JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY CHINA
https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2021.1884962

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Guarding Against the Threat of a Westernising Education: A Comparative Study of Chinese and Saudi Cultural Security Discourses and Practices Towards Overseas Study

Yan Xiaojun and Mohammed Alsudairi

The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

ABSTRACT

Cultural security has become a major watchword in the national security discourses of both the People's Republic of China and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Within this discourse, overseas study has been imagined as a conduit for cultural and ideological subversion threatening the authority of the prevailing regimes. At the same time, overseas study has been actively encouraged by both the Chinese and Saudi states as an important element in their modernization projects. In the past two decades, the Chinese and Saudi overseas student populations have been some of the largest in the world. The article seeks to explore these tensions by examining the conceptualization and practice of cultural security in the PRC and Saudi Arabia through their management of overseas study.

From Riyadh to Beijing, and from Moscow to Tehran, to remain in power authoritarian regimes must deal with two contradictory state projects simultaneously: modernization and securitization. These are two sides of the same coin. Successful development, or modernization, bestows upon the regime political legitimacy based on performance and factually supports its official discourse about the need to accept the trade-off between a 'better life' and 'freedom'. Securitization, on the other hand, safeguards the regime from the internal and external threats of heterogeneous and alien institutions, heretical ideologies and treasonous political forces that can stir up internal turmoil and undermine the power base of the ruling clique. At times, the simultaneous implementation of this dual-project may prove to be self-conflicting, and thus an authoritarian government must always carefully balance the efforts it invests in modernization and national security to guarantee the ultimate safety of the regime. The reconciliation of these two contradictory state projects is explored through a cross-national case study of government cultural securitization of overseas student populations by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).[1] Over the past few decades, both states have actively promoted overseas

CONTACT Yan Xiaojun xyan@hku.hk

[1]A rich body of scholarship on Chinese and Saudi overseas study has emerged in recent decades. A portion of this research has sought to analyze the structural out-flows of Chinese students and the consequences this entails for the modernization goals of the PRC. David Zweig, 'To return or not to return? Politics vs. economics in China's brain drain', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 32(1), (1997), 92–125.; Cong Cao, 'China's brain drain at the high end: Why government policies have failed to attract first-rate academics to return', *Asian Population Studies*, 4(3), (2008), 331–345.; Other works have attempted to gauge how experiences abroad have re-shaped the views and attitudes of foreign students towards several critical issues, ranging from their take on to non-traditional gender-sexual norms. Ahmed Alhazmi and Berenice Nyland, 'The Saudi Arabian international student experience: From a gender-segregated society to studying in a mixed-gender environment', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 43(3), (2013), 346–365.; Nisreen Alsahafi and Seong-Chul Shin, 'Factors affecting the academic and cultural adjustment of Saudi international students in Australian universities', *Journal of International Students* 7(1), (2017), 53–72.; Beyond these, a few other studies have endeavoured to explore the historical and contemporary political implications arising from overseas study, albeit largely with reference to the PRC. Ruth Hayhoe, 'China's returned scholars and the democracy movement', *The China Quarterly* 122, (1990), 293–302.; Dingxin Zhao, 'Foreign study as

study as a conduit for knowledge-transfer and as a catalyst for modernization. As a result, by the mid-2000s, the Chinese and Saudi overseas student populations grew to rank first and fourth place in global tertiary-level education outflows.[2] Official estimates for the period 2014–2015 place their numbers, respectively, at 544 thousand and 134 thousand dispersed across the world.[3] This growth became a source of insecurity for Chinese and Saudi elites. Yuan Guiren, the former Chinese Minister of Education, commented in 2015 that students returning from abroad could become unwitting carriers of Western values, thus endangering national security and stability.[4] In 2015, a strongly-worded editorial from the *Huanqiu Shibao* decried how the 'post-1980s and post-1990s' generations of Chinese overseas students were easy targets of manipulation for foreign hostile forces seeking to engineer regime-change in the PRC.[5] Likewise, the director of the General Administration of Ideological Security (GAIS), Abdulrahman al-Hadlak expressed opposition for the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) on the basis of his 'readings of contemporary history and political parties, as Saudis were affected, during earlier stages of the overseas study missions, by some erroneous ideas'.[6]

The PRC and KSA have responded to the promises and dangers posed by overseas study through a strategy of 'cultural security' (Ch. *wenhua anquan*, Ar. *al-amn al-thaqafi*) aimed at counteracting non-military ideational threats to the cultural sphere understood to also correspond to the political and ideological spheres.[7] The actualized practice of cultural security involves the state's utilization of preventative and curative measures to minimize the ideological corruption of students and their capacity for subversion while ensuring that overseas study, and the benefits arising from it, is not disrupted. The article seeks to examine the cultural securitization of overseas study as a way to understand how some authoritarian states have sought to balance the conflicting imperatives of modernization and securitization under conditions of globalization. More significantly, the case study sheds light on the deeper structural commonality between the PRC and KSA political regimes arising from their simultaneous yet autochthonous embrace of cultural security: their ideocratic character. This shared regime-type, in conjunction with the facilitating conditions of the first decade of the post-Cold War era, explains why these outwardly different and 'exceptional' authoritarian regimes have generated similar responses with respect to the dilemma posed by overseas study.[8]

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a safety-valve: The experience of China's university students going abroad in the eighties', *Higher Education* 31(2), (1996), 145–163.; Stacey Bieler, *'Patriots' Or 'traitors'?: A History of American-educated Chinese Students*(ME Sharpe, 2004).; Cheng Li, 'Foreign-educated returnees in the people's Republic of China: Increasing political influence with limited official power', *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 7(4), (2006), 493–516.; He Li, 'Returned students and political change in China', *Asian Perspective*, (2006), 5–29; Donglin Han, 'Returnees and their Political Impact: Evidence from returned students and trainees from the Soviet Union in China, 1950–1966', *Journal of Contemporary China* 22(84), (2013), 1106–1123.

[2]'Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students', *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*, undated, accessed July 7, 2017, http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow.

[3]'2016 niandu woguo chuguo liuxue renyuan qingkuang tongji'[Statistics of Outbound Overseas Students of 2016], *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jiaoyubu*, March 1, 2017, accessed September 16, 2017, http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_fbh/moe_2069/xwfbh_2017n/xwfb_170301/170301_sjtj/201703/t20170301_297676.html; '52nd Annual Report', *Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency*, (2016), 38.

[4]Yuan Guiren, 'Bawo dashi zhuoyan dashi nuli zuohao xinxingshixia gaoxiao xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo'[Understanding and Focusing on the Larger Picture, Improving Thought Work of the New Era in Institutions of Higher Education], *Zhongguo gongchandang xinwen*, February 2, 2015, accessed May 11, 2020, http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2015/0202/c49157-26490437.html.

[5]'Hostile forces target younger generation', *The Global Times*, May 25, 2015, accessed June 1, 2018, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/923528.shtml; 'Minitrue: Delete Global Times Commentary on June 4th Letter [Updated]', *China Digital Times*, May 26, 2015, accessed June 2, 2018, http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2015/05/minitrue-delete-global-times-commentary-on-overseas-forces-inciting-students/.

[6]Naif Al-Rashid and Abdullah Al-Falah, 'Al-Qa'eda' tujanid fi maghasil al-mawta' [Al-Qa'eda is Recruiting in Morgues], *Al-Watan*, June 2, 2012, accessed June 8, 2019, http://www.alwatan.com.sa/Sports/News_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=101807&CategoryID=6.

[7]Kingsley Edney, 'Building National Cohesion and Domestic Legitimacy: A Regime Security Approach to Soft Power in China', *Politics* 35(3–4), (2015), 264.

[8]Existing scholarship has recurrently depicted these polities as exceptional and distinct. Scott Kennedy, 'Overcoming Our Middle Kingdom Complex: Finding China's Place in Comparative Politics', in *Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China's Capitalist Transformation*, ed. Scott Kennedy(Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011), 8–9.; Fred Lawson, 'Keys to the Kingdom: Current Scholarship on Saudi Arabia', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43(4), (2011), 737–47.

This research article, which draws upon multi-language sources and interviews, is organized into four sections.[9] The first section provides a background on the concurrent conceptualizations and state embraces of cultural security in the PRC and KSA that began in the late 1990s, highlighting the political and ideological reading of cultural security found in both contexts, and the centrality of the state in the emergence of this phenomenon. The second section is an overview of how overseas study is problematized in the Chinese and Arabic-language cultural security discourse. The third section investigates the cultural securitization measures adopted by the PRC and KSA in their management of overseas study, taking into account differences arising from each state's unique political-economy of overseas study. The final section interrogates the key findings and considers the broader significance of what the state-led embrace of cultural security, as expressed in this case study, signifies regarding the classification of these political regimes.

Cultural Security: Conceptualization and State Embrace

From the late 1990s onwards, cultural security emerged as a major watchword in PRC and KSA academic and media discourse.[10] This development could be evidenced from the exponential growth in the number of available cultural security studies written in Chinese and Arabic. A cursory search of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure database for the term 'cultural security' returned nearly 4,185 items published between 1999 and 2018, with a definitive increase recorded from 2007.[11] The Saudi cultural security discourse has undergone a comparable trajectory. An online compilation of cultural security works included more than 850 Saudi titles on the subject from the 1960s, ranging from books to articles and sermons, with the vast majority published after 1998.[12] A search for the term 'cultural security' on the database of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences (NAUSS), an institute affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior, returned 1,733 items for 1999–2018.[13] 'Sauress', an online media database for 46 Saudi domestic and international newspapers, showed nearly 40,000 references for the term 'cultural security' in 2012–2018 alone.[14]

In the Chinese and Saudi cultural security discourse, an all-encompassing understanding of culture, denoting a people's way of life, is widely adopted. It is imagined to include all material

[8]Existing scholarship has recurrently depicted these polities as exceptional and distinct. Scott Kennedy, 'Overcoming Our Middle Kingdom Complex: Finding China's Place in Comparative Politics', in *Beyond the Middle Kingdom: Comparative Perspectives on China's Capitalist Transformation*, ed. Scott Kennedy(Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011), 8–9.; Fred Lawson, 'Keys to the Kingdom: Current Scholarship on Saudi Arabia', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43(4), (2011), 737–47.

