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# An analysis of the role of Paraguayan overseas Chinese in people-to-people diplomacy

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### Abstract

This article synthesizes references in Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish, and on the basis of the research results of scholars at home and abroad, supplemented by my interviews with Paraguayan expatriate leaders through WeChat and e-mail, discusses the population of Paraguayan Chinese, the development of economic undertakings, and the evolution of Chinese expatriate associations, etc., as well as summarizes the characteristics of the Paraguayan Chinese, and demonstrates the contribution of the Chinese expatriates in carrying out civil diplomacy. The Chinese diaspora in Paraguay is characterized by its contribution to the development of civil diplomacy.

From the 1950s onwards, Paraguay's favorable conditions attracted many Taiwanese businessmen to do business there, and the Chinese diaspora population increased significantly. New immigrants from mainland China began to go to Paraguay and gradually became the main body of the Chinese community, and the economic and trade characteristics of Paraguayan Chinese are more prominent.

Paraguayan overseas Chinese have actively carried out civil diplomacy activities in culture and education, economic and trade investment cooperation, and promoting the government by the people, and have achieved positive results. Paraguayan overseas Chinese have actively promoted the participation of Paraguay in international activities organized by China through local overseas Chinese leaders, and established local Chinese language schools to enhance the influence of Chinese culture. Meanwhile, Paraguayan overseas Chinese actively participate in local affairs and are enthusiastic in charitable industries to give back to the local community. In addition, they have made greater contributions to the comprehensive cooperation between their country of origin and Paraguay. With the gradual increase in the economic strength of Paraguayan overseas Chinese, coupled with the fact that in recent years, a number of medium- and large-scale Chinese enterprises have begun to invest in Paraguay, and taking into account the advantages of Chinese businessmen in terms of their in-depth understanding of the market situation of the two countries, and their knowledge of the national conditions and laws of the countries in which they reside, the Chinese diaspora has a great deal of potential to contribute to the Sino-Paraguayan economic and trade cooperation. This will contribute to the development of civil diplomacy between the People's Republic of China and Paraguay.

**Keywords:** Chinese diaspora, civil diplomacy, Paraguay

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the research

The Republic of Paraguay, with a population of 6,896,900, is organized into 17 provinces, bordered entirely by Argentina in the south, and Brazil and Bolivia in the north-east and north-west corners of the country, respectively, and is a member of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). The capital city of Asuncion is the largest city in Paraguay, with a population of about 525,000, and the city of Orientale (commonly known as "Qiaotou") is the second largest city, with a population of about 370,000 people.

Although the number of Paraguayan overseas Chinese is not very large, currently about 50,000 people. However, there are distinctive features, such as a large number of businessmen, active overseas Chinese associations, strong cohesion, and a high degree of motivation to carry out civil diplomacy. In addition, Paraguay, as one of the countries that the People's Republic of China has not yet established diplomatic relations with, from another level, the Chinese diaspora has a broader field to carry out civil diplomacy, and also has more potential.

As a Brazilian-Chinese international student with family members doing business in

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Paraguay for a long time, the writer is in a good position to interview local overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese leaders in Paraguay through WeChat and e-mail to obtain first-hand information. At the same time, I supplemented with relevant documents and official data in Portuguese and Spanish, and corroborated them with Chinese documents, in an attempt to have a more in-depth discussion on the role played by Paraguayan overseas Chinese in civil diplomacy

## 1.2 Research methodology

**Literature collection method:** Literature collection method is the most commonly used basic research method to provide a basis for writing the thesis and to broaden the research ideas. At the same time, further description of how to through the cited literature as a theoretical basis as well as the combination.

**1.3 Inductive analysis method:** Investigate the large amount of information collected to analyze, synthesize, compare and generalize.

**Case analysis method:** Through the collection of official data on the history of overseas Chinese, chambers of commerce and associations, as well as the actual understanding and analysis of the local situation in Paraguay, the underlying logic is clarified and the corresponding research revelations are put forward.

**Interview Method:** Through WeChat, phone calls, Facebook, and emails, we talked to Paraguayan overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese leaders to gain a deeper understanding of the social situation of Paraguayan overseas Chinese.

## 1.4 Literature review

This article collects as much literature as possible on various aspects of the Paraguayan Chinese diaspora and civil diplomacy. An attempt has been made to argue more fully the role played by the Paraguayan Chinese diaspora in civil diplomacy.

### 1.4.1 Evolution of the Chinese Diaspora

There are fewer studies on the Paraguayan Chinese diaspora, and the contents of the studies are too early and sketchy, most of which focus on the big countries in South America, so this paper tries its best to review the literature related to Paraguay.

Zhang Changyang, in his book "Overview of Chinese in the Republic of Paraguay", analyzes in detail the distribution of the Paraguayan Chinese population, industry and economic profile, showing a more comprehensive social situation of the Chinese diaspora. It is helpful for this paper to understand the development of Paraguayan overseas Chinese in the early days, but the data in this work is only up to the end of 1986<sup>[1]</sup>. In his Yearbook of the Huaren economic, Chen Huaidong introduced the situation of Paraguayan Chinese diasporas in 1999, describing in some detail the distribution of the local Chinese population, their economic development, and the development of the main local industries of the Chinese diasporas<sup>[2]</sup>. This paper also compares and updates the information data according to the

contents of the book. In the book "Overseas Chinese Economic Yearbook (South America)" published by Taiwan's "Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission", the overall situation of overseas Chinese in Paraguay in the 1990s is analyzed, the economic development of Paraguay is described in detail, as well as the economic activities and demographic changes of overseas Chinese in the region, and the emigration is analyzed through questionnaires to local Taiwanese businessmen, which is the first time in the history of Paraguay, and the first time in the world that Paraguay is a country with a large Chinese population and economic development. These data are relatively accurate and reliable, and can supplement the information in this paper in the 1990s, as well as help in the subsequent argumentation of this paper<sup>[3]</sup>.

