

Radical Feelings in the ‘Liberation Zone’: Active Chinese Canadian Citizenship in Richmond, BC

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Abstract

I rethink Chinese Canadian citizenship through a cultural studies framework combining anti-colonial education and affect, contextualized in the Vancouver area where the Chinese have a long history of settlement, of living with racism, and have now become the majority population in Richmond. Key to such rethinking is a textual analysis of how discourses of Chinese pride signify three different Chinese Canadian citizenship claims. Chinese pride involves radical feelings – ‘radical’ meaning the rise of Chinese epistemology that challenges and changes Eurocentric White supremacy. It is also active, meaning such epistemology is translated into praxis and mobilized toward citizenship claims.

Keywords: Chinese pride, Chinese Canadian, anti-colonial education, text, Vancouver, citizenship

Introduction

In British Columbia, Chinese Canadians have long lived, and remembered living, as victims of colonial violence. Early Chinese settlement in 19th century British Columbia marked not only a hope for the new world, but also a desperate escape from the old – conspicuously from the southern Chinese state of Guangdong, where indigenous societies were deeply disturbed and land was encroached upon by European imperial forces. The hope was fragmentally fulfilled, as some Chinese men became merchants and small business owners, while some managed to establish fruitful relations with indigenous women (Barman, 2013). Yet the trans-pacific escape from colonial powers was not total, and became entangled with new forms of racial, sexual, and economic oppressions, galvanized toward issues of Chinatown under Eurocentric White supremacy (Anderson, 1991; Lai, 1988; Ng, 1999; Stanley, 2011; Wai, 1998). This Chinese presence – a ghetto, a resistance, and a whole way of life structured by racial exclusion, Chinese clan and kinship associations, hard labour, limited class mobility, indigenous Chinese languages, and a bachelor society – has grounded across generations Chinese “structures of feeling” (Williams, 1961, p.64) as a shameful ‘race’, or at best not quite full citizens (Li, 1998; Li, 2007).

While inheriting this (anti) colonial past largely confined to inner-city Chinatown, Chinese settlements grow with quite different social fabrics in today’s metropolitan Vancouver, where Chinese immigrants have become more diverse and resourceful, transnational capital and ties are more fluid, and multiculturalism is a dominant narrative aligning immigrants with the Canadian nation-state (Ley, 2013; Li & Li, 2007; Wright, 2012). Of this change, two marked narratives capture the controversies around Chinese settlements in the southern Vancouver suburb of Richmond, where 48.5% of municipal residents self-identify as Chinese in origin (City of Richmond, 2013). One is a ‘local Canadian’ narrative that presupposes the authority of White settler space, to which Chinese settlement is an obvious/potential threat. In the past two decades, issues of suburban ‘White flight’ exemplify the racialized fear that residential ownership in some areas of Richmond has become predominantly Hong Kong Chinese, the loss of a White, quiet, idyllic Richmond to unruly foreign capital brought by new immigrants, and the changing politics of local citizenship affected by the different knowledge and practices of Chinese Canadian citizens (Deer, 2006; Ray, Halseth & Johnson, 1997; Rose, 2001, 2007).

Another narrative is the ‘transnational Chinese’ narrative that prioritizes the Chinese translation of languages, cultures, memories, and politics, from their places of origin to Richmond. Not until 1949 were Chinese Canadians in BC allowed to exercise their franchise in provincial and municipal elections, but as early as the 1890s and into the 1920s, Chinese settlement – including a few Chinese merchants, farmers, and mostly fish cannery workers for White settlers through Chinese contractors – was recorded in southern Richmond around the Steveston neighbourhood, together with First Nation people and Japanese immigrants (City of Richmond Archives, 2011). Through the mixed processes of suburbanization and immigration from the late 1970s to 1990s, Chinese businesses and communities in Richmond have become prosperous with settlements of Taiwanese and predominantly Hong Kong immigrants, who have brought capital, skills, cultures, connections, and who have been actively involved in the spatial construction of their collective memories of home and ideas of new life (Edgington, Goldberg, & Hutton, 2003; Hsu, 2008; Mitchell, 2001). At the turn of the new century Richmond had a reputation as “Xiao Xiang Gang (Little Hong Kong)”, with the landmark Aberdeen Centre, and the subsequent construction of Chinese (and more broadly East Asian) customer-oriented malls and plazas such as Yaohan Centre, Presidential Plaza, and Continental Plaza. The demographic rise of Mainland Chinese immigrants since 2000 has brought a significant change (and sometimes a challenge) to the previous ‘Chinese’ community structures dominated by Hong Kong linguistic-cultural milieu, transnational connections, business oriented and political participation (Mitchell, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2009; Teo, 2007). With extensive Chinese social networks and freedom from Western cultural assimilation, many Mainland Chinese called Richmond “Jie-fang Qu (Liberation Zone)” (Ming Pao, May 2014), a term originally used by the Communist Party of China to designate its areas during Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and Chinese Civil War (1946-1949) – signifying autonomous power subverting colonial and imperial domination.