[9]Fourteen interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia in Arabic with officials, security specialists and researchers working in GAIS and several security sector-affiliated institutions. Each interview lasted between one and three hours. Several follow-up interviews were organized, particularly with GAIS officials, one of the key entities involved in cultural security work in Saudi Arabia. All interviews were held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, between November 2017 and February 2018.

[10]Jie Xuefang, '1999nian yilai woguo wenhua anquan yanjiu shuping'[Review on the Study of Cultural Security Since 1999], *Jiangnan shehui xueyuan xuebao* 9(3), (September 2009), 1–8.; Liu Yuejin, 'Guojia wehua anquan wenti'[On the Problem of National Cultural Security], *Wenhua yishu yanjiu* 4, no. 2(April 2011), 20.; David Bandurski, 'A Few Words on China's New "Cultural Revolution"', *China Media Project*, 17 December 2009, accessed May 12, 2020, http://cmp.hku.hk/2009/12/17/3522/; David Bandurski, 'The Pundits of Cultural Soft Power', *China Media Project*, 26 November 2012, Accessed May 12, 2020, http://cmp.hku.hk/2012/11/26/29403/; Hassan Abdullah Al-Dejah, 'Nadariyat al-amn al-fikri'[Theories of Thought Security](paper presented at the Nahu istratijiya lil amn al-fikri wal thaqafi fi al- 'alam al-islami Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2013), 3.; Sa'id bin Ali Hassan Al-Qulayti, 'Al-takhteet al-istratiji litahgeeg al-amn al-fikri bil mamlaka al-'arabiyya al-su'udiyya'[Strategic Planning to Realize Thought Security in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](paper presented at the Al-mafaheem wal tahadiyyat First National Security Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 17–20 May 2009), 2–3.; Thiyab Musa Al-Badaynah, *Al-amn al-watani fi 'asr al-'awlama*[*Thought Security in the Age of Globalization*] (Riyadh: NAUSS, 2011), 7–22.

[11]Of the total, nearly 15.4%(271) were funded by the National Social Science Fund. Accessed December 16, 2018, http://epub.cnki.net/kns/brief/default_result.aspx.

[12]Ali bin Naif Al-Shahud, 'Mawsu'at al-gazu al-fikri wal thaqafi wa atharuhu 'ala al-muslimeen'[An Encyclopaedia of Thought and Cultural Invasion and its Consequences on Muslims], *Saaid*, 18 November 2008, Accessed May 2, 2020, https://saaid.net/book/open.php?cat=89&book=3723.

[13]Accessed May 7, 2019, http://repository.nauss.edu.sa/discover?scope=%2F&query=%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A+%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A&submit=&rpp=10.

[14]Accessed December 17, 2018, http://www.sauress.com/search/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A.

expressions, language, customs, religion(s), lifestyles, and the thoughts and values that make up the signifying or semiotic meaning-making system of a given group of people or nation.[15] This conceptualization arises from the historical diffusion of Euro-American ethnographic understandings of culture across the Global South as a consequence of the colonial encounter in the late nineteenth.[16] Operating with such an ambiguous definition means that the securitization of culture could involve a broad range of domains conceived as part of a people's way of life. Of particular interest in these scholarly works are those domains—political values, political culture, and ideology—that could have an impact on the legitimacy and authority of the political regime.[17] If any of these domains are allowed to be 'subverted' (*shentou*) or 'deviated' (*inhiraf*) by internal or external forces, undesirable outcomes will inevitably arise, including disobedience and rebellion against the state, or internal deviations from national goals and policies. Because of this, cultural security, as a form of non-traditional security, is considered interchangeable with 'political security' (Ch. *zhengzhi anquan*, Ar, *al-amn al-siyasi*) and 'ideological security' (Ch. *yishixingtai anquan*, Ar. *al-amn al-fikri*), fusing thus the categories of culture, ideology, nation and political regime together.[18] Cultural security is realized through the state's enactment of preventative and curative measures aimed at inoculating and cleansing society (the carrier of culture) from the corruption of internal and external forces.

The formation and growth of these Chinese and Saudi discourses, as well as their espousal of a uniform and state-centric view of culture, is not coincidental, but rather, reflects state preferences and control over knowledge-production processes. The authors of many of these cultural security works, published in the form of academic journals (or books), as articles on state-controlled media, or collected papers in government-sponsored conferences, are typically state-employees affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), elite universities, or security-focused government institutions such as the Public Security College, the King Fahad Security College (KFSC) and NAUSS. The direction and content of their research is often shaped by state policies and political language, incentives regimes (funding from the National Social Science Fund), and cooperation with state security apparatuses engaged in cultural security work.[19] For example, between 2007 and 2016, the offices of GAIS, the main entity entrusted with cultural security work in KSA, were located on the KFSC campus, leading to strong exchanges between the two entities.[20]

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[15]Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 87–8.; Terry Eagleton, *Culture*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 1.

[16]For this diffusion process, see Douglas Howland, *Borders of Chinese Civilization: Geography and History at Empire's End*(Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 247.; Issa Boullata, *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*(New York: State University of New York, 1990), 12.

[17]Ma Zhenchao, 'Zhuanxingqi de yishixingtai anquan yu zhengzhi wending'[On Ideological Security and Political Stability in the Transition Period], *Gongan daxue xuebao* 3, (2001), 37–40.; Pan Yihe, 'Dangqian guojia tixizhong de wenhua anquan wenti'[On the Current Condition of National Cultural Security], *Zhejiang daxue xuebao* 35(2), (March 2005), 13–4.; Han Yuan, 'Guojia wenhua anquan yinlun'[Preliminary Thesis on National Cultural Security], *Dangdai shijie yu shehuizhuyi* 6, (2008), 90–4.; Wang Ruixiang, 'Lun zongti guojia anquanguan shiyezhong de guojia wenhua anquan',[On the National Cultural Security from the Perspective of A Holistic Concept of National Security], *Shehuizhuyi yanjiu* 5, (2016), 70–5.; Zhao Li and Sheng Zousi, 'Wenhua anquan' ruhe wei guojia anquan baojia huhang'[How Can Cultural Security Safeguard National Security], *Fazhi ribao*, 23 April 2014.; Cao Jianwen, 'Yishixingtai anquan de wenhua shenshi yu jiangou'[A Cultural Interpretation and Construction of Ideological Security], *Makesizhuyi yanjiu* 4, (2017), 71.; Abdulrahman bin Ma'alla Alwayhiq, 'Al-amn al-fikri: mahiyatuhu wa dawabituhu'[Thought Security: Definitions and Criteria], in *Al-amn al-fikri*[*Thought Security*](Riyadh: NAUSS, 2005), 60.; Al-Dejah, 'Nadariyat al-amn al-fikri' [Theories of Thought Security], 3–5.; Mut'ib bin Shadid bin Muahmmad Al-Hammash, 'Istratijiyat ta'zeez al-amn al-fikri'[Strategy to Realize Thought Security](paper presented at the Al-mafaheem wal tahadiyyat First National Security Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 17–20 May 2009), 8.; Al-Badaynah, *Al-amn al-watani fi 'asr al-'awlama*[*Thought Security in the Age of Globalization*], 24.; Ali bin Fayiz Al-Jahny, *Al-ruya al-istratijiya litahgeeg al-amn al-fikri wal ijtima'i* [*The Strategic Vision to Realize Thought and Societal Security*](Riyadh: Dar jami'at Naif lil nashr, 2016), 75–6.

[18]Li Zhenming, 'Wenhua anquan shi jianshe wenhua qiangguo de qianti'[Cultural Security is the Precondition for Building a Culturally Strong Nation], *Renmin ribao*, 4 January 2012.; Fan Jianxin, 'Shehui sichao yu wenhua anquan'[Trend of Cultural Thoughts and Cultural Security], *Hongqi wengao*(July 2017).; Muhammad Musa Ahmed, 'Himayat al-amn al-fikri'[Protecting Thought Security], *Majalat al-amn wal hayat* 292(October 2006), 47.; Ma'alwi bin Abdullah Al-Shahrani, *Athar al-hirak al-ma'rifi 'ala al-amn al-fikri*[The Impact of Knowledge Movements on Thought Security](Riyadh: NAUSS, 2012), 20–2, 159.

[19]According to information available from the National Social Science Fund, there were 47 funded projects on cultural security' between 2000 and 2017. During the same period, there were 43 funded projects on 'ideological security'. Accessed November 14, 2018, http://fz.people.com.cn/skygb/sk/index.php/Index/seach?xmname=%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8&p=1.

This state-driven dynamic is brought into clearer focus when considering the broader official trend of embracing cultural security in the PRC and KSA since the late 1990s. This trend could be discerned from the growing frequency in which the term was invoked by Chinese and Saudi leaders.[21] An institutionalization process, which culminated with the identification of culture as an area of focus for newly created organs like the (PRC) National Security Commission and GAIS, can also be counted as evidence for this trend.[22] State-led cultural securitization has also been felt in various domains over the past decade, most notably education. Since 2014, the Communist Party of China's (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection, in the spirit of 'document 9', initiated a sustained annual cultural security campaign investigating universities, research institutions and cadre schools for any signs of ideological Westernization.[23] Policies were unveiled in recent years to enhance classroom monitoring, limit the use of Western textbooks, and to expel ideologically compromised teachers and professors.[24] In KSA, the Ministry of Education established a specialized unit in May 2015 responsible for counteracting subversive influences among educators and students including secularism, liberalism, religious extremism and sectarianism.[25] In December 2017, a more centralized entity, the Centre for Thought Awareness, was formed to oversee the proliferating number of thought security units in universities and schools entrusted with combating ideological corruption and strengthening patriotic and loyalist sentiment among students.[26]

Cultural Security Discourse on Overseas Study

Overseas study is a transformative experience that entails a journey, in pursuit of a foreign education, by susceptible youth to environments beyond the control of their families, society and state. In the Chinese and Saudi cultural security discourse, this transformation can have negative consequences. Overseas students are at risk of becoming—using the description preferred by some PRC scholars—'banana

[20]Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.

