, is difficult to say. Most worryingly, in the opinion of the author, has for some time been the toxic effect that the paranoia we have seen on display has on freedom of speech, and the dangerous precedent that endowing ill-founded accusations with the cloak of political correctness sets for rational debate on a range of issues surrounding how Australia positions itself at an important time for international politics.

It is against this backdrop that, over the past two years, the author has in various forums voiced an opinion on incidents related to with Sino-Australian relations, and, for holding what the ABC once solicited as a ‘contrary opinion’, been relegated into Australia’s most recent and most prominent ‘Asian Invasion’

proponent Clive Hamilton's 'fifth column' in the book *Silent Invasion* published in late February 2018.

According to Hamilton, the author and others like him who hold allegedly pro-PRC views could only ever be possibly attributed to some benefit that they are receiving from the Chinese Communist Party, to which he suggests they have some 'deep connection'. Indeed, these people must be a 'dear friend of China' to have the temerity to contemplate negotiating Australia's relationship with that country in any sort of a positive light.

By this irrefutable logic, the present thesis must also be tainted with biases and pay-offs from the Chinese Communist Party to have arrived at the preposterous conclusion that the claims of punters like Hamilton should be subject to at least the same level of scrutiny that they subject 'up-and-coming China scholar(s)' like the author to.

With any luck, the opportunistic attempts mentioned above to capitalise on a temporary information deficiency and nationalistic sentiment will in fact lead to the very opposite — when readers begin to question the soundness of the grand claims that are being made, and the reasonability of the suggested response. To this point, all we have seen is the deterioration of amicable co-operation, the rise of nationalistic rhetoric, and predictably constant bickering between a few 'key opinion leaders'. Hopefully, that bombastic bestseller-to-be will cause the "Chinese influence" brigade to examine more closely the information at hand, and indeed the reliability of the primary sources of this information, and with time, seek comment from other sources to arrive at a more holistic conclusion before undertaking extreme measures. In time, the author hopes, we might see a

more peaceful, balanced and rational bilateral relationship foster as exchange between these two countries moves in a positive direction.

Only time will tell, if this Cold War mentality and the unconstructive paradigm of a Sino-US dichotomy will prevail, or if the people of China and Australia will ‘stand up’ 站起来 against the beholders of power that would prefer they remained in the dark.

Australia owes it to itself, its people, and the world, to do better.

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