In his paper "Historical Changes in the Number and Distribution of Overseas Chinese in the World" in the journal World History, Zhuang Guotu discusses the historical changes in the number and distribution of overseas Chinese in South America, which provides some help to this paper's research on the Paraguayan overseas Chinese<sup>[4]</sup>. Chen Tairong and Liu Zhengqin's market survey in ciudad del este, Paraguay, analyzed the main jobs and types of local Chinese, running six to seven hundred stores, mainly selling home appliances, toys, handicrafts, textiles, clocks and watches, and small hardware. There are 3,000 to 4,000 Chinese who often do business in ciudad del este, and many overseas Chinese living in Sao Paulo and other places often go to ciudad del este to buy and sell goods. Thus, the rise and fall of commercial activities in ciudad del este is not only directly related to the financial income of the Paraguayan government and the employment of many Paraguayans, but also closely related to the local Chinese<sup>[5]</sup>. Brazilian anthropologist, Rosana Pinheiro Machado examines the economic and political impact of trade in South America in her doctoral dissertation "China-Paraguay-Brazil" focusing on the countries of Paraguay, Brazil, and China. In her thesis, Rethinking the Chinese Diaspora, she explores the economy and politics of Paraguay and the Chinese diaspora in greater depth through field interviews with local Chinese in the context of the Chinese diaspora in Ciudad del este, Paraguay<sup>[6]</sup>. A study by the Library of the National Congress of Chile, "The Actual Situation of the Chinese in Latin America," provides a preliminary count of the number of Chinese diasporas in various Latin American countries and discusses the impact of the development of the Chinese diaspora in South America<sup>[7]</sup>. According to Zhang Qiusheng and Zhang Rongsu's research, there are more than 60 million overseas Chinese in the world, and Chinese businessmen are an important segment of the overseas Chinese community, and an important communication bridge and participatory force

<sup>3</sup> 中华经济研究院 华侨经济年鉴 (2000-2001 美洲篇) [M].台北:“侨委会”, 2002

<sup>4</sup> 庄国土 世界华侨华人数量和分布的历次变化[J]. 世界历史 2011(05):4-14+157.

<sup>5</sup> 陈太荣 刘正勤 巴拉圭的东方市与南方共同市场[J]. 拉丁美洲研究 1996(01): 42-43+32.

<sup>6</sup> Machado R P. Rethinking the Informal and Criminal Economy from a Global Commodity Chain Perspective: China-Paraguay-Brazil[D]. Global Networks, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. La realidad de los chinos en Latinoamérica[EB/OL]. 2008年1月11日[2022年4月20日]. <https://web.archive.org>.

<sup>1</sup> 张长洋.巴拉圭共和国华侨概况.[M].台北:正中书局, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> 陈太荣. 华侨经济年鉴[M]. 2000/2001. 北京: 朝华出版社, 2002.

in promoting the “Belt and Road” initiative. The historical development of overseas Chinese businessmen and the contribution of overseas Chinese enterprises in the field of historical development, since the reform and opening up, more than 60% of the foreign investment absorbed by China has been invested by Chinese businessmen, which has played a great role in promoting China's modernization process. At the meantime, Chinese businessmen also have a certain degree of influence in the field of world economy. The two professors are very comprehensive in their research on the history of overseas Chinese, and the ideas and contents of their articles are very informative for this paper [8, 9].

Yuan Shurui from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, in her paper “Research on the Trade Potential between China and Paraguay in the Context of China-Latin America Cooperation”, researches on the trade potential between China and Paraguay, and the paper puts forward her own views on promoting the trade scale between China and Paraguay. This includes establishing diplomatic relations as soon as possible, strengthening multi-party communication between China and Paraguay; establishing bilateral and multilateral economic and trade cooperation mechanisms from the governmental level; and strengthening the cooperation between China and Paraguay in infrastructure construction and other perspectives. The paper concludes that the Chinese diaspora in Paraguay has a great potential in the development of civil diplomacy [10]. In his master's thesis, “A Study on Improving the Quality of Arts and Science Education in Overseas Overseas Overseas Schools in Diplomatic Countries: The Case of Zhongzheng and Zhongshan Overseas Overseas Overseas Schools in Paraguay,” Chen Zuqin, an ethnic Chinese from Paraguay, takes the Paraguayan diaspora as the background, and conducts a more in-depth analysis and research on the existing local diaspora education organizations, the best diaspora education resources, and the schools in Paraguay [11]. Using the example of immigration in Brazil, Monasterio attempts to link the various outcomes through the long-term, slow determinants of the economy and society and how they are affected by the migration process and historical events, the role played by two distinctive features of the official colony [12]. The relationship between immigration and the rise of Peronism in Argentina is explored in the context of Argentina through theories of nationalism in the book *Immigration and Institutional Change* by Nicholas, Alexander, and Ellie Azunde of the University of Buenos Aires. Because the context of its study is extremely similar to that of Paraguay, and its current economy relies heavily on the immigrant economy, the work contributes to a personal understanding of the impact of the development of

the immigration system [13].

#### 1.4.2 Civilian Diplomacy

Li Jinjun, in his article “Civilian Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics”, argues in detail the significant progress made in the theory and practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and that in the era of globalization and information technology, civil diplomacy is playing an increasingly important role in China's three-dimensional pattern of diplomacy, and that it has developed further from “civil affairs first, civil affairs for the government, and government and civil affairs” to “communication of public opinion, civil friendship, and cooperation of people's livelihood”, which makes the author have a deeper understanding and knowledge of civil diplomacy. The development of “public opinion communication, civil friendship, and cooperation of people's livelihood” has given the author a deeper understanding and awareness of civil diplomacy [14]. Zhao Kejin, in his article “People are close to each other, hearts are connected”, discusses his understanding and view of China's civil diplomacy in the new era against the background of China-US relations, and combines the direction of civil diplomacy pointed out by General Secretary Xi Jinping to promote the theoretical and practical innovations of civil diplomacy, which contributes to this article's understanding of the role of civil diplomacy in the relationship between the two countries [15].

In Lin Songtian's paper “Actively Creating a New Situation for Civilian Diplomacy in the New Era”, he explains in detail the positioning and historical contribution of civil diplomacy, and analyzes the new situation, new challenges and new opportunities faced by civil diplomacy, which provides some help to this paper in understanding the important role played by Paraguayan overseas Chinese in civil diplomacy [16]. In Ye Xiaohan's article “The History and Present Situation of Sino-Japanese Civilian Diplomacy” of Yanbian University, after the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, civil diplomacy is defined as “the activities of foreign relations carried out by civil organizations, groups, or individuals who do not have official diplomatic qualifications and who are not interested in the foreign relations of other countries to achieve a specific purpose in a certain field based on their own national interests and the maintenance of world peace and development”, and it is related with the activities of the overseas Chinese in Paraguay, which is the same as that of the overseas Chinese. ”, and distinguish it from people-to-official and cultural diplomacy [17]. In their paper “70 Years of China's Civilian Diplomacy, Local Diplomacy and Humanistic Exchanges-People's Diplomacy”, Zhang Ji and Ding Yuanyuan examine how China's civil diplomacy, local diplomacy and humanistic exchanges, which have Civil diplomacy became a special and pioneer channel of new

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张荣苏,张焜生.改革开放以后中国学界海外华裔研究述评[J].华侨华人历史研究, 2018(04).

<sup>9</sup> 张焜生.拉丁美洲华裔:历史、现状与展望[J].桂桥刊,2019(04).

