

**A GEOSTRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF PACIFIC ISLANDS:  
TAIWANESE DIPLOMATIC RELATION COUNTRIES  
FROM 2001 TO 2017**

By

**Chia-Yi Li**

李佳珩

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

This senior paper was presented

by

Chia-Yi Li  
李佳玲

It was defended on

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

and approved by

Reviewer 1: Daniel Lin, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer 2: YuJane Chen, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: Ren-Her Hsieh, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Chia-Yi Li, B.A.

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## **Abstract**

Geostrategy is a strategy that influences the states' decisions on diplomacy by geographical location. In recent years, China has been vying with Taiwan to compete the Taiwanese diplomatic countries. The targets of China are six Taiwanese diplomatic countries in Oceania. Because Oceania countries are located in important geographic locations, rich in marine resources, and the colonial countries were dominated by the UK and the US, which further affected China's ambition to establish diplomatic relations with them. The purpose of the research is to identify these countries' geostrategies, and what are the trade and investment relations among these countries with Taiwan and China. In addition, this study also analyzes how these countries respond to diplomatic decisions from the perspective of British and American colonization. The researcher also interviewed the Oceania Ambassadors to Taiwan for further discussing the influences of the trade and investment. The findings are the results through analyzing geostrategies and the causes of the trade and investment from the interviews.

**Keywords:** Oceania countries, Taiwan, China, geostrategy, trade, investment

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

From 2001 to 2008, the fifth President of Republic of China (Taiwan) was Chen Shui-Bian, a member of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). During his tenure, he defended his policy of "All Out Diplomacy" and advocated that pluralism is to enhance diplomacy. He emphasized that "China is China, Taiwan is Taiwan" and that he had visited the diplomatic countries as many as 15 times during his term of office. However, there were 9 countries that terminated the diplomatic relationship with Taiwan, but there were 3 countries that resumed the relationships with us. In 2009, Ma Ying-Jeou won presidential election and Kuomintang of China (KMT) became the ruling party. President Ma supported his policy of "Flexible Diplomacy" and accepted 92 consensuses so that only Republic of the Gambia ceased the relationship with Taiwan during Ma's tenure. Party alternation occurred again in 2016 in Taiwan. Tsai Ing-Wen, the DPP presidential candidate won the election and became the first female president. However, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe terminated diplomatic relation with Taiwan on December 21 same year. Furthermore, there were five countries ended their diplomatic allies with Taiwan within two years since Tsai took office. Of course, all these countries established the diplomatic relations with People Republic of China (PRC). PRC promised them that the Beijing government would give numerous financial assistances and help to build public constructions. In addition to the only diplomatic country in Europe, Holy See, there are six countries<sup>1</sup> in East Asia and the Pacific region in which their situations of

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<sup>1</sup> Kiribati cut off the diplomatic relation with Taiwan on September 20, 2019; Solomon Islands discontinued on September 16, 2019. However, these two days were during the research. Further, the

diplomacy with Taiwan were stable from 2016 to 2018. They were the Republic of Kiribati (Kiribati), Republic of Nauru (Nauru), Solomon Islands, Republic of the Marshalls Islands (Marshalls Islands), Republic of Palau (Palau) and Tuvalu. All of them are members of the United Nations.

Diplomacy has a very important role in a country. When two countries have the diplomatic relations, they can promote political and economic interests between each other. It demonstrates that both countries formally agree to each other being independent states with autonomy. It is a bridge as well in international negotiation, cooperation and the solutions of problems. The functions of diplomacy include protecting the citizen of each other, and having more exchanges not only on policies but also people in all aspects.<sup>2</sup> Due to the constant unabated pressure from the Beijing authority, Taiwan is unable to participate in some international organizations and assemblies, or form diplomatic relations with other countries easily. Taiwan is not supported by the countries which have diplomatic relations with China. However, having the diplomatic relation countries is important to Taiwan as they speak for Taiwan's participations in some international occasions, offer each other trade preferences and freedom, exempt or reduce tariffs. For example, WHA is an important issue for Taiwan. We could not participate it, but some diplomatic countries spoke for us and called on other countries to maintain the equality and let us join. Although most of diplomatic countries are developing and less-developed countries, they have abundant natural recourses and a beneficial geographic location. There were some rumors that some Oceania countries would like to cut the relations with

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research range was from 2001 to 2017, so the research still listed them as the diplomatic countries.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Neumayer, "Distance, Power and Ideology: Diplomatic Representation in a World of Nation-States," *Area* 40, no. 2 (2008).

Taiwan. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the influence from Taiwan and China on these countries.

### **Motivation**

In reality within Taiwan, very few Taiwan people know countries with whom Taiwan currently has the diplomatic relations. Very few also have heard these countries, hence, the locations of the Oceania countries are showed in Figure 1. When a country stopped their relations with Taiwan, people always blamed the government for being incompetent. However, there were some situations that could not have been avoided. From March 21st to 28th in 2019, President Tsai departed for Palau, Nauru and the Marshall Islands to start her “Ocean of Democracy” tour. This visit was dedicated to the international cooperation and to allow the world to see Taiwan’s efforts. The researcher is able to understand our friends and realize the influences and situations of Oceania diplomatic countries through geostrategies and compare them with Taiwan and China by this time. Few people studied this topic, so it was a good opportunity to understand these countries and why China is so active in making good relationships with them through geostrategies and economies. The differences between the Chinese Dollar Diplomacy and Taiwanese Technical Mission are worth exploring. The paper will explore how Taiwan and China influence the investments and trade of six Oceania diplomatic countries from geostrategies.



Figure 1: The Map of Oceania Countries<sup>3</sup>  
 Source: Peter Hermes Furian, "Oceania Countries Stock Images and Stock Footage," ed. Oceania political map. (Salzburg-gnigl, Austria: Dreamtime.com)

### Research Purpose

Unlike China’s abundant diplomatic financial resources, Taiwan’s diplomatic financial assistance is limited. We use the technical mission as a bridge for communication of friendships and helps. The agricultural technical missions teach them how to grow crops and fruits and help their residents to harvest enough food and nutrition. We also offer medical assistance to help them decrease the rates of diseases. However, all we have done sometimes still cannot overcome China’s financial temptation. For instance, after April 2009 general election, there were some words

<sup>3</sup> Peter Hermes Furian, "Oceania Countries Stock Images and Stock Footage," ed. Oceania political map. (Salzburg-gnigl, Austria: Dreamtime.com).

Solomon Islands might turn to China. The interactions between these two countries are also quite frequent. The paper would like to explore concept of geostrategy and understand the importance of Taiwan's diplomatic allies in Oceania. Furthermore, this paper would like to analyze the economic relations, such as trade and investment, among Taiwan and Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu and compare the economic relations between China and these six states.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are geostrategic significances of Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu?
2. What are the trade relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China?
3. What are the investments relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China?

### **Contribution**

Taiwanese diplomatic countries are always said to be small and poor, but at the same time Taiwanese people do not know the name and the location of our diplomatic countries. First of all, this research leads the readers know our Oceania diplomatic countries, and their geographical situation. Then, the readers can understand the importance of these countries through the histories, politics and economies. Finally, the paper found out why China recent years is so active to establish the relationships with these countries, and what kind of reasons from China and Taiwan would influence the trade and investments of these countries.

### **Limits**

The geostrategy covers geopolitics, military and economics to fully present its significance. Due to limitations on time and space, this article cannot fully cover the discussion. Meanwhile, the research time and access to materials are limited.

### **Delimits**

Taiwan has total seventeen diplomatic relation countries, and the geostrategy includes many parts. However, this research only focused on the economies of Oceania countries from 2001 to 2017. Not only Taiwan and China, but also Australia, America and Japan have economic aids to Pacific Islands. It shows that these island countries are very much valued by great powers, but this paper just discussed their relationships between Taiwan and China. Some data was difficult to search, some countries' data is not complete. China is also reluctant to release data, resulting in many tabular data being blank.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Geostrategy and Geopolitics

### Geostrategy

According to Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, the definitions of geostrategy are "a branch of geopolitics that deals with strategy", "the combination of geopolitical and strategic factors characterizing a particular geographic region", and "the use by a government of strategy based on geopolitics"<sup>4</sup>. On the whole, geostrategy refers to "a type of foreign policy guided principally by geographical factors as they inform, constrain, or affect political and military planning."<sup>5</sup> At the beginning, "geostrategy" was proposed by Frederick L. Schuman in "*Let Us Learn Our Geopolitics*" in 1942. He emphasized that geostrategy should be national security and international reciprocal cooperation, and he advocated the design of national strategic policies by geographical factors.<sup>6</sup> Geostrategy translated from the German term "Wehrgeopolitik" by a German geostrategist, Karl Haushofer. Haushofer et al. advocated the concept of "Wehrgeopolitik" and advocated a close analysis of the defense structure, military strength, population issues and border situation of countries from a military perspective. From this point of view, "Wehrgeopolitik" was a strategic analysis method that focused on analyzing strategies from a geographic perspective and making policy recommendations.<sup>7</sup> Geostrategy analyzes the importance and chain relationships of each region in the entire geographical