[21]Rida Radwan, 'Al-amn al-fikri'[Thought Security], *Al-amn wal hayat* no 183, (1998), 34–35.; 'Al-amir Naif awal man nabaha ela khuturah al-gazu al-fikri'[Prince Naif is the First to Have Warned About the Dangers of Thought Invasion], *Al-amn wa al-hayat* 363(June-July 2012), 68–9.; Matthew Johnson, 'Securitizing Culture in Post-Deng China: An Evolving National Strategic Paradigm, 1994–2014', *Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts* 4(1), (2017), 62–80.

[22]'Zhongyang guojia anquan weiyuanhui diyici huiyi zhaokai Xi Jinping fabiao zhongyao jianghua'[The Central National Security Commission Holds Its First Plenum Meeting, Xi Jinping Delivered a Keynote Speech], *Zhongyang zhengfu menhu wangzhan*, (15 April 2014), accessed July 3, 2017, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-04/15/content_2659641.htm; 'Al-amn al-fikri'[Thought Security], *Ministry of Interior*, undated, accessed March 4, 2018, https://www.moi.gov.sa/wps/portal/Home/sectors/ideological-security/contents/!ut/p/z0/fY7BCsIwEER_pZcey6ZpFK-loLYeVDxYcwlLCLIaU9tui_69wbN4Gt7wGAY0tKADznRFpi6gj3zRSyNqpba5kruVOqxFeZRNVVa13CsFJxygAf1fiit063tdgrZdYPdia-Cmm987yhD4ZnZ0G4ncqftYJDqI4IlVUoGWaicmNX3c0bnaBTV5kYpFJkRdo4qPnfXP-ALYPZwE!/.

[23]'Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation', *ChinaFile*, November 8, 2013, accessed May 3, 2020, https://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation;Xi Jinping, 'Zai quanguo dangxiao gongzuo huiyishang de jianghua'[A Speech at the National Conference on the Work of Party Schools], *Qiushi*, April 30, 2016, accessed June 19, 2017, http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2016-04/30/c_1118772415.htm.

[24]'Jiaoyubu: juebuneng rang xuanchuan xifang jiazhi guannian jiaocai jin ketang'[Ministry of Education: Absolutely Not Allow Textbooks Advocating Western Values to Enter into the Classroom], *Xinhua*, January 30, 2015, accessed May 3, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/mil/2015-01/30/c_127438444.htm.; 'Jiaoyubuzhang: didui shili de shentou shouxian xuanding de shi jiaoyu xitong' [Minister of Education: The First Target of Infiltration of Opposition Forces is the Education System], *Zeguanggewang*, December 10, 2016), accessed August 2, 2017, http://news.sina.com.cn/c/nd/2016-12-10/doc-ifxypipt0847554.shtml.

[25]'Wazir al-ta'leem yu'lin an tasis idara ta'ni bil amn al-fikri'[Minister of Education Announces the Establishment of a Department Concerned with Thought Security], *Al-Riyadh*, May 4, 2015, accessed July 23, 2017, http://www.alriyadh.com/1045147.; 'Al-ta'leem tuhasin talabataha min al-libraliyya wal 'illmaniyya'[Education Ministry Fortifies its Students Against Liberalism and Secularism], *Makkah*, October 28, 2016, accessed July 23, 2017, http://makkahnewspaper.com/article/471320/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B5%D9%86-%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9.

[26]Rashid Al-Sakkran, 'Insha markaz lil wa'ii al-fikri fi al-ta'leem'[The Establishment of a Center for Thought Awareness in the Ministry of Education], *Al-Riyadh*, December 27, 2017, accessed December 28, 2017, http://www.alriyadh.com/1649779.

people' (*xiangjiaoren*) who, while retaining the outward features of Chineseness, are more akin to foreigners in both heart and spirit.[27] In a comparable fashion, their Saudi counterparts (and especially those embedded within religious institutions) speak of students returning with 'Muslim Arab faces' but in possession of 'stern Western hearts'.[28] Such corrupted youth then either choose to remain abroad due to the incompatibility between their newfound mindsets and the mainstream culture, undermining in turn the knowledge-transfer process, or return and spread their polluted thoughts and licentious behaviour across society, corroding its moral integrity and cohesion in turn.[29]

These discussions also focus upon one of the most disconcerting transformations that could arise from overseas study: the political. Overseas students are viewed as easy targets for ideological manipulation and 'cultural aggression' (Ch. *wenhua qinlue*, Ar. *gazu thaqafi*) by Western hostile forces. The latter, through generous offerings of financial assistance, research opportunities, a biased and Orientalising education, and even promises of citizenship (conveyed through intelligence services), lure students into accepting Western ideological values and modes of thinking contrary to those found in their home countries.[30] Inculcated with a 'pro-American' outlook, these targets of subversion gradually embrace the role of a reserve force or fifth-column working to further the interests of their Western masters.[31] Co-opted returnees then seek to penetrate the political system and quietly engineer 'peaceful evolution' (*heping yanbian*) aimed at changing the regime, reversing the course of national modernization and reducing the country into a state of vassalage to the West.[32] A prominent cultural security expert associated with CASS likened such individuals to Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi, the son of Libya's late dictator, Mu'ammar al-Qaddafi.[33] Brainwashed by the London School of Economics, the Westernized Saif al-Islam not only advised his father to relinquish the country's nascent nuclear program in 2003, but to disastrously embrace neo-liberal economic policies that triggered the popular uprising of 2011 which ultimately led to the demise of the regime.

[27]Li Minghua, *Zhongxi wenhua chongjibo*[*The Shockwaves of Chinese and Western Cultures*] (Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 2007), 4–9.; Wang Huiyao & Miao Lu, eds., 'Liuxue rechaoxia zhongguo xuyao guanzhu de zhuyao wenti ji jianyi'[Important Issues and Suggestions in Light of China's Hightide of Overseas Studies], in *Zhongguo liuxue fazhan baogao*(2)(Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013), 51–52.; Zhao Li & Wang Kun, 'Zhongguo liuxuesheng nianling qudi huafei zengduo'[Chinese Overseas Students Tend to be Younger, but Spend More], *Qiushi*, November 14, 2015, accessed January 7, 2019, http://www.qstheory.cn/zhuanqu/bkjx/2015-11/14/c_1117142832.htm.

[28]Abdulaziz Al-Badah, *Al-'ibti'ath: tarikuh wa atharuh* [*Overseas Study: History and Impact*](n.p., 2010), 71, 94.

[29]Liao Jianping, & Qu Kun, 'Dangdai daxuesheng ruhe yingdui xifang wenhua shentou de diaocha yu sikao—yi hunan bufen gaoxiao weilie'[Investigation and Thoughts on the Response of Contemporary University Students to the Cultural Infiltration of the West], *Jiaoyujie zazhishe*,(May 2017).; Han Qinghua, 'Xifang wenhua shentouxia dangdai zhongguoren hunyinguan bianqian'[Transformation of the Concept of Marriage of Contemporary Chinese People Under the Cultural Infiltration of West], *Kejiao daokan* 18,(2018).; "Al-'ibti'ath(khutbah)" [Overseas Study(Sermon)], *Mohammed Salih Al-Munjid*, April 15, 2011, accessed September 3, 2017, https://almunajjid.com/1295.; 'Al-Barak: ibti'ath rijal al-haya lidirasat al-injiliziya 'khud'a hadafuha taghreebuhum'[Al-Barak: Sending the Men of the Commission (Abroad) to Learn English is a Plot to Westernize Them], *Al-Weeam*, April 11, 2013, accessed January 2, 2019, https://www.alweeam.com.sa/194558/البراكابتعاث-رجال-الهيئة-لدارسة-الان/.

[30]Jia Xuyang, 'Lun xifang heping yanbian zhanluezhong de qingnian yinsu' [On the Youth Factor in the 'Peaceful Evolution' Strategy of the West], *Zhongguo gongchandang xinwenwang* (9 February 2010).; Huang Changyi, & Yao Jinyan, 'Xifang wenhua shentou de yunxing jizhi, qian zai fengxian ji yingdui fangan'[The Mechanism and Potential Danger of the Cultural Infiltration of the West and Our Response Plan], *Makesizhuyi yanjiu* 9,(2016).; Al-Badah, Abdulaziz, *Al-'ibti'ath*[*Overseas Study*], 49, 59.; Interview with NAUSS academic, 12 December 2017.; Interview with NAUSS academic, 17 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 31 January 2018.

[31]Jia Xuyang, 'Lun xifang heping yanbian zhanluezhong de qingnian yinsu'[On the Youth Factor in the 'Peaceful Evolution' Strategy of the West].; Liu Jianwu, 'Heping yanbian zhongguo shi xifang guojia buke gaibian de changqi zhanlue'[The 'Peaceful Evolution' Strategy Is the Long Term Strategy of the Wes], *Haijiang luntan*,(3 November 2016).; Ma Weikang, 'Guanyu yi meiguo weishou de xifang fada zibenzhuyi guojia dui woguo jinxing wenhua shentou xianxiang de chubu tanjiu'[A Preliminary Study into the Cultural Infiltration Strategy of the Western Powers Led by the United States], *Qiushi*,(20 October 2015), http://www.qstheory.cn/politics/2015-10/20/c_1116882327.htm(accessed 6 January 2018).

