

Chinese in South Africa: Race, Diversity, and Exclusion

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Introduction

South Africa has the largest population of Chinese on the African continent. It is also home to one of the few multi-generational local Chinese communities in the region, with others in Mauritius, Reunion, and Madagascar. That which is often viewed, from the outside, as one Chinese community, however, is actually several different Chinese communities. This paper explores the various phases of Chinese migration to South Africa, the concerns of the different communities, as well as alliances and contestation between communities. In the context of a history of exclusion and a post-apartheid South Africa still struggling to construct a unifying national identity, address highly controversial policies of racially-based redress, and deal with outbursts of xenophobic violence, the paper also attempts to position the various communities of Chinese, both South African and immigrant. Where do the Chinese fit in? And will they (ever) become South African – or is true South African citizenship reserved for (a particular group of) Blacks only?

Chinese migration to South Africa

The earliest Chinese in South Africa included convicts and company slaves of the Dutch East India Company who controlled the Cape in the mid- to late 17th century, a small number of contract labourers and artisans who came to South Africa in the early and mid-1800s, and over 63,000 contract miners imported to (and later exported from) South Africa between 1904-1910. While these histories are significant in terms of understanding the context into which free Chinese migrants entered South Africa, their numbers were small and most were eventually repatriated to China or they gradually mixed into South Africa's mixed race population.¹

The first Chinese settlers

The ancestors of the 'local' Chinese or SABCs (South African-born Chinese) began arriving in South Africa in small but significant numbers from the late 1870s. Today this segment of the Chinese in South Africa numbers approximately 10,000.² From their first arrival in the late-1800s and for nearly a century discrimination and racist legislation kept their numbers

low, restricted further immigration, and placed controls on the existing Chinese community.³ According to census data, in 1891 there was a total of 413 Chinese in South Africa; by 1904, these numbers increased five-fold but remained, relative to the total population, quite small, at 2,556.⁴ While the numbers were tiny, both in real and relative terms, the reaction was unduly harsh: Chinese throughout the various colonies and states of early South Africa met with fear and hatred based primarily on race.

The Orange Free State was particularly severe. It prohibited the settlement of 'Asiatics' until 1886. From 1854, the law forbade 'Asiatics' from owning property or becoming citizens; these were rights reserved for whites only. In 1891, another Orange Free State law further prohibited any 'Asiatic' from living within the province; transiting 'Asiatics' were permitted within its borders for only 72 hours.

The Johannesburg business community led the anti-'Asiatic' sentiment in the Transvaal. From 1855, no person of colour could become a citizen, and only citizens could own land. From 1885, Law 3 of the ZAR expressly excluded Chinese from citizenship. From 1888 to 1899, fears of invasion of Indian traders resulted in a series of laws to prohibit or restrict 'Asiatics' in residence and in trade; these included pass laws.⁵ The targets of most of the legislation were the Indian community of South Africa, but the Chinese were subjected to the same race-based discriminatory legislation.

In the early 1900s the Cape Colony passed a number of laws that severely restricted Chinese immigration. The first of these was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1902, which effectively barred most 'Asiatics' by demanding that prospective immigrants pass a literacy test in a European language. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904 went a step further and specifically prohibited Chinese from entering and residing in the Cape Colony, and instituted a comprehensive system of registration and control; the law required 'certificates of exemption' to be carried by all Chinese in the Cape, to be renewed yearly. The law denied citizenship to Chinese and required fingerprint identification. The passage of this law again related to fears that the Transvaal's indentured Chinese miners would flood into the Cape. Despite the protests of the Chinese, the South African government kept the Act in place and for almost three decades virtually halted any new Chinese immigration to the Cape.

