CHAPTER 2

The Politics of Chineseness in South Africa: From Apartheid to 2015

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Introduction

South Africa is one of very few African countries[1] with three distinct Chinese communities. Issues of community and identity in the country that perfected and codified racial segregation have been complicated by fault lines of ethnicity, generation (or the length of time in South Africa), language, region of origin, education and class, as well as nation (specifically, South Africa, Taiwan and mainland China) and citizenship. The state and larger society often fail to see these intragroup differences and on numerous occasions have treated the Chinese as alien, different, or "other." Ethnic Chinese communities have also defied or co-opted these assigned identities to their own advantage. In this chapter, I describe several instances when Chinese communities tussled with the state and society over the politics of being Chinese and I make some observations about the future of these communities in a still multiethnic South Africa. I focus on the fluidity of "Chineseness" both in terms of its content and its uses, while pointing to the differences between the three main communities of Chinese in South Africa: third-plus-generation Chinese South Africans, first- and second-generation Taiwanese South Africans, and those more recently arrived from mainland Chinese. I also explore shifting connections and

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identifications with China and Chineseness over time. Material for this chapter was culled from in-depth interviews with Chinese South Africans conducted in 1999, interviews with newer Chinese migrants conducted between 2007 and 2010, more recent interviews with several Chinese South Africans, Taiwanese South Africans, and Chinese migrants conducted in 2015, and close participant observation between 1999 and 2015.[2]

Multiple Chinese Communities

Early Chinese Immigration from Guangzhou

The Chinese South Africans or "local Chinese" have roots going back as far as the late 1870s when diamonds and then gold were discovered in South Africa.[3] The young men were mostly from Guangzhou (the Pearl Delta region of Guangdong Province). On hearing of yet another gold rush, they hopped aboard ships bound for the newest *Kam Saan* (Gold Mountain), only to find that, at the tip of Africa, the land had already been "discovered" by European colonizers and earmarked as white men's territory even though the majority population was black. The newcomers from China, referred to derogatively as "Chinamen," were prohibited from obtaining mining licenses and relegated to livelihoods supporting the very miners they had thought to become. Their lives were marked by controls and prohibitions: the Chinese, together with other "non-whites" (including blacks, "coloreds" and Indians), were subjected to pass laws and travel restrictions, residential permits, occupational controls and immigration laws.

Despite legal controls and prohibitions, a trickle of Chinese men continued to land on South Africa's shores, eventually bringing wives and later children to settle into lives of hardship. According to census data, in 1891 there was a total of 413 Chinese in South Africa. By 1904, these numbers had increased five-fold with the incremental immigration of independent migrants, but they remained, relative to the total population, quite small at 2,556 (Yap and Man 1996: 62, 76–84). By 1936, in addition to the predominantly male population, there were more than 1000 Chinese women in South Africa and 1,000 children born in South Africa of Chinese parents. Over the next decade, these numbers doubled (ibid.).

Large-scale immigration from China was prohibited by restrictions in the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act of 1902 and the Cape Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904.[4] By the 1970s, the total number of Chinese

South Africans had reached approximately 12,000. With out-migration during apartheid, low rates of marriage (see Park 2008) and low birth rates, these numbers remained fairly stable for nearly five decades, fluctuating between 10,000 and 12,000.

Two distinct groups of the Chinese—the Cantonese and the Hakka (or Moiyeanese)—immigrated to South Africa and for several decades they maintained distinct communities, with the Cantonese settling in and around Johannesburg and the Hakka in the Eastern and Western Cape (Yap and Man 1996; Park 2008). Apartheid restrictions, which prohibited mingling between race groups, eventually pushed these two ethnic Chinese communities together. Both maintained close ties to China, with young men returning home to find Chinese wives, and couples sending children to China for a "proper Chinese education." Many Chinese still considered themselves to be sojourners. All the back-and-forth movement was halted in 1948/1949 when drastic changes in China and South Africa slammed shut the door between the two countries and forced the small Chinese communities to make their permanent homes in the country at the tip of Africa.

While South African barriers to Chinese immigration to North America had been lowered around the time of World War II, the Nationalist Party's racist and anti-communist policies prohibited new immigration from mainland China with the passage of the Immigrants Regulation Amendment Act (Act 43 of 1953). South Africa retained ties to the Nationalist government that fled to Taiwan at the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, preferring their traditional allies to the new Communist government on the mainland. With the doors to new immigration closed, there were only a few isolated cases of the Chinese entering South Africa between 1953 and the late 1970s. These included some wives, a few qualified Chinese chefs, Chinese-language instructors, and a small number of illegal immigrants who persisted in their attempts to join family members in South Africa (Yap and Man 1996: 350–351).

