The reimagined migrant portrait – exploring the lives of Chinese and Taiwanese minorities living in South Africa

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

This multimedia project explores the lives of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants living in South Africa and how language, culture, community and marginalisation have come to shape their identities and to visually represent them in a way that is not prevalent in mainstream media. It uses two visual mediums – photography and video interviews – to understand these migrants' experiences, how they perceive themselves and how they think society perceives them. Data analysis consisted of a process of coding the video interviews and structural analysis of the visuals. Rising worldwide migration has simultaneously increased the spread of diasporic communities. China's positionality as an economic powerhouse and the influx of East Asian migrants to South Africa in recent years has shone a light on this minority population group. However, much of what is known about them tends to be through forms of mass media which perpetuates stereotypical representations. This paper draws on various literature including acculturation, diasporic communities, representation, languaging and xenophobia to explore the lives of East Asian migrants living in South Africa and search for more empowered forms of representation.

Keywords

Migration, East Asian, diasporic communities, identity, language, documentary photography

Chapter 1: Introduction

Home to me is South Africa. I am born here. This is my home. I speak the language but I can't read or write Chinese. So to relate an experience, I was over in China. We were on a trip and we were in Guangzhou and I asked someone for directions to guide me to the ticket counter to buy a ticket to travel somewhere and he looked at me and he said to me: 'Are you that stupid can't you read the signs?' Because the signs were all in Chinese. I could speak the language but I couldn't read the signs. So if we went to China to settle I don't think we'd fit in at all because we'll be regarded as outsiders, as westerners.

- Colin Wing

Colin Wing is a 58-year-old South African Chinese and the owner of a family-run Chinese restaurant in Cape Town for the past 36 years. He spent most of his life in Johannesburg, growing up in areas like Hillbrow and Denver where his parents owned a grocery store. His story blends the realities of growing up during apartheid as a third generation South African Chinese; living illegally behind their shop due to the segregation, an ability to speak multiple languages, struggling to merge identities and attempting to maintain an interracial marriage within the local Chinese community to name a few. Colin's story is one that is similar to many other East Asian migrants in South Africa. In particular, the above quote touches upon the concept of home – a significant theme amongst migrants alike. The visual project "Odd Country" explores these pertinent themes threaded through personal stories and visual portrayals of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants in several cities across South Africa. The project strives to illustrate the migrants' ongoing struggle for the search of a "home" and a sense of belonging.

The steady rise of worldwide migration continues to contribute to the formation of new diasporic communities; exposure to and integration of diverse cultures, languages and ethnic groups in addition to the creation of conflicts. Accessible methods of transportation, advancing technologies have aided the movement and relocation of people, coupled with various political, economic and social factors. The number of international migrants has rapidly increased particularly in recent years and by 2017, there was an estimate of around 258 million migrants worldwide – up from 173 million in 2000 (United Nations, 2017). The same study by the United Nations (2017) found that 60% of all these international migrants reside in Asia, Europe and North America, followed by Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Oceania respectively. Furthermore, 106 million international migrants were born in Asia

and China is the fourth largest country of origin of international migrants (10 million) (United Nations, 2017). There has been a significant growth of international migrants to Africa, which had the fastest average annual growth rate compared to other continents of 3% per annum between 2000 and 2017 (United Nations, 2017: 5). To date, South Africa has the largest number of international migrants in Africa and recent decades have seen an increase in the population of East Asian migrants. The Chinese population in particular has seen an increase. About 250 000 – 350 000 Chinese people now live in South Africa, however there is no official figure of the estimate of Chinese in South Africa due to factors such as corruption and poor record-keeping at Home Affairs and an increase in illegal migrants (Park, 2009). On a smaller scale, other East Asian immigrant populations in South Africa include Taiwanese, South Korean, Hong Kong and Japanese. The recent influx of Chinese migrants to South Africa is in tandem with China's rapid rise and increasingly dominant position in the world, and its established relations with various countries.

South Africa is the only country in Africa that is home to three distinct communities of Chinese; the local Chinese, the Taiwanese and Hong Kong industrialists and the new wave of migrants from PRC (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). There are also smaller groups of other East Asian ethnicities living in South Africa. From the 1970s, South Africa established relations with Taiwan which led to the influx of Taiwanese industrialists. Small numbers of Taiwanese industrialists started arriving in South Africa, motivated by incentives offered by the South African government such as covering costs for relocation, subsidising wages and rent among others. At its height, there were approximately between 30 000 and 40 000 Taiwanese industrialists in South Africa (Wilheim, 2006). Many of the immigrants started up small businesses across South Africa, oftentimes in small towns. Huynh et al., (2010) points out that the immigration of the Taiwanese to South Africa was not a "permanent uni-directional migration" and that many migrants were largely taking advantage of the incentive scheme and indeed by the early 1990s, the Taiwanese population had started decreasing – with many returning to Taiwan or relocating to other Western countries due to concerns such as family and security. This was further perpetuated by South Africa's official recognition of China in 1996 and cutting ties with Taiwan. Today, there are about 6 000 Taiwanese immigrants left in South Africa and the number continues to decrease, whereas there is a steady rise in Chinese immigrants settling in the country.

To date, South Africa boasts the largest population of Chinese people in Africa including one of the few 'multi-generational local Chinese communities' in the region (Park, 2009). The

earliest Chinese in South Africa included slaves and convicts who arrived in the late 1800s, with many repatriated to China but some remained in the country (Park, 2009). Park (2009) points out that the initial Chinese population was small and the descendants eventually became known as the "local" Chinese or (South African-born Chinese), and were met with discrimination, restricted immigration and control by the government. The population grew slowly due to these restrictions until the 1980s when an influx of Taiwanese, Hong Kong and Chinese migrants entered the country. Since the recognition of China in 1998, there was an increased number of both illegal and legal immigrants from mainland China which outnumbered the existing South African-born Chinese community and the Taiwanese (Park, 2009). Many of the Chinese migrants that arrived in the 1990s established small businesses during their contracted stay, and some chose to remain in South Africa afterwards. They were generally involved in businesses that manufactured and sold textiles, shoes, bags etc and their connections to factories in China aided their businesses (Huynh, 2010).