In Natal, alarm at the growth of the Indian population⁶ resulted in legal steps against all 'Asiatics', including Chinese. In 1897, laws were passed to restrict immigration and trading; later, in 1904, another law placed restrictions on transit. The immigration legislation required that all new immigrants pass a European language test, as in the Cape. Archival research for a history project on the South African Chinese community revealed that, between 1900 and 1904, 752 Chinese were refused entry and only 54 were admitted, either because they passed the education test or because they could prove that they had previously resided in South Africa.⁷ Those living in Natal had to obtain domicile certificates to re-enter the colony. The Transit Immigrants Act of 1904 followed, requiring the confinement of all contract laborers in compounds while in Natal; the law further prohibited anyone in the colony from harbouring or employing such Chinese. The law also had a direct impact on free Chinese in Natal, requiring them to furnish fingerprints for a special domicile certificate to be carried at all times. Chinese residents objected to giving fingerprints. In China, fingerprints identified criminals; the fingerprint requirement was seen as a slur on their good moral character. Despite other restrictions on trade and immigration, Chinese in Natal owned land and fixed property from 1896. By 1904 there were approximately 165 Chinese left there.⁸

Until the apartheid years, their numbers grew slowly but steadily. Barriers to Chinese immigration in North America were lowered during and after World War II, but in South Africa, after an initial increase between 1949 and 1953 comprised mostly of new brides brought from China, the door to South Africa was virtually shut by the Immigrants Regulation Amendment Act 43 of 1953. There are only a few isolated cases of Chinese entering South Africa between 1953 and the late 1970s; these include a few qualified Chinese chefs who were permitted entry on temporary permits and a small number of illegal immigrants who persisted in their attempts to join family members in South Africa.⁹

While South Africa was segregated along race lines well before 1948, the apartheid government deepened racial differentiation. Laws prohibited social mingling, enforced racial segregation, entrenched whites in a position of superiority, and denied rights and privileges to people of colour, including the Chinese. The Population Registration Act (1950), the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Group Areas Act (1950), and other legislation encompassing educational and occupational rights affected the Chinese community.

However, because the Chinese were such a small community and because they were seen to be respectable, quiet and law-abiding, there was a gradual shift in the application of apartheid laws as regards this community. While concessions and privileges opened up access to white schools, hospitals, residential areas and other amenities, it also, increasingly, placed the Chinese in an unenviable position. The local Chinese I interviewed attested to the confusion in the day-to-day implementation of apartheid laws affecting them. Most public facilities were designated for white and non-white. However, in a system within which 'race was to be the critical and overriding faultline',¹⁰ Chinese often spoke of being 'in between', 'sitting on the fence', and lost in the bottomless gulf between black and white. Some of the most poignant examples of confused implementation came from people speaking of their experiences as children, shunted from one entrance marked 'European' to the other marked 'non-European' and back again. It was not only the bureaucrats who were confused about the Chinese position. As Chinese gained more concessions, South African citizens of all colours began to assume that Chinese were 'white' or at least 'honorary white', and the faultline of race began increasingly to show fissures. General social perceptions led to assumptions about the Chinese community's societal position, which in legal terms had not changed. Into this confused and confusing situation, there arrived some new Chinese migrants.

Taiwanese Chinese migrations

During the 1970s, due to increasingly close ties between the apartheid government in South Africa and the Republic of China/Taiwan, small numbers of Taiwanese industrialists were enticed to make investments in remote areas of South Africa, part of a larger plan to staunch the flow of black Africans from the 'homelands' into urban areas. A small but steady influx of Taiwanese industrialists into South Africa during this period formed the first wave of new Chinese immigration to South Africa. Generous South African government incentives (including relocation costs, subsidised wages for seven years and subsidised rent for ten years, cheap transport of goods to urban areas, and housing loans) and favourable exchange rates encouraged the immigration of investors and their families from Taiwan and Hong Kong.¹¹

Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, the numbers of these industrialists continued to grow. At first these early Taiwanese experienced some difficulties with housing and schooling for their children as they settled in conservative towns surrounding the former

homelands. These Taiwanese immigrants initially were accommodated by permit-based exemptions to existing apartheid laws. Eventually, however, South Africa's long-standing prohibition of non-white immigration was waived in order to accommodate them and in the Orange Free State Province laws were overturned to permit Chinese residence in the province.