Conceptual Framework

I use Chinese pride to articulate the rising power of an epistemology, arguably indigenous to Chinese language and culture while deeply entangled with (anti) colonial history and space. I use a cultural studies framework combining anti-colonial education and affect theory (Ahmed, 2004; Chen, 2010; Dei, 2006; Dei & Kempf, 2006). For the purpose of this paper, I emphasize anti-colonial education as a project of epistemological resistance against and emancipation from colonial relations. Broadly, I understand ‘colonial’ as anything ‘imposed and dominating’, not only about ‘external forces’ (e.g., north/south, foreign/alien) but also different sites of ‘internal power relations’ (e.g., class, gender) (Dei & Kempf, 2006, pp. 63-64). First, I use ‘Chinese’ as a strategic point of solidarity in search for indigenous knowledge and resistance against Eurocentric colonial power, but also as a construct self-implicated in colonial history and space. This use aligns with Dei’s (2006) position on the resistance potential of language and history for embodied knowledge, and Chen (2010)’s argument that, “Western imperialism has long been part of the Chinese psyche” (p. 11)– against which indigenous “knowledge production” (p. 211) is a vital transformation of the self and further resistance. Second, the histories of Western imperial violence in China, the de-centering/loss/border-making of ‘Chinese’ in the (post) colonial geopolitics of Asia, and the emerging ‘Chinese’ influence in the globalization of capital, have all fore-grounded the rise of ‘Chinese’ as “a pervasive structure of sentiment” – to appropriate Chen (2010)’s idea of using “Asia as an emotional signifier” to read critically and transnationally the new colonial power relations and anti-colonial potentials embedded in the epistemological and economic rise of Asia (pp. 213- 214). I situate Chinese pride in such power relations, using affect theory to understand pride as a floating signifier, and its production “as a form of affective value” accumulated over time and space (Ahmed,

2004, p. 11). Through intersecting narrations of history and territory, affective values bind people to some communities and move them away from others.

Citizenship is a powerful form of agency to know and transform, though itself a quite Eurocentric construct pronouncedly grounded on the rise of modern nation-state, and with very different implications for Chinese language, education and modern history (Hébert, 2002; Xiao, 2013). In this paper, citizenship is the forming of different subjects, sites, and scales of claim-making. Claims are not only made through formal citizenship as legal status and rights, but also made through “acts of citizenship” as a condition for citizenship possibilities, where “acts constitute actors who claim and assert rights and obligations, enact themselves as activist citizens and, in the process, differentiate others as those who are not (strangers, outsiders, aliens)” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). Canadian multiculturalism, as a definitive aspect of Canadian citizenship, has long been wrestling with issues of diversity and has at its core the pedagogical intent of teaching ways of negotiating differences related to the colonial others, racialized others, and immigrant others (Wright, 2012; Willinsky, 2012). Chinese Canadian identities – from a denigrated ‘race’ to the image of ‘model immigrants’ – are part and parcel of the multicultural claim-making of Canadian citizenship (Li, 1998).

Although I do not use a psychological framework, I acknowledge that psychologists in North America have long included pride as an inherent part of self-esteem (Rosenberg et al., 1995; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and recently explored two facets of pride as authentic and hubristic (Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b). In cultural studies, the sparse literature on pride nonetheless suggests that it speaks to self-determination, articulating strong belongings and rights in political communities, be it in the name of multiculturalist citizenship or being citizens of a nation of glory (Christensen, 1999; Fortier, 2005; Wang, 2012; Yu & Bairner, 2008). Next, I will explore relevant historicity and spatiality of Chinese pride, as a floating signifier of complex (anti) colonial, (anti) imperial relations interwoven by the historical loss of Chinese lands and geopolitical centrality, Chinese resistance against non-Chinese imperial powers, and the possible re-emergence of a Chinese ‘empire’. I will then zoom in to the colonial, multicultural, (sub) urban context of Vancouver, exploring how Chinese pride is grounded in (counter) Eurocentric knowledge, migration history, and transnational space to articulate three citizenship claims.

Chinese Pride in Chinese Terms

I delimit my analysis to several key discursive constructions of Chinese communities since the late 19th century Qing dynasty, when the politically contested ‘Chineseness’ was foregrounded, and further embedded in the intersecting discourses of pride in the Chinese race and nation (*zhong-hua* and *zhong-guo*). This revisit is important not only because such discourses remain today among overseas Chinese through family, education, and media, but also because it was a time when unprecedented powerful connections were worked out between ideas of pride and the Chinese presence – to make senses of, delineate, and justify the very existence and future of Chineseness, in relation to colonial, imperial ‘non-Chinese’ presences.