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<sup>4</sup> Noah Webster, "Geostrategy," in *MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY* (MERRIAM-WEBSTER INC.).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Baofu, *The Future of Post-Human War and Peace: A Preface to a New Theory of Aggression and Pacificity* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> 羅慶生, "地緣戰略理論的回顧與前瞻" (淡江大學, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> 王俊評, "潛在的超強：中國崛起的地緣戰略與亞太安全研究" (國立政治大學, 2011).

relationships and not discuss the actual preictal plans. National geostrategies need to be adapted to the changes in the international environment and their own development needs. There are three characteristics of geostrategy: study the impact of the geographical environment on strategy, utilize the geographical relationship between countries to obtain national interests, and use geopolitical relationships to safeguard national interests.<sup>8</sup> Not only past but now, every scholar has their own opinions of geostrategy (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Definition of Each Scholar

Scholars	Definitions
Schuman	National strategies based on geographical factors for national security and international cooperation.
Spykman	A national security plan based on geographic factors.
Brzezinski	Mastery of geopolitical combat.
National Defense University	Studying the science of the relationship between the establishment, operation and exertion of the four major national factors of politics, economy, psychology and military

Sources: 曾祥穎 (2017)。「亞太地緣戰略對我發展之影響」。《陸軍學術雙月刊》，第五十三卷第 552 期，7。<sup>9</sup>

## Geopolitics

“Geopolitics” was first proposed by Rudolf Kjellén, a Swedish political scientist at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was inspired by German geographer, Friedrich Ratzel who published the book *Politische Geographie* (Geopolitical Geography). The term, “geopolitics,” means more generally “the art and practice of using political power over a given territory” and although “traditionally” the term has applied primarily to the impact of geography on politics, “its usage has evolved over the past

<sup>8</sup> 王立. "地緣戰略學簡介(一)." In 王立第二戰研所, February 19, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> 曾祥穎, "亞太地緣戰略對我之影響," 《陸軍學術雙月刊》第五十三卷第 552 期 (2017 年 4 月).

century to encompass a wider connection.”<sup>10</sup> Geopolitics is mainly based on geopolitical and environmental factors, examining how countries are in a better position to gain access to the international power system in accordance with established natural and geographical conditions.<sup>11</sup> Since this paper focused on geostrategy, and the researcher tried to let the readers know what geostrategy and geopolitics are, so this part was not explained too much to avoid blurring the focus.

### **A brief discussion of geostrategy and geopolitics**

Geostrategy and geopolitics are easily confused. Geopolitics is political processes or the analysis of interaction between country and country. Geostrategy is a kind of foreign policy<sup>12</sup>, also a branch of geopolitics. Because “geostrategy” has the word “strategy”, it should be related to strategy, and be concerned with matching means to ends, especially in relation to a country’s resources with its geographical superiority. Peter Baufu thought that the better way to distinguish “geostrategy” from “geopolitics” is the definition given by Zbigniew Brzezinski (1986). Brzezinski wrote “geopolitical reflects the combination of geographic and political factors determining the condition of a state or region and emphasizing the impact of geography on politics; geostrategic merges strategic consideration with geopolitical ones.”<sup>13</sup>

The opinions from the research, geopolitics is a kind of theory and interactions in many parts between country and country. Geostrategy is a branch of geopolitics, and

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<sup>10</sup> Baofu, *The Future of Post-Human War and Peace: A Preface to a New Theory of Aggression and Pacificity*.

<sup>11</sup> 許菁芸 and 宋鎮照, "地緣政治與國家主權的關係研究－以車臣和科索沃獨立省思臺海兩岸問題," [An Analysis on the Relations between Geopolitics and State Sovereignty-Comparative Case Studies on Chechnya, Kosovo and Taiwan.] *政治學報*, no. 56 (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Krishnendra Meena, "Munesh Chandra Asked: What Is the Difference between Geo-Politics and Geo-Strategy?," Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

<sup>13</sup> Baofu, *The Future of Post-Human War and Peace: A Preface to a New Theory of Aggression and Pacificity*.

it is a kind of strategy that can determine the strategy of other countries through the advantage of geographical conditions.

### **The application of geostrategy**

The geostrategy concept was applied to study the geographic importance of any specific country. A research made by Mark Smith reminded us that Australia, an island as well as a continent, has its contradictory realities: it is located East (Asia Pacific) but aligned with the West; it searches for economic cooperation with close geographic neighbors but security protections from distant friends, such as United States.<sup>14</sup> Smith found that there were three main challenges for Australia based on the implications of geostrategic environment and the situation of some fragile states in Pacific ocean is one of the three.<sup>15</sup> A paper written by Yu Chang Sen argued that the Pacific islands used to play an marginal role in China's strategic thinking due to far afield geographically.<sup>16</sup> However, China's rise and changing architecture of international politics in Asia-Pacific is giving the Pacific islands a significant importance of geostrategy. Yu pointed out that the location of Pacific islands is in the sea route between China and South America, Antarctica, Australia and New Zealand so that China needs strategic cooperation with Pacific islands to safeguard its maritime security, especially for its trade and shipment across the sea lanes.<sup>17</sup> Lai, a Taiwan scholar, thought that the South Pacific had no geostrategic importance in the

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Smith, "Navigating uncertain waters: the three most significant geo-strategic challenges confronting Australian within the next decade," *The Regionalist*, no.2 (2016), p1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p2. The three challenges are (1) China's re-emergence as a major power and her strategic relationship with other nations in the Indo-Pacific; (2) the changing power relationship between Australia and Indonesia since their strategic positions reverse; (3) the fragile states in Pacific ocean.

<sup>16</sup> Yu Chang Sen, "The Pacific Islands in Chinese geo-strategic thinking," paper presented to the conference on China and the Pacific: the View from Oceania. National University of Samoa, Apia, Samoa, (2015). P.1

<sup>17</sup> There are other significant importance for geostrategic cooperation with Pacific Islands states: such as undermining the US "second island chain" blockade; keeping fighting the diplomatic tug of war between Taiwan and China to win the diplomatic relation with Pacific Islands states; the power competition between China and US in the Pacific islands under the backdrop of China's rise and US's "pivot to Asia." Ibid, pp.1—2.

Cold War era because there was no violent strategic competition; hence the South Pacific was a so-called strategic undeveloped land and it lacked international attention. However, South Pacific's geographical location will directly affect the sea power strategy of the United States, Japan and Australia. However, Lai also pointed out that the end of Cold War and China's rise caused the change of geostrategic location of South Pacific. For China, it could achieve its the desired political, economic, and military interest result with relatively cheap capital in South Pacific, and once it encountered insurmountable resistance, the loss is not too great.<sup>18</sup>

Lai emphasized the importance of the South Pacific region to Taiwan which includes diplomatic relations, the impact on US strategic dominance, and the impact on Taiwan's East Asian strategic situation. Since Taiwan's security situation in East Asia is closely related to the US's leading capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, if the US strategic projection capability was affected, Taiwan's situation will be even more difficult. Therefore, for Taiwan, building and maintaining diplomatic relations with the South Pacific can indirectly reduce China's influence in South Pacific, thereby limiting China's possible use of the South Pacific to weaken US strategic projection capabilities, and thus will not lead to the negative impact of East Asian and Taiwan's strategic situation. In this sense, the relationship between Taiwan and the South Pacific has a high degree of strategic security implications.<sup>19</sup>

### **Official Development Assistance (ODA)**

Official Development Assistance (ODA) started from more than 20 new countries such as the United States, Japan, France, and Germany. According to the

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<sup>18</sup> 賴怡忠, "台灣的南太平洋戰略," *台灣國際研究季刊* 第3卷, 第3期 (2007/秋季號). p.145-146

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp.147,150

Organisation for Economy Co-operation and Development (OECD), the definition of ODA is defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally, from donor to recipient, or channeled through a multilateral development agency such as the United Nations or the World Bank. Aid includes grants, "soft" loans (where the grant element is at least 25% of the total) and the provision of technical assistance. A long-standing United Nations target is that developed countries should devote 0.7% of their gross national income to ODA.<sup>20</sup> To put it simply, the main purpose of ODA is to support developing countries, improve their economic development and people's living standards, and provide humanitarian relief through donations (at least 25% of funds for direct distribution, no repayment), investment, and borrowing.<sup>21</sup> ODA is a traditional form of aid and a concept of aid endorsed by Western industrial countries. ODA encourage more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as investment. The direct channel is good quality if infrastructure, further leads more investment; the indirect channel is human resource, further leads promotion of consumption and market size.<sup>22</sup> It is still the main operating mode of the OECD.

Aid can be divided into business motivation, humanitarian motivation, compensation motivation, and common interests:<sup>23</sup>

- Business motivation: using foreign aid as a means to open up overseas markets and business opportunities, taking advantage of local land materials and low-cost

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<sup>20</sup> Organisation for Economy Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Net Oda," Organisation for Economy Co-operation and Development (OECD), <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> 葛傳宇, "國際對外援助新趨勢與台灣模式," *育達研究叢刊*, no. 4 (2003).

<sup>22</sup> Lau Wee Yeap, "Impact of Oda/Foreign Investment on the Development of Beneficiaries: The Tales of Two Countries," in *International Conference of Southeast Asia Study* (Kaohsiung, Taiwan 2019).