In the 1990s, a second wave of new Chinese immigration started. On the heels of the industrialists, many other immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong entered South Africa. They came in as entrepreneurs opening import/export firms, restaurants, other small businesses, and as students.¹² While the industrialists were based primarily in or near the former homelands, these newer arrivals settled in South Africa's larger cities. By the end of 1994, there were approximately 300 such businesses and hundreds of Chinese students in South Africa.¹³

However, it should be noted that this was not a permanent uni-directional migration. As with many transnational migrations, some of these new migrants were opportunistic capitalists; they took advantage of incentive schemes and moved on when conditions for business worsened.¹⁴ Still, for about a decade the number of Taiwanese migrants grew steadily. Then, in the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, many of these Taiwanese took leave of South Africa, their departure hastened by South Africa's official recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC), difficulties with South Africa's labour regulations, and stiff competition from the entry of cheap imports brought in directly from China. Crime and security as well as concerns about political and economic stability were also major concerns during this period, when the interest rate increased and the South African Rand depreciated to a record low of R13:US\$1. From a high of approximately 30,000 in the mid-1990s, there are currently approximately 6,000 Taiwanese in South Africa, and their numbers continue to drop.¹⁵

Waves of mainland Chinese migration

The third wave of new Chinese migration, which overlaps with the second and continues today, is immigration primarily from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Starting in the late 1980s and picking up pace in the period leading up to South Africa's recognition of the PRC January 1998, significant numbers of both legal and illegal immigrants have entered South Africa from mainland China, dwarfing the existing South African-born Chinese community and the Taiwanese. These numbers have increased even more dramatically in the past five

to seven years. In terms of this third wave of immigration, mostly from mainland China, Anna Ying Chen identifies three distinct periods: the first from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s; a second from the mid- to late 1990s; and a third - larger and ongoing - wave which began in the early 2000s.¹⁶

The earliest of these new Chinese immigrants from mainland China arrived in South Africa in the late 1980s. Many landed in South Africa between 1989 and 1992. We speculate that many of these immigrants arrived along two primary routes: the first group arrived via Lesotho and the second via Hungary¹⁷ through the Ivory Coast. The majority of this group came to South Africa with little and started up small businesses. Those that came via Lesotho initially began as employees for Taiwanese businesses. After years of hard work, by late 1990s, many of these earliest immigrants from mainland China became quite successful, owning established and profitable business, mostly as importers and wholesalers of Chinese products and as owners of their own factories. However, like many of the early Taiwanese industrialists, as many as half of these earliest Chinese immigrants have recently left South Africa due to security and other family concerns; some have returned to China¹⁸ while others have remigrated to the Canada, Australia, and other developed Western countries.

The second inflow of mainland Chinese into South Africa took place in the mid- to late 1990s, in the period immediately following the first democratic elections and as South Africa ended its relationship with Taiwan and established diplomatic relationship with the PRC. These early Chinese businesses, some state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and others private, typically sent between two to ten Chinese nationals to staff their operations. At the end of their two- to three-year contract periods, some of these Chinese employees - from across China - decided to stay on in South Africa. Those who chose to remain were largely well-educated professionals, many with international work experience and capital. They have since established extensive business networks in Southern Africa and in China. Many have expanded beyond their initial trading businesses into other industrial fields, including mining, manufacturing, and property development.

Others in this second cohort hail from Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, two of the most affluent regions in China which benefited from the Chinese open door economic policy. Entrepreneurs from these regions identified the business opportunities in Africa and saw South Africa as their entry point to other neighbouring African countries. They came with both

capital and other business resources. Most of these immigrants are linked by both family and other close social networks to factories in China. With these resources and competitive advantages, their first business choice is import, wholesale, and distribution. Some of the mainland Chinese of this second cohort have also moved on to other countries in southern Africa, again, usually as wholesalers / distributors of Chinese imports.¹⁹

The last and ongoing wave of Chinese immigrants began arriving in South Africa in the new millennium. They are made up of small traders and peasants²⁰ primarily from Fujian province. Many entered the country illegally via neighbouring countries; due to their limited English, limited education, and less extensive business networks, they tend to run small shops in the remote towns all across South Africa.