驕傲 (*jiao-ao*), 自豪 (*zi-hao*), and Chinese Pride

On 1 January 1874, ‘驕傲 (*jiao-ao*)’ appeared in a front-page article of 申報 *Shen Bao* (January 1, 1874), a then widely circulated Chinese newspaper founded by the British merchant Ernest Major

in Shanghai¹. In this article titled “Translation of Britain’s London Newspaper *The Times* editorial on China issue”, *jiao-ao* was used to project an arrogant, self-enclosed China – proud of its long history and cultural achievements but facing a diminished presence after encounters with Western power. This was not the first recorded use of *jiao-ao* in Chinese, but this new take on *jiao-ao* as self-indulged arrogance has since then been tied to China-West conflicts, where *jiao-ao* has been presented as the undue pride of the weak and the loser (June 15, 1887; April 10, 1892). Chinese *jiao-ao* meant a weak and lost Chinese identity – albeit with a strong past – in the dominating presence of West that was no longer a distant stranger.

This undue positioning urged resistance, and at that time, a radically new historical consciousness of China: the disillusioned present and the need to ‘wake up’ – quite vividly captured by “sleeping China now needs to wake up”, title of a *Shen Bao* (June 15, 1887) front-page article in which *jiao-ao* was again used to refer to the weak and almost invisible Chinese under imperial world order. This improper pride as 傲慢 (*ao-man*), well into the 1930s, was constantly used to caution against the over-optimistic Chinese mood among the presence of foreign powers (June 22, 1911; May 1, 1937). But since the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, *jiao-ao* also acquired a positive sense of proper pride as 自豪 (*zi-bao*), to shore up an elevated Chinese position, articulated in a Chinese nation, and justify a Chinese presence among imperial non-Chinese powers. This *zi-bao* – quite often designated to foreign powers that were strong enough to claim rights and a sense of confidence – became what the Chinese wanted to claim. Closely related was self-esteem 自尊 (*zi-zun*) that was later used for basic human dignity and social recognition, and the backbone of pride as 傲骨 (*ao-gu*) calling for proper self-respect and respect from others (February 11, 1943; March 7, 1946; March 21, 1948). The list of related words could continue, but suffice it to say that a collective Chinese pride became hinged upon, and a reaction to, the modern trauma of colonial and imperial violence inflicted on the “Chinese” territory of late Qing and its people. Such pride partly originated from internal ethnic and political struggles to represent an original and authentic (Han) Chineseness, but pronouncedly from the loss of indigenous land, that of the great China to the imperial non-Chinese powers including the West 西洋 (*xi-yang*) and Japan 東洋 (*dong-yang*).

Embedded in a past of resisting imperial powers and foreign violence, Chinese pride represents a hope for the return of indigenous Chinese ‘self’ (e.g., the proper Chinese nation and land regained), of recovering the Chinese face (*mian-zi*), The Chinese conception of ‘face’, meticulously discussed by the American anthropologist Hu (1944), works across discursive spaces and everyday situations to give individuals a recognized sense of self in any given community. The loss of ‘face’ is not a simple loss of respect or self-esteem, but is emphatically the loss of a proper role, the very colonial erasure of self-consciousness and thus the denial of presence. ‘Face’ politics is still quite commonly held by today’s political elites and decision-makers in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), for whom the century of humiliation is still readily palpable and a discourse of pride is needed for appealing to overseas Chinese communities – such as the rhetoric of a great Chinese renaissance in order to regain a strong Chinese nation and Chinese people united by ancestral roots (Bloomberg Business week, January 2010; Christensen, 1999; The United Front Work Department of CPC Central Committees, March 2014).

¹All *Shen Bao* articles cited in this paper are accessed through the *Shen Bao* database of University of British Columbia Library.

光榮 (guang-rong) and Chinese Glory

In a 1928 film, the depiction of a strong, righteous Chinese man punishing Western villains was hailed as adding to “華人之光榮” (Chinese glory) (*Shen Bao*, January 27, 1928). This pride as glory (*guang-rong*) was also grounded on a dominating/dominated relation through the performance of distinct and powerful Chinese martial arts. But read further, what this Chinese *guang-rong* emphatically performed was the Western eyes that saw the ‘Chinese’ wonder. The Chinese character did not speak Chinese and was actually played by a Japanese actor, but this Chinese *guang-rong* remained because its meaning lied in the act of appealing and revealing to Westerners – it was this act of impressing the West that mattered most. In quite a few other *Shen Bao* articles during 1920s and 1930s, *guang-rong* was used to narrate various real or imagined impressions – a satisfied Chinese presence as and only as the West beheld. The objects of impressions included the Chinese botanist in the United States (November 10, 1929), the Chinese martial art master winning the boxing competition in the United States (November 8, 1930), and Chinese business teams winning among foreign teams (July 25, 1934). Suffice to say that what this *guang-rong* presumed and performed was Chinese visibility in the eyes of the West.