<sup>23</sup> 葛傳宇, "國際對外援助新趨勢與台灣模式." P.130-131

labor in recipient countries to create commercial interests in aiding countries.

- Humanitarian motivation: Expressing concern and sympathy for countries that are poor or suffering from natural and man-made disasters and using aid to reflect higher moral sentiments.
- Compensation motivation: in order to circumvent the legal liability for compensation in international law, using aid as pretext for offsetting the historical faults.
- Common interests: Based on joint efforts to combat transnational organized crime, prevent economic illegal immigration, and counterterrorism, the aiding countries provide ODA to recipient countries in exchange for their cooperation commitments or specific actions.

### **Taiwanese Aid Model**

Lately Taiwan's diplomatic countries were all developing countries. They did not have enough food and equipment, and Taiwan gradually did not have enough money to do financial support. Taiwan changed the methods, called "technical mission" to continue our sincere support.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning, we focused in agriculture, and then the project was gradually expanded to include industry, fishery, crafts, medical care, water conservancy, and animal husbandry. Technical mission has continued until now and is still the most important aid method from Taiwan. In terms of financial assistance, Taiwan can provide very limited, so it will conduct a strict review of each application. The researcher thought that Taiwanese assistance is not just that we need other countries to support us in the international arena, but also include business motives to support each other's needs. Technical mission is indeed

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<sup>24</sup> 楊心妮, "台灣對外經貿及技術援助政策之研究—以中南美洲為例" (政治大學, 2011).

implemented in our every diplomatic relation country, including the Pacific island countries.

### **Chinese Aid Model**

In 1982, the Chinese government carried out a series of institutional reforms that transformed aid from the political interest to the interests covered political and economic benefits. The economic benefit gradually thus became the biggest consideration in aid for China government. The traditional aid model usually involved technology transfer, human resource training, etc., which would increase the added value of the aid program and the country's development capacity. However, China only focuses on construction services, transportation foundation, energy construction and there were no manpower training or technology transfer related assistances.<sup>25</sup> Strictly speaking, Chinese aid was not ODA since only 21% of Chinese aid was traditional aid, and the rest is commercial loans. Hence, the recipient countries must repay their principal and interest to Beijing, and China will obtain considerable economic returns. Beijing often chose countries that were conducive to promoting China's own exports, or markets where loans and interest can be quickly recovered through the multilateral institutions such as Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).<sup>26</sup>

Recent years, in order to secure this procurement, newly industrialised countries were increasing their foreign aids to many of the poor but natural resource-rich countries in Africa in order to secure their procurement of resources for production. China established its diplomatic relationships with many African countries with its increased foreign aids recently. The Chinese economy has grown rapidly during the

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<sup>25</sup> 林洛宥, "傳統援助與中國援助之比較—以斯里蘭卡為例" (中興大學, 2019).

<sup>26</sup> 杉麗雅, "研究：北京給了其它國家多少援助資金？," *BBC* 2017.

last decades and it became an oil-importing country in 1993. As demand for energy and natural resources in China has explosively increased, the level of oil-importing dependence has also increased. As a result, China seems to be vulnerable in procurement of energy. In response to this, China has been endeavoring to procure natural resources as a survival strategy.<sup>27</sup> However, the problem of corruption has existed with their governments for long time. Chinese aid just only encourages a bad atmosphere and has not made these countries democratized.<sup>28</sup> When the construction was carried out, China also employed Chinese workers, and the contractors were also Chinese state-owned enterprises. This obviously did not help local ability and economic situation of the recipient countries.<sup>29</sup> The researcher thought that the operation of China foreign aid to African countries could be applied to Pacific island countries. China was also eager for the natural resources of those Pacific island countries and wants to get it through diplomatically methods, but during the process of obtaining these resources, Chinese workers will be dispatched, making the economy of these countries unable to grow. Based on Chinese loan model, it will only make more and more debts in these countries. Sri Lanka is the most typical example, because the Sri Lankan government was unable to repay large debts and could only hand over 80% stocks of the largest port of Hambantota to China, leased by China for the term of 99 years.

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<sup>27</sup> Jihwan Park, "Korean Oda Strategies for Resource Diplomacy Towards Africa: Learn the 'Angola Mode' of Chinese Oda Strategies," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 28, no. 1 (2014).

<sup>28</sup> 張婷, "中共對外巨額援助 有你不知道的祕密 (上)," *大紀元* 2017.

<sup>29</sup> 張婷, "中共對外巨額援助 有你不知道的祕密 (下)," *大紀元* 2017.

# METHODOLOGY

## Research Processes

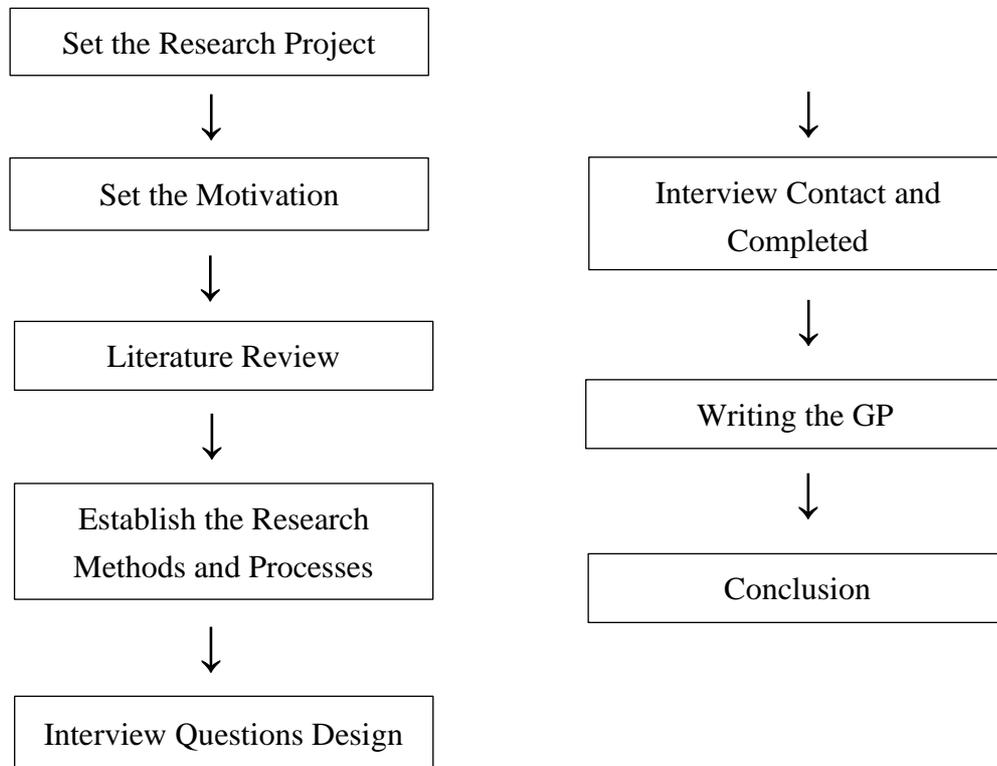


Figure 2: Procedure of Research Methodology

This research focused on the influences from Taiwan and China to the investments and trades of Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. First of all, the researcher set up the research project, motivation and research purpose by reading diverse information, and through reading some related articles and papers to establish the research questions, methods and interview questions. Second, the researcher visited and interviewed the Ambassadors of Kiribati, Palau and Solomon Islands about the trade and investment from 2001 to 2017 on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup>. The Ambassadors of Marshall Islands and Nauru did not accept the interviews. The Ambassador of Tuvalu was back to Tuvalu for the

official business on August and did not reply the mail, so there is no interview record of Tuvalu. The Ambassadors all were foreigners, so the conversations were English throughout. Because the interviewees had scruples, there are no transcripts in the paper. The unit of data of Tables is thousands of dollars, and all data rounds off to the thousand. The research captured the conversations to reflect the data analysis. Finally, the researcher analyzed the data and the content of interview to make the conclusion and complete the whole paper.