Unfortunately, there are no accurate statistics regarding the total population of Chinese in South Africa. As mentioned, there are currently fewer than 10,000 Chinese South Africans (South African-born or local Chinese) and approximately 6,000 Taiwanese in the country, but in terms of the overall numbers, these are more difficult to ascertain. The Chinese embassy reports that while they do not have any official figures, they estimate that there are about 200,000 Chinese in South Africa. In news broadcasting by CCTV and other news agencies, the figure rises to 300,000; we estimate that there are between 300,000 - 350,000.²¹ Due to large numbers of illegal migrants, poor record-keeping and corruption in the Department of Home Affairs, as well as continued flows of migrants and workers, it is impossible to come to any exact accounting of the total number of people of Chinese descent in South Africa.

Multiple forms of Chineseness in South Africa

As evidenced in the above description, there are, today, various communities of Chinese in the country. Local Chinese or Chinese South Africans are comprised of second-, third-, and fourth-generation South Africans of Chinese descent. Many speak no Chinese languages, but fluent Afrikaans and English. Most have never travelled to China. Yet they maintain a distinct Chinese South African identity, forged by apartheid-era challenges and a tight hold on their Chinese heritage linked to an increasingly mythical China. They claim that although they may no longer speak Chinese, they have retained their Chinese values and some of their traditions in ways that the newer Chinese immigrants seem to have forgotten.

Many of the Taiwanese who once made their homes in South Africa have, after taking South African citizenship, left the country. They form a segment of the transnational overseas

Chinese - fluidly moving across borders. Those Taiwanese who remain have become, in their distinct way, South Africans. Amongst them there are prominent business people as well as four members of the South African parliament. Many have now been in South Africa for over two decades, have children who were born or who grew up in South Africa, and count themselves as South Africans.

Amongst the newer immigrants from the PRC, there are further differences of class, region, and even language. Some amongst these have also become transnationals, flitting between China and several African countries, effecting transfers of capital and carrying out businesses across borders. Others, like the most recently arrived from Fujian province, are rural peasants who are repeating patterns typical of 19th and 20th century first generation migrants as shopkeepers in small towns across South Africa. They speak their local dialects, little English, and retain and sojourner mentality about life in South Africa.

Each of these different communities of Chinese has a different identity and they are contesting local conceptions of 'Chineseness'. Many of the local Chinese viewed their constructed Chinese identity - law-abiding, apolitical, quiet, honest, industrious, low-key, and conservative - as *essentially* Chinese. Chinese immigrants viewed the local traditions as quaint and out-dated, also arguing that their lack of Chinese language prevented local Chinese from being 'real Chinese'. As the contest over 'Who are the *real* Chinese?' or 'Who is *more* Chinese?' heated up it became clear that both groups held differing yet essentialist views of Chineseness. Repeatedly people spoke of 'very Chinese' or more or less Chinese. Local Chinese questioned the authenticity of their own culture or they felt their values and behaviours to be more truly Chinese than those of the new immigrants.

South African-born Chinese, for over a hundred years, have viewed themselves and been identified by other South Africans as Chinese. Within the harsh apartheid terrain, they found solace in that identity. Able to retain some semblance of Chinese cultural practice, and set apart racially by apartheid laws, they could comfortably assert their Chineseness. A senior Chinese scholar commented, 'Many mirrors, some less distorting than others, intervene when a Chinese living abroad constructs his composite image of what it means to be Chinese'.²² All the mirrors, until recently, projected images of non-Chinese that were sufficiently different from themselves to let them construct their Chinese identity without outside challenge. Now, with the influx of many new Chinese immigrants to South Africa, for

the first time in almost forty years they find their Chineseness questioned. The new immigrants place before them a different mirror, one that reflects other ways of being Chinese; the new reflections challenge their established, constructed notions of their Chineseness.