Furthermore, Huynh (2010) points out the post-2000 wave of Chinese migration consists mainly of migrants from Fujian province in China with many illegally entering South Africa and running small shops in outskirt towns. Despite the rapid increase of East Asian migrants to South Africa in recent years, their presence in the country is minuscule compared to other Western countries such as the US or Australia for example. Including Indians, they form 2.5% of the total South African population and an even smaller percentage if we look only at Chinese and Taiwanese migrants in the country.

It is against this backdrop that this multimedia project explores the lives of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants living in South Africa and how language, community, marginalisation/xenophobia have come to shape their identities and to represent them visually in a way that is not prevalent in mainstream media. Maintaining a clear distinction between Chinese and Taiwanese may be controversial due to their complex history. However, for the purposes of this paper, they are differentiated based on the geography of their homeland and Taiwan's ongoing call for independence from China. Thus, Taiwanese participants will be considered separate from the Chinese. The goal is to promote a deeper understanding of these ethnic groups located within the larger landscape of the country, provide a more representative lens into their lives and reflect upon their positionalities in South Africa. Thus, it will use two visual mediums – photography and video interviews – to explore how these migrants perceive themselves and how they think society perceives them. This study explores: (1) Who are these migrants? (2) How do East Asian migrants experience identity,

language and community living in South Africa? (3) What challenges have they encountered that pertain to stereotypes, marginalisation and xenophobic attitudes? (4) Constructed alternative visual representations of East Asian minority groups in South Africa. Despite the topic being a well-researched area, much of the existing literature has been carried out in North America and Europe with fewer studies done on Asian minority groups and in particular – the visual representation of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants – in South Africa. Before answering these questions using interviews with research participants and analysing the creative production, this article will briefly review existing literature for theoretical groundwork.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Diasporic communities

Rising worldwide migration has resulted in the increase in transnational migrants and the spread of diasporic communities. The term "diaspora" refers to a wide range of dislocations experienced by various groups of people (Bhatia & Ram, 2001: 12). These people reside in places distant to their home country and often experience differences in culture, social practice and language differences amongst other factors. Diaspora is the rise of immigration to developed worlds, the absence of assimilation amongst migrant groups, links with the home country and even the continued efforts to maintain language institutions, religious ties, ethnic media etc (Tölöyan, 1996). For these groups of migrants residing outside their countries of origin, many "remain linked, in one way or another, real or imagined, objectively or subjectively, to their native land" and in particular amongst adult migrants who rarely detach themselves from the bonds that bind them to their origins (Rumbaut, 2002: 44). The advancement of technologies and an international economy have encouraged those ties, creating "transnational communities". Rumbaut and others have pointed out that these people seem to live dual lives. Many of these migrants understand at least two languages, shift between various cultures and often establish homes in two countries (Rumbaut, 2002). Studies have shown that certain diasporic communities choose to abide strictly by their traditional values of their home country, whereas others tend to form new identities in their host country.

To delve into the process of adapting to a new country, we will use the theory of acculturation. The concept of acculturation can be defined as: "a phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. . . under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation…" (Redfield et al., 1936: 149 – 152). Significant research on acculturation was carried out by John Berry who proposed models of acculturation strategies that refer to how people respond to new cultural contexts. This classification includes "assimilation", "integration", "separation" and "marginalisation". He argues that people who disregard their cultural identity and interact with other cultures use the "assimilation" strategy; individuals who want to maintain their own culture while engaging with other groups employ the "integration" strategy; whereas

"separation" is when one maintains their culture and avoids interacting with others and lastly "marginalisation" occurs when the individual has little interest in any cultural maintenance whether of their own or with others (Berry, 1997: 9).

Although migration from the East to the West can be traced back to the19th century, the bulk of this international migration has occurred in recent decades. Several international studies have researched the movement and of East Asian migrants to Western countries. In a study carried out amongst Taiwanese and Hong Kong migrants in Australia, it was found that these first generation young migrants were provided with an international Western education as a means of enhancing their social standing (Chiang and Yang, 2008). Although they experienced many challenges such as language, relationships, familial bonds and adjusting to school and workplaces, they would tend to accept the traditional ways of their culture of origin (Chiang & Yang, 2008). Furthermore, the authors point out that many of them identify as "Taiwanese" and the minority perceive themselves as "possessing a hyphenated identity" and less "Australian". They argue that this is dependent on the duration of residency and employment in the country. Another study looked at the lives of Taiwanese migrants in Vancouver, Canada which attracted migrants due to family ties and the thriving Taiwanese and Chinese community (Chu, 2002). Similarly in this study, "better quality of life and educational prospects for children" were often stated as motivation for many Taiwanese migrants when compared to their home country which they perceived was "limited" and "declining" (Chu, 2002). This study also found that many of the Taiwanese migrants permanently immigrated and few returned to Taiwan or other countries (Chu, 2002). Chu (2002) found that although challenges such as language limitations created difficulties for these migrants in acquiring prominent employment positions, this also triggered them to act as "agents of change" in this new environment by creating their own employment opportunities. In another study, the authors explored what it meant to be Chinese and what it meant to be American among Chinese American young adults in the United States. They found that associating with being Chinese or American changes with "increased exposure to, and experience with, American culture" and furthermore is correlated to which "cultural orientation is internalised in one's self-concept" (Tsai et al., 2000: 322). These studies illustrate that enticing economic opportunities, attractive environments and prestige are some of the core reasons for the migration and that the level of acculturation into the host environment is dependent on a multitude of factors such as age, generational status, culture,

social, language abilities, household and personal perspectives. Similarly, this paper explores to what extent East Asians have acculturated into South African society.