<sup>10</sup> 袁淑睿. 中拉合作背景下中国与巴拉圭贸易潜力研究[D]. 广东外语外贸大学, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> 陈胜欽. 邦交海外侨文教育素质提升之研究—以巴拉圭中正及中山侨校为例[D]. 国立台湾师范大学侨教与海外华人研究组, 2014年1月

<sup>12</sup> Monasterio L. Immigration and the origins of regional inequality: Government-sponsored European migration to southern Brazil before World War I[M]. Brazil:CNPq, September 2012:Volume4 issue5.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolas Cachanosky, Alexandre Padilla, Alejandro Gomez.

Immigration and institutional change: Did mass immigration cause peronism in argentina?[M].,Argentina:Universidad del CEMA, Av. Córdoba 374, Buenos Aires, April 2021:Volume 184.

<sup>14</sup> 李进军. 中国特色民间外交认识与建议[J]. 公共外交季刊,2013(04).

<sup>15</sup> 赵可金. 民相亲, 心相通——习近平民间外交思想及其指导意义[J]. 美国研究, 2021, 35(05).

<sup>16</sup> 林松添. 积极开创新时代民间外交工作新局面[J]. 国际问题研究, 2022(01).

<sup>17</sup> 叶笑晗. 中日民间外交的历史与现状研究[D]. 延边大学,2018.



China's diplomacy under the bipolar pattern, and transformed to serve economic construction after the reform and opening up, with more prominent civic nature and more diversified subjects<sup>[18]</sup>. Yu Hongyuan, Wang Sen and Guan Chenglong, in their article "Shanghai's Civil Diplomacy at the China Import and Export", discuss the active use of the Fair platform to develop civil diplomacy, and to publicize to the outside world through the event, while safeguarding China's interests, increasing opportunities for cooperation, and enhancing the friendship between countries<sup>[19]</sup>.

The combing of relevant papers and monographs and other literature provides significant references for this paper to argue for the development of the Paraguayan diaspora, as well as the promotion of cultural diplomacy, the strengthening of economic cooperation, and the promotion of governmental exchanges in the development of civil diplomacy.

**2. The development and evolution of Paraguayan overseas Chinese:** Up to now, through interviews with local overseas Chinese leaders and other relevant information, the author has analyzed that the number of Paraguayan Chinese has reached about 50,000 people. There are a large number of businessmen, mainly located in the capital city of Asunción and the city of Oriente. In addition, Paraguayan Chinese associations are more active, with about 20 influential ones and a total of about 40 local associations.

### 2.1 The Chinese population

The first Chinese immigrants arrived in Paraguay in the middle of the 19th century, with a small number of older immigrants coming mainly from Guangdong Province and Hong Kong, and from the 1950s onwards, many Taiwanese businessmen were attracted to Paraguay due to the fact that it has one of the freest business environments in South America, with low import and export taxes, relatively liberal policies, and diversified market activities. In addition, Paraguay has relatively low immigration requirements, requiring only that one be at least 20 years of age and have a stable income to obtain residency status in Paraguay, and as of the end of 1986, there were approximately 5,000-7,000 Chinese nationals in Paraguay<sup>[20]</sup>.

Beginning in the 1980s, new immigrants from the provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, and Zhejiang traveled to Paraguay. The earliest can be traced back to 1984, the seafarer surnamed You of Fujian origin from Brazil exclusively to Paraguay<sup>[21]</sup>, and subsequently, many new immigrants in neighboring countries also found Paraguay's low tariffs to bring the "opportunity", resulting in some of the new immigrants and then transfer people to Paraguay<sup>[22]</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> 张骥丁 媛媛 中国民间外交、地方外交与人文交流70年——人民的外交[J]. 国际展望 2019(05)

<sup>19</sup> 于宏源, 王森, 关成龙. 进博会中的上海民间外交[J]. 公共外交季刊, 2021(02).

<sup>20</sup> 张长洋. 巴拉圭共和国华侨概况. [M]. 台北: 正中书局, 1989: 42.

<sup>21</sup> 资料来源: 笔者 2022 年 3 月 28 日通过微信采访巴拉圭侨领陈先生所得。据其介绍在 20 世纪 80 年代巴拉圭大陆早期新移民, 约有 44 人, 广东籍约 17 人, 福建籍 7 人, 上海籍 5 人, 浙江籍 5 人, 北京籍 4 人, 吉林籍 3 人, 山东籍 2 人, 四川籍 1 人。

<sup>22</sup> 邹春光 旅居巴拉圭华人领袖轶事: 在未建交中国写传奇[EB/OL]. 2013年11月01日 09:43[2022年4月27].

<https://www.chinanews.com.cn/hr/2013/11-01/5451340.shtml>.

With the implementation of Paraguay's free trade policy, many overseas Chinese imported a variety of goods from Taiwan (China), Japan, Korea and other countries to Paraguay and resold them in Brazil, Argentina and other countries. During the "golden age" of the Paraguayan diaspora, from 1990 to 1995, the total number of Paraguayan Chinese amounted to more than 30,000, with as many as 12,000 Taiwanese residing in the Ciudad del Este<sup>[23]</sup>.

The growth of new immigrants from the Chinese mainland has subsequently been more rapid. Some Chinese enterprises such as China Telecom, Huawei Electronics, Changan Automobile and other larger enterprises have entered the Paraguayan market one after another through joint ventures or wholly-owned enterprises, which has also led to a more rapid growth of new immigrants from mainland China. According to Paraguay's relevant research institutions, in 2019, for example, the number of mainland Chinese immigrants naturalized was 800, and the number of Taiwanese immigrants entering the country was only four. The current total number of Chinese nationals in Paraguay is currently around 50,000 people<sup>[24]</sup>.

**Table 1:** Naturalization of immigrants from mainland China in Paraguay Unit: persons

Years	1990	1995	2005	2010	2017	2019
Number of person	1953	1419	840	800	800	800

Information obtained from

[www.datosmacro.expansion.com](http://www.datosmacro.expansion.com).

**Note:** The agency provides data for significant years only.

According to Table 1, the number of Paraguayan immigrants of Chinese nationality of origin shows that there were 1,953 in 1990 and 1,419 in 1995, at the peak of mainland immigration in the 1990s, and that from 2005 onwards the number of immigrants was relatively stable, remaining at around 800.

### 2.2 Economic development

In the late 1980s, Chinese products began to be mass produced and sold all over the world. Most of the overseas Chinese in the region were mainly engaged in business, and in the 80s and 90s, they were mainly engaged in gifts, department stores and daily necessities. In addition, the border trade between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay was booming at that time, and Dongfang City was at the center of the international border between the three countries, with a superior geographical location, which attracted a lot of Chinese merchants, Arab merchants, and Brazilian and Argentinean baggers to come here to conduct merchandise trading, and at the same time, attracted a lot of international tourists. Ciudad del Este used to be one of the largest commercial centers in the world, with an annual trade amount of up to 2 billion US dollars<sup>[25]</sup>. By the end of the 1990s there were 800 to 1,000 Chinese-owned stores and travel agencies in Ciudad del Este<sup>[26]</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> 中华经济研究院 华侨经济年鉴 (2000-2001美洲篇) [M]. 台北: "侨务委员会", 2002:199.