Immigration from Taiwan

Significant changes took place in South Africa from 1961 through the 1980s as anti-apartheid activities intensified. In the aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre, when police shot at protestors and killed 69 people, many in the international community began calling for action against the apartheid government. Divestment from the country did not begin on a significant scale until the mid-1980s, but several states began to distance

themselves from South Africa. Global economic sanctions forced South Africa to pursue closer ties with other pariah nations, including Israel, Chile, and Taiwan. As traditional economic partners started pulling away, the apartheid government instituted an incentive scheme to attract investors from these three countries. By encouraging investment in the black "homelands," the government also implicated foreign investors in their plans to staunch flows of black Africans from these rural areas into urban ones. A small but steady influx of Taiwanese industrialists immigrated to South Africa, beginning in the late 1970s. Generous incentives included relocation costs, subsidized wages for seven years and subsidized rent for ten years, cheap transport of goods to urban markets or ports, housing loans, and favorable exchange rates. Combined with increasing competition in Taiwan, these were sufficient reason for some to take their chances in South Africa (Hart 2003: 2).[5]

These plans were quite successful for a while. An estimated 2,500 immigrants from Taiwan had arrived in South Africa by the late 1980s. By 1989, nearly 150 factories had been established; by 1992, 40,000 jobs had been created and ZAR1 billion invested in these remote areas (Yap and Man 1996: 421; Hart 2003: 2–3). The arrival of the Taiwanese also prompted changes to some of the existing race-based policies: South Africa's longstanding prohibition of non-white immigration was waived in order to accommodate them, and in the Free State laws were overturned to permit Chinese residence in the province, allowing the Taiwanese to purchase homes in formerly white-only areas and send their children to white schools.

A second wave of Taiwanese migration, mostly comprising small entrepreneurs and students, followed on the heels of the industrialists. This group settled in the larger cities and towns. This later inflow led to the establishment of financial services, newspapers and other businesses catering to this growing community. The Taiwanese established their own community organizations, the Bank of Taiwan established a branch in Johannesburg in 1991, airlines ran six weekly flights between Taipei and Johannesburg, and one entrepreneur started a Taiwanese-run newspaper (Tseng 1991: 7). At their height there were between 30,000 and 50,000 Taiwanese in South Africa (Park 2012a; Grimm et al. 2014); today the community is much diminished, with most officials and community representatives indicating that there are approximately 6,000 (Park 2012b).

These Taiwanese differed from the earlier migrants from China in a number of ways: many migrated as families, they were well educated, and they had resources. They were also different insofar as they engaged in

South African civic and political life in ways that the "local Chinese" never did. When some prominent and wealthy Taiwanese publicly announced their support for the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994, the local Chinese protested, saying that because no one could tell them apart, they would all suffer from the potential backlash. The Taiwanese ignored the cries of the Chinese South Africans and continued to participate in local politics. Unhampered as they were by a history of racist oppression that kept most Chinese South Africans quiet, the Taiwanese made advances to various political parties when it suited them. Given the general invisibility of Chinese South Africans in local politics up to that point, it was a shock when in the national elections of 2004 four Taiwan-born South Africans were elected to parliament.

Both South Africa and Taiwan, for a time, permitted dual citizenship, so many of the Taiwanese became citizens of their new country. While large numbers eventually returned to Taiwan (or moved elsewhere) when subsidies expired or when South Africa switched official recognition from Taiwan to mainland China in 1998 (see Section 4), those who remained raised children in the country and became committed residents and citizens. The largest communities of these Taiwanese South Africans now reside in the greater Johannesburg/Pretoria area, in the area surrounding Bloemfontein in the Free State province, and in the greater Cape Town area.

New Chinese Migration from Mainland China

Except for a small number of mainland Chinese brought in by the Taiwanese as factory supervisors and line managers, there was little new migration from mainland China even after China's open-door economic reform; most participants in these newer waves of migration appear to have gone first to the Americas, Europe, and Australasia. New migration from the PRC to South Africa began to surge only after the mid-1990s, around the time of the first democratic elections in South Africa. This occurred in several waves. Many members of the first wave of Chinese migrants from the mainland arrived in South Africa by way of third countries, often from Eastern Europe, while the second wave arrived directly from China. Among these earliest migrants were a handful of employees of Chinese state-owned enterprises or private companies. The vast majority of the Chinese in the first two waves were well-educated professionals, many with international work experience and some capital. Most were linked by both family and other close social networks to factories in China. With these resources and

competitive advantages, many went into importing, wholesale trade and distribution. Those who were successful have since established extensive business networks in South Africa and in China; and some have expanded beyond their initial trading businesses into other sectors, including mining, manufacturing, tourism, and property development (see Park and Chen 2010).