## Research Design

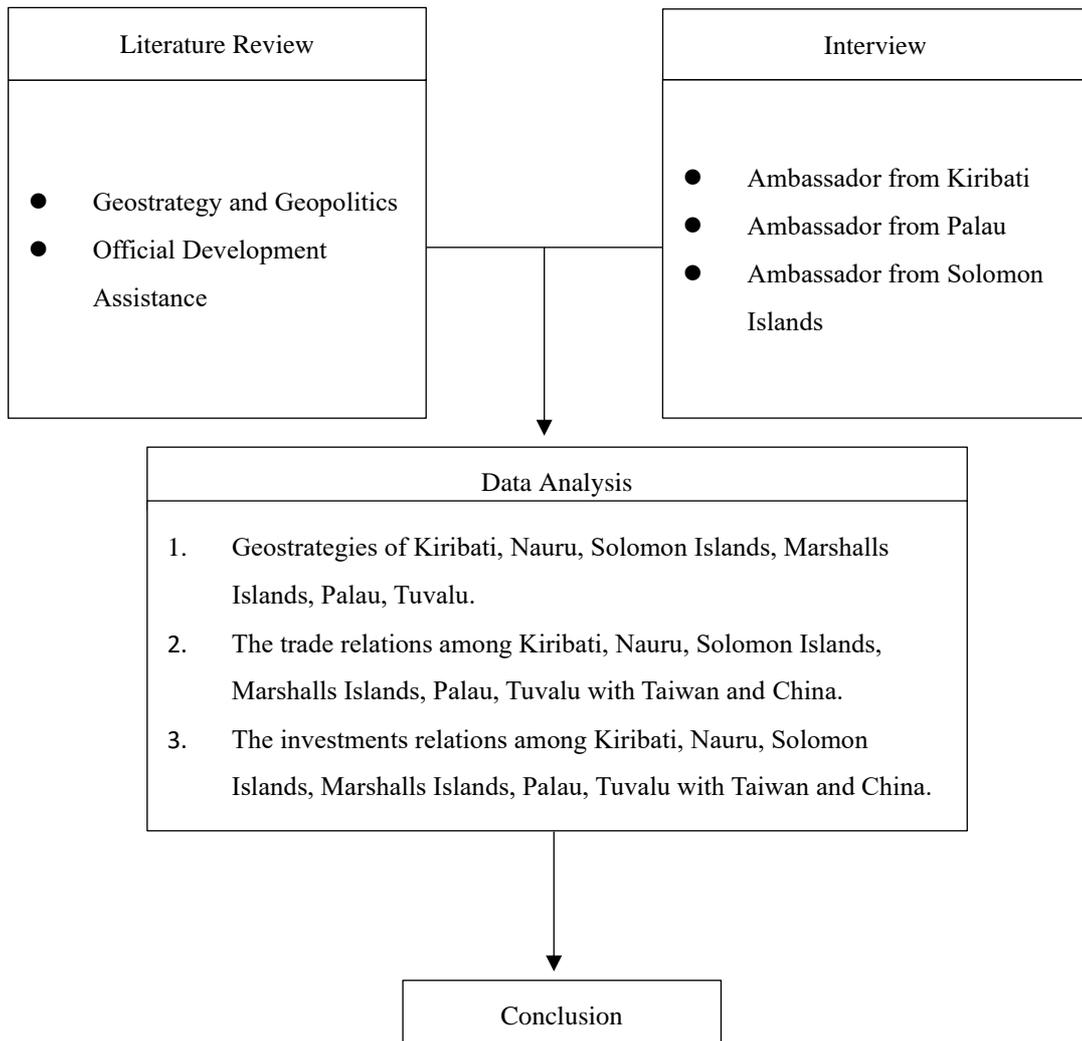


Figure 3: The Formulation of Research Design

The research would be designed by literature review and interviews. Literature review provided the definition of geostrategy, how past scholars illustrated the geostrategy, and the differences between geostrategy and geopolitic. The researcher would explore each country's history, connect the geostrategy by how each country's past colonial status affects their political stance. The analysis of interview provided the assistances of the data from the Ambassadors. Through these processes, three results, the conclusion included the findings and research results would derive out.

### Source of Data

Due to the few literatures for geostrategies, investments and trades of these countries, most of information the researcher used were the histories, colonial status and interview to connect the relationships between them. The research interviewed the Ambassador of Kiribati, Tessie Eria Lambourne; the Ambassador of Palau, Dilmei Louisa Olkeriil; the Ambassador of Solomon Islands, Joseph Pius Walwanisia. The Taiwanese export and import data were from Ministry of Finance, R.O.C; Chinese were from National Bureau of Statistics and China National Knowledge Infrastructure. The findings would be conducted through the above narrative.

Table 2: Information of Interviewees

Name	Identity	Date	Place
Tessie Eria Lambourne	Ambassador	2019/08/20	Embassy of Kiribati
Dilmei Louisa Olkeriil	Ambassador	2019/08/21	Embassy of Palau
Joseph Pius Walwanisia	Ambassador	2019/08/21	Embassy of Solomon Islands

Source: Edited by the Author

## DATA ANALYSIS

Overall, the research would be compiled into three consequences: 1) the geostrategies of Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu.; 2) the trade relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China.; 3) the investments relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China. The details of those findings are as follows:

### Geostrategies of These Six Countries

In terms of geographical relations, since the South Pacific island countries are located between Eurasia and the American continent, they are the center of the Pacific Ocean. The geopolitical significance of the South Pacific has the importance of the strategic environments of sea power rather than the territorial land rights. Because the South Pacific island countries are located at the center of the Pacific Ocean, they are the necessary places for the America and East Asian air and sea transportation, with a certain degree of strategic significance.<sup>30</sup> These countries are made up of hundred, even thousand islands, and they almost surrounded by the sea, so the advantages of rich species of fisheries, coupled with the wide range of territorial waters, make them very important for the great powers. Also, these island countries have not been developed and polluted too much, so beautiful scenery and seascapes are the preferred holiday destinations for many people. Selling fishing licenses, exporting copra crops and fish products, tourism service industry are the sources of these countries' income.

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<sup>30</sup> 賴怡忠, "台灣的南太平洋戰略." p.138

Palau is on the boundaries of the second islands chain. At present, the focus of the US strategic deployment in Asia, or the main target of its besieging is China, and the first and second islands chains are the most outposts of US military defense. Only the "CCP's Path of Disturbance of Taiwan" and the National Defense Report released by the Taiwanese government in the end of 2017 that have confessed that the CCP's naval and air force long-range operations and force projection capabilities can already dominate the air superiority of the west of the first island chain. Therefore, former National Defense Commission, Lin Yu-Fang pointed out, "the status of the first island chain will gradually weaken, and the United States now accelerates the operation of the second island chain including Guam."<sup>31</sup> Nowadays, China becomes stronger and more powerful in many terms, and some countries which originally were Taiwanese diplomatic countries turned the relationship to it. The influences of China and Taiwan on these six countries include policy decisions, diplomatic trends, trade, etc. In addition to geostrategy, the influences must trace past their own histories and colonial histories. These countries had been colonized by the United Kingdom (the UK) and the United States (the USA), so the UK and the USA have the certain impacts on these six countries in nowadays. Sometimes the decisions are made by the UK and the USA are important and made these Oceania countries have the direction to make choices. The historical review of these six Oceania countries:

### **Republic of Kiribati**

The Republic of Kiribati, known as Kiribati, is an island country located the Pacific Ocean. The capital is Tarawa. According to legends and prehistoric studies, the ancestors of the Kiribati migrated from Southeast Asia to settle here. In the 14th or 15th century, there were immigrants from Samoa. Spanish explorers observed these

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<sup>31</sup> 賈忠偉, "賈忠偉觀點：重說「島鏈戰略」," *風傳媒 The Storm Media* 2018.

islands in the 16th century. In 1788, a British captain, Thomas Gilbert visited here. He gave this island first European name, the Gilbert Islands. The Europeans discovered the Western Pacific in the 18th century. They brought Chinese and other Pacific Islands' residents into contact with these islands. These migrants had left many traces of physical and cultural heritage in the Gilbert Islands. The language spoken by the Kiribati belongs to the Austronesian ( 澳斯楚尼西亞 ) language family that is distributed from Southeast Asia to most Pacific islands.

On May 27 and June 17, 1892, Kiribati became parts of the British Protected Territory, and the 16 islands of the Gilbert Islands were declared protected by Colonel E. H. M Davis of the Royal Navy's H.M.S. Royalist battleship. Banaba was incorporated into the Protected Territory in 1900. In 1916, the Protected Territory became the Gilbert and Ellis Islands (Ellice Islands now is Tuvalu). In 1974, the Ellice Islands held a referendum, and the overwhelming majority of voters supported the separation of the Gilbert Islands. Thus, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1975, the Gilbert and Ellis Islands were officially separated. The Gilbert Islands reached internal autonomy in two stages and finally became the fully independent Republic of Kiribati on July 12, 1979. The Tarawa Atoll, the Butaririt Atoll and other islands of the Gilbert Islands were occupied by Japan during the World War II. One of the bloodiest battles in the history of the US Marine Corps occurred in Tarawa. The Marines landed in November 1943, and the Battle of Tarawa took place in Betio, the former capital of Kiribati in the Tarawa Atoll. Kiribati is divided into three major islands, Gilbert Islands, Line Islands, Phoenix Islands. There are 32 atolls and a coral island scattered over the equator at 3800 square kilometers. The sea area has the world's largest marine protected area.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Kiribati national official, "吉里巴斯共和國," <http://www.kiribati.org.tw/history.htm>.