[32]'Meiguo ruhe "heping yanbian" zhongguo'[How Does the United States Undertake its 'Peaceful Evolution' Strategy in China], *Zhongguowang*,(June 2002), http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/ch-yuwai/328165.htm(accessed 24 August 2017).; Russell Ong, '"Peaceful Evolution", "Regime Change" and China's Political Security', *Journal of Contemporary China* 16(53), (2007), 717–727.

[33]Zhu Jidong, 'Sulian wangdang wangguo guochengzhong de jice fazhi gaige xianjing ji jingshi'[Several Traps and Lessons of Legal Reform During the Process of the Demise of the Party and State of the Soviet Union], *Qiushi*,(11 May 2015), http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/hqwg/2015-05/11/c_1115237609.htm(accessed 4 November 2018).

Unlike in the PRC, the Saudi narrative is more divided over how to appraise the political implications of overseas study. This probably reflects the tensions that surrounded the state's inauguration of KASP in 2005 and the broader ideological struggle that pitted conservative and liberal constituencies against one another over it. Conservatives portrayed the program as a plot to Westernize the Kingdom through the machinations of a treacherous fifth-column largely made up of an American-aligned liberal technocratic elite.[34] In a public letter addressed to the royal court from 2010, a prominent religious scholar decried 'the sad trend recently in expanding the number of students heading to the West and elsewhere … . thereby increasing the number of Westernizers whose thoughts have been polluted by the West'.[35] Opponents to KASP within the Ministry of Education inserted material into the curriculum in 2011 warning of the dangers of overseas study.[36] In 2014, activists distributed anti-overseas study pamphlets among Saudi youth in the United States, an act that prompted the head of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Attaché Mission (SACM) Mohammed al-'Issa to condemn this as a misguided attack on an irreversible policy of the state.[37]

Cultural security officials, including the now retired head of GAIS al-Hadlak, among others, have shared in many of the misgivings expressed by conservatives over KASP.[38] Nevertheless, because the program had royal court backing, cultural security specialists had to diffuse these criticisms in different ways. While acknowledging the problematic aspects of overseas study, some emphasized their confidence in the patriotism of Saudi youth, downplaying the ability of foreign actors to alter their allegiances.[39] Others maintained that overseas students were in danger, but that they were threatened less by Westernization and more by radicalization from Islamist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS).[40] This argument not only turned the tables on conservative constituencies whilst upholding the threat perception of KASP, but was also substantiated by the efforts of militant organizations to target impressionable overseas students for

[34]Abdulaziz Al-Badah, *Al-'ibti'ath* [*Overseas Study*], 79–98, 107–114.; Interview with NAUSS academic, 17 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 31 January 2018.; Interview with KFSC academic, 1 February 2018.

[35]'Khatar al-tawasu' fi al-ibti'ath 'ala bilad al-haramayin lil sheikh "abdulmuhsin al-"abbad hafidahu allah'[The Danger of Expanding Overseas Study Upon the Land of the Two Mosques for Sheik 'Abdulmushin al-'Abbad May God Preserve Him], *Multaqa Ahl Al-Hadeeth*,(30 June 2010), http://www.ahlalhdeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?t=215854(accessed 12 September 2017).

[36]'"Khatar al-ibti'ath" wa dugut "aldemokratiyya wal islah" … 'anaween kadeeda fi manahij madat "al-hadeeth"' [Dangers of Overseas Study and the Pressures of Democracy and Reform … New Titles in the Curriculum of Hadith], *Al-Hayat*, (14 September 2011), http://daharchives.alhayat.com/issue_archive/Hayat%20KSA/2011/9/14/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%95%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%86%D9%87%D8%AC-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB.html (accessed 3 May 2020).

[37]Abdulrahman Bawazir, 'Bahth munahith li "al-ibti'ath" yuhathir al-mubta'atheen al-su'udiyyeen fi amrika' [A Report Against Overseas Study Warns Saudi Overseas Students in America], *Al-Hayat*,(30 December 2014), http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/6534075(accessed 15 August 2018).

[38]A quantitative study commissioned by the GAIS-affiliated Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz chair for moral values at the University of King Abdulaziz in Jeddah for example showed a strong-correlation between experiences abroad and shifts in political values, with the most pronounced change observed among those who had studied in the United States. Ibrahim Sa'di & Marwan al-Harbi, 'Al-taghayur al-qimi lada al-'aideen min al-ibti'ath al-khariji fi daw ba'th al-mutaghayirat al-nafsiyya wal dimographiyya'[Changes in Values Among Returnees from Overseas Study in Light of Psychological and Demographic Transformations],(King Abdulaziz University, 2017), 40–46.; Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 31 January 2018.

[39]Khalid Al-Salih, 'Ameen rabbitat al-'alam al-islami lil eqtisadiyya: laysa fil ibti'ath aye "taghreeb"'[General-Secretary of the Muslim World League to Aleqtisadiyya: There is no Westernization (Danger) from Overseas Study], *Aleqtisadiyya*,(21 June 2014), http://www.aleqt.com/2014/06/21/article_859557.html(accessed 17 September 2017).; Abdullah Al-`Uwayid,Al-mubta'athun bayna al-taghreeb wal taghyeeb'[Overseas Students Between Westernization and Neglect], *Al-Hayat*,(16 May 2015), http://www.alhayat.com/Opinion/Letters/9188794/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AB%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%A8 (accessed 16 September 2017).

[40]Caryle Murphy, 'Saudi Arabia tries to keep the Islamic State from recruiting its youth', *Public Radio International*,(2 March 2015), https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-03-02/saudi-arabia-tries-keep-islamic-state-recruiting-its-youth(accessed 17 September 2017).; Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.

recruitment.[41] A particularly notorious case was that of Mish'al al-Suhaymi, a Saudi overseas student in Australia who travelled to Iraq and ended his life as an ISIS suicide bomber in 2015.[42]

Proponents of cultural security in both countries have called for the adoption of moderate strategies, involving preventative and curative measures, that seek to minimize the negative fallout arising from overseas study while keeping it intact as a conduit for knowledge-transfer.[43] One common measure is that students in the pre-departure phase should be enrolled in specialized training sessions in order to inoculate them against subversive influences and to strengthen their patriotic spirit.[44] Embassies are recommended to play a supervisory role vis-à-vis the overseas student population, carrying out cultural security awareness activities and rectifying any expressions of deviant thought and behaviour.[45] In the PRC, some cultural security experts have advised that a cautious attitude should be adopted with respect to all overseas returnees regardless of their expertise.[46] Such individuals should not only be subject to curative measures such as political thought work, but that their ideological stances should also be scrutinized carefully if they are seeking employment within the state bureaucracy.

Cultural Securitization of Overseas Study

Despite their embrace and recurrent invocation of cultural security, the PRC and KSA governments have not produced official statements outlining in-detail how they aim to realize it with respect to overseas study.[47] In identifying these strategies and their associated measures, the cultural security concepts discussed in the preceding section were used as a guide. This approach is given credence by how many of the proposed measures are currently being implemented by state actors using the language of cultural security. In addition, some of these measures were operationalized by the PRC and KSA governments as early as the mid-twentieth century for ideological security purposes.[48] Since the late 1990s, these measures were incorporated into a vision of cultural security that has

[41]Thiyab Rahmah, 'Daish' yastahdif al-mubta'atheen al-su'udiyeen bihumla 'illamiyya "munathama"'[ISIS Targets Saudi Overseas Students with an Organized Media Campaign], *Al-Hayat*,(14 November 2014), http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/5686369 (accessed 19 August 2017).

[42]Nasir Hussieni, 'Al-suhaymi' ikhtafa min ustralia … wa dhahara bi suriyya.wa intaha "intihariyyan" fil Iraq'[Al-Suhaymi Disappeared from Australia … And Reappeared in Syria … And Ended [His Life] as a Suicide Bomber in Iraq], *Al-Hayat*, (17 March 2015), http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/8084855(accessed 18 September 2017).

[43]Zhu Jiade, 'Jianshe gaojiao qiangguo' [Constructing a Strong Country in Higher Education], *Xiandai daxue jiaoyu* 5,(2012), 28–34.; Zhang Xiaoping, *Dangqian zhongguo wenhua anquan wenti yanjiu* [*Study of the Current Problem of Cultural Security*], (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012), 102–113.; 'Al-liwa al-Juhny: al-tanthimat al-irhabiya tata khataf al-mubta'atheen … al-Rajhy yarud: al-mamlaka istata'at bihinkat qiyadatiha tajfeef manabi' al-irhab' [Major-General Al-Juhny: Terrorist Organizations are Targeting Overseas Students … Al-Rajhy Responds: The Kingdom, Through the Wisdom of its Leaders, was Able to Dry up the Sources of Terrorism], *Almowaten*,(10 May 2017), https://www.almowaten.net/2017/05/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AD%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AA/(accessed 2 January 2019).

[44]Hu Huilin, *Wenhua chanye fazhan yu guojia wenhua anquan* [*Development of the Cultural Industry and the National Cultural Security*],(Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2005), 153–154.; Salman Al-Shitri, "Adad al-mutarifat bilmamlaka la yuthkar … wal manahij al-ta'leemiyya bareea min idi'aat al-ba'th'[The Number of Female Extremists in the Kingdom is Inconsequential … And Educational Curriculums are Innocent of the Accusations of Some], *Al-jazirah*,(19 February 2016), http://www.al-jazirah.com/2016/20160219/ln78.htm(accessed 19 September 2017).; Wang Huiyao, & Miao Lu, 'Liuxue rechaoxia zhongguo xuyao guanzhu de zhuyao wenti ji jianyi' [Major Issues under the High Tide of Overseas Study and the Necessary Response] in *Zhongguo liuxue fazhan baogao*(2).(Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013), 58.