Xenophobia and racism

Migrants are often faced with an array of challenges in their host country including discrimination, xenophobic attitudes, racism, concerns surrounding self and identity and a lack of a sense of belonging. The concepts xenophobia and racism tend to interconnect and are both forms of oppression. However, xenophobia is distinct in that it is defined as "attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to a community, society or national identity" (WCAR, 2001). Adjai and Lazaridis (2013) point out that xenophobia is therefore based on treating the "other" in a discriminatory manner due to factors such as ethnicity or nationality; it focuses on differences rather than biological superiority. Xenophobia tends to be linked to times of political and economic turmoil and Suarez-Orozco (1995) argues that negative views of immigrants tend to arise from fears of reduced economic resources, weakened political influence and demographic changes. South Africa has an ethnically and culturally diverse population, although certain minority groups tend to be continuously treated as foreigners. Furthermore, xenophobic acts of violence have often been targeted towards the general immigrant population in South Africa. Whilst black African migrants living in South Africa are more likely to be targeted in these attacks, various groups of Asian immigrants remain visible and vulnerable to violent xenophobic attacks (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). Moreover, Gordan (2016) points out that causes for xenophobia particularly in South Africa have often been linked to the economic conditions, labour market competition and political subjectivities. Furthermore, tensions continue to exist not only between the East Asian and local South African populations but also amongst themselves: the local Chinese, Taiwanese and the new wave of Chinese migrants. Park (2009) also talks about the different levels of "Chineseness" among Chinese immigrants and Chinese locals, which brings about questions of self and identity. Whilst a host of factors ultimately contribute to negative attitudes towards East Asian migrants in South Africa, a noteworthy factor is analysing how they are presented to the masses particularly in mainstream media and how these images impact the perceptions of these populations groups.

Representation

Despite increasing worldwide migration – which suggests societies becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse – representations of minority groups remains problematic. In societies where there are imbalances in power relations, dominant groups use ideology as a means to legitimise power over other groups and one way is through mass media (Paek & Shah, 2003). East Asians are often portrayed negatively in Western popular media and studies show they are depicted in numerous stereotypical ways from "Yellow Peril" to various economic and societal threats to the "model minority". Stereotypes can be explained as a "set of representational practices that are key mechanisms by which one group's generalised and widely accepted beliefs about the personal attributes of members of another group are constructed" (Paek & Shah, 2003: 228). It essentially reduces people to having certain characteristics which are seemingly "fixed". The "model minority" stereotype came about when describing Japanese Americans in the 1960s and has become common when discussing the Asian community – invoking expectations that Asian Americans are rich, diligent and smart (Murjani, 2014). Asians are also often depicted as passive, quiet, reserved, poor communicators and workaholics (K.-Y. Lee & Joo, 2005). The "perpetual foreigner syndrome" was coined to express the phenomenon that members of ethnic minorities will always be seen as the "other" (Que-Lam Huynh et al., 2011). Furthermore, the "yellow peril" stereotype describes Asian Americans as foreigners or "other" who are not perceived to abide by dominant cultural norms, are economic competitors and therefore a social and economic threat (Kawai, 2005). In television advertising, it has been shown that ethnic minorities remain under-represented, negatively depicted and appear mostly in background or minor roles (Mastro & Stern, 2003). Mastro & Stern (2003) state that Asian Americans tend to appear in technology television advertisements which reinforces the perception that they are dedicated to work and the "nerd", studious stereotype. Paek & Shah's (2003) study on racial stereotyping in US magazine advertising shows that stereotypical versions of Asian minorities are distorted to generate profit for companies and that the audience may uncritically accept this portrayal of Asian Americans – whether "good" or "bad".

Negative perceptions of East Asians migrants in South Africa can be linked back to the late 1800s and early 1900s when Chinese workers were perceived as a threat by local workers as illustrated in early cartoons, postcards etc. (Harrison et al., 2017). Later on, the apartheid government attempted to project a multicultural nation by depicting images of inclusionary Chinese through articles and documentaries, but simultaneously disregarded the history of discrimination towards this minority group (Harrison et al., 2017). When diplomatic ties were

established between South Africa and Taiwan, Taiwanese industrialists were represented as ambivalent and news images of local workers in their factories looked similar to that of sweatshops in East Asia (Harrison et al., 2017). Furthermore, national news coverage of East Asian migrants in South Africa tend to focus on highlighting their economic activities in the country; the importance of learning Mandarin; the dominance of China; the growing presence of Chinese migrants and their involvement in illegal trade such as rhino poaching, abalone poaching and the donkey skin trade. This has not come without backlash as the Chinese community has become progressively aware of xenophobic and racist comments and have issued public statements to denounce these acts (News24, 2017). Both international and local representations of East Asians in the media tend to be stereotypically driven. Regardless of whether they are "positive" or "negative" stereotypes, ultimately these portrayals have consequences which feed into maintaining the status quo and attitudes towards East Asian migrants.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study used qualitative methods to address the research objectives. It involved participation from a wide range of Taiwanese migrants, local Chinese and a few new Chinese migrants living in South Africa. Participation from female and male Taiwanese and Chinese people in four cities – Cape Town, Newcastle, Johannesburg and Pretoria – between the ages of 21 and 69 were used for this study. I decided to focus specifically on Chinese and Taiwanese migrant groups to form a deeper investigative study for several reasons: China's thriving population growth in South Africa, China and Taiwan's intertwined political history with South Africa; and lastly because of my own positionality in this project as a second-generation Taiwanese migrant with a family background in the textile industry. Although I could easily relate to my participants, it was important for me to approach these interviews without biases which might have swayed participant's answers. I needed to remain reflexive in my approach and conscious of my positionality in the research process.

Due to potential difficulties in accessing migrants, research participants were recruited through a snowball approach. I made initial contact with friends and family who are ethnically Taiwanese and Chinese and residing in South Africa. Some of these initial participants introduced other potentials who were suitable for the study. Snowball sampling is based on the assumption that there is an established "link" between initial participants and others in the same population group which allows for referrals to be made (Berg, 1988). My prior association and access to the Taiwanese community helped facilitate finding Taiwanese participants in Newcastle. The search for local Chinese contacts was found through friends and secondary sources such as blogs, Facebook pages, Instagram as well as inquiring at certain workplaces (restaurants, shops etc). New Chinese migrants were the hardest to make contact with and make up the smallest percentage of my project.