Until 1979, the phosphate rock (磷酸鹽) was over-exploited in Banaba, then Kiribati's economy heavily depended on the exports of then mineral. Nowadays, because of the abundance of marine resources, the government's capital comes from the exports of fish stocks and the licensing fees of foreign fishing vessels, including special tuna fishing agreements with the European Union. Commercial seaweed farming has become an important economic activity. Some countries and transnational space agencies have built or proposed building facilities on or around the island. These projects have brought capital, extra employment opportunities and infrastructure improvements; however, Kiribati still has to rely on foreign aids to get most of its capital and development spending. Most of the people living on the offshore islands are self-sufficient farmers who receive very little income from copra, fishing or handicrafts.<sup>33</sup>

In 1980, Kiribati had the diplomatic relation with China. In 1997, China established a satellite tracking station in the Tarawa Atoll. This is China's first permanent facility in the South Pacific, which gives China a foothold in the South Pacific. In 2003, the ascension of Shenzhou V played an important role. At the same time, the former president, Anote Tong, believed that Kiribati should establish friendship with the world, so he decided to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan on November 7, 2003. China could not accept this decision, so they ended the relation with Kiribati and evacuated the satellite tracking station. This satellite base had always been considered not a pure satellite monitoring base, but also a secret mission to monitor US missile testing in Marshall Islands. The United States did not want to be monitored by China, because it would affect the US National Missile Defense

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<sup>33</sup> Sophie Foster and Barrie K. Macdonald, "Kiribati," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2019).

Program. When Anote Tong was running for the presidency, he said that the Chinese satellite station was doing spying work. Perhaps because of the intervention of the United States, Taiwan could successfully establish diplomatic relations with Kiribati.

“Our location is very strategic, for numbers of reasons, first of all, geographically, we’re custodians of largest ocean in the world, and one we remaining help tuna stocks, that the world also relies on, and maybe other things like deep sea mining now as lots of. Maybe there is the oil in the seabed, lots of unknown and I think there are a lot of people are interested in Pacific Ocean, and to see what’s there.

Sometimes it within the pockets of my exclusive economic zone, so you can’t into without get in across my boundary, my country, my territory. So, it’s very important. And maybe most of the world hasn’t realize that but very soon and have a friend and now with the kind of balancing of Chinese influences in our region. We are very important at this time. So now we become important, everybody is “the Pacific”, America “Indo-Pacific”, “Pacific region”, “Indo-Pacific strategy”, we are all in these, so we are going to become the core, the main interest, region of interest by the world.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MS. Tessie Eria Lambourne)

## **Tuvalu**

Continue the description of Kiribati, Tuvalu was originally part of it. In 1975, Gilbert Island and Ellice Island officially separated. Ellis Islands was independent and changed the name to Tuvalu. Three years later, it became independent after the United Kingdom granted the permission. This country is composed of nine coral islands. The capital is Funafuti. As the sea level rising, Tuvalu will soon be overwhelmed.

Tuvalu has almost no natural resources, and its main income comes from foreign aid. Its main industries are fishery and tourism. Although seafood is abundant, the technology is insufficient. It relies on cooperation with foreign fisheries and sells fishing licenses as an important source of income. Some incomes are from exporting copra and selling stamps. Most residents are self-sufficient farmers and receive remittances from overseas working relatives.<sup>34</sup> Taiwan and Tuvalu established the diplomatic relation on September 19, 1979. This relation is stable.

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<sup>34</sup> Barrie K. Macdonald, "Tuvalu," *ibid.*

## **Republic of The Marshall Island**

Republic of The Marshall Islands, known as Marshall Islands, is one of Freely Associated States of the US. The capital, Majuro, is the center of the Pacific Ocean. Marshall Islands are located in the North Pacific Ocean and consists of some of the most Eastern islands of Micronesia. Marshall Islands are composed of more than 1200 islands and consists of two columns of roughly 24 atolls. Around 2000 BC, Micronesians settled in the Marshall Islands, and they were the native people. The most populous atolls are Majuro and Kwajalein, which offers employments at the U.S. missile testing range, and there are also almost three-fourths of the country's total population. The rest of the population lives in traditional villages of the offshore islands which far away from these two centers. The Europeans discovered the Marshall Islands in the 1920s, and the Spanish explorer Álvaro Saavedra saw the atoll at sea in August 1529. Later, other Spanish and British explorers also discovered the island. The name of the Marshall Islands was derived from the British explorer, John Marshall in 1788. In 1874, the Marshall Islands became part of the West Indies. These islands were sold to Germany in 1884 and became part of the German New Guinea in 1885. Marshall Islands were occupied by Japan in World War I and then by the United States in World War II. After the World War II, the United States administered it as part of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under jurisdiction from 1947 to 1986. In 1979, Marshall Islands achieved self-government and obtained the independent sovereignty.<sup>35</sup>

On October 20, 1986, Marshall Islands signed the Compact of Free Association with the United States. Now, the relationship between Marshall Islands and the United States is very close. Due to the lack of natural resources on the island, the

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<sup>35</sup> Robert C. Kiste, "Marshall Islands,"*ibid.*

economy depends on the services sector, some fisheries and agriculture. The United States provides it not only national defense, political, and economic assistance, but also military.<sup>36</sup> In 1979, it was the first time Taiwan and Marshall Islands established the diplomatic relationship; however, 12 years later, November 16, 1990, in order to become the member of United Nations, Marshall Islands turned to be China's diplomatic country. On November 20, 1998, Marshall Islands turned to establish the relation with Taiwan again. On December 11 of the same year, the 8-year relation between Marshall Islands and China was announced ending.

### **Republic of Nauru**

Republic of Nauru know as Nauru, Nauru does not have the official capital, but the government offices are located district of Yaren. Nauru is the member of Commonwealth of Nations. The native people lived in Nauru were Micronesians and Polynesians. Nauru consists of a raised coral island. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, European arrived this country. At the same time, the society of this country consisted of 12 matrilineal kinship groups and each group had a chief. In 1798, an English sailing vessel was sighted the island, but native people had the extensive contact with European until 1980s. Because the whaling industry penetrated Eastern Micronesia, Nauru became the port of call for the vessels, and people could look for the food and water. Shortly thereafter, a small number of European visitors settled on this island. However, they brought the alcohol, guns and diseases. The escalation of the inland war between the competitive regions became particularly intense in the 1880s. German government was encouraged at the end of 1888 to incorporated Nauru in its Marshall Islands protected area. Soon, these armed wars were end.

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<sup>36</sup> 羅元祺, "斷交啟示錄 (亞太篇): 中國逐步深入「太平洋反共防線」," *The News Lens* 2018.

In 1906, the Pacific phosphate which British concerned about, British negotiated with the German government began to mine the Nauru's phosphate deposit and operated next year. With the outbreak of the World War I, a small Australian army occupied Nauru and withdrew most German nationals. In 1920, Nauru became an authorized territory within the framework of the League of Nations. Australia, the UK and New Zealand were designated as responsible authorities, but in practice the government was still in the hands of Australia. The phosphate industry was taken over by the newly established British Phosphate Board, a joint enterprise between Australia, the UK and New Zealand. A series of developments in the early 1960s led to self-governments, and finally achieved the political independence and the ownership of phosphate industry. In October 1967, an agreement was reached to grant independence to Nauru. Nauru was the richest state before because it is a volcanic island. The island was rich in phosphate mines. Four-fifths of the land of Nauru was a phosphate rock deposit. These phosphates can be used as the basic raw material for fertilizers. Nauru maintains national revenues by mining and exporting phosphate rock of the most abundant phosphate and its best quality in the world from 1970s to 1980s. However, after 20 years, the excessive digging of phosphate caused the current society of Nauru is biased towards poverty. As the phosphate market faltered and costs increased, national accounts began to decrease. Nowadays, Nauru relies heavily on foreign aid and debt, and their daily necessities are all dependent on imports.<sup>37</sup>

When Nauru was just independent, it got the economic assistances from Taiwan and China at the same time. Nauru also supported some small countries who wanted to be independent to get the assistances from the power countries. It is protected by

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<sup>37</sup> Robert C. Kiste and Sophie Foster, "Nauru," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2019).

Australia in defense and justice. Taiwan and Nauru have two times diplomatic relations. The first time was on May 24, 1980. However, because of the economic short, Nauru decided to turn to establish the relation with China in 2002. The President of Nauru at that time was René Harris, on the grounds of going to Hong Kong for vacation, he established diplomatic relations with China without permission from the congress. China promised to give Nauru \$130 million US Dollars for economic aid, \$60 million US Dollars for grants, and solve the US General Electric Company \$77 million US Dollars for liabilities. But China could not fulfill the promises, so Nauru and Taiwan resumed the diplomatic relations on May 24, 2005.

### **Republic of Palau**

Republic of Palau known as Palau, is famous for tourism. It is located on the Second Island Chain. It is one of Freely Associated States of the US. It consists of 340 coral islands and volcanic islands. The capital is Ngerulmud. According to the history, the native people were the immigrants from Philippines. The islands were discovered in 16<sup>th</sup> century by European. It was ruled by Spanish and Germany. After World War I, it was occupied by the Japanese Imperial Navy. During the World War II, it was a part of battlefield. After the war, it became Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. According to the Compact of Free Association, it officially became a sovereign state on October 1, 1994. Due to Palau signed the Compact of Free Association with the US, their defense, finance, and internal affairs are dominated by the United States. Although there are bans on chemical and nuclear weapons in the territory, they are not fully enforced because the US military has the right to dispatch nuclear warships and military aircraft on its own.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Donald Raymond Shuster and Sophie Foster, "Palau," *ibid.*

As we know, everyone's first association of ideas of Palau are tourism and vocation. The tourism industry is one of the main incomes, the data from 2001 to 2017 was also rising year by year. Other main incomes come from subsistence agriculture and exports fisheries, coconut oil, copra and handicrafts.<sup>39</sup> The diplomatic relation between Taiwan and Palau began on December 29, 1999. We have a stable relation. In 2018, the Beijing government banned Chinese travel groups from going to this island country in order to force Palau to terminate the diplomatic relation with Taiwan. Although there was some harm to the tourism-oriented shackles, the President, Tommy Remengesau Jr. said "ideals, values and principles such as freedom" give Palau "more in common with Taiwan," during the interview of Nikkei Asian Review.<sup>40</sup> He thought that because of the value ideals of liberal democracy, we are closer to each other and he insists this diplomatic relationship.