The tensions between the various groups of Chinese in South Africa today clearly point to the fact that ethnicity is constructed and contested as well as positional and relative.²³ Existing notions of ‘Chinese South African’ will have to become more fluid and incorporate the new immigrants.²⁴ In the meantime, several ongoing processes ensure that the meaning of ‘Chinese South African’ will continue to change in coming years: more and more immigrants continue to arrive from mainland China, while other Chinese, South African-born and Taiwanese, continue to emigrate.

In addition to contestations around Chineseness, there have been periodic clashes between groups. For example, in the months leading up to the first democratic elections in 1994, Taiwanese industrialists made very public overtures to the ANC; the local Chinese community protested. They argued that they have never been public about their politics because of potential negative ramifications; that the Taiwanese could always leave if things did not work out for them, whereas they had nowhere to go. Local Chinese also complained in the late 1990s that new immigrants made efforts to take over the leadership in local Chinese associations.

Conflicts between new immigrants from the PRC and local hawkers on the streets of Johannesburg; the involvement of Chinese triads in abalone and rhino-horn smuggling, as well as gun-running and drug trafficking; and the establishment of a second ‘Chinatown’ in Johannesburg where new immigrants could be seen in their vests and slops, squatting on the sidewalks and spitting in public were all seen as embarrassing by the local Chinese. Adverse media attention created tensions between the local Chinese and the new immigrants. A marked ‘us’ and ‘them’ attitude developed in the late 1990s, and the South African-born Chinese grew increasingly frustrated that most other South Africans could not differentiate between them.

These new Chinese pose challenges to the carefully constructed identity of Chinese South Africans as a law-abiding, quiet, civilised, conscientious, and apolitical people. Andrew K, 63, was distressed:

I don't agree with many actions of the new immigrants. I hate when I see a lot of the behaviour is bringing down the reputation of the Chinese in Pretoria. Before, in Pretoria, I guess elsewhere as well, the credibility of the Chinese, the credit worthiness, as well, was very high. Today, it's not so. We are being questioned because of all the - call it fraudulent - dealings that have happened, and all this has come about because of the new immigrants . . . They ruined the good reputation of the local Chinese who were here . . . the fact that they are Chinese makes me even more unhappy that Chinese could behave in that way . . . so the unlawful elements . . . they have pulled down the general reputation of the Chinese in South Africa.

The diversity of the Chinese in South Africa and their contestations aside, there are, increasingly, more and more reasons for these communities to join forces to fight common enemies.

Race and Exclusion

While most South Africans have difficulties differentiating between these various groups of Chinese in South Africa, there are, in fact, numerous differences. Amongst these are the various issues which affect different communities of Chinese. I focus on two of these concerns below: racial profiling and the affirmative action question.

Racial Profiling: Crime and Corruption

Many of the new Chinese immigrants expressed concerns about corrupt South African government officials from Home Affairs, the Revenue Service (SARS), and the Labour Department, as well as the local police. Chinese across the country are often targeted for extortion attempts by corrupt officials because of their difficulty with English, their general ignorance about national and local laws, and rumours about their illegal status in South Africa and about large quantities of cash stored in their shops and their homes.

The biggest challenge regarding life in South Africa, however, is crime. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Chinese immigrants have fallen victim at least once or twice to break-ins and armed robberies. During the course of recent interviews with new Chinese immigrants,

every single person mentioned at least one such incident. The fact that all of these new immigrants were engaged in some sort of small retail business and dealt in some quantities of cash, makes them soft targets for South Africa's criminal element.

In Johannesburg there are repeated incidents of car hijacking, kidnapping, and armed break-ins. It appears that there are several crime 'syndicates' specifically targeting Chinese, often following cars home from the new Chinatown in Cyrildene. The inability of these criminals to distinguish between various groups of Chinese has meant that local Chinese as well as Taiwanese have suffered together with newer immigrants from the PRC. Crime and corruption is so high that the Chinese Consul-General in Johannesburg has held several high level meetings with the provincial minister of safety and security and the various communities have created a joint local taskforce to address these problems.