Content analysis of the interviews will be used in this study to explore relevant themes that occur frequently. The content that will be analysed will come from the full interview transcript, not just the final edited version. The photographic portraits and video interview will also be analysed and how its meaning is communicated to the audience. Interviews were conducted either at the participant's home or place of work, depending on what was convenient for both participant and researcher. If needed, follow up questions to clarify certain aspects of the initial interviews were used at a later stage through social media apps such as WhatsApp and WeChat. Knapik (2006) points out that the advantages of conducting

interviews helps the researcher focus on understanding the individual's personal, emotional experiences. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes to just over an hour and were video-recorded. A shorter edit of this footage coupled with a portrait taken at the venue comprises the visual element of this project. The interviews took on a semi-structured format and I asked established questions but allowed for flexibility in follow-up questions to explore a topic further (Brennen, 2013). The interviews were carried out in either English or Mandarin, depending on what language the participant was most comfortable with. The participants responded in their language of choice, either English, Mandarin or Taiwanese Hokkien. The use of multiple languages allowed me to develop a closer rapport with my participant and for them to speak freely, without limitations. Consent forms were provided for the video interviews and photographs. Each interview was digitally recorded with a Canon Mark III, Zoom and lapel mics, transcribed, translated, coded and analysed*. Reoccurring themes are addressed and discussed in detail in the results section and substantiated by quotes from the interview.

*(*Transcriptions can be made available upon request)*

Chapter 4: Results

Participant profiles

This study included the participation from 15 people: eight Taiwanese migrants and second generation migrants; one Chinese migrant and one second generation Chinese migrant and lastly, five local Chinese people. In this paper, the term migrant refers to someone who relocates to another country from their home country and second-generation migrant is someone who was born and raised or spent the majority of their childhood and adult years in the host country. The Taiwanese participants are located in Newcastle and Pretoria and the majority of them arrived in South Africa in the 1990's, bringing their families with them in search of economic opportunities particularly in textiles, manufacturing or general shops, thus falling under the Taiwanese industrialist movement. These participants form part of the Taiwanese migrants that arrived in South Africa during the "economic peak" of the group, and thereafter the number of factories decreased in light of a weakened economy and political instability (Huynh et al., 2010). Most of these participants also indicated that the choice to relocate to South Africa was largely influenced by having a contact or family member in the country who had encouraged them to emigrate, in addition to the better economic opportunities, living and education conditions that they perceived the country to have. Their occupations range from working in textile manufacturing, plastics manufacturing, wholesale grocery stores, salons and education. Most of the first generation migrants continue to reside and work in Newcastle, some still maintaining their original business, while others have moved onto different opportunities. The migrants' children were educated at local primary, secondary and high schools and subsequently left Newcastle to pursue tertiary education in larger cities. Three of the four second-generation migrants in the Taiwanese group have joined their family businesses in textiles and plastics manufacturing after acquiring a bachelor's degree at university, abandoning alternative job opportunities. Of these eight participants, one relocated from Newcastle to Pretoria with her family shortly after immigrating due to better education opportunities.

The two Chinese participants in this study arrived in South Africa during the early 1990s and the other in 2000. One was born in Bloemfontein, raised in Durban and is currently studying towards a bachelor's degree in Cape Town and the other is a restauranteur who had initially immigrated in Johannesburg but moved to Cape Town with her family after a few years due to safety issues. These two had similar reasons to the Taiwanese participants for relocating to

South Africa – persuasion from existing family members and contacts in the country and economic opportunities. All of the Taiwanese and Chinese participants continue to maintain some level of contact with family members and friends in Taiwan and China and visit regularly. Some also returned to China and Taiwan for a few years either to work, study or find a partner and have since found their way back to South Africa. Of the five local Chinese who participated in this study, three were born and raised in Johannesburg, one in Cape Town and the other in Port Elizabeth. They range from second to fourth generation Chinese, and their ancestors came from places in South China in the early 1900s in search of opportunities and the lure of the gold rush in Johannesburg at the time. The two older participants experienced the tail end of apartheid and the other three were able to speak about the impact of apartheid on their grandparents and parents. Two of the older local Chinese participants are involved in the food industry – restaurants, catering etc. whereas amongst the three local Chinese in their thirties, two have pursued white collar jobs following tertiary education and one followed in his father's line of work in martial arts whilst completing an arts degree. These local Chinese have little to no relationship ties in China, with most of their family situated in South Africa or other western countries such as the US, Canada and Australia.

A common theme amongst these migrants' stories uprooting from Taiwan and China to South Africa is the search for better economic and living opportunities. In this sense, first generation migrants tend to take risks and are optimistic and proactive in attempting to provide a better life for themselves and their children. These migrants used their entrepreneurial skills to establish small businesses which subsequently gave them the resources to provide quality education for their children. This includes access to tertiary education, which enabled their offspring to pursue professional careers in the corporate world and white collar jobs – which was deemed a necessary part of success. Some of the children of migrants gave up creative/alternative paths for one considered more practical by the parents. This may stem from East Asian cultural values which emphasise obedience and family responsibilities (Lu et al, 2001). Furthermore, only three participants were in their twenties, while the rest ranged from thirties to sixties. This diverse range provided further insight into perspectives from other generation groups.

Identity and community

The rise of cross-border migrations mean that migrants are required to adapt in some way to their new host society and thus often expected to coincide different identities. Identities are

essentially social constructions, and are about "questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we represent ourselves" (Hall, 1996: 4). Most of the younger second generation participants identified with being South African and East Asian simultaneously, referring to themselves as South African Taiwanese or South African Chinese. This suggests that they've embraced both identities and therefore created a category of identification for themselves.