[45]Khalid Al-Salih, 'Muragabat hisabat al-mubta'atheen fi mawaqi' al-tawasul wa dirasat tawasu' al-ibti'ath'[Monitoring the Accounts of Overseas Students on Social Media Sites and a Study on Expanding Overseas Study], *Al-Watan*,(11 April 2017), http://www.alwatan.com.sa/Local/News_Detail.aspx?ArticleID=299928&CategoryID=5(accessed 19 September 2017).; 'Wakil jami'at naif: al-tanthimat al-irhabiyya tatakhataf al-mubta'atheen litajneedihim fi tantheemathim al-irhabiyya'[Dean of Naif University: Terrorist Organizations Target Overseas Students to Recruit them in their Terroristic Organizations], *Al-Jazirah*, (12 May 2017), http://www.al-jazirah.com/2017/20170512/ln64.htm(accessed 19 September 2017).

[46]Zhu Jidong, 'Jiaqiang yishixingtai nengli jianshe zengqiang lingdao ganbu zhizheng benling'[Strengthening Ideological Capacity and Improving the Ability to Govern of the Officialdom], *Zhongguo gongchandang xinwenwang*,(7 May 2014), http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2014/0507/c40531-24987660.html(accessed 2 November 2017).

[47]At least in KSA, several cultural security officials have confirmed the existence of one. Interview with GAIS official, 18 December 2017.; Interview with GAIS official, 18 February 2018.

responded to the growth of overseas student populations. While this approach is not ideal, it offers a framework for interpreting a variety of seemingly discordant state practices into a holistic and integrated whole: a cultural security strategy.

The comprehensiveness of any cultural security strategy is contingent upon the character of a country's political-economy of overseas study i.e. the role of government in allocating resources to its overseas student population. While adopting similar cultural securitization strategies overall, there are critical differences between the PRC and KSA that can be attributed to their dissimilar political-economies of overseas study. From the early 1980s, the fiscally-strained PRC government abandoned the Maoist era's model of full scholarship provision and direct involvement in favor of a minimalist role with respect to overseas study.[49] It allowed other actors, such as foreign governments, universities and organizations like the World Bank, the Ford Foundation and the United Nations Development Program to provide assistance to promising students, and in 1984 permitted citizens to undertake overseas study on their own expense.[50] This shift in the government's role, accompanied by the boom experienced by the PRC economy, engendered significant growth in the number of overseas students over the next three decades: in the period of 1978–2018, over 5,850,000 left in pursuit of a foreign education, the majority of whom were self-funded.[51] In 2015 for example, out of the 544 thousand Chinese students who went abroad, 90% were self-funded, 3% were covered by their employers and only 5.5% were recipients of state funding from the China Scholarship Council (CSC), an entity founded in 1996 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.[52]

The KSA political-economy of overseas study is vastly different from that of the PRC. In 2005, the Saudi government launched KASP as part of a broader reform project to accelerate national modernization.[53] Buoyed by an increase in crude oil prices in the mid-2000s and a consequent expansion in state revenue, the government was able to provide a lavish package for students enrolled into the program, including full coverage of their tuition fees, monthly stipends, support for accompanying dependents, health insurance, and annual travel tickets from and back to KSA.[54] Liquidity also enabled the state to fund many of its citizens. In 2015 for example, out of a total overseas student population of 144 thousand, 83% were beneficiaries of KASP.[55] A more recent figure from 2018 indicates that this coverage rate has been relatively consistent: out of 122 thousand overseas students, 80% were supported by KASP.[56] Saudi officialdom has recurrently pointed to this patronage of overseas students as a way to highlight the magnanimity and generosity of the state. In an interview with *al-Hayat*, Mohammed al-'Issa, the head of SACM in the United States, juxtaposed

[48]Abdulaziz Al-Badah, *Al-'ibti'ath*[*Overseas Study*], 79–98.; Han, 'Returnees and their Political Impact', 1106–23.; Li Peng and Tang Jing, 'Xinzhongguo kaiqi liuxue jiaoyu de lishi kaocha'[A New China Opens Historical Hightide of Overseas Studies], *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu*, 15 July 2015.

[49]Donglin Han, 'Returnees and their Political Impact', 1106–1123.

[50]Joyce Kallgren and Denis Simon, *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*.(Research Papers and Policy Studies, 1987), 96–148.

[51]'2018 niandu woguo chuguo liuxue renyuan qingkuang tongji'[Statistics on the National Overseas Studies Population of 2018], *Zhongguo renmin gongheguo jiaoyubu*,(27 March 2019), http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201903/t20190327_375704.html(accessed 7 May 2020).

[52]In the figure cited, 1.5% of students were unaccounted for. '2016 niandu woguo chuguo liuxue renyuan qingkuang tongji'[Statistics on the National Overseas Studies Population of 2016].; Qiang Zha(ed.), *Education in China: Educational history, models, and initiatives*(Berkshire Publishing, 2013), 391–4.

[53]Ahmed Al-'Issa, *Islah al-ta'leem fi al-su'udiyya: bayna giyab al-ru'ya al-siyasiyya wa tawajus al-thaqafa al-diniyya wa 'ajz al-idara al-tarbawiyya*[*Reforming Education in Saudi: Between the Absence of Political Vision, the Anxiety of Religious Culture and the Impotence of Administration*](Beirut: Dar al-Sagi, 2009), 37–42.

[54]'KASP Scholarship Program', *Ministry of Education*(Saudi Arabian Cultural Bureau in Canada), undated, https://www.saudibureau.org/en/inside.php?ID = 16(accessed 17 August 2017).

[55]'53rd Annual Report', *Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority*,(2017), 40.

[56]Sahar Abushaheen. '98% min al-mubta'atheen 'adu ela al-mamlaka'[98% of Overseas Students Returned to the Kingdom], *Makkah*,(8 February 2020), https://makkahnewspaper.com/article/1503797/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%AF/98—%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%85%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A9 (accessed 8 May 2020).

what he termed a few ungrateful troublemakers (students-turned-dissidents), with the praise of 'many foreign nationalities [who witness the policies of the Saudi state], and wish they were Saudis so they could benefit even partially from what our nation offers its sons and daughters'.[57]

These differences in the political-economy of overseas study have shaped the comprehensiveness—and by extension, the coverage and effectiveness—of the PRC and KSA cultural security strategies. This is noticeable in the case of pre-departure training, a measure utilized by both states for the purposes of ideological inoculation. In the PRC, only a miniscule segment of the total overseas student population, the recipients of CSC scholarships, are required to attend the pre-departure training sessions organized by the Ministry of Education's Overseas Student Service Center (OSSC).[58] This requirement stems from their regulatory obligations under CSC, the violation of which could entail termination of the scholarship.[59] From 2009, the OSSC has carried out such training on a biannual basis, prior to the start of foreign academic semesters, across many Chinese cities.[60] The sessions on offer vary in temporal duration but are usually one or two days-long. According to Xu Peixiang, the OSSC head, the sessions were designed to enhance students' security-awareness, cultivate a protective mentality towards their homeland, and ensure that they can be entrusted with the defence of China's image while abroad.[61]

Students are subtly yet recurrently alerted in these training sessions about the threat of political and cultural Westernization they might encounter while living abroad. This can be discerned from the content of a video series, entitled 'My Life, My China' (*wo de shenghuo, wo de zhongguo*), that is shown to attendees. The series is produced by Fudan University's China Institute, a government-funded think tank established in 2015 and headed by Zhang Weiwei.[62] Each of the series' episodes involves an interview with young Chinese professionals such as journalists, entrepreneurs and even party cadres, who had lived overseas. Throughout these episodes, speakers repeatedly emphasized how they faced anti-China biases and corrosive ideological challenges to the point where their allegiances had temporarily wavered. However, and in their own ways, each of these individuals came to the conclusion that the PRC's political system and prevailing ideology was best for the country's needs. This message is sometimes conveyed in unexpected ways. In one episode, a cadre warmly discussed her exposure to Christianity in the West and how she was moved by the sincerity and devotion displayed by believers at a church she visited.[63] As opposed to galvanizing her to convert to

[57]Muath Al-'Umari, 'Al-"Issa li Al-Hayat": "adad al-mubta" atheen inkhafadh ela 80 alfan … wal "al-ibti'ath" lam yatawagaf'[Al-'Issa to Al-Hayat: the Number of Overseas Students has Decreased to 80 Thousand … and Overseas Study has not Stopped], *Al-Hayat*,(11 April 2016), http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/14992264/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%89-%D9%84%D9%80-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A9—%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AB%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AE%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-80-%D8%A3%D9%84%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%8B—-%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AB–%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81(accessed 13 September 2017).

[58]'Jiaoyubu 2017 nian "pingan liuxue" chuguo liuxue xingqian peixunhui zai Xiamen daxue shunli juxing'['Safe Overseas Study' Pre-trip Briefing Conference by Ministry of Education is Successfully Held at Xiamen University], *Guojia liuxue wang* (20 May 2017), http://www.cscse.edu.cn/publish/portal0/tab38/info14696.htm(accessed 18 September 2017).; 'Jiaoyubu caizhengbu guanyu yinfa 'guojia gongpai chuguo liuxue yanjiusheng guanli guiding(shixing) de tongzhi'[Notification for Promulgating the Regulations on State-Sponsored Overseas Students (Trial Version)], *Guojia liuxue wang*, undated, http://www.csc.edu.cn/chuguo/s/586(accessed 18 September 2017).; '2017nian guojia liuxue jijin zizhu chuguo liuxue renyuan xuanpai jianzhang' [2017 Regulations on Selecting Candidates for Overseas Studies by the National Foundation for Overseas Exchange], *Guojia liuxue wang*,(12 December 2016), http://www.csc.edu.cn/article/709(accessed 27 October 2017).