<sup>24</sup>

商务部国际经济合作研究院 中国驻圣保罗总领馆 商务部对外投资和经济合作司 对外投资合作国别(地区)巴拉圭指南[R], 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Machado R P. Rethinking the Informal and Criminal Economy from a Global Commodity Chain Perspective: China-Paraguay-Brazil[D]. Global Networks, 2018. 第4页

<sup>26</sup> 陈怀东. 华人经济年鉴[M]. 2000/2001. 北京: 朝华出版社, 2002: 第278页.

New immigrants often follow in the footsteps of older expatriates and slowly begin to run small businesses. Most new immigrants first work for older expatriates to start their own companies, and then slowly begin to accumulate work experience and initial capital to start their own independent businesses.

At present, the distribution of economic occupations among Paraguayan overseas Chinese is still dominated by business, but the level and scale of business has increased considerably, with larger companies engaging in the import, export and wholesale of commodities beginning to emerge, and some Chinese businessmen independently opening or investing in small- and medium-sized processing factories in cooperation with the local community, with the main industries including: plastic bags, fishing tackle and wood processing, CD-ROMs, electric fans, etc. The traditional grocery stores and restaurants have also seen some development. The traditional grocery stores and restaurants, tourism and cultural and educational industries have also made some progress. According to local leaders, about 55% of Paraguayan Chinese are engaged in international import and export trade and retail business, 25% are employees, 5% run manufacturing and processing enterprises, and about 3% are engaged in catering work.

Due to the accumulation of the mainland Chinese in the early stage, they slowly entered the mainstream of business and began to operate their own business. With the rapid development of the domestic economy and industrial

progress. The Paraguayan overseas Chinese, taking advantage of the geography of their country of origin, gradually began to directly import domestic products for sale in Paraguay, thus creating foreign exchange for their country's industrial export economy and helping the Paraguayan overseas Chinese in their own endeavors, which can be described as a win-win situation for both inside and outside of the country, "promoting the government by the people".

**2.3 Overseas Chinese Associations**

The establishment of overseas Chinese associations stems from the fact that Chinese immigrants in a foreign country are watchful of each other, sharing the feelings of their hometowns and seeking common survival and development. The number of Paraguayan overseas Chinese is not very large, but the overseas Chinese associations are active, with a high degree of participation by members, a strong cohesion, and a solid foundation for the smooth development of civil society.

According to the relevant literature consulted by the author, the earliest Paraguayan overseas Chinese association was established in 1933, and the one founded by new immigrants from mainland China was established in 1998; although it was established later, it is more active because its members are younger and most of them are engaged in commerce and industry.

**Table 2:** Statistics on major taiwanese associations in Paraguay

Name of the organization	Year of foundation	Area of distribution of members	Number of persons
OCAC in Paraguay	1933	Asunción, Encarnación, Pedro Juan Caballero, Ciudad del Este	About 1352
Asociación China en Asunción Paraguay	1965 1982	Asunción, Ciudad del Este	About 3500
Qiaotou Christian Church, Ciudad del Este Paraguay, South America	1985	Ciudad del Este	About 219
Buddha's Light International Association of Paraguay	1992	Ciudad del Este	About 169
Chinese Freemason Paraguay	1993	Ciudad del Este	About 127
World Association of Chinese Businesswomen and Entrepreneurs - Paraguay Chapter	2013	Asunción, Ciudad del Este	About 686
Paraguayan Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry	2013	Ciudad del Este	About 147
Taiwan Association of Paraguay/Taiwanese Association of Paraguay	2014	Ciudad del Este	About 185
Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce in Paraguay Junior Chapter	2014	Asunción, Ciudad del Este, Encarnación	About 900
Paraguayan Chinese Charitable Foundation	2014	Ciudad del Este	About 87

*Source:* Compiled by the author on the basis of the official websites of various associations and other information.

The Paraguayan Taiwanese Chinese have established associations at an early stage, with a relatively large number of members and a certain degree of influence. However, they also face problems such as aging members and rigid mechanisms, and are currently carrying out work such as securing new immigrant members and cooperating with new immigrant associations.

**The relatively representative immigrant associations in Taiwan are**

1. The Paraguayan Chinese Association, which has two branches, the Asunción Chinese Association and the Oriental City Chinese Association. Founded in 1965 and 1982 respectively, the Paraguayan Chinese are natural members. The founder and first president was

- Zhou Junwu. The Asunción Chinese Association is currently chaired by Gu Mei Gui, and the Oriental Chinese Association is currently chaired by Situ Ziming, with a total of about 3,500 members. The main purpose of the Association is to help coordinate, maintain and contact the Chinese community in Paraguay, to promote cohesion within the Chinese community and to strengthen relations with the local government.
2. The Paraguayan Association of the Buddha's Light International Association (BLAIPA), with about 679 members, was founded in 1992, with its first president, Mr. Ji Wenxiang. The current president: Zhao Shenjie, vice presidents: Jiang Juying, Song Yanxin, Ji Huijuan. There are also two chapters: Chapter 1 President: Yang Qitao, Vice President: Yan Xiangyun, Chapter 2

- President: Cheng Pingdong, Vice President: Cheng Zhuying. It is a religious and cultural association, whose main members are local overseas Chinese who believe in Buddhism, and a number of well-known overseas Chinese leaders in the local community are also important members of the association.
3. Paraguay Taiwan Chamber of Commerce Youth Chamber of Commerce, was established on June 16, 2014, the community is growing rapidly, the number of members reached about 900 people. President Yang Jingyi, vice president of the Oriental City, Chang Chingxiang, vice president of Asuncion, Chen Sihua, vice president of Encarnación, Huang Baiwei, the main members of the parents of local young businessmen from Taiwan composed of contact with the old and new Taiwanese businessmen to develop together.

**Table 3:** Statistics on the main mainland chinese associations in Paraguay

<b>Name of organization</b>	<b>Year of founding</b>	<b>Area of distribution of members</b>	<b>Number of persons</b>
<b>Paraguayan-Chinese-Paraguayan Cultural Exchange Association</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>Asunción</b>	<b>About 30</b>
<b>Paraguayan Chinese Friendship Association</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Ciudad del Este</b>	<b>About 65</b>
<b>Paraguayan Chinese Women's Association</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Ciudad del Este</b>	<b>About 50</b>
<b>Paraguayan Chinese Association for the Promotion of International Trade</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Ciudad del Este</b>	<b>About 80</b>
<b>Paraguayan Overseas Chinese Home</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ciudad del Este</b>	<b>About 80</b>
<b>Overseas Chinese Youth Association of Paraguay</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ciudad del Este</b>	<b>About 40</b>
<b>Pedro Juan caballero Branch of Paraguay-China</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Pedro Juan caballero</b>	<b>About 40</b>

*Source:* Compiled by the writer on the basis of the official websites of various associations and other information.