Jason Cheng (parents relocated to South Africa when he was one years old):

> *50/50. Taiwanese and South African. Originally I'm Taiwanese. My parents are Taiwanese. I don't think I will be able to forget that or throw that away. And the other half is South African just because I grew up here and all my thinking and knowledge is all from South Africa.*

James Jiang (born and raised in South Africa):

> *I was born in South Africa but I'm Chinese so my nationality will be Chinese but I also consider myself South African. I was born here but I have a different skin colour compared to Africans and Indians. It's just because there are less Chinese people in South Africa. So they will assume you are from China. In people's view they view that I am Chinese but in my view I think I am South African Chinese.*

These younger participants have acculturated at a faster rate than their migrant parents due to being in contact with various cultures, diverse environments, people and languages from a young age. Out of all the generation groups interviewed, this group showed the most adaptability between the "two identities", being able to shift between being South African and Taiwanese or Chinese. This suggests a smoother transition into a western society compared to their parents – most of whom are first generation migrants. The process of acculturation can take years and is likely to include different forms of "mutual accommodation", which ultimately results in "longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups" (Berry, 2005: 699). The older second generation migrants who only arrived in South Africa in their teens experienced slightly more conflicted feelings towards their identity.

Andy Hsu (parents moved to South Africa when he was 12 years old):

I still think I am more like a Taiwanese person. Because, I'm not actually sure. I think my way of living is more similar to that of a Taiwanese person's. My style is more similar to Taiwanese but the way I live my life is more similar to South Africans.

Kuan-da Du (parents moved to South Africa when he was 11 years old) adds:

I'm used to living in South Africa because when I go to Taiwan or China, I can't keep up with the pace at all. It's too fast. I'm used to the lifestyle and pace here. It's too crowded in Taiwan. However even though I live here, I feel that they still see me as a foreigner. They don't see me as South African. Probably because of the way I look.

Despite being accustomed to the local lifestyle, their sense of self, value system, language etc align closer to that of Taiwanese. Returning to Taiwan for work or education after migrating to South Africa also plays a role here and their acculturation period is essentially less than that of the second generation migrants whom were born and raised in South Africa. First generation migrants associated more easily with being Taiwanese or Chinese first and then South African – sometimes leaving the South African identity out altogether and referring to South Africa more of a base, or a place where they stay, rather than having an deep emotional connection to it.

Tracy Hsu (moved to South Africa at 33 years old) says:

I am definitely Taiwanese/Asian, whether it's my appearance or how I am inside/the way I think. Because I was educated in Taiwan, I am Taiwanese.

May Zeng (moved to South Africa at 30 years old):

Definitely China. Wherever you go, it's our roots. At the very least, China is our home, this can't be changed. Even though we have citizenship or permanent residence here, it's not the same. And you'll never be able to be accepted here in South Africa.

The first generation migrant group have the shortest exposure period in their host country and the least developed local language skills. They are more likely to visit Taiwan and China regularly due to family and friendship ties in the country and this has also largely influenced the second generation group who have continued this ritual and most return to their country of origin at least once a year. Local Chinese readily identified with being South African but

also acknowledged their Chinese heritage. They've essentially assimilated into the South African society, often participating in local customs and have well established bonds with other South Africans due to being in the country for decades.

Colin Wing (third generation local Chinese) says:

> *I consider myself South African because I am born here and hold a South African passport. Although I am of Chinese origins, I don't feel like I belong in China or in the East. I would consider myself South African Chinese to be precise. I am at the same time proud of my heritage. I would term myself a South African born Chinese – SABC.*

Lee Jardine (fourth generation local Chinese):

> *I've been to many places overseas but if you specifically talk about our diaspora, as a Chinese person when you go back to China or Hong Kong or all that, it's not the same feeling as the country that you're born in. So I do consider myself South African but at the same time I don't forget my Chinese roots.*

Ultimately, most of the participants (regardless of generation status) struggled to pinpoint their identity and have conflicted feelings – often feeling "foreign" when visiting their country of origin and also being perceived as foreigners in their host country. At times, there may be a sense of a loss of home or foundation and thus attempting creating a home within a new space.

Most participants continue to maintain ties with other East Asians living in South Africa. Many consider themselves to be part of a local Asian community which is often perceived to be tight-knit as a support group although the downside includes the tendency for gossip. The Taiwanese community is seemingly slightly larger than the local Chinese community, however both tend to hold various functions throughout the year, especially in celebration of traditional events.

Tracy Hsu:

> *Even though we live in a foreign country, we still get together and hold and celebrate traditional Asian events and activities. For example celebrating Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival. And of course events*

associated to our faith. I'm a follower of Buddhism so I also participate in the Buddha Festival.

There seems to be a dilemma with keeping traditions alive in both Taiwanese and Chinese communities. First generation migrants tend to be more traditional and often do the hosting of cultural events, and although second generation migrants may participate in such events, there is a struggle to maintain a sense of culture as the first generation grow older and their offspring are less influenced by traditions and often have little motivation to maintain these activities. In the local Chinese community, there is also some concern regarding this and Colin Wing says:

> *What saddens me the most is that I feel we are becoming a dying breed. The young people nowadays I feel that they should be the ones to be groomed to take over the role of serving the community. The community centre has been set up but in order to keep its legacy going we need to maintain it hence the fundraising efforts. And unfortunately it's been in the hands of a few in the community, particularly the old stalwarts. I feel the youngsters should be talking a more active role in keeping the community spirit alive.*

Colin's concern juxtaposes another third generation local Chinese participant, Bianca Forlee, who is thirty-one and vice chair of the Western Province Chinese Sports Association which encourages children to learn about their Chinese culture and heritage. Her coming into the organisation is largely due to her parents' and grandparents' involvement at some stage. However, it is a small percentage of the younger generation that are involved in the management of these communities. It is evident all the participants have come into contact with Asian communities at some point due to parental and peer influences. Their decision to maintain this contact depends on a host of factors such as personal values and preferences, social circles and family. The presence of tight knit diasporic communities illustrates the need for kinship – connected through shared cultures, languages, identity, religion and challenges encountered in a western society.