This Chinese *guang-rong* was variously criticized by the Chinese leading cultural critic Lu Xun. In “未來的光榮 (future *guang-rong*)”, Lu (2006[1934]) critiqued the *guang-rong* that relied solely on how Chinese was seen and depicted from the cultural horizon of the West, while holding an illusion that Chineseness thus performed would gain more glorious recognitions in the future (pp. 785-786). Lu (2006[1936])’s deep worry –in another article about the depiction of Chinese characters in movies by American directors – was not the positive/glorious or negative/derogatory depictions of Chinese per se. Rather, it was the Chinese consciousness of self-image always subjected to the Western whim of judgment – a pathological mentality that any proof of a valuable Chinese identity always needed to beg recognition from the West (pp. 1072-1075). More recently, in a seminal essay *To be or not to be Chinese*, anthropologist Ang (1993) captured this performance of western eyes during a short visit to south China. It became “almost painful,” said Ang (1993), to see how the presentation of Chineseness “could only be accomplished by surrendering to the rhetorical perspective of the Western other” (p. 2). To perform Chinese presence, be it hardships or glorious achievements, was almost to take up “a *defensive* position” (original emphasis) – “a position in need of constant self-explanation, in relation to a West that can luxuriate in its own taken-for-granted superiority” (p. 2).

But Chinese *guang-rong* also performed the Chinese spirit (*jing-shen*), which suggested something more than grand cultural heritage. Often, it was narrated as a spirit of struggling and resisting, coupled with endurance and sacrifice. Through the 1930s and 1940s, this appeared most strongly and readily at the collective level of Chinese nation and people. In *Shen Bao* articles, *guang-rong* performed the events of supporting Chinese-made goods at a difficult time for local manufacturing industry (July 17, 1939), of commemorating the Chinese army fighting against the Japanese invading troops (November 8, 1939; September 3, 1947), and of safeguarding and building the nascent Chinese nation – with a speech delivered by the then Chinese president Chiang Kai-shek (April 25, 1938; May 6, 1946). Various, it was a pride of persisting efforts – as persistence it accumulated and thus created histories, and as effort it achieved and thus deserved acknowledgments. This *guang-rong* delineates a global, coherent line of resistance – by the indigenous Chinese, against the foreign West. This historical line of Chinese/West sustains the articulation of Chinese diaspora that situates Chinese presence in various shapes of spatiality and sociality, while working with certain concentric linguistic and cultural forces to unify Chinese communities as a

luminous and unique cultural presence in the world (Tu, 1991). This, in turn, relates to the more contemporary discourse of Greater China and Chinese fraternity.

大中華 (da zhong-hua) and Chinese Fraternity

In problematizing transnational Chinese capitalism, anthropologist Aiwa Ong (1997) highlights the discourse of Greater China – in Chinese as 大中華 (*da zhong-hua*). Characterized by an overseas Chinese capitalist zone, narratives of *da zhong-hua* celebrate “subjects in diaspora and the ways their hybridity and flexibility suggest transnational solidarities” connecting different Chinese overseas, solidarities that propel an imaginary of “flexible citizenship” in tension with the modernist imaginary of the nation-state emphasizing essentialism, territoriality, and fixity (Ong, 1997, p. 173). This tensionality between transnational Chinese capitalism and nationalism is not entirely new, and was partly anticipated by historian Gungwu Wang’s (1993) discussion of the economic, political, and cultural implications of Greater China for Chinese overseas. While the economic Greater China emphasizes effective movement of capital and integration, the political Greater China implies Chinese “expansionism towards the neighbouring regions”, and when used culturally Greater China suggests a Chinese “grandiosity which is at best misleading and at worst boastful” (p. 926).

Whether talking with the political overtones of a strong and unified China or taking pride in the ethnic Chinese exceptionalism of capital productivity, the discourse of Greater China feeds into the construction of Chinese business empires. On the one hand, Greater China evokes the unification of Chinese bloodlines – once deeply disrupted by the colonial West – for a distinctive Chinese capitalism, with a “flexible citizenship exercised by Hong Kong and other Asian business elites relocated from Asia to the west coast of North America” (Ong & Nonini, 1997, p. 329). Envisioning such a far-flung Chinese world, the then Singaporean premier Lee Kuan Yew talks about a “Zhongguorengongtongti (common body of Chinese)”, linked together by concrete trade interests that allow profits and trust to grow into capitalist success, which “further fuels the region’s pride and confidence in itself” (as quoted in Ong, 1997, p. 188). On the other hand, this ‘Chinese’ capitalist success has been narrated with the kind of “moral economy based on Confucian ideals”, in contrast to the Western liberalism said to prevail in less successful Asian countries (Ong, 1997, p. 182). The Confucian values – such as “belief in hard work, thrift, filial piety, and national pride” – are interpreted as key factors in economic advancement for the rise of industrialized Asia (Ong, 1997, p. 186; also see Tu, 1989). Such Confucian ethics momentarily elicits a kind of Chinese fraternity for building a transnational capitalist empire, in East-West trade competition.