Overseas Chinese associations on the mainland first appeared at the end of the 1990s, and as the number of new immigrants from the mainland has increased, more and more overseas Chinese associations have been established and are actively carrying out their activities. Because the relationship between new immigrants from mainland Paraguay and overseas Chinese in Taiwan is relatively harmonious, there are both Taiwanese participating in mainland associations and mainlanders participating in Taiwanese associations, generally showing an increase in cooperation between new and old immigrant associations and a harmonious relationship. In the mainland immigrant associations are relatively representative of the following:

1. Paraguay China-Paraguay Cultural Exchange Association, founded in 1998, address: Asunción, the

capital of Paraguay, the registrant/president of the Cai Biao, members of about 30, is the earliest established local immigrant associations in the mainland. The purpose of the association is to promote communication and exchange activities between the relevant departments of the two countries, thereby strengthening a better understanding and more comprehensive cooperation between the two Governments and deepening local knowledge of Chinese culture.

2. The Paraguayan Chinese Friendship Association was established in 2012 in Ciudad del Este, with the registration of Lin Azhi, the president of Chen Jisheng, and a total of 65 members. With the help of personal advantages of overseas Chinese, integrating the resources of all parties, not only to strengthen the



friendship among overseas Chinese, but also to encourage overseas Chinese to give back to the local community, with the conditions of the members to actively participate in the election and political participation.

3. Paraguay China International Trade Promotion Association (PCTPA), founded in 2016, is located in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, with a registered owner/president: Jiang Juying, and about 80 members. 2018, it has established its own sub-chapters: Paraguay-China Youth Chamber of Commerce (BCYC) and Paraguay Chinese Women's Association (PCCWA), with the same location and members as above. The main purpose is to provide assistance to local mainland Chinese, resolve conflicts with local Taiwanese Chinese, and strengthen communication with the local government.

Other more active Chinese associations include: Taiwan Chamber of Commerce in Paraguay, Paraguay Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Economic and Trade Cadets Association, Paraguay Confucius Center, Asunción Chinese Golf Fellowship, Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Paraguay Liaison Offices in Asunción and Ciudad del Este, Guanyin Compassionate Merit and Virtue Society, Soka Gakkai International Paraguay Association, Hakkasan Clansmen's Association of Paraguay, Paraguay Honorable Fellowship Association, and Paraguayan Chinese Table Tennis Association, Ciudad del Este Chinese Basketball Association, Ciudad del Este Chinese Bowling Association, Ciudad del Este Chinese Golf Association, Paraguayan Formosa Martial Arts Association, Paraguayan Singing Fellowship Association, etc.<sup>[27, 28]</sup>

### 3. Characteristics of the Paraguayan Chinese community

The Republic of Paraguay has a generally good social security and a better living environment than Brazil and Argentina, and many overseas Chinese from neighboring countries have chosen to move to Paraguay because of these advantages. The city of Dongfang is the second largest city in Paraguay, apart from the capital, Asunción, and is also the city with the largest concentration of overseas Chinese living in it (commonly known locally as Qiaotou), which is just across the bridge from the city of Iguazu on the Brazilian side of the border, and is situated on the triple border between Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina.

#### 3.1 Concentration of the population in Ciudad del Este

Paraguay has one of the freest business environments in South America, with low import and export taxes, relatively low commodity prices, relatively liberal economic policies, and a wide variety of market activities, which attracts a large number of investors. In addition, the city of Iguazu in Brazil is a world-famous tourist city, and is very close to Oriente, Paraguay, with only a 10-minute walk across the bridge. The wide variety of goods and their low prices attract a large number of tourists from Brazil, Argentina and

other countries who travel to Iguazu City. Traveling to Ciudad del Este for shopping. This also provides greater space for the Paraguayan Chinese community to conduct business and trade, among other things.

As a center city for tourism and shopping, Ciudad del Este provides great business opportunities for the majority of overseas Chinese in the industries of import and export, retail, catering and travel agencies. According to the estimation of Mr. Chen Chuangeng, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oriental Chinese Association of Paraguay, at present, about 80% of Paraguayan overseas Chinese are located in Ciudad del Este, about 10% in Asunción, and the rest of them are scattered in other cities such as Beethoven and Encarnación<sup>[29]</sup>.

Today, there are about 5,000 stores in Ciudad del Este, one-third of which are Chinese-owned. As the economic strength of the Chinese diaspora has increased, they have also begun to invest in setting up factories. Some Chinese businessmen have responded to changes in the market environment and opened factories. For example, in 1997, Mr. Gu Danchen, a Chinese businessman who used to be engaged in commerce, took advantage of the abundant resources in the area and set up a wood processing factory, mainly producing semi-finished flooring products. Mainly sold to China, Taiwan, Europe and the United States and other places, is a more successful case of transformation. In 2008, Mr. Jiang Juying, a Chinese businessman of Zhejiang nationality, seized the opportunity of Paraguay's policy of "developing industry" and successfully established the "South America Qinyi Woolen Blanket Factory" in Ciudad del Este, which has obtained the preferential import and export tariff of zero import and export from the government of Paraguay. The products produced by the enterprise under the brand name of Camamia are not only sold throughout Paraguay and loved by local consumers, but also exported to Brazil, Argentina and other South American countries.

#### 3.2 Weak economic base

Because Paraguay was founded on agriculture and livestock farming and lacks an industrial base, and because of the city's high concentration on commerce, Chinese businessmen have concentrated on small and medium-sized import and export businesses, as well as retail businesses. In addition to household appliances, daily necessities, and other industrial products, the main target of Chinese immigrant investors is supermarkets and small convenience stores, which are low-cost and high-margin businesses. The phenomenon of homogenization of stores and commodities is relatively serious. Diversified division of labor has not yet been realized, and there are problems such as counterfeiting of the products sold, which are basically stores selling mainly Chinese products, and the main sales targets are mainly tourists. In addition to some small and medium-sized processing enterprises such as household appliances and daily necessities, there are not many large-scale stores and enterprises invested by overseas Chinese, and the overall economic strength has yet to be improved.