Language

One of the biggest challenges that migrants encounter in their host country is communication. Language is integral to the acculturation of migrants into the new society and their experiences and perceptions are predominantly moulded by various forms of languaging. Language significantly impacts business, formation of social circles and family relations and

the establishment of self. The first and second generation participants grew up being exposed to more than one language: Mandarin and other dialects of Chinese and Taiwanese and later English in addition to other national languages of South Africa. Many first generation participants initially experience prominent language barriers which largely influence a successful integration into their new community.

Andy Hsu:

> *For example my wife, she won't leave the house that often or make friends with the local people because of the language barrier. There will be restrictions on your social circles – limited to only Asians. And in the end, your circle will be very small.*

James Jiang also points out the challenge this poses for migrants such as his parents in terms of dealing with administrative tasks at the bank or home affairs, which creates further distance between locals and migrants. It also results in the tendency for migrants to mostly associate with other migrants due to language familiarity, which enhances the widening chasm of decreasing contact with local languages. Thus, these communication barriers can persist for many years even after initial relocation and is dependent on the migrant's adaptability and willingness to acquire knowledge of local languages. Additionally, research shows that multilingual speakers tend to use English for "utilitarian purposes with a pragmatic attitude and they won't develop a cultural affinity with the language or attempt to represent their identities through English" (Canagarajah, 2006: 199). This is demonstrative amongst older migrants who learned English after relocating to South Africa and second generation migrants that arrived in South Africa in their teens or later years. They tend to reserve the use of English and other local languages for business and administration. Several migrants also talk about feelings of shame and not speaking for fear of humiliating themselves or miscommunicating, particularly during the first few years. Amy Lin says: "If customers say hello to me, I would say hello and then duck my head and walk away because I was scared they would continue to talk to me. I didn't understand any English when I first came, and then slowly learned it myself."

May Zeng:

> *There are many things we don't understand at that time. But now it's much better after the children came. They understand English. They helped us translate.*

And a part of me wants to learn but I can't find the time or settle down to learn. At least we have our children to ask.

These migrant parents tend to turn to their children to assist them with language concerns. Second generation participants are exposed to a variety of languages such as English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa etc. through formal education in addition to their home languages Mandarin and Taiwanese Hokkien. The steady language exposure from a young age increases their fluency levels and many also attend Chinese school on a daily or weekly basis.

Jennifer Chen:

When I speak to my parents we speak in Mandarin. But when I speak to my grandparents, I have to speak in Taiwanese. But my parents try very hard to understand my mixed Mandarin, English that I communicate with. When they speak between themselves its pure Mandarin but when I speak with them its Mandarin. When I get very emotional, it's English.

The above quote illustrates how this participant draws from various language repertoires during communication with her parents. Multilinguals "shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014: 21). Many second generation participants tend to mix languages in their communication with parents and with their East Asian peers. Furthermore, some second generation migrants are placed in homes with other South Africans in order to rapidly improve their language skills.

Kuan-da Du:

I first came with my sister and uncle and we stayed at a White person's house for a few years and then my dad came over. We stayed with them to learn English since we didn't know how to speak it but we didn't learn properly.

In contrast, the local Chinese participants primarily spoke English growing up. They tend to know at least one other local language that was taught at school, or learned from their peers or helpers at home. Some of the participants indicated that despite their parents having knowledge of Mandarin and other dialects, they generally did not communicate with their children in these languages and would default to English.

Taryn Lock (third generation local Chinese):

My parents never spoke Chinese at home, they also spoke English. My dad is Miaonese and my mom is Cantonese. So I can't speak Chinese at all, I tried to learn it and it's quite difficult to learn Mandarin. That's something I really want to spend time on is learning Mandarin.

Many spoke about their desire to learn Mandarin or Cantonese and wished their parents had taught them the languages. Some of the older local Chinese learned basic phrases in Mandarin but are unable to read and write it. There also seems to be a sense of shame or embarrassment amongst some participants for not being able to speak Mandarin or other dialects. Edwards (2013) argues that subtractive bilingualism occurs in a setting in which one language is more dominant; where one is on the ascendant and the other is declining. The use of Mandarin in the local Chinese community has clearly declined over the years in favour of local languages which they perceive as more practical within the given environment. Furthermore, when visiting countries in East Asia, some participants are faced with feeling like outsiders or foreigners amongst people who look like them, particularly due to language barriers.

Colin Wing:

We were on a trip and we were in Guangzhou and I asked someone for directions to guide me to the ticket counter and he looked at me and he said to me: "Are you that stupid? Can't you read the signs?" Because the signs were all in Chinese – I could speak the language but I couldn't read the signs. So if we went to China to settle I don't think we'd fit in at all because we'll be regarded as outsiders, as westerners.

Many of the local Chinese also have surnames which were often a result of administrative mishap when their ancestors registered their names upon arrival in South Africa.

Bianca Forlee (fourth generation local Chinese):

So our Chinese surname is actually Hsieh. But I think when my great grandfather came over with the ships, I'm not even sure what his name was, but the way they documented his name it came out as Forlee and that's been our family name for the past 102 years.

Canagarajah (2007) points out that the acquisition of language is based mostly on performative strategies, purposive uses of the language and interpersonal negotiations. In this context, first generation migrants have little motivation to learn local languages fluently apart from "basic English" to get by with their businesses. Since their client-base is largely made of other non-English speakers, their language level tends to stagnate at a certain stage even after many years in the country. This is also enhanced by their association with other migrants who communicate predominantly in Mandarin or Taiwanese Hokkien. Furthermore, their reliance on their children to assist them with communication results in further stagnation. These language obstacles ultimately affect the acculturation levels into South African society. Similarly, the local Chinese' lack of exposure to Mandarin and other Chinese dialects have resulted in the gradual diminishing of these languages as part of their repertoire and the increased use of local languages. Despite having knowledge of multiple languages, second generation migrants also encounter the challenge of maintaining a diminishing home language to preserve relationships with other family members.