“The location of Palau is struck physically important to us and you know because it closes to the Asia, and intern of security, we are very important. Because of the resources in Palau interns of the ocean, we are also very important in terms of investment, tourist industry for instance.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MS. Dilmei Louisa Olkeriil)

## **Solomon Island**

Solomon Islands consist of a double chain of volcanic islands and coral atolls in Melanesia. Melanesians from New Guinea were considered to be the first to settle in the Solomon Islands. Álvaro de Mendaña de Neira, a Spanish explorer who first arrived this island. The unreasonable rumor led people considerate that he had not only found the gold there but also had discovered in the Bible that King Solomon had obtained gold coins for his temple in Jerusalem. Because the rumor, this island was

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<sup>39</sup> 經濟部投資業務處, 帛琉共和國投資環境簡介, (經濟部全球台商服務網, 2019), <https://twbusiness.nat.gov.tw/countryPage.do?id=368738323&country=PW>. P.3-4

<sup>40</sup> TAKAYUKI TANAKA, "Taiwan Relations Unchanged Despite Chinese Pressure: Palau President," *NIKKEI ASIAN REVIEW* MAY 18, 2018

named Solomon Islands. However, nobody could not confirm the authenticity of this report. It was not until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that Solomon Islands were accurately drawn after further discovery by French and British navigators. After the British settled in Sydney in 1788, naval and commercial shipping began to pass more and more through the waters of Solomon Islands. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these islands were being exploited to work in Fiji, other islands and Queensland. In 1893, in order to prevent the threat of annexation in France, the UK announced that the name of Solomon Islands became British Solomon Islands Protectorate. The traditional colonial rule began in 1896. Japanese occupied Solomon Islands in the World War II in 1942, but the next year, the United States repelled the Japanese in the Battle of Guadalcanal. After the war, people had the political consciousness and some movements. In 1975, the country officially changed to Solomon Islands. On July 7, 1987, it was successful in independence.<sup>41</sup>

Because of the abundant and diverse natural resources, the economy of Solomon Islands is dominated by agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mines. The industry of forestry is the largest part of the incomes. It is 60 percent of the total revenue. Agriculture productions are copra, coconut oil, cocoa, palm oil and palm kernel oil. They export these goods and a large amount of fish to other countries for incomes as well. The islands have numerous of bauxite (鋁土礦) on Rennell Island and phosphates on Bellona, and some gold has been extracted on Guadalcanal. Nevertheless, in April 2014, floods occurred in the country, causing serious damage to mining equipment. The mine area had been returned to the local community

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<sup>41</sup> Sophie Foster and Hugh Michael Laracy, "Solomon Islands," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2019).

committee for self-management and had been suspended indefinitely. There were many foreign companies that have disputes over the mining of minerals.<sup>42</sup>

Taiwan and Solomon Islands established the diplomatic relation on March 24, 1983. Taiwan remained on good terms with Solomon Islands when the diplomatic relation began. We also provide the help of Technical Mission. However, after the Prime Minister election of 2019, the Prime Minister, Manasseh Sogavare, won the election, there is some rumor that Solomon Islands intends to terminate the relation with Taiwan, and turn to establish the relation with China. According to the interview of the Ambassador, actually, there are different voices in the Solomon Islands National Parliament, some politicians support Taiwan, and some support China, but he thought this relation with us should be continued. On September 9, Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of the Solomon Islands, Jermiah Manele, and his wife visited the President Tasi at the Office. It seems to be affirmation of this relationship, but it is a secret as well.

“For now, because these countries have abundant natural resources and the China and now, they really need these resources, so if you if they can solar and maybe they will pay much cheaper like trade or trooper tax. Because if they want to have trade with some South America, maybe they will through these countries.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MR. Joseph Pius Waleania)

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<sup>42</sup>經濟部投資業務處, 索羅門群島投資環境簡介, (經濟部全球台商服務網, 2019), <https://twbusiness.nat.gov.tw/countryPage.do?country=SB>. P.10

## **The Trade Relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China**

The Pacific islands states have less population and small lands. Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are highly disadvantage in development. All of these six islands states rely on imports in all aspects of life. However, the data of the imports and exports between China, Taiwan and these countries had huge and significant differences. (See Table 3 and Table 4) The researcher will discuss the exports and imports relation first, then elaborate the reasons resulted in the trade differences, such as the order of establishment of diplomatic relationships, poor economy, and colonial consequence.

### **Exports and Import**

Though reading many literatures, the basic understanding of these Pacific islands states is that not all of them have abundant natural resources and prosperous commercial development. In addition, the soil-poor ridges lead to very limited production of crops so that they highly depend on imports goods. Oceania countries mainly exported the crude wood, mineral and fish products, for example, Solomon Islands is rich in timber and minerals. Logs are shipped to many countries as high-quality furniture. Australia, Japan, Indonesia and China are vying for mining rights, but Solomon Islands' environmental awareness has risen, and it has begun to increase mining resistance.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. P.7-10

Table 3: The Trade between China and Pacific Islands

Unit: Thousands of US Dollars

	Kiribati		Marshall Islands		Nauru		Palau		Solomon Islands		Tuvalu	
	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export
2001	500	-	1,820	-	390	-	1,630	-	1,020	5,940	-	-
2002	490	-	23,690	10	420	-	290	-	1,070	18,220	-	-
2003	891	-	100,206	60	50	-	189	-	2,116	32,640	67	70
2004	873	-	104,577	-	99	-	433	-	3,320	57,950	2,244	2,240
2005	1,410	20	280,970	-	30	-	680	-	5,080	57,950	6,350	6,350
2006	1,181	-	457,176	200	-	-	686	-	5,012	124,860	10,882	10,880
2007	16,688	-	517,217	40	40	-	743	-	10,179	124,860	6,638	6,640
2008	2,462	-	456,962	-	-	-	3,057	-	11,902	124,860	46,251	46,250
2009	3,937	-	1,354,257	11,870	20	-	1,304	60	16,137	178,110	6,058	6,060
2010	11,386	10	1,946,029	5,240	22	-	1,965	30	28,414	287,050	8,417	8,420
2011	13,076	90	2,190,067	16,540	185	-	1,192	10	30,676	348,810	14,939	14,940
2012	33,983	170	1,823,200	23,380	972	50	1,640	30	36,681	377,700	143,449	143,450
2013	18,657	460	1,422,454	77,750	1,075	40	3,186	10	368,002	404,520	7,534	7,530
2014	20,620	2,900	1,236,920	43,330	2,750	10	10,460	60	49,440	473,830	4,640	4,640
2015	42,460	4,010	3,403,160	24,970	18,810	90	19,030	10	80,610	460,110	11,870	11,870
2016	24,870	9,490	3,950,780	20,080	1,410	20	19,180	40	86,560	376,270	5,630	5,630
2017	15,400	-	3,096,410	18,270	420	280	16,830	-	92,580	554,820	18,350	18,350

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Export), China National Knowledge Infrastructure (Import)

- means no data.

Table 4: The Trade between Taiwan and Pacific Islands

Unit: Thousands of US Dollars

	Kiribati		Marshall Islands		Nauru		Palau		Solomon Islands		Tuvalu	
	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export
2001	807	0.388	54,522	82	26	42	6,199	84	335	47	24	-
2002	943	34	2,180	23	59	44	6,939	3	505	27	-	-
2003	812	92	78,938	36	43	2	3,074	3	1,803	19	-	-
2004	546	12	37,150	118	51	104	6,118	75	420	1,026	31	-
2005	1,879	319	53,300	27	240	13	7,109	78	1,321	53	3	0.394
2006	458	346	104,408	647	57	3	7,297	599	299	64	30	4
2007	605	1,594	43,216	981	42	8	4,927	1,408	1,163	321	3	5
2008	384	2,741	6,814	1,515	393	53	26,785	1,102	1,027	515	4	4
2009	460	1,960	6,230	736	8	-	25,837	331	1,178	382	19,247	61
2010	774	1,503	45,497	990	175	10	18,541	432	2,398	114	2,207	-
2011	660	5,125	24,018	749	349	7	16,726	571	3,962	1,151	2,574	0.102
2012	578	2,499	16,574	1,663	3,097	29	19,241	576	3,572	3,434	339	0.33
2013	666	231	12,707	7,168	1,770	55	17,869	506	7,862	4,219	17	-
2014	2,426	777	13,283	1,197	117	15	14,598	471	5,277	7,520	44	8
2015	2,855	51	12,587	1,239	165	51	11,684	244	6,702	7,529	276	66
2016	722	1	10,375	384	182	100	13,273	222	10,091	8,029	117	-
2017	2,581	17	130,211	697	291	26	21,040	641	9,105	10,525	184	2

Source: Bureau of Foreign Trade (經濟部國際貿易局)

- means no data.