The third wave of Chinese migrants from mainland China began arriving in the new millennium, and this is continuing. This latest influx is distinct from the first two in some important respects. These immigrants are mostly peasants of low socioeconomic background primarily from Fujian Province; they are much more numerous; and they have no connections with the Chinese state or its official representatives. Many enter illegally, mostly by overstaying their tourist visas or undertaking land crossings from bordering countries and then applying for asylum. South Africa's inefficient and corrupt Department of Home Affairs allows for these extralegal processes.[6] Owing to their lack of English-language proficiency, limited education, and inadequate connections to existing Taiwanese or Chinese business networks, nearly all of these newcomers have gone into the retail sector, opening up small grocery, convenience or other stores across the country.[7]

Unfortunately, there are no accurate statistics regarding the total population of the Chinese in South Africa. There are currently fewer than 10,000 Chinese South Africans and between 6000 and 10,000 Taiwanese in the country. However, because of the large numbers of illegal border crossings, poor record-keeping and corruption within the Department of Home Affairs, and continuing out-migration, it is impossible to know the total number of people of Chinese descent in South Africa. Estimates typically range from 200,000 to 350,000 (Park 2012b; Sautman and Yan 2007; see also Mohan and Kale 2007). However, more recent research indicates that current numbers may have topped 500,000 (Lin 2014: 182).

Chinese South Africans: Not White Enough, Not Black Enough

Through most of South Africa's early history, during the colonial period as well as the apartheid era, the Chinese were officially classified as "non-white" and treated as second-class citizens. Just as often they were designated as "Chinese" and treated as foreigners, even if born in South Africa. However, the small local Chinese community did not accept all such designations lying

down. They challenged their state-assigned identities as they fought to be recognized as South Africans and quietly struggled for their rights. Later, in the post-apartheid era, they conducted what became a very public battle to be included as designees of affirmative action legislation.

Legislation, as applied to the small ethnic Chinese population of South Africa, has been haphazard at best and, ironically, was often prompted by South African government interests or concerns about other ethnic groups or foreign relations: the Indians in the late 1890s; Japan and the small non-resident population of Japanese diplomats and businessmen in the 1920s and again in the late 1940s; Taiwan and the Taiwanese in the 1970s and 1980s; and, most recently, China. As mentioned earlier, the first pieces of anti-Asian legislation actually targeted the Indian population. Alarm at the growth of the Indian population, first with the "coolies" and later with independent migrants, spurred Natal, the Cape Colony, and the then South African Republic to implement immigration restrictions, as well as laws pertaining to trading, residence and citizenship (Yap and Man 1996; Harris 1998; Park 2008). These legal measures were targeted at all "Asiatics," including the Chinese.

Chinese as "Honorary Whites"

While Indians and Chinese were constructed as "non-white" during this period, racial policies were constantly being negotiated and at times economics trumped ideologies. The tiny Japanese business and diplomatic community and the larger (but still small) Chinese communities in South Africa posed challenges to the ruling party, because of their small size, the global position of these countries, and racial difference. It was untenable to create separate areas and institutions for these two groups, such as existed for blacks, whites, coloreds, and Indians. But what to do with them? It was ultimately the growing importance of trade relations with Asian countries that caused shifts, ultimately necessitating special accommodation within racial ideologies. Economic necessity gradually influenced a policy of exemptions, concessions and privileges for the local Chinese, which contradicted the race-based legislation of the country.

The Japanese were the first and only official "honorary whites" in South Africa (Yamamoto 2013). Because of their important status as a principal economic partner, Japanese visitors and short-term residents in South Africa were exempted from "non-white" status and granted specific privileges, while Chinese continued to be legally "non-white." As early as

1928, this special status of the Japanese was written into the Liquor Act, which exempted them from the definition of "Asiatic," allowing them to buy liquor in stores and public bars (Yap and Man 1996). The small Chinese community in South Africa, with the aid of the Chinese consul-general, publicly protested this differential treatment but they failed to convince the government to change the laws. However, the inability of most South Africans to differentiate the Chinese from the Japanese worked in the interests of the Chinese South Africans. In their own private acts of defiance, many Chinese simply allowed whites to believe they were Japanese or said as much; when their Chineseness did not serve them, they "became" Japanese (Park 2008).