Marginalisation, stereotypes and xenophobia

Migrants are often faced with issues such as discrimination, stereotyping, racism and xenophobia when residing in another country. Berry (2006) argues that migrants tend to be viewed less favourably since they are typically dissimilar to the local population. Therefore, those who "seek to assimilate and who undergo greater behavioural shifts (towards receiving society norms) may experience less discrimination (Berry, 2006: 622). Due to the diverse range of interviewees, their experiences varied. First generation and older second generation participants experienced discrimination due to their limited English abilities and certain cultural practices. There is also a prevalent fear of being targeted by criminals especially amongst those involved in the manufacturing industry. There seems to be a general consensus amongst migrants that locals perceive them to be wealthy. These migrants tend to be particularly cautious in their business dealings and many have experienced robberies at work or know of other migrants who have been targeted. Many migrants also reside at their place of work such as at the factories, but due to previous experiences of crime, some have mentioned that they have relocated to residential areas to return to after work for safety reasons. Park & Rugunanan (2010) point out that although Africans continue to bear the brunt of most of the xenophobic violence in South Africa, various groups of Asian migrants are becoming increasingly vulnerable to crime and harassment due to certain perceptions associated with them.

Andy Hsu:

> *Asians in South Africa are easily targeted or to be perceived as a target and robbed. As an Asian person in South Africa we will need to be low profile. Of course if you want to drive nice cars, you personally might not think it's something that's high profile, trying to show off – why do they want to drive nice cars is because in Taiwan all these cars are very expensive whereas they are cheaper here in comparison. So it's not that they are intentionally wanting to show off but because they have the ability to buy nicer things, they would obviously also want to do it.*

Furthermore, a few participants also spoke about misunderstandings between local factory workers and Asian owners and how this has created a common misconception that owners mistreat the workers. One participant reasoned that there is a disparity in cultural values and communication. Jennifer Chen points out: "When people think that we're heartless people that work our staff like I'm a 24 hour plant. It comes from our heritage that we're hardworking. ... I think it's specifically targeted at manufacturing entities. That industries in manufacturing run by Asian people probably don't follow labour laws, business legislation, corporate rules, and the company's act. I feel that's a big misconception, they're learning." In contrast, another participant points out racist attitudes from Asians towards black South Africans.

Lindy Jang:

> *I feel that there are many Chinese people who don't see the local black people as equals. I feel that they are racist towards black people but it could be because of the older generation. For example in my house, the grandparents have conflict with the locals. The way they treat our helpers it's as if they think Black people were born to be subordinates. I think if you want to live here and make money, you can't think this way.*

The second generation participants spoke about being predominantly discriminated against at school due to factors such as a lack of English abilities, cultural aspects including the food they brought to school and their ethnic appearance. A few still experience discriminatory attitudes in their adult lives however it has become less frequent. The acculturation theory proposes that the decline in incidents may be the outcome of increased acculturation over time and by the time they reach adulthood, the participants may be adapted into society. The

local Chinese are the most integrated in South Africa. However, many report that they have also received some level of discrimination such as stereotyping and racist attitudes.

Lee Jardine:

> *I did a survey on the Chinese community Facebook group asking about this idea of the terminology 'Fong Kong', whether it was offensive or not. And one third of everyone who took the survey said no it's not. It's just funny, get over yourself. But, it's funny because for a long period of time after having people saying it all the time, we have to deal with it and they've sort of accepted it as something we should just brush off you know, turn the other cheek or have a thick about it.*

He pointed out that discrimination against Asians seems to be accepted and it is also because some Asian people accept it as a way of life. Some incidences of rebuttal from local Chinese regarding hate speech have made headlines in recent years, suggesting that there is a gradual increase in discrimination awareness and an attempt to denounce it. Two of the older local Chinese spoke about their experiences of discrimination during apartheid and one mentioned how being in an interracial marriage influenced the way he was treated by the community members and was only accepted back into community after remarrying another Chinese person. In contrast, Taryn Lock, who is also in an interracial marriage has not experienced the same discrimination as Colin.

Colin Wing:

> *I was married to a half Chinese before much to the disdain of my parents. They weren't too keen to that. After we got divorced I married a proper Chinese. I would say getting married for the second time has changed my life. I have become more accepted into the community and by my family.*

Both Colin Wing and Robert Ting Chong experienced discrimination during apartheid such as living in designated areas under the Group Areas Act, having to acquire permits for tertiary education and authorisation from neighbours before purchasing a home in a different area. Additionally, local Chinese seem to show apprehension towards new Chinese migrants. There is a fear that migrants will "tarnish" the image that local Chinese have established, by participating in illegal activities and not abiding by local social norms.

Robert Ting Chong:

> *There are some Chinese people who know how to conduct themselves in a western world and others who'd be too arrogant to say I am not prepared to do*

anything differently but behave the way I've always known to behave, like spitting in the streets or burping.

Colin Wing adds:

The new immigrants are the ones who are tarnishing our image purely because of the fact that I have not come across many that are prepared to come off their high horse and prepare to assimilate into this society. They tend to stick to themselves and sometimes you don't blame them but are basically not prepared to venture out. So they don't learn about other cultures or languages. So as a result people view them as just coming over here and profiting off them and not putting anything back.

Regardless of generation status, the participants tend to feel that there has not been overt discrimination towards East Asians in South Africa apart from a few instances mentioned. However, many continue to feel like an outsider or foreigner to some extent even after years of living in the country, largely due to their appearance. Ultimately, many of the issues experienced by the participants stem from language barriers, cultural differences, appearance and the negative perceptions targeted towards the population group at large as a result of isolated incidences.