This discourse heavily loaded with Chinese identity is highly misleading and has often led to mutual reinforcement between a new transnational Chinese chauvinism of empire building and a new local racist discourse of anti-Chinese, anti-global sentiments (Ong & Nonini, 1997). The powerful narrative of linguistic and cultural bonds among Chinese communities overseas – sometimes heavily centred on ancestral bonds – strategically performs the presence of Chinese blood. This presence has widened the circles of capital flows and the markets for investments and consumption. Concomitantly, it has produced much racialized tensions around ‘Chinese communities’ that have repercussions on both sides of the Asian Pacific. The discourse of Chinese fraternity, thus performed through Greater China, gets grounded on a ‘valuable’ and precarious position of Chinese ‘empire’ building.

Chinese Pride for Canadian Citizens

'Ugly Chinese Nationalism' and Chinese Canadian as a 'Visible Minority'

In a 2008 article on *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Kwan – a respected radio host in Chinese Canadian communities – talked about his ambivalent feelings of pride related to the ascending global power of China, in particular displayed through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Although noting that many of his Hong Kong Canadian audience in recent years have found a new sense of Chinese pride as China became influential on the world stage – a sense which he himself admitted to, Mr. Kwan worried that “the sentiments being expressed will be mistaken for ‘ugly Chinese nationalism’ instead of shows of dignity and cultural pride” (*The Globe and Mail*, August 2008). Sure enough, this Chinese pride was *jiao-ao* and *xi-bao*, as the Chinese face recovered from a very disturbed past dominated by the West. It demands visibility as a markedly improved status – Chinese Canadian is a visible minority but this visibility of ‘Chinese-ness’ now means a strong power.

This knowledge of visibility reflects, in effect, forces of (anti) racism that have historically situated Chinese Canadian in a mix of colonial world order and worldviews. First, the persistent connection to China repeated a diaspora discourse of Chinese fraternity traced through ancestral bloodlines and land, as the title of the article quite well suggests, “Chinese-Canadian diaspora fostering new bond with homeland”. This need for fraternity, for re-building Chinese indigenous communities once destroyed by western colonial forces in southern China, was embedded in a history of (anti) racism in Vancouver and the operations of Chinese clan and kinship associations (Mitchell, 1998; Ng, 1999). Second, the overall claim on transnational Chinese Canadian visibility, markedly since the 1980s, was made through movements (of people, capital, and citizenship) from the former British colony Hong Kong to Canada. A historical colonial system of English language and culture made possible the flexibility of citizenship, and subsequently the strong Hong Kong – Canada circuits and ties which kept shaping the landscape of Vancouver (Edgington, Goldberg, & Hutton, 2003; Li, 1992, 1993).

What makes Chinese pride even more ambivalent is Mr. Kwan’s worry – that such pride will be mistaken for ‘ugly Chinese nationalism’. But mistaken by whom? It readily implies the performance of Western eyes – eyes that see the ugliness of such pride and racialize it as unfit for the Canadian multicultural mosaic that rations certain cultural pride to visible minorities. This performance of Western eyes – constantly gazing at what the Chinese in Canada have made Canada ‘ugly’ – has targeted Chinese language, food culture, built forms, and educational achievements. Two cases were well known: ‘monster houses’ was a term used by the English media in Vancouver to describe the style of concrete housing constructed by Hong Kong Chinese immigrants (Li, 1998); Maclean’s “Too Asian” report on the academic ‘over-representation’ of Asians – most of them Chinese Canadian college students – that deformed white Canadian college cultures (Cui & Kelly, 2013). More recently, some ‘non-Chinese’ residents, calling themselves the new ‘visible minority’ in Richmond, petitioned for a municipal by-law to ban business signs with Chinese-only language (*CBC News*, March 2013). This followed the earlier heated debates on shark fin ban which – with multiple levels of stakeholders including a Chinese Canadian MP – escalated to intra/inter-racial tensions where Chinese culture was set against Canadian values. The feeling of indignation on being denied proper respect and self-esteem has been widely felt in Chinese communities (*CBC News*, December 2012; *Richmond Review*, October 2012).