Chinese and affirmative action legislation

Despite ample evidence of past discrimination against the Chinese South African community, the post-1994 Employment Equity (EE) and Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) legislation excluded Chinese South Africans from the explicit definition of who should be regarded as previously disadvantaged. Both the 1998 EE Act and the 2003 BBBEE Act refer to 'designated groups' which include 'black people, women and people with disabilities'. The term 'black people' is further defined as 'a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians'.²⁵ It was therefore unclear whether the legislation was intended to include those who *were* classified as such during apartheid, or those who are currently believed to belong to categories or to have belonged to these in the past.

Since May 2000, five months after the commencement of the 1998 Employment Equity Act, the Chinese Association of South African (CASA) repeatedly engaged with government to seek clarification on the position of the Chinese South Africans vis-à-vis the EE and BBBEE legislation.²⁶ In December 2007 CASA launched a court application as final recourse after an eight-year long process to seek clarity on the position of Chinese South Africans in South African society. On the 18th of June 2008 the Pretoria high court handed down an order proclaiming that the Chinese South Africans fall within the definition of 'black people' contained in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003.

This court order has unleashed an alarming backlash in the media. Some black business and professional organisations have referred to the ruling as ‘surprising, irrational, shallow, opportunistic and inexplicable’.²⁷ The Labour Minister, who ironically was one of the respondents who did not oppose CASA’s application, also made baffling and racist statements, conflating the local Chinese (the only beneficiaries to the court ruling) with Taiwanese industrialists criticised for their poor labour practices and new immigrants derided for pretending not to understand English. When they should be celebrating their legal victory CASA’s members are scrambling about defending themselves from highly public racist attacks. The CASA case and the highly publicised and negative reactions to the court ruling bring into stark relief the continued significance of race and racial classifications, the ongoing tensions between policies of redress and the construction of inclusive notions of citizenship, and the continued confusion about the place and position of Chinese communities of South Africa.

Conclusion

South Africa, fourteen years after its first democratic elections, is still struggling to construct a unified and unifying national identity. At the same time, inequalities of the past have worsened and the need for policies of redress are perhaps more urgent now as ever. However, tensions between the nation-building project and ways in which redress policies are implemented have resulted in the increased salience of racial difference. While the constitution guarantees rights for all its residents, social and political perceptions of the Chinese as evidenced in the recent public statements by the Labour Minister and black business raise more questions about where the Chinese fit in.

The recent spate of xenophobic attacks in South Africa primarily targeted immigrants from other African countries. However, amongst the many victims were two Chinese nationals, an Indian immigrant, and a few Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants. The day after the attacks began in Alexandra township rumours of impending violence spread throughout various immigrant communities. In Cyrildene (the new Chinatown in Johannesburg) and at several of the Chinese wholesale/distribution centres outside the city centre, rumours that armed mobs were descending upon them were passed on from shop to shop, stall to stall. Local community members urged shop and restaurant owners to close up; the Consul General sent messages to Chinese in other provinces warning them to maintain a low profile throughout the disturbances. Fears of potential persecution by impoverished and angry mobs

combined with ongoing racial profiling by the country's criminal element and corrupt officials have caused great harm to race relations and general confidence in South Africa. Continued media representations of China's 'invasion' and 'neo-colonialisation' of Africa also contribute to a negative climate for all Chinese on the continent.

Only time will tell if the newest Chinese migrants to South Africa will choose to settle here. Much depends on their reception as well as their business successes (or failures). Thus far, despite the challenges, new Chinese migration to South Africa continues apace, and few of those here appear to be leaving. The impact of recent Chinese immigration on the constructed Chinese South African identities has been significant. Perhaps time and political circumstances will encourage the eventual construction of a pan-Chinese, multi-generational, multi-group Chinese South African identity²⁸ that will usefully serve all these people who share both a belief in the myth of a once great China, pride in an increasingly strong and globally powerful China, and residence in South Africa. Whether or not this occurs, the influx of the overlapping waves of Chinese immigration into South Africa since the late 1970s has had an indelible impact both on local Chinese and on South African society. And, without a doubt, the large numbers of legal and illegal Chinese immigrants from mainland China will continue to change the South African social, economic, and political landscape as well as Chinese South African identities.