Constructed visual representation

Susan Sontag (1977: 15) states that "to photograph is to appropriate the thing being photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge, like power". This visual project aimed to counter this narrative and provide a deeper, personal insight into a group of individuals through the lens of someone from within the community rather than from outside. Referring to Sontag's quote, I used my position of power as a South African Taiwanese to become an extension of the participants through which they can be seen and heard. In approaching other East Asians, the image making and interviews became a form of dialogue, therapy, knowledge sharing, support, empowerment and a sense of kinship. The photographs are constructed, the subject posed, aware and usually looking directly into the lens as the photo is taken. There is some resemblance between these portraits and the portraits of African photographers such as Seydou Keita (Malian portrait photographer) and Yoruba photography. Both Seydou Keita and Yoruba photography seemingly strive to counter the colonialist gaze, by the subject reinventing themselves and reclaiming their identities through carefully constructed poses in the portraits. The subjects tend to be well-dressed and sit facing the camera with a dignified expression and looking at

and through the camera (Sprague, 1978). My participants' attire consisted of their everyday wear and some took extra effort to be well-presented for the photograph. Details of the clothing, environment make up the sociological aspect. I opted to take the portrait in landscape which offers a glimpse into the environment in which the participants are in. A classroom; a master bedroom; a restaurant kitchen; a salon; a factory or a martial arts storeroom – these settings added context and were crucial to the individual's identity. The psychological aspect is contained in the facial expressions and gestures. It was a collaborative effort; we would share ideas as to where the photograph can be taken and a few participants would ask for assistance on posing, particularly if they felt awkward or unsure of what to do with their body. I found myself reading their postures and assisting them from what they were comfortable with, or following their lead and encouraging them to repeat a particular pose that seemed to work aesthetically. The poses were simple – either standing or sitting – but the participants were always centred so the viewer's eye-line is immediately drawn to the soul of the photo. Since each situation was different, I attempted to use the light sources (whether artificial or natural) effectively in order to highlight the participant. I refrained from using an external flash in order to keep the setting as natural as possible and to avoid distracting the other person which could potentially alter their demeanour and change the atmosphere. Framing the entire body in the portrait gave more context and a sense of wholeness – seeing the individual as they are. It also allows the viewer to understand the participant in relation to the place they are in through the body language expressed. Furthermore, the photos were generally taken at either eye level to the participant or from a slightly lower position. This method was to represent them in a dignified manner, exuding presence and power.

Although placement and location were relatively straightforward, the photographs do offer hidden narratives, juxtapositions and questions that the viewer may feel compelled to inquire. Who are these people? What are their stories? Where do they come from? What are they doing here? One of the main goals of this project is to highlight a small participant group taken from a minority population group in South Africa and answer some of these questions. Still photographs are essential in order to provide the initial impression. However, I needed a deeper level of engagement which I felt was missing in the representation of East Asians in mainstream media, and particularly in South Africa. The interviews were integral for this process. An ongoing and prevalent issue in documentary filmmaking is the attempt to elicit truth in the presence of a camera. Naturally, people feel defensive and may put on a level of performance in front of the camera. For many of my participants, it was their first time on

camera. Some felt anxious because they were hearing the questions for the first time. Nonetheless, they answered the questions thoroughly and started warming up and answering more naturally due to the extended length of the interviews. A few participants mentioned that the interview was therapeutic, one said it helped him do some soul-searching and a few were curious as to what other participants said. Thereafter, I translated and transcribed the interviews and selected pull quotes to accompany each of the photographs. The interviews were edited down to 1-2 minutes each and placed on my website next to each corresponding photograph and quote. "A documentary representation is one in which the carefully selected raw material, or edited footage, is creatively or 'artfully' edited or 'interpreted' to reveal truths which would otherwise evade the camera" (Beattie, 2004: 29). Similarly, when it came to curating final photographs, video footage and quotes, it was also a highly selective process. It is essentially a subjective practice and is reflective of the curator's intentions. The choice of using a website was the most feasible for a visual project that combined various mediums. It consolidates all the information in one place where it can be easily accessed across the world. It enhances visibility, reach and engagement which is essential for this particular project.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study provides a deeper understanding into the transformed lives of Taiwanese and Chinese migrants in South Africa and their positionality in society. The results show that first generation participants tend to be involved in entrepreneurial activities in manufacturing, restaurants, small businesses and other types of sales whereas subsequent generations are prone to be well-educated and enter white collar jobs after university. Only a few return to assist their family's businesses. Regardless of their generation status, the primary reason for relocating to South Africa was in search of improved economic opportunities and living conditions. Second generation migrants have also acculturated at a faster rate than their migrant parents and readily identified with being both South African and Taiwanese or Chinese. First generation migrants often first identified with their country of origin which they considered their primary home and the local Chinese strongly aligned with being South African, but acknowledging their Chinese heritage. Although many participants continue to feel foreign in South Africa, they experience a similar feeling of being perceived as an outsider when they visit their country of origin due to factors such as language barriers, cultural and social norms. Arguably, a significant factor which affects the participants' experience and level of integration in a different country is language abilities. This is particularly evident amongst the first generation migrants in South Africa whose struggles are predominantly a result of limited English and cultural clashes. Furthermore, a preference for a particular language is highly dependent on environment and social circles and the diminishing use of Mandarin and Taiwanese Hokkien can be seen amongst the second generation and onwards. Amongst the local Chinese, very few can speak the Mandarin and other dialects, with most having a preference for English. The majority of the participants have been discriminated against from a young age due to language, appearance and culture but experienced it less as adults. Those involved in the manufacturing industry tend to perceive themselves as "easy targets" and more susceptible to crime. Although the local Chinese are more acculturated than the other participants, they also mentioned episodes of discrimination which suggests that East Asians are continued to be perceived as "other" despite efforts of integrating into society. Finally, carefully constructed photographs portray a personal and dignified representation of the participant as they reclaim the space they are in. It is a disruption of the prevalent narrative of East Asian migrants in a western country, offering a more explorative perspective into their lives. The curation of quotes, photographs

and videos on a website provides an efficient and interactive space for viewers to engage, learn and share.

This visual project focused predominantly on the lives and stories of fifteen first and second generation Taiwanese and Chinese migrants and local Chinese. Future studies and the continuation of this project can incorporate more participants, particularly new Chinese migrants. Furthermore, this study only includes a certain demographic of East Asian migrants and limited to ones that hail from Johannesburg, Newcastle and Cape Town. Future research can incorporate a wider range of participants living in various towns and cities across South Africa and even in other African countries. It can also potentially expand to include other East Asian ethnicities such as Japanese, South Korean, etc. and include other exhibition formats such as a feature length documentary, a photo story and an online web-series.

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