[59]'Zizhu chuguo liuxue xieyishu' qianyue, gongzheng banfa'[Procedures on the Signing and Authentication of Agreement for Overseas Studies], *Guojia liuxue wang*, undated, http://www.csc.edu.cn/chuguo/s/166(accessed 27 October 2017).

[60]'2014nian chuguo liuxue xingqian peixun' [Pre-trip Training for Overseas Studies 2014], *Zhongguo renmin gongheguo jiaoyubu*, undated, http://old.moe.gov.cn//publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s8067/list.html(accessed 23 December 2017).

[61]'Jiaoyubu 2017nian "pinganliuxue" xingqian peixunhui zai xinjiang daxue juxing'['Safe Overseas Study' Pre-trip Briefing Conference by Ministry of Education is Successfully Held at Xinjiang University], *Zhongguo liuxue wang* (8 June 2017), http://www.cscse.edu.cn/publish/portal0/tab38/info14715.htm(accessed 26 September 2017).; 'Haiwai liuxue xingqian peixun quangonglue'[Guide for Overseas Study Pre-trip Training", *Zhongguo liuxue fuwu zhongxin*,(26 October 2011), http://www.chivast.com/corp/project/201110/3800.html(accessed 12 September 2017).

[62]'Gaikuang' [Overview], *Fudan daxue zhongguo yanjiuyuan*, undated, http://www.cifu.fudan.edu.cn/411/list.htm(accessed 27 September 2017).

Christianity, this encounter encouraged the young woman to have faith in the CPC and to join its ranks soon after her return to China.

In KSA, participants in KASP, like their CSC-enrolled counterparts, are required to attend pre-departure training, although attendance does not appear to be strictly enforced.[64] These sessions, each two-weeks long and concentrated in the cities of Riyadh, Jeddah and Dhahran, are held by the Ministry of Education four times every year.[65] Shorter sessions, several days-long, are also available for pre-departing self-funded students.[66] The content of these sessions focuses on informing students about the consular and legal services made available to them by the Saudi state, as well as the psychological, cultural and academic challenges they might encounter during their studies. Attendees are reminded to be patriotic, to recall the modern achievements of KSA and to be grateful for the 'security and safety' (*al-amn wal aman*) provided by the rulers. The importance of cultural security, and the need to be ever-vigilant against foreign subversion, is also emphasized, a consequence perhaps of the strategic partnership between GAIS and the Ministry of Education and the involvement of cultural security experts from NAUSS and KFSC in the design of these sessions.[67]

Pre-departure training sessions are but one measure in a larger cultural security repertoire that the Chinese and Saudi authorities draw upon in their strategy to manage overseas study. In extra-territorial environments, the PRC and KSA rely on their diplomatic missions and national student clubs to enforce cultural securitization—marked by monitoring, intervention and rectification—upon their overseas student populations. Again, the comprehensiveness of this measure is tied to the political-economy of overseas study of each state. PRC embassies, through their Ministry of Education-affiliated educational sections, are more involved in the affairs of state-funded students as they are obliged, under CSC regulations, to accept the guidance of diplomatic missions abroad.[68] Within ten days of arriving at their study destination, such students are expected to report (in-person or by email) to the educational section of the closest embassy for registration.[69] They are mandated to maintain regular contact with the educational section and to submit a report on their study situation every semester that is then relayed back to the CSC.[70] Continued provision of stipends and other services, distributed through the educational section, is linked to the satisfaction of these requirements and the absence of any overt shows of opposition to the state.

KSA embassies, through SACMs, have a comparable relationship with students enrolled in KASP, with the key difference being that, unlike with the PRC, the Saudi state has greater penetration of its

[63]'Wo de shenghuo wo de zhongguo 02 yong shiliu nian taoli jiaxiang'[My Life My China 02—It Takes 16 Years to Flee One's Hometown], *Youtube*,(3 March 2017), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_X6-GKATp4(accessed 12 September 2017).

[64]'Ijraat al-ibti'ath'[Overseas Study Procedures], *Ministry of Education*(Saudi Arabia), undated, https://www.moe.gov.sa/ar/studyaboard/Policies-and-Rules/Academic-Matters/Pages/Emission-measures.aspx(accessed 17 August 2017).; 'Wazir al-'taleem al-su'udi: nub'id al-mubta'atheen 'an al-akhtar bitathgeefihim qanuniyan'[Saudi Education Minister: We Keep Overseas Students Away From Danger Through Legal Education], *Al-Sharq Al-Aawsat*,(11 April 2017), https://aawsat.com/home/article/898956/وزير-التعليم-السعودي-نبعد-المبتعثين-عن-الأخطار-بتثقيفهم-قانونيا?amp(accessed 18 January 2019).

[65]Om Al-'Aqili, "Rais dawrat al-mubta'atheen li'sharq al-awsat': lan yubta'ath ay talib qabla husulihi 'ala dawra min jami'at al-imam"[Head of Course for Overseas Students to Al-sharq l-aawsat: No Student Will be Permitted to Go Abroad Until they Complete the Course at Imam University], *Al-Sharq Al-Aawsat*,(17 June 2005), http://archive.aawsat.com/details.asp?article=308094&issueno=9708#.WgUcyLpuK3A(accessed 18 November 2017).

[66]'Al-ta'leem al-"ali" tuhathir al-mubta'atheen min al-anshitah al-da'awiyya ghayir 'al-murakhasa'[Ministry of Education Warns Overseas Students Regarding Uncertified Missionary Activities], *Al-hayat*,(8 January 2015), http://www.alhayat.com/Articles/6697748/-التعليم-العالي-تحذر-المبتعثين-من-الأنشطة-الدعوية-غير-المرخصة-(accessed 25 August 2017).

[67]'Awadh Al-Qahtani, 'Al-'aqeed al-'Umari: al-dawra al-tawjihiyya lil mubta'atheen ahad al-mutatalabat lima'rifat al-thaqafa al-mukhtalifa fi balad al-ibti'ath'[Colonel al-'Umari: Guidance Courses for Overseas Students are One of the Necessitates to Know the Different Culture of the Destination Country], *Al-Jazirah*,(19 February 2015), http://www.al-jazirah.com/2015/20150219/ln66.htm(accessed 8 July 2017).; Interview with NAUSS academic, 17 December 2017.; Interview with KFSC academic, 1 February 2018.

[68]'2017nian guojia liuxue jijin zizhu chuguo liuxue renyuan xuanpai jianzhang' [2017 Regulations on Selecting Candidates for Overseas Studies by the National Foundation for Overseas Exchange].; 'Jiaoyubu caizhengbu guanyu yinfa 'guojia gongpai chuguo liuxue yanjiusheng guanli guiding(shixing) de tongzhi' [Notification for Promulgating the Regulations on State-Sponsored Overseas Students (Trial Version)].

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid.

overseas student population. SACMs, affiliated with the Ministry of Education, are responsible for the implementation of KASP, dispensing scholarship funds, following up on academic progress, certifying degrees, resolving residency and visa issues, and offering legal and psychological services to students.[71] Unlike their Chinese counterparts, SACMs assume a more proactive and public role in discouraging student political activism. On social media platforms and *via* email, SACMs issue repeated warnings about joining demonstrations and protests, associating with opposition groups abroad, or even engaging in political or religious debates, as these detract 'from the main purpose of this program [KASP], which is academic attainment' and put a student at risk of losing their scholarship.[72] Monitoring of student social media for any signs of 'thought deviancy' (*inhiraf fikri*), a term directly borrowed from the cultural security discourse, is part of the responsibilities of SACMs.[73] Upon identifying a case, SACMs carry out curative disciplinary measures that either rectify this deviancy outright or lead to the student's recall back to KSA before any further complications arise.

National student clubs are part of the state management system regarding overseas study. The PRC government makes use of Chinese Student and Scholar Associations (CSSA) as organizational vehicles for accessing the larger population of self-funded overseas students, a category identified by President Xi Jinping as a focus of united front work.[74] CSSAs supplement the cultural securitization work carried out by PRC diplomatic missions. In Australia, it was reported that CSSA student leaders regularly convene with embassy staff to report information about any incidences of political activism among club members.[75] Some CSSAs act as platforms for embassy-directed political thought work.[76] The Harvard University CSSA chapter for instance organized a course in November 2017, with consular support, to study the decisions of the Nineteenth Party Congress.[77] Ambassadors and consul-generals occasionally give talks at CSSA gatherings, giving them an opportunity to reinforce patriotic sentiment among overseas students as well as deepen their familiarity with the key political slogans of the moment.[78]

Despite these functions, the nature of the relationship between CSSAs and PRC diplomatic missions, and consequently their role in cultural securitization, should not be exaggerated.[79] There is no definitive and consistent pattern linking these two entities together, and the extent of cooperation is dependent upon multiple factors, including the (foreign) legal environment, the

[71]'Wihdat al-irshad al-nafsi wal shuun al-ijtima'iyya' [Psychological Guidance and Social Affairs Department], *Ministry of Education* (Saudi Arabia), undated, https://departments.moe.gov.sa/Scholarship/RelatedDepartments/Unit-direction-guidance/Pages/Tasks.aspx(accessed 29 October 2017).

[72]Mit'ib Al-'Abbas, 'Amrika: "al-mulhaqiya al-thaqafiyya" tuhathir al-mubta'atheen min mudaharat siyasiyya'[America: Cultural Attaché Office Warns Overseas Students About Political Demonstrations], *Al-Hayat*,(20 March 2011), https://www.sauress.com/alhayat/246446(accessed 18 July 2017).

[73]Al-Salih, 'Muragabat hisabat' [Monitoring the Accounts].