Starting in the early 1960s, opposition party politicians and the press joined the quiet protests of the Chinese South Africans. They too began to question why only the Japanese were granted special privileges. Granting "honorary white" status to the Japanese only in terms of one law proved to be problematic for the government on ethical, political, and practical grounds. While they defended a rigid white vs. non-white divide in the face of contradictions and inconsistencies, as a practical matter it was almost impossible for the bureaucrats, hotel managers, restaurateurs and others to distinguish between the two Asian groups. As such, there was a gradual acceptance of the Chinese into white areas. The National Party ultimately paid a high price for these state exemptions and exceptions, revealing the first of many cracks in the edifice of apartheid.

Just as South Africa's economic ties with Japan affected Chinese South Africans, so did government ties with Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s. The two states increased bilateral trade, exchanged visits of cabinet ministers and, in 1976, raised their diplomatic relations to ambassadorial level. By 1979, Taiwan ranked as South Africa's fifth largest trading partner (Harris 1998: 280). State efforts to encourage Taiwanese investment in manufacturing precipitated changes in immigration legislation, allowing immigration from Asia to South Africa for the first time since 1951. The Taiwanese were also granted exemptions under the Group Areas Act and permitted to live in white-only designated areas. By the mid-1980s, new legislation repealed "certain laws regulating the admission of Asians into certain parts of the Republic" (ibid.). The upshot was that all ethnic Chinese were permitted to establish residence in the Free State, from which they had been banned (with the Indians) since 1891.

Chinese South Africans, again, had stayed abreast of political developments and their potential impact on their community. As they had earlier,

they exploited the changing national climate resulting from improved relations between Taiwan and South Africa, even if it meant jeopardizing their relations with blacks, Indians and "coloreds."[8] Their acceptance of concessions and privileges can also been seen as a firm refusal to acquiesce to their assigned second-class citizenship.

Officially, the apartheid state, still ambivalent about the Chinese, made periodic advances toward the local Chinese community. Some apartheid leaders, aware of China's history as an advanced civilization, had continued to be conflicted about the inclusion of the Chinese as "non-white". Prompted by continued jibes from the white liberals, the impracticalities of creating another set of separate institutions for the tiny Chinese community, and their own growing ties with Taiwan, they advanced several national propositions to include the small Chinese South African population on the white voter rolls, add a Chinese representative (together with white, coloured and Indian representatives) to the President's Council, and install a Chinese person on the tricameral parliament (Park 2008: 49–51), while continuing to deny rights to the majority black population. The catch? All of these proposals would have necessitated that the Chinese officially be reclassified as white.

Interestingly, while the Chinese South Africans were quietly willing to accept and even fight for concessions, they refused to become officially designated as "white." Their position can be viewed, in part, as their unwillingness to officially give up their Chineseness. It was one thing to "pass" as Japanese or Taiwanese; it was quite another to be officially reclassified as white. Their Chineseness had helped them to retain some semblance of community and identity when they were treated as foreigners in South Africa. Morality and political maneuvering also played a role in their collective decision to wait it out; they would not accept any political carrots from the apartheid government until South Africans of all colors were granted the franchise.

"Chinese Now Black!"

While some Chinese lamented their position as second-class citizens under apartheid, arguing that they were never "white enough," in the post-apartheid era, local Chinese South Africans fought to be included under affirmative action policies, which defined previously disadvantaged groups as black.[9] From 1998 and for the next eight years, leaders of the Chinese South African community made multiple efforts to get clarification from

parliament and several branches of government about whether or not the Chinese were included in the definition of "black" as contained in the two pieces of affirmative action legislation. Failing to get answers, in 2006 the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA) decided to take the government to court. With representation from a top law firm and apartheid activist George Bizos, they won their case. In June 2008 the Pretoria High Court issued an order that Chinese South Africans fall within the broad definition of "black people"—the specific language in the legislation to indicate their previous disadvantaged position—as pertains to the Employment Equity Act and the broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act.

While their court battle ended successfully, the media fallout was replete with scathing headlines about the Chinese "becoming black." The court order only applied to Chinese South Africans and other Taiwanese or Chinese immigrants who had become citizens prior to 1994—likely fewer than 20,000. However, the lack of clarity about "which Chinese" and "how many Chinese" was a major contributory factor to the subsequent media frenzy and public reaction. Black South Africans expressed anger that the Chinese South Africans had not fought against apartheid. They were also concerned that the government "pie" would be further divided into ever-smaller pieces if all Chinese were permitted to apply for affirmative action benefits. It continues to be the case that few South Africans can distinguish between Chinese South African, Taiwanese and new Chinese migrant.[10] The fact that the ethnic Chinese community had grown from approximately 12,000 in the 1970s to well over 300,000 by 2008 added to these concerns. This case, decided soon after one of the most heinous and heartbreaking episodes of xenophobic violence, further politicized Chineseness (Park 2012a; Erasmus and Park 2008).