Where they fit in in a post-apartheid, post-Polokwane South Africa depends on many factors. The negative reaction to the CASA court case together with recent xenophobic attacks reveals the darker side of South African society. Broader-thinking members of the society defend the constitution and the provisions it makes for all residents of the nation. However, the question remains: Can the Chinese ever truly be considered South African? Will they ever truly fit in? Thus far, the evidence suggests exclusion rather than belonging. Based on the historical record one might conclude that South Africanness – if that is the prize to be won – will only be granted begrudgingly, after more long battles.

Notes

¹ For more detail on these early histories see M Yap and D Man, *Colour, Confusion and Concessions. The History of Chinese in South Africa*, University of Hong Kong Press, Hong Kong, 1996; YJ Park, 'Sojourners to Settlers: Early Constructions of Chinese Identity in South Africa, 1879-1949' in *African Studies*, vol. 65, no. 2, December 2006, pp 201-231; KL Harris, 'The Chinese "South Africans": An interstitial community' in L. Wang and G. Wang (eds.) *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected essays*. Vol. 2.

Times Academic, Singapore, 1998a; and KL Harris, 'The Chinese in South Africa: A historical study of a cultural minority', unpublished paper, 1998b

² This figure is based on June 2008 press release of the Chinese Association of South Africa.

³ Yap and Man 1996:62, 76-84; LN Smedley, 'A Sociological Analysis of Some Aspects of the Life of South Africa's Chinese Community'. Unpublished DLitt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1980:20-21; Harris 1998a, 1998b

⁴ Yap and Man 1996: 62

⁵ One of these laws required registration with the district magistrate within eight days of arrival in the province and a fee of £25. Indians, as British subjects, protested. After protracted correspondence between the ZAR and the British governments, the 1887 laws were amended to allow Asiatics to buy fixed property in streets or locations set aside for them; in addition, the registration fee was lowered to £3.

⁶ By 1891 the population of Natal was as follows: 470 000 blacks, 45 000 whites, 46 000 Indians, 77 Chinese. The Indian population exploded with the importation of indentured labour followed by the immigration of the Indian trading classes, and had already surpassed the population of whites in Natal, causing great alarm. For more on Indian indentured labour to Natal, see Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000.

⁷ Yap and Man 1996:44.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Yap and Man 1996:350-351

¹⁰ Posel 2001:52.

¹¹ Hart explains that at the same time, large numbers of small-scale industrialists in Taiwan came under enormous pressure to leave the country due to rising wages, escalating exchange rates, and high rents. Ironically, these conditions, she says, were created by the stunning pace of their industrial investment and export drive (G Hart, *Disabling Globalization: Places of power in post-apartheid South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2002:2).

¹² At the University of the Witwatersrand the number of first-year foreign students from ROC/Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong, rose steadily from the mid-1980s through the 1990s, from 17 in 1986 to a high of 141 in 1997, and then declining slowly to 53 in 2004. It is also worth noting that between the mid-1980s until the late 1990s there were also large numbers of South African students who reported that they spoke Chinese as a first language. For example, in 1986 there were 45 of these students and in 1997 there were 83. Findings of Park's research on Chinese South African identities indicated limited Chinese language abilities second- and third-generation Chinese South Africans; it is therefore quite likely that these numbers are inclusive of foreign-born Chinese who had become naturalized South African citizens. If this is the case, then numbers of (likely) foreign-born Chinese students at Wits exceeded 200 in 1997 and has remained between 215 and 230 ever since (YJ Park, 'Shifting Chinese South African Identities in Apartheid and Post-apartheid South Africa' unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2005.)

¹³ Yap and Man 1996:423

¹⁴ See Park 2005, chapter 7 for discussion

¹⁵ These numbers were originally based on an 'off the record' comment by a former staff member of the Taipei Liaison Office; however, the figure seems to be regularly quoted by the Chinese language press in South Africa.