Table 3 shows that Marshall Islands had the most trade with China in these six countries and it had the most significant trade deficit with China, for example the trade deficit reached around USD 3,930 million in 2016 (imported USD 3,950.78 million and exported USD 20.08 million). Almost all six countries had trade deficit with China, except Solomon Island. Solomon Island enjoyed USD 462.24 million trade surplus with China in 2017 (imported USD 92.58 million and exported 554.82 million). Though Nauru had less trade with China, it could not avoid the trade unbalanced. Kiribati and Palau had growing trade with China from 2001 to 2017 but they also suffered the huge trade deficit.

China was one of the important countries which could provide the people in these island states with daily affordable stuff. The main Chinese commodities imported into these countries were motor products, clothing, textiles, light industrial products, chemicals and medical materials. In the case of Nauru, because the phosphate mine in Nauru is almost developed, only a few can export, and the land is poor. There is not much resources to export, and it depends on imports, which causes a huge gap between exports and imports. The import and export data between Solomon Islands and China contraries to the other five countries. It is rare for Pacific island countries to export more than imports. According to the interview, Solomon Islands is not a huge country, the daily needs of Solomon Islands are dependent on imports, but people are limited, resulting in limited demand. Not only Chinese imports to Solomon Islands, but also other countries; in addition, China needs rich fishery and forestry resources from Solomon Islands, the demand is very high, and the point is value of these resources is relatively high. Therefore, Solomon Islands has a trade surplus with China. China and the Marshall Islands have the largest trade surplus, and the Marshall Islands has become China's largest commodity export

market, mainly for the export of ships and floating structures, fossil fuels and mineral oil, steel products, machinery and equipment, rolling stock and parts thereof. And floating structures are the main export commodities, accounting for 86.14% of total merchandise exports, which is directly related to the Marshall Islands being the world's second largest ship registration country.<sup>44</sup>

Table 4 shows Marshall Islands also had the most trade and most significant trade deficit with Taiwan in these six countries. The trade deficit with Taiwan reached around USD 129 million in 2017 (imported USD 130.211 million and exported USD 0.697 million). Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau and Tuvalu from 2001 to 2017 all had trade deficit with Taiwan. Only Kiribati, from 2007 to 2012, and Solomon Island, in 2004, 2015, 2015 and 2017, had trade surplus. Palau and Solomon Islands also have a large number of imports from Taiwan and the imports increased year by year.

Compare to the trade with China, Pacific island countries' trade with Taiwan is a relatively small scale. Through these two tables, the researchers simply analyzed the trade situation, and it could be seen that these countries were highly dependent on imports more than exports. Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu had relied on Chinese imports more than Taiwanese imports. Palau, in contrast, had relied on Taiwan's imports instead China's. Kiribati, at the beginning, relied on Taiwan's imports, but suddenly turned to China's imports in 2007. Through the trade data, we can clearly understand that, to what extent, they relied on foreign countries and the dependence brought trade deficit is also unavoidable.

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<sup>44</sup> 尹鹏 et al., "中国与小岛屿发展中国家贸易特征与影响因素," *经济地理*, no. 3 (2019). P.6

## **The Impacts of Trade from Establishments of Diplomatic Relationships**

After Kiribati established diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2003, there was more and more trade with China, and there was no ups and downs in trade with Taiwan. During the period of establishing diplomatic relations with China from 2002 to 2005, the trade volume with China decreased. The volume of trade with Taiwan has not changed much, but after the resumption of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the volume of trade with China and Taiwan has increased. Most countries increase trade volume over time, but the trade volume between Nauru and Tuvalu to Taiwan has been decreasing since 2013 and 2014. So, from the data, the relationships between China or Taiwan with these Pacific states seem to have no effect on trade.

According to the interview of Kiribati's Ambassador, in 1980 China established the diplomatic relationship with Kiribati first, so many Chinese businessmen went to Oceania countries to develop their careers and some of them even settled there. As a result, their descendants inherited the careers and became family and local business. Later, there were more and more businessmen who came to trade, too. Because some are the original Chinese businessmen's friends and relatives. Even if they did not know each other, based on they all were Chinese, they helped each other. They not only had very careful plans with ambitions, but also have the useful connections. They knew who was powerful and the suppliers, then they made their careers in the fastest and most efficient way.

“In Kiribati we have a lot of second generation, third generation, fourth, Chinese descendants. If you are thinking about setting a business when you look for suppliers, you make sense because you have family there and they can link you with the supplier, and it's easier.

And the second, I guess, follow on from them because of that link. They always help each other out, so they have network and very effective network.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MS. Tessie Eria Lambourne)

## **Poor Economy**

These Pacific island countries have a poor economy, an average annual income is not high, and the materials are seriously insufficient. These reasons cause them cannot afford too much daily cost. However, during some important festivals, parents have to buy some gifts for their children. In the meantime, people are just able to choose the products are equal to the prices. The products made in China are cheaper than Taiwan made. Although the qualities from China are not as good as Taiwan, people do not care about it. Face the real life, everyone still takes the price as a priority.

“Sometimes the products to achievement and not good quality. Because they’re cheap, when most people, when they go on buying something, the first priority is the cost. “what can I get with my money?” This is why the business in Kiribati, they order from China, because they don’t have these like ethical obligation to make sure that they sell good product, good quality product, it’s about profits. The first thing people think about when they go shopping is the price. Only a few who are aware of differences between good quality and not so good quality.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MS. Tessie Eria Lambourne)

## **Colonial Consequence**

All of these countries were colonized by the US and the UK before. Kiribati, Nauru and Solomon Islands are the members of Commonwealth of Nations. Since Hong Kong is close to the sea and it used to be a British colony (belonged to British Hong Kong in 1841 and did not return to China until 1997), the economy is more prosperous. Chinese businessmen use this point, they manufacture and register the products in China, and delivery to Hong Kong to export. Actually, the real data of Chinese trade is more than the researcher found. The products are made in Solomon Islands are very small, and most of merchandising companies were operated by Chinese who were from Hong Kong and Singapore during the British colonial administration.

“It's something that started historically. It wasn't part of our diplomatic goals. Its historical because with China, the trade that we have done with China affect the trade we conduct with China is really with Hong Kong. Much of the goods that we trade actually originated from Hong Kong. The suppliers are based in China, but they supply to an agent in Hong Kong. And so that the trade register would register as Chinese goods that the origin way. Originally, the place where they actually sent exported is Hong Kong. The reason is because our most of the businesses that import from China and Chinese companies, this is small, most of them are merchandising companies and they're all operated by descendants of Chinese from Hong Kong and Singapore.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MR. Joseph Pius Waleanisia)

### **The Investments Relations among Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Marshalls Islands, Palau, Tuvalu with Taiwan and China**

Compare the Chinese investments with Taiwanese investments, it is obvious to see the differences. (See Table 5.) Due to the lack of resources, the chances of getting profits after investing are too low, so there is no Taiwanese have invested in Nauru and Tuvalu. Taiwanese are too afraid to invest in Kiribati, so there is also no data of Kiribati's investment, but the reasons China invested in Kiribati and Solomon Islands are the same with the trade. China mainly invested agriculture, fishery, tourism and infrastructure, so does Taiwan. However, because these countries are Taiwanese diplomatic countries, Taiwan mainly invested our technical mission, technical mission does not list to the business investment. Actually, there are more investments than the Taiwanese and Chinese websites show, because the low of Pacific Islands effects the real situation. For example, Palau regulations stipulated that many industries were limited to the local, so small additional funds are mostly operated by “front business”（門面商號）<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, maybe the real owners are foreign investors, but the stores are registered the name of

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<sup>45</sup> 經濟部投資業務處, 帛琉共和國投資環境簡介. P.4

Table 5: The Investment from China and Taiwan to Pacific Islands states

Unit: Thousands of US Dollars

	Kiribati		Marshall Islands		Nauru		Palau		Solomon Islands		Tuvalu	
	CH	TW	CH	TW	CH	TW	CH	TW	CH	TW	CH	TW
2001	-	0	-	22,626	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
2002	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
2003	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	80	0	-	0
2004	-	0	-	99,077	-	0	100	0	-	0	-	0
2005	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
2006	-	0	2,000	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
2007	-	0	36,160	0	-	0	500	1,000	-	0	-	0
2008	-	0	44,160	0	-	0	850	0	-	264	-	0
2009	-	0	80,860	0	-	0	8,520	0	-	0	-	0
2010	-	0	73,520	0	-	0	9,020	0	-	363	-	0
2011	-	0	1007,370	0	-	0	9,590	0	-	0	-	0
2012	-	0	116,870	0	-	0	9,590	0	-	0	-	0
2013	820	0	116,870	0	-	0	9,590	51,000	-	0	-	0
2014	820	0	116,870	0	-	0	10,100	0	-	0	-	0
2015	2,930	0	60,050	0	-	0	11,600	0	-	0	-	0
2016	2,930	0	65,410	0	-	0	12,100	0	-	0	-	0
2017	2,930	0	60,680	0	-	0	12,180	0	-	0	-	0

Source: Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China Department of Outward Investment and Economic Cooperation (PRC); Investment Board, Ministry of Economic Affairs (ROC)

- means no data.

the local. The Table 5. only shows the number of Taiwanese and Chinese businessmen direct foreign investments. It would divide into tourism, fishery and technical mission. Although Taiwanese investments look like nothing, actually Taiwan has had a lot of investments in the 1990s, so it is not recognized in this paper. After 2000, there would be no new investors investing in Pacific island countries.