Although the overall social security environment in Paraguay is good, with the rapid development of the overseas Chinese economy, there have been numerous cases in which some Chinese lawless elements have organized

<sup>27</sup> 资料来源：笔者 2022 年 3 月 28 日通过微信采访巴拉圭侨领王先生所得。

<sup>28</sup> 陈传庚 邦交国海外侨校文理教育素质提升之研究—以巴拉圭中正及中山侨校为例[D]. 国立台湾师范大学侨教与海外华人研究组, 2014 (1)

<sup>29</sup> 陈传庚 南美巴拉圭地区侨情报告[EB/OL]. 2014年6月2日 01:43[2022年4月30]. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

triad groups to target Chinese businessmen for violent extortion and blackmail, some of which have even turned into extremely bad cases of kidnapping and murder. Some local police officers often check the identity documents of new immigrants in public places, taking the opportunity to extort new immigrants<sup>[30]</sup>. The black forces have also caused some Chinese businessmen to be afraid to make large-scale investments in Paraguay, and some have even moved on to other countries. In addition, many new immigrants to Paraguay face difficulties in adapting to the new local environment and in communicating with the local language, which also partially limits the development of the Chinese economy.

Because most Chinese are engaged in import and export business, they are vulnerable to the effects of the international market environment, and Paraguayan Chinese were also greatly affected by the global economic crisis triggered by the subprime mortgage crisis and the collapse of the financial bubble in the United States in 2008. At the time, most Chinese faced problems such as industry closures and unemployment. Also because of the economic downturn, according to a report in the *Guangming Daily* on November 9, 2008, the city of Dongfang, Paraguay's border region, was the place from which most of the merchandise from the Asian region had been sold to all parts of Paraguay and neighboring countries. After the effects of the financial crisis, the reduction in the volume of goods exported from Asia to South America, as well as the weakening of the population's purchasing power, led to a 30 per cent drop in the volume of goods traded in Ciudad del Este<sup>[31]</sup>.

The financial crisis has forced some of the Paraguayan Chinese diaspora to move to other countries because of their economic weakness and lack of roots in the country. In the following years, the total number of Paraguayan overseas Chinese declined significantly. However, the Paraguayan diaspora quickly recovered from the financial crisis and embarked on the path of development again, thanks to their hard work, thrift and perseverance, as well as their ability to explore business opportunities.

Generally speaking, the economic strength of Paraguayan overseas Chinese is still relatively weak, but they have begun to focus on investing in the real economy through associations such as chambers of commerce and other organizations that exchange information and support each other, and they have a certain potential for development.

**4. The Role of the Paraguayan Diaspora in Civilian Diplomacy:** Civilian diplomacy is distinguished from official diplomacy in civil international exchanges, all the diplomatic acts engaged in by non-official institutions or officially authorized representatives belong to civil diplomacy, and its fundamental purpose is to promote the proximity to the people and the heart of the people, such as: Chinese business enterprises, overseas Chinese associations, etc., all belong to the scope of civil diplomacy and the main body. It is characterized by a large number of subjects, a wide range of fields, abundant resources and the laying of a foundation<sup>[32]</sup>.

Overseas Chinese in Paraguay have made their own efforts

in promoting people-to-people communication, enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, and making efforts in culture, education, charity, economic development and other aspects, and have achieved good results in civil diplomacy.

Mr. Jiang Juying, president of the Paraguayan Association for the Promotion of International Economy and Trade of China, is one of the most important representatives of mainland Chinese businessmen in Paraguay, and he is also very enthusiastic in carrying out civil diplomacy activities. The reason why Mr. Jiang established this association is to better unite the Paraguayan overseas Chinese, contribute to the local community and help the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. "Since its establishment, the Association has contributed more than 800,000 dollars to public welfare causes, 95% of which was sponsored by Jiang Juying's personal business. The contribution of the association has also been recognized by the local people. In 2012, 2013 and 2016, four officers of the association were honored with the titles of Distinguished Honorary Citizen, Distinguished Honorary Citizen and Outstanding Honorary Citizen in the Ciudad del Este and Beethoven, Paraguay. In addition, the association is committed to protecting the legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese, employing local lawyers and police officers as consultants, to protect the business premises of the Chinese community. When the PedroJuan Cabellero overseas Chinese encountered injustice, PedroJuan Cabellero Branch President Zhou Ping led the staff to talk with the local government face to face, and strive for the support of the government departments and the mayor, to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the overseas Chinese who have set up store in the city of Beethoven, and establish a friendly relationship with the local police department<sup>[33]</sup>.

#### 4.1 Promotion of cultural exchanges

In 1988, Chinese chess master Ding Weihong, accompanied by her husband Cai Biao, was invited by the then President of Paraguay, who was a keen chess player, to come to Paraguay to meet friends. But just after arriving in Paraguay, a coup d'état broke out in the country and the president fled to Brazil for refuge. Mr. and Mrs. Ding Weihong were forced to stay, and then opened "Ding Ji Shop" in Dongfang City, dealing with daily groceries, household appliances and other commodities, and attracted merchants from other countries to come to batch goods, and made a rich profit. With the good development of his business, Ding Weihong gained more and more influence in the political and business circles of Paraguay, and became close friends with many parliamentarians and high-ranking officials.

In 2008, as the assistant to the President of the Paraguayan Olympic Committee, Ding Weihong participated in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. She worked tirelessly for the Paraguayan delegation and won praise from all walks of life in Paraguay. The Chinese authorities were also aware of Mr. and Mrs. Ding's excellent public relations skills in Paraguay. Since then, promoting Paraguay's participation in the 2010 Shanghai World Expo has become a new task for the couple. Since September 2008, Mr. and Mrs. Ding Weihong

<sup>30</sup> 资料来源：笔者 2022 年 4 月 10 日通过微信采访巴拉圭侨领郭女士所得。

<sup>31</sup> 马塞罗·埃斯皮诺萨：金融危机冲击巴拉圭“购物天堂”[N]. 光明日报 2008 年 11 月 11 日(08 版)。

<sup>32</sup> 林松添：积极开创新时代民间外交工作新局面[J]. 国际问题研究, 2022(01): 23.

<sup>33</sup> 蒋菊英：助力融入巴拉圭[N]. 人民网—人民日报海外版 2018 年 12 月 10 日 08:29.

[www.industry.people.com.cn](http://www.industry.people.com.cn)



have been formally involved in promoting Paraguay's participation in the Shanghai World Expo. On the one hand, Mr. and Mrs. Ding have been in close contact with key leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Sports, and other governmental departments to promote Paraguay's participation in the Shanghai World Expo. On the other hand, through the local news media, we reported the progress of the preparations for the Shanghai World Expo in a timely manner, so as to let Paraguayan people know more about the World Expo. Finally, in March 2009, Mr. and Mrs. Ding obtained the authorization from the President of Paraguay through the Secretary General of the Presidential Office to urge the Paraguayan Industrial Union to negotiate with the Paraguay-China Business, Culture and Technology Alliance founded by Cai Biao to jointly participate in the Shanghai World Expo. The two sides finally reached a consensus after many negotiations, and in April 2009, the two sides held a signing ceremony for the cooperation agreement. In February 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay officially sent a letter to the Shanghai World Expo Bureau confirming its participation in the Shanghai World Expo and appointed Ding Weihong as the deputy general representative of the Paraguayan Organizing Committee for the Shanghai World Expo.