‘Spirit of the Dragon’ and Chinese Canadian as a ‘Model Minority’

In *Spirit of the dragon: The Story of Jean Lumb, A Proud Chinese-Canadian*, Arlene Chan gave a succinct biographical account of her mother Jean Lumb, a widely respected Chinese Canadian woman. What made Jean Lumb a role model for many Chinese was her spirit of struggling “from being an ‘outsider’ to being a leader not only within the Chinese-Canadian community but also in the whole of Canada” (Chan, 1997, p. 1). In an oral histories collection called 巾幗 *jingguo* (a common reference in Chinese that women are as brave and as strong as men), Jean Lumb talked about her efforts to integrate into Canadian society, even though she was born in Canada. The spirit that she felt proud of and wanted to pass on to future generations was the persistence to integrate, as Chinese Canadians who have “earned” the respects, “taken our places in the mainstream”, and “become accepted into this society” (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1992, p. 53). This Chinese spirit of integration, embedded in the experiences of survival, hard work, and sacrifice, resonated well with stories of many other Chinese Canadian women included in the book – stories of surviving poverty and violence, taking care of family, pursuing education, and doing hard work. Another prominent and more upper-middle class articulation was on 6 September 1988, when the long established and widely circulated Chinese newspaper in Vancouver Chinese Times (September, 1988) dedicated a page to congratulate David Lam – a Hong Kong Chinese immigrant – as the new Lieutenant Governor to British Columbia. The majority of the page was occupied by eight oversized Chinese characters read 華裔之光加國之榮 (*guang* of ethnic Chinese, *rong* of Canadian nation). This *guang-rong* (glory) was widely shared among the Chinese Canadian communities, endorsed by various Chinese Canadian associations listed at the bottom of the page. The identity associated with *guang-rong*, according to David Lam himself, was very much meant to perform the spirit of struggling to integrate into mainstream Canadian society, struggling through persistence, diligence, and service (Huang & Jeffery, 1992, pp. 58-69; Poon, 1990, pp. 6-16).

Pronouncedly this knowledge of Chinese spirit speaks to the experiences of working class women’s survival of, resistance against, and escape from White male hegemony. It extends to the emancipatory experiences of persistent Chinese struggles – from second-class citizenship designated for people from the colonized old world to equal citizenship in the developed new world. But this persistence has a particular affinity to Canadian liberal multiculturalism that is quite Eurocentric and forgetful of colonial history and space. First, this Chinese spirit subscribes to a utilitarian and narrow modeling of immigrants as acceptable resources for local society – or in the language of liberal multiculturalism such acceptance “depends on the perception that immigrants are holding up their end of the bargain and making a good-faith effort to contribute to society – particularly economically” (Kymlicka, 2012, p. 2). A continuous supply of good stories and model immigrants are needed to prove the benefits of immigration and the values of ‘visible’ ethnicities involved. Second, Chinese spirit only works within Canadian citizenship claims verified by the tightly controlled borders of nation-state and local loyalty, which are hegemonic upon non-European differences. Either interculturalism or multiculturalism as distinguished by Taylor (1994, 2012) remains largely within the European epistemology that unwarrantedly “forget that there are differences which come as cultural legacies of the non-Europeans, and which are negatively interpreted irrespective of their actual content when they enter into societies pre-textured with colonial and imperialist relations and ideologies” (Bannerji, 2000, p. 147). Third, this Chinese spirit over-emphasizes individuals’ self-reliance with their own available resources – downplaying possibilities of transforming social structures while delimiting individual agency to the self-competence of liberal intercultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 2003).

This knowledge, typical of the narrative of ‘model minority’ in North American societies (Lee, 2011; Li, 2005; Li & Wang, 2008), unfolds a quite controversial politics of recognition once it gets translated into the practices of what it means to be a Chinese Canadian citizen. Speaking to thousands in an audience on a public occasion in 1990, Jean Lumb expressed how such Chinese spirit could transform a person into a proud Canadian citizen. “Through the hard work and sacrifices of our forefathers, they have passed on a legacy of loyalty, honour, obedience, and respect. We, the Chinese Canadians, have inherited a broad and firm foundation as good, responsible citizens. I am proud, I am very happy, to be a Canadian” (As cited in Chan, 1997, p. 29). Being good and responsible has as its prerequisite obeying the rules and attaining educational and socio-economic success within the system of the liberal, multicultural nation-state. It would not be surprising that Jean Lumb and David Lam saw the then new immigrants from Hong Kong after 1980s as not being quite Canadian, not settled in Canada, and unsettling the Chinese status of model minority. These immigrants were too “progressive” in material life, too “confined” in mental life, not “respecting” of the local Canadian culture, disregarding the long, gradual struggles of Chinese for citizen rights and instead claiming everything as an equal right after they settled in Canada, thus eventually bringing racial tensions (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1992, p. 53; Huang & Jeffery, 1992, pp. 58-69; Poon, 1990, pp. 6-16).