¹⁶ YJ Park and AY Chen 'Intersections of race, class and power: Chinese in post-apartheid Free State', unpublished paper (presented at the South African Sociological Association Congress, Stellenbosch) July 2008

¹⁷ At the time, because Hungary was also a communist nation, Chinese did not need visas to enter. Upon discovering that there were limited business opportunities there, they moved on to look for other opportunities. Africa was one of the obvious choices, again due to the porous borders of many African nations.

¹⁸ While many of these earliest Chinese immigrants left South Africa, quite a few of them maintain business linkages to the country. Some have left their South African business interests in the hands of newer Chinese immigrants. Others have set up related businesses, such as factories, in China.

¹⁹ See G Dobler 'South-South business relations in practice: Chinese merchants in Oshikango, Namibia', unpublished paper, 2005 on Chinese wholesale merchants engaged in cross-border trade in Oshikango, Namibia.

²⁰ In the early 1980s part of economic reforms in China allowed families to occupy and farm a piece of land; however the land is still owned by the government. Each village has rights to some portion of land; this land is then divided equally amongst the families that live in the village. The individual families farm the land and then sell some portion of their produce back to the government, after taking a small share for themselves. These are not farmers in the commercial sense; rather the Chinese ‘peasants’ are similar to sharecroppers, with the Chinese state as the landowners.

²¹ Park 2005

²² G Wang, ‘Among Non-Chinese’ in W Tu (ed) *The Living Tree: The changing meaning of being Chinese today*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1994: 128.

²³ J Nagel, ‘The Political Construction of Ethnicity’ in S Olzak and J Nagel (eds), *Competitive Ethnic Relations*. Orlando FL: Academic, 1986; M Nash, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986; H Wiberg, ‘Identity, Ethnicity, Conflict’ in S. Bekkar and D. Carlton (eds) *Racism, Xenophobia and Ethnic Conflict*. Durban: Indicator, 1996; A Brah, ‘Difference, Diversity and Differentiation’ in J. Donald and A. Rattansi (eds) ‘Race’, *Culture and Difference*. London: Sage, in association with the Open University, 1992

²⁴ W Tu, (ed). *The Living Tree: The changing meaning of being Chinese today*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, discusses the fluidity of identities.

²⁵ Republic of South Africa 1998 Chapter 1 Section 1; Republic of South Africa 2003

²⁶ Edward Nathan Sonnenberg Inc. *Chinese Association of South Africa: Chronological Timeline*, 2008; see also YJ Park 2005; YJ Park ‘Under the shoe tip. Chinese and affirmative action’, *South African Labour Bulletin*. Volume 31, Number 3, July/August 2007, pp 37-39; and YJ Park ‘State, Myth, and Agency in the Construction of Chinese South African Identities, 1948-1994’, *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, Volume 4, Number 1, May 2008, pp 69-90

²⁷ L Chilwane, ‘Black business fury at Chinese ruling’, *Business Day*, 4 July 2008.

²⁸ See Padilla ‘Latino Ethnicity in the City of Chicago’ in Olzak and Nagel (eds), 1986; R Tajima, ‘Site-seeing through Asian America: On the Making of Fortune Cookies’ in AF Gordon and C Newfield (eds), *Mapping Multiculturalism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis/London, 1996, pp 263-294; L Grueso, C. Rosero and A. Escobar, ‘The Process of Black Community Organizing in the South Pacific Coast Region of Colombia’ in Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar (eds), *Cultures of Politics and Politics of Culture: Re-visioning Latin American social movements*, Westview, Boulder CO and Oxford, 1998; OM Gomes da Cunha, ‘Black Movements and the “Politics of Identity” in Brazil’ in Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar (eds), 1998; and A Brah, ‘Difference, Diversity and Differentiation’ in J. Donald and A Rattansi (eds) ‘Race’, *Culture and Difference*, Sage, in association with the Open University, London, 1992 for discussions on political identity construction.

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