In addition, during the preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Mr. Cai, President of the Hongmen General Association of Paraguay, on October 12, 2007, helped establish the "One Heart Knot" inter-school exchange and cooperation program between Liangxiang No. 3 Primary School in Fangshan District, Beijing, and CDI School in Asuncion, Paraguay. Officials from the Paraguayan Olympic Committee were very supportive of the program.

During the Olympic Torch Relay held in Paraguay, Mr. Cai, as the representative chosen by the Paraguayan Olympic Committee, lit the Olympic cultural torch, which conveyed the friendship between Chinese and Paraguayan schools. On behalf of Liangxiang No.3 Primary School, Principal Wang Sheng also presented the Olympic Fuwa to CDI School in Asuncion, Paraguay, wishing to enhance the friendship between countries and school-to-school exchanges and cooperation on the platform of the Olympic Games<sup>[34]</sup>.

Paraguayan overseas Chinese carry out cultural diplomacy activities, effectively promoting the dissemination of Chinese culture in the local population, especially the Chinese school students, through Chinese education and learning, after the precipitation of time, in the future through the extension of culture, can enhance the long-lasting influence of Chinese culture, easier to communicate with the local country's multiculturalism, and better to promote the all-round cultural exchanges between China and Paraguay.

In addition, there are two formal Chinese schools in Paraguay, the Zhongshan Overseas Chinese School in Ciudad del Este was established in 1987. In its heyday, the number of students reached 350. The other relatively smaller Paraguayan Chinese School, located in the city of Asuncion, was established in 1983. These two Chinese schools are funded in large part by donations from local

Chinese communities and associations. The enrollment in these two schools is not only for children of overseas Chinese and Paraguayan locals, but also attracts children of Brazilian, Argentinean, Korean, Japanese, and Arab expatriates to come and learn Chinese, which has made a great contribution to spreading Chinese culture and strengthening mutual understanding and exchange among local people.

#### 4.2 Strengthening economic and trade cooperation

In recent years, the economic and trade development between China and Paraguay has gained good momentum, and China has become an important trading partner country for Paraguay's international trade. According to the latest Foreign Trade Report issued by the Central Bank of Paraguay, in the first quarter of 2021, Paraguay's total foreign trade amounted to 5,800.8 million U.S. dollars, a year-on-year increase of 1.1%; the trade surplus was 396.2 million U.S. dollars, a year-on-year increase of 142.2 million dollars. Mainland China is the largest source of direct imports to Paraguay, and is the largest source of imports to Paraguay<sup>[35]</sup>.

"Mr. Chen, the president of Paraguayan Chinese Friendship Association, organized Paraguayan Chinese businessmen to attend the 16<sup>th</sup> China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen on September 12, 2012, and at the same time participated in the "Overseas Chinese Businessmen Invest in China Summit". Overseas Chinese Businessmen Invest in China Summit". Through the CIFIT, Paraguayan Chinese businessmen helped Chinese enterprises to understand the investment environment and investment information of Paraguay, helped Chinese enterprises to "go out", and promoted exchanges and cooperation between China and Paraguay<sup>[36]</sup>.

In the field of international trade between China and Paraguay, overseas Chinese play an important role. On the one hand, there is a large number of overseas Chinese engaged in international trade business; on the other hand, overseas Chinese are familiar with the market situation of China and Paraguay, and have the conditions and motivation to promote China-Paraguay trade. For example, according to statistics from the Paraguayan General Customs Administration, Chinese exports to Paraguay totaled 3.746 billion U.S. dollars in 2018, accounting for 28.12% of Paraguay's total imports, of which nearly 50 million U.S. dollars was contributed by imports from China by the enterprises of Jiang Juying, a famous Chinese businessman in Paraguay<sup>[37]</sup>.

In recent years, Paraguayan Chinese businessmen have gradually begun to transform from business to industry. At the same time, some larger Chinese enterprises have also begun to invest in Paraguay. Overseas Chinese people give full play to their own advantages and play the role of matchmaking in the investment activities of Chinese enterprises in Paraguay, which further promotes the

<sup>34</sup> 南美共门总会  
真情感动巴拉圭——南美共门总会会长蔡三义说“这是我应做的”[EB/OL].  
2007年10月12日[2022年3月20]. www.hmyzg.com.

<sup>35</sup>  
商务部国际贸易经济合作研究院 中国驻圣保罗总领馆 商务部对外投资和经济合作司对外投资合作国别(地区)巴拉圭指南[R]., 2019年.

<sup>36</sup> 李宗阁 厦门日报网“邀海内外侨界参加“九八”投洽会[N]. 中国新闻网  
2012年09月12日 13:52.

<sup>37</sup> 赵哲立  
奋斗的力量 70年 70侨 | 蒋菊英: 她的产品在南美家喻户晓, 连国家总统都为她站台[EB/OL]. 2019-09-04 20:58[2022年4月13日].  
www.thepaper.cn.

development of economic and trade cooperation between China and Paraguay.

For example, on October 8, 2018, the Board of Directors of Shandong Linglong Tire Company Limited made an announcement that it was preparing to sign a strategic cooperation agreement with SUNSET. After the implementation of this agreement, the annual share of the tire market in Paraguay reached more than 10%. In addition, in the Brazilian city all Chinese tires imported, the annual share also reached more than 10% [38]. This project was achieved thanks to the intermediary role played by the local Chinese businessmen.

In addition, the economic development of Paraguayan overseas Chinese in the local area has improved the socio-economic environment of the local country and promoted economic and trade exchanges between China and Paraguay, which will also promote comprehensive cooperation and exchanges between China and Paraguay.

### 4.3 Promoting governmental exchanges

China's civil diplomacy and official diplomacy both represent national interests, both serve the country's foreign policy, both have different channels, complementary advantages, complementary, and the same way. Civilian diplomacy has the advantages and characteristics of flexibility, diversity, multi-channel, wide coverage, etc., which determines that it can make up for the limitations and shortcomings of official diplomacy, reduce diplomatic risks, and strive for greater room for maneuver for official diplomacy. Moreover, there are some things that cannot be done by the official government that the private sector may be able to do, or even do better; and there are some things that the official government is not in a good position to say that the private sector may be able to say [39]. Paraguayan overseas Chinese take advantage of their own strengths to carry out civil diplomacy activities, which is conducive to strengthening the comprehensive dialogue between China and Paraguay, and laying a good foundation for opening official exchanges between China and Paraguay.