‘Voices Rising’ and Chinese Canadian as a ‘Majority-Minority’

Interviewing cultural activists mostly of Chinese and Japanese heritage, Li (2007) used the title *Voices rising* to articulate the ascending ‘Asian’ presence in ‘Canadian’ knowledge and practices. Such ascendance, in a Chinese sense, was narrated in the *Ming Pao* report of Chinese New Year Parade in Vancouver’s Chinatown, titled “一年勝一年, 華人也自豪 (better every year, *zi-bao* to be Chinese)” (*Ming Pao*, February 2014). As one parade participant put it, this *zi-bao* (pride) was nested in rising Chinese status in local society and the world. In Vancouver, and Richmond in particular, strong Chinese influence comes with the regional concentrated settlement of immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China, with new capital and skills, and with prosperous community activities and activism (Li & Li, 2007). On the one hand, many recent Mainland Chinese immigrants call Richmond *jie-fang qu* (Liberation Zone), quite free of Western culture and the pressures of struggling for integration into the ‘mainstream’. On the other hand, ‘non-Chinese’ community activists publically called for a formal Chinatown in Richmond as a ‘designated area’ for Chinese language and culture rather than allowing its spread into the whole city (CBC Radio, May 2013).

The ongoing argument on the overall status of ‘Chinese’, either in the tone of Chinese diasporic nationalism or urban planning within the White European conception of ‘race’ and space, hides in fact the complex, changing, and sometime contradictory moods of being ‘Chinese’ in a mix of (post) colonial and multicultural contexts. Mainland Chinese pride articulates very different memories and space of belonging, as compared to those of Hong Kongers, Taiwanese, and local-born Chinese Canadians. The Mainland Chinese were never quite colonized, having a strong sense of Chinese national identity constructed through the education and media in Mainland China (Wang, 2012; Wu, 2011). With economic and familial considerations, they were also not quite settled into Canadian life (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006; Teo, 2007). The Hong Kongers were British colonial subjects and had a very different history education (Kan & Vickers, 2002; Luk, 1991), yet many Hong Kong immigrants did not see that past in a negative way and take pride in its persisting privileges. They were adroit at using the rule of law, the colonial English language, and business models, seeing Canada largely as a space of transferring capital, skills, and lost British identities to a new democratic context. They became quite successful in Vancouver (and particularly Richmond) (Edgington, Goldberg, & Hutton, 2003; Mitchell, 2001; Rose, 2007). The Taiwanese had a persisting

unease with the Mainland Chinese in terms of political ideologies and claims on Chinese government legitimacy, tended to dissociate from Chinese identities, and were quite willing to integrate into the Canadian mainstream (Chu & Lin, 2001; Wu, 2012). Since the implementation of multiculturalism in the 1980s, the *tu-sheng* (local-born) were able to claim Canadian recognition more readily because of their immediate bonds to the Eurocentric Canadian contexts of education and media. A specific narrative of pride was not gaining Canadian recognition through social assimilation, but rather claiming Canadian identity through historical and spatial traces of Vancouver's Chinatown and more broadly the Chinese roots and routes in BC (Lee, 2011; Ng, 1999).

Speaking of pride, Chinese presence thus involves a very active listening to different narratives of the past. In 2010, the City of New Westminster – historically called among the Chinese communities in BC as The Second Chinatown (Lai, 1988) – gave an official public apology to Chinese communities for its past injustice against the Chinese population, and it became the first Canadian municipality that reached historical reconciliation with the Chinese community. According to the Chinese newspaper *Sing Tao Daily*, feelings of pride were shared among many Chinese Canadians, characterized by an eighty-seven year old Chinese Canadian veteran who said “身為加拿大人，我是 110% 驕傲，我今天以身為華人而自豪 (as a Canadian, I feel 110% *jiao-ao*, and today as a Chinese I feel *zi-bao*)” (*Sing Tao Daily*, September 2010). In 2012, a group of Chinese community activists in Richmond cited this as an example and urged BC Premier Christy Clark to include a fair and accurate depiction of Chinese and First Nations people's history in B.C.'s school curriculum, further noting that B.C. is one of “the few remaining West Coast jurisdictions which still hides its history towards its minorities” (*Richmond Review*, February 2012). In January 2014, the B.C. Minister Responsible for the Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism Teresa Wat hosted community forums in Richmond to discuss a provincial government's apology to B.C.'s Chinese community for historical wrongs. It also involved discussions around adding the historical discrimination against the Chinese in Canada into B.C. school textbooks, with the attendance of B.C. Education Minister Peter Fassbender, who supported such addition into school curricula (Information Bulletin of Government of B.C., January 2014).