Most Chinese in Oceania states are engaged in small businesses, such as small retailers, restaurants, or mechanical equipment repairs. Now, because of the visa fee and tax, Nauru only has around 200 Chinese work there. Only few larger companies are working with the government. For instance, there is a public private partnership program between Kiribati government and Fujian company, which are also Chinese, the Fujian, and Shanghai TIPC officially, big companies in China. The number of businessmen in Nauru had been decreasing year by year, because the Nauru government began to collect visa fees for foreigners doing business in Nauru from 2012. Each person had to pay 6,050 Australian dollars per year and also 10% tax on foreigners' salaries.<sup>46</sup>

## **Tourism**

These countries are famous for the natural scenery and beautiful sea view. Especially, Palau is the most popular destination for tourists. China and Taiwan invested hotel industry in Palau respectively. Taiwanese and Chinese investors were mainly engaged in travel industries, restaurants and hotels. Taiwan has about 10 hotels there, and it is more than China. In 2018, Palau was not listed in Approved Destination Status (ADS) which is an arrangement between Chinese Government and another country, that lets Chinese people visit a country in a

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<sup>46</sup> 諾魯共和國投資環境簡介, (經濟部全球台商服務網, 2019), <https://twbusiness.nat.gov.tw/countryPage.do?country=NR>. P.3

tour group<sup>47</sup> by Beijing Government. It means Chinese people could not go to Palau with group tour, but they could go self-guided tour. This situation made many businessmen suffer heavy losses. 2014 and 2015 were the peak period Chinese tourists visited. At that time, hundreds of Chinese people entered every day. Tourist ships rushed to the islands and islands. Chinese tourists also rushed to buy souvenirs.

“I do know that the has intense so far, hotel industry, Taiwan has more hotels in Palau than any country. I know there are many Taiwanese businessmen in Palau, I know there are Chinese businessmen in Palau, but the number I think is not as many as Taiwanese. I only see one big hotel owned by Chinese and then others like one to three big hotels owned by Taiwanese.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MS. Dilmei Louisa Olkeriil)

## **Fishery**

Fishery is very prosperous in these countries, but there are no developed technologies in the region, so they must rely on other countries to provide equipment and technologies to complete together. In 2016, Taiwan and Marshall Islands signed “The Agreement on Fisheries Cooperation Between Republic of China and Republic of Marshall Islands”. This agreement would not only ensure the stable operation of Taiwan fishing boat operators in Marshall, but also bring benefits to Marshall and further strengthen bilateral cooperation.<sup>48</sup> The more well-known company is Koo’s Fishing Company Limited, Koo Kwang-Ming created in 1994. He established Koo's Fishing Co., Ltd. in Marshall Islands in 2000 as well. This company has 5 ships, one of these ships cooperated with Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority. Also, Koo’s Fishing Company and Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority joint

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<sup>47</sup> "Approved Destination Status (Ads)," New Zealand Tourism, <https://www.chinatoolkit.co.nz/market-intelligence/distribution/approved-destination-status-ads>.

<sup>48</sup> 漁業署, "我國與馬紹爾群島共和國完成簽署漁業合作協定," 行政院農業委員會, [https://www.coa.gov.tw/theme\\_data.php?theme=news&sub\\_theme=agri&id=6618](https://www.coa.gov.tw/theme_data.php?theme=news&sub_theme=agri&id=6618).

venture Marshall Islands Finishing Company, Koo has 51% stocks and management rights, Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority has 41% stocks.<sup>49</sup>

### **Technical Mission**

Technical mission actually is a kind of investment and a diplomatic assistance from the Taiwan government. Taiwan is very proud of helping its allies. The lands in these countries are poor, and it is not easy to grow nutritious fruits and vegetables. Technicians teach them to grow the crops, also help them improve their crops. The crops all are affordable for the local, and the whole can be away from hunger. In addition to agriculture, Taiwan also assists to different aspects, such as livestock, education, and medical. This also reflects what we often say, “teaching a man how to fish is better than giving him a fish.”

“Taiwan has some investment. And that, again is historical, I think because we don't have bilateral ties to China. Taiwan is doing in other bilateral partners, diplomatic partners, the hog rearing pig, rearing pig, the introducing end of the cultural farm improvement project introducing, new varieties like the dragon fruit. So, the high-quality products you can find process and then export packet, or you can sell to any manufacturer and they will accept it because it's good quality. That's an investment in agriculture sector for food security for security, meaning improvement in people's diet. The improvement in the quality of meals but also for export. The export now, some of our good crops we export to Canada.” (H.E. AMBASSADOR MR. Joseph Pius Waleanisia)

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<sup>49</sup> 經濟部投資業務處, 馬紹爾群島共和國投資環境簡介, (經濟部全球台商服務網, 2019), <https://twbusiness.nat.gov.tw/countryPage.do?country=MH>. P.7-8

## CONCLUSION

Pacific islands have become very popular recent years, not only neighboring New Zealand and Australia, but also the United States, the United Kingdom and France that once colonized Pacific islands. Consequently, China has taken interest and has also actively expanded its diplomacy in this region. However, when a country establishes the diplomatic relationship with China, it will lead to panic in the US and Australia. China would like to have more diplomatic countries in Pacific region because of several strategic reasons, such as blocking Taiwan's diplomacy, having many abundant natural resources from the Pacific islands, and securing its pathway to South America. However, the way China is interesting in these Pacific countries makes the US, the UK, Australia and Taiwan unpleasant.

The importance of these island countries is their locations in the center of the Pacific Ocean which are the places to transfer between America and Asia. Since these countries are underprivileged and underdeveloped, they need to rely on imports to maintain their daily needs. Furthermore, they have abundant natural resources, such as minerals, logs, fishery resource and coconut products. All products from the Pacific island countries have their value for great powers. Many developed countries and international organizations use ODA to aid and promote more investments and trade through grants and loan with economic liberalization. Although Taiwan provided ODA to these countries, we did not make Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu have Taiwanese investment. China has a large territory with a total population of 1.4 billion people, so their demand of resources is high and there are many Chinese fisheries cooperate with the Pacific fishermen to increase trade volume. In addition, China's demand includes high-quality woods and some coconut-based agricultural products.

However, according to the data of data analysis undertaken, the existence of the diplomatic relations in the state did not affect the results presented. These Pacific island countries have not changed much in trade when they have established or ended the diplomatic relations with China or Taiwan. For example, Nauru turned to China from 2002 to 2005, but the trade with China did not increase. During these years, the trade with Taiwan did not decrease or increase a lot. Both China's and Taiwan's trade data had almost grown each year.

These developing countries still retain the most primitive environment and natural scenery having not been over developed, attracting a large number of foreign tourists every year adding to the booming tourism industry. The increase of foreign tourists has also made investment and trade more prosperous. Due to the lack of resources for trade in these countries, such as technology, skills, materials, employee training, etc. Taiwanese businessmen have taken steps and have not invested much. In contrast with Chinese merchants, many Chinese in the past have operated stores in these countries and hence settled in these countries, leading to their careers to be passed down from generation to generation. If new Chinese businessmen decide to trade or invest in these countries, local Chinese businessmen would provide essential and useful advice. In addition to their well-prepared plan for success in the short term. However, compared with Taiwan's high-quality goods, local people have limited income, causing China's low-quality goods have become their first choice. After the formation of a consensus on supply and demand, the survival of Taiwanese businessmen has become even more difficult.

The most important way for Taiwan to consolidate relations with the diplomatic countries is to provide virtual assistances through the technical missions. Taiwan's technical missions are very important for all of our diplomatic countries. Technical

missions have improved agricultural products with a large amount of nutrition into varieties suitable for local cultivation through technological improvement, in which it also could become exports. Through the breeding of pigs and fish, medical care, education and handicrafts, the technical missions have also given assistances to enable local people to obtain nutritious food and the ability to earn money. The Ambassadors of Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Palau strongly encouraged Taiwanese people invest or trade in their countries. In addition to promoting the economy of both sides, it also strengthens our relationships. For example, H.E. AMBASSADOR MR. Joseph Pius Waleanisia said, “now Solomon Islands and Taiwan do not have trade agreement. With trade agreement, both countries and can enjoy benefit of trade privileges, or trade benefits that you could otherwise get. Under trade agreement, we can negotiate the rate, which we agree. That's the advantage of having a trading arrangement. The other advantage of formal trade agreement is things like certifying your products that meet a certain standard before your companies, your country can import.”

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