[74]Ming Yi, 'Jiaoyubu: ba aiguozhuyi rongru geji jiaoyu ge huanjie'[Ministry of Education: Merge Patriotic Education into the Various Levels of the Educational System], *Zhongguo wang*,(9 February 2016), http://news.china.com.cn/2016-02/09/content_37763496.htm(accessed 14 September 2017).; 'Xi Jinping: gongu fazhan zui guangfan de aiguo tongyi zhanxian', *Xinhua*,(20 May 2015), http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-05/20/c_1115351358.htm(accessed 12 September 2017).

[75]Alexander Joske and Philip Wen, 'The "patriotic education" of Chinese students at Australian universities', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (7 October 2016), http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-patriotic-education-of-chinese-students-at-australian-universities-20161003-gru13j.html(accessed 14 September 2017).

[76]Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, `Chinese Government Gave Money to Georgetown Chinese Student Group'(14 February 2018), https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/14/exclusive-chinese-government-gave-money-to-georgetown-chinese-student-group-washington-china-communist-party-influence/(accessed 31 October 2020).

[77]The news on this piece is inaccessible from the Harvard CSSA, but it is recorded here: 'Zhongxin xueshu weiyuanhui fuzhuren wenyuan Ding Junping jiaoshou zai hafuo daxue jiedu shijiuda baogao'[Professor Ding Junping, Deputy Chairman of the Academic Committee of the Center, Explained the Report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China at Harvard University], *Wuhan daxue dangnei fagui yanjiu zhongxin*,(29 November 2017), http://iplr.whu.edu.cn/info/1024/1894.htm(accessed 31 October 2020).

[78]'Zhu niuyue zonglingguan juban daniuyue diqu bufen gaoxiao zhongguo xueshengxuezhelianyihui zhuxi zuotanhui' [Meeting of Chairpersons of Chinese Students and Scholars Association in the Greater New York Region Organized by the Chinese Consulate-General in New York], *Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China* (14 January 2006), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cgny/chn/lgxw/t231066.htm(accessed 30 October 2020).

[79]Western security concerns over CSSAs are based on a perception that these entities are linked and directed by the PRC government. John Poreba, 'Neutralizing China's student-spy network', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence* 25(2), (2012), 260–291.; also see 'Intelligence Services, Part 1: Espionage with Chinese Characteristics', *Stratfor*, (March 2010), 6.

importance of the university (and foreign country), geographic proximity of the diplomatic mission to the CSSA in question and the personalities involved. This inconsistency is reflected in how some CSSAs receive funding from PRC diplomatic missions, but many others do not.[80] It is unclear moreover whether monitoring activities are undertaken at the behest of embassies themselves or carried out by CSSA student leaders and members out of nationalism or personal gain.[81] Many of these student clubs do not host political thought work activities, with most of their resources directed at holding a yearly Spring Festival Gala that serves social and professional networking objectives. Beyond all of these issues, CSSAs are voluntary organizations: while they might offer a potential pathway for the PRC government to expand its outreach, it does not follow that this provides better access to the majority of overseas students.

By contrast, the relationship between KSA diplomatic missions and national student clubs, numbering over 260 chapters in the United States alone, are more direct and substantive.[82] The Saudi government covers a large portion of the budgetary needs of these organizations, and their activities are overseen by a club management committee chaired by the ambassador and vice-chaired by the head of SACM of the foreign country in which they operate.[83] Any attempts to raise additional funds, organize extracurricular gatherings off-campus, or to even create a website, requires that the student club leadership first obtain permission from the committee's vice-chair.[84] The committee, headed by Saudi government officials, is empowered to punish all violations of Saudi laws that take place within the student clubs, including those of a political nature.[85] These fiscal and structural controls suggest that student clubs supplement SACM monitoring efforts and work to pre-empt undesirable political expression and behaviour among their members. Although KSA embassies are not typically engaged in political thought work, recent years have seen growing attempts by various diplomatic missions, in cooperation with national student clubs, to host cultural security lectures.[86] As with CSSAs, it is unclear whether these student clubs provide the KSA government with greater access to its overseas student population than is possible through KASP.

While adopting similar cultural security strategies, the variations in the PRC and KSA political-economy of overseas study have given rise to differences in their comprehensiveness. Saudi state resources enable it to implement a more expansive cultural security strategy that affects a larger proportion of its overseas student population. The limitations facing the PRC government in its management of overseas study may have spurred it towards adopting a further layer of targeted cultural security measures absent in KSA approaches. Fresh returnees hired in academic institutions —universities, research centers and think tanks—are first required to complete in-house political thought work.[87] Accounting anywhere between 20% to 50% of all university faculty under the age of 40, returnees have been identified by cadres involved in political thought work as lacking in a political identity, apathetic about ideology, and deeply corrupted by the West.[88] Failure to rectify

[80]Anne-Marie Brady, 'Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping', *Wilson Center*,(2017), 8.; 'Guanyu women' [About Us], *CSSA.US*, undated, http://www.cssa.us/about.html(accessed 12 September 2017).

[81]Nick McKenzie, Chris Uhlmann, Richard Baker and Sashka Koloff 'Australian sovereignty under threat from influence of China's Communist Party', ABC News,(6 June 2017), http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-04/australian-sovereignty-underthreat-from-chinese-influence/8583832(accessed 27 September 2017).

[82]"An al-andiyya al-tulabiyya' [About Student Clubs], SACM Clubs, undated, http://sacmclubs.org/ar/site/page/view/aboutsacm-clubs(accessed 18 August 2017).

[83]'Al-laiha al-tanthimiyya' [Organizational Regulations], Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia(US),(2008, amended 2010), http://sacmclubs.org/files/cons.pdf(accessed 12 September 2017), 29–34.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Saudi Royal Embassy in Moscow, 'Telegram (Doc88149)', *WikiLeaks*, 10 February 2012, https://wikileaks.org/saudi-cables/doc88149.html.

[87]'Fudan daxue jianchi "sige qianghua" jiaqiang jiaoshi sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo'[Fudan University Upholds the 'Four Strengthening' and Improves the Political Work of Faculty], *Jiaoyubu*,(2017), http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s3165/201710/t20171009_315951.html(accessed 12 December 2017).; '"Xuexi Xi Jinping zongshuji gaoxiao sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo jianghua jingshen, guanzhu gaoxiao haiwai guiguo renyuan fazhan" yantaohui zai woxiao juxing'[Studying the Important Speech by General Secretary Xi Jinping on the Political Work in Institutions of Higher Education, A Conference Concerning the Development of Returnees from Overseas Studies is Held in Our University]. *Beijing Shifan Daxue*,(29 December 2016), http://www.bnu.edu.cn/bsdkx/83139.html(accessed 12 December 2017).

the deviated thinking of these future disseminators of ideology could have disastrous consequences and facilitate the cultural subversion efforts of Western hostile forces.[89] The Chinese state has been sensitive to this potential cultural security threat: the launch of the 2014 ideological disciplinary campaign within the educational system was partially driven by the growth of academics with overseas study backgrounds.[90] Cultural securitization, expressed through promotional ceilings, also affects returnees aspiring to join the CPC as full-time cadre-officials. An informal policy of 'promotion with reservation' by the CPC bars hired returnees from sensitive policymaking positions, and thus limits them to serve but 'in the functional areas of education, science and technology, foreign trade and foreign affairs'.[91] This structural barrier ensures that cadre-officials with problematic educational backgrounds, and espousing potentially deviant ideology, are limited to certain professional capacities and are unable to undermine the PRC's political and ideological security. This can be considered a preventative measure of cultural security purposed towards pre-empting peaceful evolution. Although it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of all the reviewed PRC and KSA cultural securitization measures, it is possible to claim that this targeted structural barrier constitutes the most consequential approach in proofing the political system from the imagined dangers arising from overseas study.

Ideocracies and Cultural Securitization

Over the past two decades, the PRC and KSA governments have adopted a cultural security strategy, predicated on an elastic understanding of culture that stresses the political and ideological domains, with respect to overseas study. Justification for such a cultural security strategy stems from a perception of overseas study, articulated in the cultural security discourse, as a conduit for subversion against the cultural sphere and, by extension, as a threat to regime security. Ironically, this negative assessment of foreign education inversely mirrors the pervasive view found in Western scholarship and media representations that treats overseas study as a potential catalyst for fast-tracking authoritarian states towards liberal-democracy.[93] In adopting a cultural security strategy then, authoritarian states like the PRC and KSA attempt to avoid such an outcome and reconcile the conflicting state projects of modernization and (regime) securitization.

[88]According to one study, nearly half of the returnees in academic postings for Beijing were recipients of CSC-scholarships. See: 'Beijing gaoxiao guiguo liuxue renyuan youguan qingkuang diaocha fenxi baogao'[Analytical Report on the Relevant Condition of Returned Overseas Students and Scholars in Beijing], *Zhongguo jiaoyu xinwenwang*,(22 December 2017), http://www.jyb.cn/zcg/xwy/wzxw/201712/t20171222_898914.html(accessed 28 December 2017).; Zhenliang Cai, '"Sigequanmian" xiade haigui rencai yishixingtai jiaoyu'[Ideological Training of Returned Overseas Students under the 'Four Comprehensives'], *Kexuewang*, (24 March 2016), http://paper.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2016/3/341370.shtm(accessed 11 December 2017).

[89]'Jiaqiang he gaijin gaoxiao qingnian jiaoshi sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo 16 tiao yijian chutai'[Sixteen Opinions on Strengthening the Thought and Political Work of Young Faculty Members in Institutions of Higher Education Issued], *Zhongguo gongchandang xinwen*,(28 May 2013), http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/0528/c164113-21645326.html(accessed 5 December 2017).; Chunling Cai, 'Cong zhanlue gaodu renshi gaoxiao yishixingtai gongzuo'[Understanding Ideological Work in Instutions of Higher Education from A Strategic Viewpoint], *Qiushi*,(1 November 2015), http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2015-11/01/m_1117001273.htm(accessed 5 December 2017).

