ABSTRACT

The central focus of this exercise is a comparison of the response of Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen towards the economic modernization of Late Ch'ing and Deng Xiao Peng's period, paying special attention to the characteristics of the responses. The exercise begins with an overview of the measures taken by the Late Ch'ing government and present Chinese government in attracting overseas Chinese capital.

With the emphasis on Singapore in particular, this exercise explored the role played by Southeast Asian Chinese businessmen via examination and comparison of the investment strategies, patterns, location and channels taken by them in both periods. Of special interest is the different investment patterns that resulted from the setting up of trading networks in Deng's period. This is in contrast to the individual-based and less-organised investment styles in Late Ch'ing's period.

It is widely recognised that overseas Chinese businessmen in both modernization periods have lent their expertise and capital to China. What is of significance is that underpinning these investment trends, the source of motivation has changed from patriotism to profit seeking, mainly due to the change in identity of overseas Chinese businessmen between the two periods. However, the trend of investment has also caused concern among the indigenous residents of host countries. Thus, an analysis is done on the underlying factors and conditions.

Using Late Ch'ing's experience as a precedent and the observations on the current modernization period, the further insights gained from this exercise allows us to come to a conclusion on the future investment trend.