Listening to these oppressed Chinese pasts becomes meaningful as it involves talking about a future of Chinese privileges. The government of B.C. realizes the importance of historical reconciliation not only because of the need to embrace more fully the settlement history – urged by Chinese community activists such as Bill Chu and Hanson Lau (*Richmond Review*, February 2012), but also because of the need of the province and the municipalities to attract Chinese capital and investments through future international trade and immigration, reminiscent of the transnational Chinese ‘empire’ of *da zhong-hua* (*Newsroom of Government of British Columbia*, November 2013). In a keynote at a Canada China Business Council luncheon, B.C. Premier Christy Clark herself stressed the future of Canada as “a Pacific nation” – that the future for Canada and especially B.C. lies across the Pacific Ocean in Asia and “increasingly that means China” which could offer immense opportunities for trade and business that are key to economic growth in B.C. (*Newsroom of Government of British Columbia*, December 2013). In an earlier pre-election interview with Christy Clark, the Chinese newspaper *Sing Tao Daily* translated Christy Clark's expression of pride as *zi-bao*, who directed the feelings of pride to the seven selected Chinese Canadian candidates in her party as representing the future – given the 600 thousand Chinese Canadian votes in BC and the need to build connections with China for BC's economic growth (*Sing Tao Daily*, May 2013). The title “Significant Opportunities held in the hands of Chinese Canadians” became reminiscent of the performance of *jiao-ao/zi-bao* – a performance of Chinese face as the power of displaying a presence of economic and political ascendance.

Conclusion

The working of Chinese pride is on the one hand, grounded in some indigenous Chinese language, culture, and practices, challenging colonial White supremacy, and critical of Eurocentric epistemologies. On the other hand, it is grounded on the reproduction of (trans) national and local colonial relations, fermenting new forms of Eurocentric/Chinese privileges and conflicts. The different positionalities of Chinese Canadian citizenship signified by pride, especially the Chinese who are a majority-minority in Richmond, are constructs of power relations in three dimensions. First, China's increasingly global influences seemingly break the historical shame of underdevelopment and loss to the imperial West since late 19th century. Pride becomes the nationalistic call for 'patriotism' among overseas Chinese, although with appeals to different versions of the Chinese nation and mobilization of capital (Liu & Lin, 1999; Ong & Nonini, 1997). Second, the ongoing Chinese Canadian struggles for recognition are built on strong memories of racialization, exclusion, and the desire for integration. Pride serves as a devise of Chinese dignity against racism, while aligned with a liberal multicultural narrative of being accepted/fit/successful in the Eurocentric middle-class mainstream (Ng, 1999). Third, Chinese influence in Richmond sustains a strong sense of belonging and spatial ownership that might pilot a new historicity of Chinese in Canada with or without the appeal to being multicultural (*CBC News*, March 2013; *CBC Radio*, May 2013). Here articulating Chinese pride is highly susceptible to radical politics in new forms of Chinese activism or insurgent racial discrimination.

This paper has three major limitations. First, the complex interactions and fragmentations between different 'Chinese Canadian' groups are yet to be explored – a complexity that demands future research to question the political contingencies of using an overarching category of 'Chinese Canadian' as such. Second, the lack of nuanced discussion on 'Eurocentric' and 'West' hides the power hierarchies occupied by Canadians with different 'European' heritages, from different places of European colonial histories, and having different relations with Chinese communities (e.g., Ukraine, German, Greek, Indian, Philippine, Vietnam, etc.). Third, understanding the future of Chinese Canadian citizenship requires policy analysis in fields such as urban planning and multicultural education, and further ethnographic research of young people's lived experiences beyond textual analysis. With these limitations, this paper serves as a preliminary step towards reading critically the non-European power and practices of making citizenship claims in Canada. First, knowledge of Chinese Canadian citizenship should be re-constructed, so that its new praxis is able to transgress the colonial, racialized history and space that frame Chineseness – as either suburban Chinatown (Fong, 1994; Luk, 2005) or ethnoburb (Li, 1998, 2009) in North America. In Vancouver and in particular Richmond, the very vibrant Chinese business, residences, and cultural practices make 'Chineseness' a quite salient access to the lived spaces of many people, in Lefebvre (1991)'s words the "representational spaces" (p. 33) to claim the right to the city, and further as a strategic point of "coalition-building" across differences as a counter-Eurocentric, alternative spatial justice (Soja, 2010, p. 109). Second, allying with anti-colonial education, the proposal of Chinese pride does not mean to erect Sinocentrism in replacing Eurocentrism. The touch on pride furthers an "anti-colonial discursive framework" (Dei, 2006, p. 4) that looks at both the material and non-material aspects of colonizing relations, and emphasizes the epistemological power of colonized subjects. The insistence on Chinese aims to invite more diverse epistemological resistance in a transnational, colonial context, and to activate the awareness to speak without Eurocentric tones. In this belief and direction, this paper presents a particular Chinese Canadian path.

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