"After arriving in Paraguay in 2000, Mr. Chen, the president of the Paraguayan Chinese Friendship Association, found that there was a great deal of security problems for local Chinese, and that local policies and regulations were not friendly to them. So he was requested by the local Chinese, in order to solve these problems resolutely joined the Paraguayan Liberal Party (Partido Liberal Radical Autentico, also known as the Blue Party), in order to seek the support and help of the local party's political power, Mr. Chen was then the chairman of the party, Julio Cesar Franco, personally introduced to the party's leadership and actively participate in the activities of the Liberal Party. Mr. Julio was elected Vice President of the Republic of Paraguay in 2000. Channels of mutual understanding and communication have been established between Mr. Chen and local government officials in Paraguay to resolve some of the disputes and controversies, including those of the overseas Chinese community, through dialogue, consultation and negotiation, and to broaden the points of convergence of interests and social consensus by expanding the friendly exchanges and mutual understanding among all

ethnic groups.

During his work in the political party, President Chen came into contact with many political party members and elites from all walks of life, and actively promoted the fine traditional virtues of the Chinese and taught them the concept of hard work and diligence on various occasions, which won the appreciation of the local people. As the Chinese seldom participated in the work of the political party, President Chen's active participation in the political party and his work performance was particularly outstanding, and he was received by the President of the Senate of the National Assembly, Dr. Carmona [40].

In addition, on November 25, 2009, at the invitation of the President of the Brazilian Federal Senate, Jia Qinglin, then Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), arrived at Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, on a special plane to begin his official friendship visit to Brazil. Because President Chen was involved in the work of local political parties while not forgetting to promote friendly cooperation and exchanges with his country of origin, and achieved greater results, he was received during Jia Qinglin's official visit to Brazil this time.

After the spread of the 2020 epidemic in Paraguay, President Jiang Juying sent the general manager of his company to the capital city of Asuncion, and suggested the President of Paraguay, in his capacity as a Chinese businessman, through the Political Department of the Presidential Office, to take quarantine measures as soon as possible and learn from China's successful experience of preventing and controlling epidemics. On March 11th, the President of Paraguay swiftly adopted the suggestion and ordered the closure of schools and places of public entertainment and the cancellation of gatherings across the country. On March 18th, the whole country of Paraguay was "sealed off" [41], which finally provided timely and effective policy advice for Paraguay to control the new crown epidemic.

In addition, Paraguayan Chinese have also given back to the local community in various ways to deepen mutual understanding and support with the local population. One month after the outbreak of the epidemic in Paraguay, the BCCPA proposed a "Love Pack" to warm up the local community. In the name of its personal enterprise, the assistance was initiated, and 12.6 tons of food were purchased, with basic supplies such as firewood, rice, oil and salt. These "Love Packs" are more than 20 kilograms each, and a total of 630 copies were prepared. On April 17, 2020, Mr. Jiang, the general manager of the company, took the company's volunteers and sent them to Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, to help local children and the elderly to tide over the difficult times [42]. Other associations have also made donations to overseas Chinese and local people through charitable activities.

### 5. Conclusion

This paper finds that there is a certain timeline missing in the historical research on Paraguayan Chinese diaspora, this

<sup>38</sup> 玲珑轮胎与南美经销商签约[J]. 橡塑技术与装备, 2018, 44(21):42.

<sup>39</sup> 李进军. 中国特色社会主义外交认识与建议[J]. 公共外交季刊, 2013(04):4.

<sup>40</sup> 资料来源: 笔者 2022 年 4 月 1 日通过微信采访“巴拉圭华人联谊会”陈会长所得.

<sup>41</sup> 邱王紫蕙, 徐玉涵, 蒋菊英: 回馈当地社会是侨胞最真诚的奉献[EB/OL]. 2020年04月28日18:16 [2022年3月22日]. [www.chinaql.org](http://www.chinaql.org).

<sup>42</sup> 张鲁楠, 海外侨胞抗疫说⑫蒋菊英: 回馈当地社会是侨胞最真诚的奉献[N]. 浙江侨联, 2020-04-27 19:53.

paper adds the development and evolution of Paraguayan Chinese diaspora in recent years, since the first batch of Chinese immigrants arrived in Paraguay in the middle of the 19th century, mainly from Guangdong Province and Hong Kong area, the number of people is relatively small. Since the 1950s, because Paraguay has the freest business environment in South America as well as lower tax burden, it attracts many Taiwanese businessmen to go to do business. The realization of free economic policies, among other things, has attracted many Taiwanese businessmen to Paraguay. New immigrants from Fujian, Guangdong, Zhejiang and other provinces began to arrive in Paraguay and gradually became the mainstay of the Chinese community. To date, there are around 50,000 Paraguayan Chinese. In terms of population distribution, the Paraguayan overseas Chinese population is highly concentrated in Ciudad del Este due to its favorable business environment. This paper analyzes the situation of Paraguayan overseas Chinese associations through interviews with local overseas Chinese leaders, and finds that local overseas Chinese associations are more active, with a large number of associations, good relations between old and new immigrant associations, strong cohesion, and a high degree of motivation to carry out civil diplomacy. In addition, Paraguay has not yet established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, so from another perspective, the field of Chinese diaspora to carry out civil diplomacy is more extensive and has more potential.

Overseas Chinese in Paraguay have actively carried out civil diplomacy activities in the fields of culture and education, economic and trade investment cooperation, and promotion of government by the people, and have achieved good results. Paraguayan Chinese have actively participated in local affairs, enthusiastically engaged in charitable industries, and given back to the local society. Some leaders of the associations actively participate in politics and serve the local communities and overseas Chinese, and are recognized by the Paraguayan government and the public, and their policy suggestions are often adopted. In addition, they have made great contributions to the comprehensive cooperation between their home countries and Paraguay. For example, they actively promoted Paraguay's participation in the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. With the gradual increase in the economic strength of Paraguayan overseas Chinese, coupled with the fact that in recent years, some medium- and large-sized Chinese enterprises have begun to invest in Paraguay, Chinese businessmen have the advantage of having a deeper understanding of the market situation in both countries, and a better understanding of the national conditions and laws of the country in which they reside, so the overseas Chinese have a great deal of potential for Sino-Paraguayan economic and trade cooperation.

To sum up, Paraguayan overseas Chinese have utilized their own advantages to actively carry out civil diplomacy activities, which is conducive to strengthening the comprehensive cooperation between China and Paraguay. With the steady growth in the number of Paraguayan overseas Chinese, the enhancement of the economic strength of Chinese businessmen, the development of overseas Chinese associations gaining momentum and actively contributing to the local society, Paraguayan overseas Chinese will certainly lay a good foundation for the opening of official exchanges between China and

Paraguay.

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