[90]Rogier Creemers, 'Ideology Matters: Parsing Recent Changes in China's Intellectual Landscape', *Sinocism*,(7 February 2015), https://sinocism.com/ideology-matters-parsing-recent-changes-in-chinas-intellectual-landscape/(accessed 11 December 2017).; Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China* (Red Global Press, 2015), 109

[91]Cheng Li, 'The status and characteristics of foreign-educated returnees in the Chinese leadership', *China Leadership Monitor* 16(1), (2005), 21.; Chien-Wen Kou, 'Elite Recruitment and the Duality of the Chinese Party-state: The Mobility of Western-educated Returnee Elites in China, 1978–2008', in Philip Xu, Yushan Wu and Suisheng Zhao(eds.) *Search of China's Development Model: Beyond the Beijing Consensus*(Abingdon, Oxon, 2011), 167.

[93]Liping Bu, *Making the world like us: Education, cultural expansion, and the American century*(Praeger Publishers, 2003).; Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest* 16, (1989), 3–18.; Richard Madsen, *China and the American dream: A moral inquiry*(University of California Press, 1995), 135.; Antonio Spilimbergo, 'Democracy and foreign education', *The American Economic Review* 99(1),(2009), 528–543.; also see John Pomfret, 'Why China is so afraid of Chinese students in the United States', *The Washington Post*, May 25, 2017, accessed September 14, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/05/25/why-china-is-so-afraid-of-chinese-students-in-the-united-states/?utm_term = .f77b46dc5afc.; 'Education in the Gulf—The Contradictions of Study Abroad', *The Economist*, August 9, 2012, accessed May 13, 2017, https://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2012/08/education-gulf.

The actualization of cultural security has entailed the implementation of a similar set of preventative and curative measures in the PRC and KSA. However, there are observable differences in their comprehensiveness linked to their dissimilar political-economies of overseas study. In the case of KSA, the immense resources at the disposal of the state have not only allowed it to fund the majority of Saudi overseas students, but to afford the financing of national student clubs as well. These relational dependencies give the Saudi state greater access than that available to its PRC counterpart, enabling it in turn to more widely disseminate its inoculative ideological messaging, to maintain a higher-degree of supervision, and to wield a more persuasive (and coercive) disciplinary power in relation to its overseas student population. By contrast, the PRC's political-economy of overseas study, wherein the majority of students are self-funded, limits the coverage and outreach of the state. Accordingly, and so as to address this limitation, the PRC government has opted for what appears to be a more targeted cultural security strategy: returnees seeking employment within academia or membership in the CPC as full-time cadre-officials are subject to curative political thought work and promotional ceilings. Despite the asymmetry in resources deployed, the PRC targeted measures of creating structural barriers for foreign-educated cadre-officials are probably the most definitive and effective in obtaining the objectives of cultural security.

The article demonstrated that the PRC and KSA simultaneously yet autochthonously embraced and actualized similar cultural security strategies with regards to the management of overseas study. This parallelism is puzzling, especially given the lack of evidence for any sustained exchanges between the two states and their seemingly different political regimes, a one-party Leninist state and a dynastic monarchy. This could be explained by two variables. First, the political regimes of the PRC and KSA are ideocracies which are especially vulnerable to ideational threats.[94] According to Piekalkiewicz and Penn, an ideocracy 'is a political system whose activities are pursued in reference to the tenets of a monistic ideology … the legitimacy of the political system is derived from the monistic ideology, which establishes a universal frame of reference for the participants of the system'.[95] Legitimation on the basis of ideology, as expressed in terms of either Hegelian historical law (the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism) or divine sanction, is a characteristic of communist and monarchical ideocratic regimes.[96]

Although the PRC and KSA regimes have undergone significant ideological change over the past few decades, with drastic adjustments made to their monistic ideological frameworks that suggest a shift towards pluralism or even a 'loss of faith', these political regimes can still be considered ideocratic regimes.[97] The continued invocation of a Sinified Marxist canon as justification for CPC-rule over China, hand in hand with the continued importance placed by Chinese political elites on ideas (as elaborated upon by Brown and Vukovich), underscores the aptness of this classification for the PRC.[98] The overturning of longstanding religious institutions and the active promotion of social liberalism that marks the reign of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman has not ended moreover the Saudi political regime's reliance upon ideological sources of legitimacy to justify dynastic rule.[99]

The ideocratic character of these political regimes shapes how their political elites conceive of the challenges facing national security. As Buzan has argued, the vulnerabilities or threat matrices of any

[94]Various scholars have explicitly categorized the PRC and Saudi Arabia as ideocracies or as 'ideological states', or have identified their regimes (communist and Islamist) as ideocracies. Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz and Alfred Wayne Penn, *Politics of Ideocracy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 43, 170.; Afshin Shahi, *The Politics of Truth Management in Saudi Arabia* (Routledge, 2019), 162 -3; Uwe Backes and Steffen Kailitz, eds., *Ideocracies in Comparison: Legitimation–Cooptation–Repression*(London: Routledge, 2015), 3–4.; Peter Bernholz, *Totalitarianism, Terrorism and Supreme Values*(Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017), 41–2.

[95]Piekalkiewicz and Penn, *Politics of Ideocracy*, 25–6.

[96]David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power*(New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1991), 71–4,181–2.; Giuseppe Di Palma, 'Legitimation from the Top to Civil Society: Politico-cultural Change in Eastern Europe', *World Politics* 44(1), (1991), 49–80.; Steffen Kailitz, 'Classifying Political Regimes Revisited: Legitimation and Durability', *Democratization* 20(1), (2013), 39–42.

[97]For an alternative view, see Gordon White, 'The Decline of Ideocracy', in *China in the 1990s*, ed. Robert Benewick and Paul Wingrove(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 21–33; also see Backes and Kailitz, *Ideocracies in Comparison*, 1.

[98]Kerry Brown, *China's Dream: The Culture of Chinese Communism and the Secret Sources of its Power*(Oxford: Polity Press, 2018), 105–39; Daniel Vukovich, *Illiberal China: The Ideological Challenge of the People's Republic of China*(Singapore: Springer, 2018), 3.

given state are constructed by securitizing actors (policymakers) on the basis of how three constitutive elements of the state are configured: the physical base of the state (its population size, geography, resources), the institutional expression of the state (the machinery of the government) and the idea of the state.[100] The latter is defined as the 'constituting principle—sovereignty, but sometimes ideology—of the state'.[101] If a political regime stresses ideological claims for its legitimacy, as opposed to procedural or populist sovereigntist claims, the political regime develops a tendency towards imagining alternative ideologies as existential threats to its survival.[102] This places weight on the 'idea of the state' within the trinitarian configuration of vulnerabilities perceived by political elites. Accordingly, ideocratic political regimes like those of the PRC and KSA are more sensitive and vulnerable to ideological threats.

The second variable is that the post-Cold War decade of the 1990s gave rise to a 'historical moment' conducive to the embrace of cultural security by the PRC and KSA ideocracies. On one level, this moment saw the emergence of new ideological threats to these political regimes. For the PRC, the primary challenge came from the newfound ideological hegemony exercised by the United States following the collapse of socialist modernity in 1989–1991 and as refracted through the events of Tiananmen.[103] For KSA, while contending with the same problem posed by the universalization of liberal-democracy, the threat emanated from Islamists who, emboldened by a sense of triumph following the end of the Cold War, sought to topple the monarchy.[104] A profound sense of ideological vulnerability, intensified by globalization and informatization, 'triggered' these ideocracies to search and develop counteractive strategies that consequently led to the cultural security turn in the late 1990s. The regime-change policies of the United States and the democratization waves in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Arab world in the first two decades of the twenty-first century served to reinforce this trend among ideocracies like the PRC and KSA.[105]

Equally important in this historical moment was the spread of a new language on culture and security that facilitated the conceptualization of cultural security in the PRC and KSA contexts. The 'cultural turn' in the social sciences transformed cultural and civilizational identities into privileged frameworks for interpreting political dynamics around the world.[106] This elevation was a by-product of the 'post-ideological moment' created by the hegemony of liberal-democracy in which, according to Eagleton, 'ideology yielded ground in the part to the concept of culture, which seemed capable of doing much the same work in a more flexible way'.[107] The end result of this process was that culture increasingly became a byword for politics and ideology. This cultural turn also coincided with changing understandings of security in the field of international security studies: a widening of the concept beyond state-centric and military-centric frames was gaining momentum.[108] New 'types' of security, such as human security, social security and economic security, among others, appeared and obtained acceptance. These two developments —the cultural turn and the widening of security—created an opening for Chinese and Saudi scholars to locally coin and popularize the term cultural security by the late 1990s.

[99]Stéphane Lacroix, `Saudi Arabia and the Limits of Religious Reform', *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 17(2), (2019), 97 -101

[100]Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*(Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983), 36–40.

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In sum, the PRC and KSA are ideocracies which, having been triggered by comparable ideological threats and informed by new emergent discourses on cultural and security in the post-Cold War era, resorted to the production of a similar framework of cultural security. This framework quickly gained traction among academic and official circles, and was subsequently institutionalized and applied in a variety of domains. Overseas study, which took off in both states by the early 2000s, was one such domain in which a cultural security was applied. This case study exemplified the attempt by threatened ideocracies to reconcile the contradictory state projects of modernization and (political and ideological) securitization together.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This research is sponsored by a General Research Fund (Project number: 17613417) provided by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Notes on contributors

Yan Xiaojun is Associate Professor of Department of Politics & Public Administration of The University of Hong Kong.

Mohammed Alsudairi is Post-doctoral Fellow at the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences at The University of Hong Kong and Head of the Asian Studies Unit at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. Email: sudairi@hku.hk.

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