The CASA case speaks to the ambiguity and complications involved in systems of racial classification, past and present. This ambiguity has manifested itself in confused popular perceptions about how the Chinese were classified during apartheid, whether they had suffered discrimination, and where they stand today. The confusion was heightened by the immigration of large numbers of ethnic Chinese from Taiwan and mainland China. The strong negative public response dampened any sense of victory on the part of the Chinese South African community, providing further evidence of their marginal and tenuous position in South Africa, despite their efforts to integrate and claim their South Africanness.

Taken together, these instances in which the tiny Chinese South African community contested its racial classification in both public and private ways also speak to the shifting politics of being Chinese in South Africa. In the country's early history and throughout the apartheid period, Chineseness was neither desirable nor advantageous. Sometimes it was worthwhile to fib and claim Japanese or Taiwanese identity in order to gain access to a restaurant or a bus, or sometimes just to avoid the embarrassment of being removed from white-only spaces. And sometimes it became imperative to make public the fight for inclusion, even if these fights were ostensibly for "white" or "black" rights.

At the same time, the Chinese South Africans protectively clung to their Chineseness. After multiple generations, geographically scattered, numerically insignificant, and divided between two distinct ethnic/linguistic groups (the Cantonese and the Hakka), most Chinese South Africans have long since lost any Chinese-language abilities. Despite this, many of them continue to cling tenaciously to remnants of their Chinese culture, dated interpretations of Chinese values, Chinese community associations with their annual events, and memories of an imagined Chinese past. Most Chinese South Africans claim their South Africanness, but they also retain their Chineseness. These struggles were always been challenging, but they became even more complicated with the arrival of ethnic Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. Confronted with "real Chinese" from China, many Chinese South Africans began to question the authenticity of their "Chinese" label.

Taiwanese South Africans

Taiwanese engagement with South Africa is a fascinating and understudied topic. Between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Taiwanese moved to South Africa, set up shop, made some money and subsequently left. In many ways, their behavior can be likened to that of other ethnic Chinese transnational migrants who regular flit between East Asia, Southeast Asia, Australasia, and the Americas (as described by Ong [1999]). As with many transnational migrations, some of these new migrants can only be described as opportunistic capitalists: they took advantage of incentive schemes and then moved on when conditions for business deteriorated.

Cheap South African Passports

Starting in the late 1980s, and continuing into the early 2000s, many Taiwanese who had been living in South Africa took their leave. From a high of between 30,000 and 50,000 in the mid-1990s, there are currently only between 6000 and 10,000 Taiwanese in South Africa. Taiwanese investors cited South Africa's increasing crime level and threats to physical safety as the top reasons for their departure (Pickles and Woods 1989). The post-apartheid increase in labor union power was another substantial reason for the Taiwanese exodus. A study conducted by the Center for Chinese Studies interviewed one Taiwanese investor who stated: "After 2000, 70 % of investors left because of wage demands from labor unions which negatively affected investors' profit margins, and 30 % left the country due to security reasons " (Grimm et al. 2014). Adding to their incentives to leave, South Africa shifted official recognition from Taiwan to the PRC in 1998. Taiwanese people, without formal diplomatic relations, were left more vulnerable insofar as they had no official authority that could protect or represent them in South Africa (Grimm et al. 2014).

One of the curiosities of these Taiwanese inflows and outflows is that so many Taiwanese had acquired South African citizenship. Political and economic ties between the two nations had permitted dual citizenship. South African citizenship had allowed Taiwanese business people to bypass costly visa renewals and simplify business transactions. The ease and speed with which some of them were able to acquire (and then discard) passports calls into question the value of South African citizenship. The behavior of these Taiwanese reinforces Benedict Anderson's argument that passports have become "less and less attestations of citizenship, let alone of loyalty to a protective nation-state, than of claims to participate in labor markets" (Anderson 1994: 323). South African passports were simply a means to an end—a relatively easy way to avoid the additional costs of doing business as a foreigner. For those who stayed in South Africa, however, their South Africanness and their Chineseness have taken on more significance in a period of formation for the "new South Africa" and China's global rise.

Political Participation

In the early 1990s, just before the first democratic elections in South Africa, tensions between the Chinese South African community and the newer Taiwanese community were running high. The Chinese South Africans

were concerned about increasing reports of illicit and illegal activities of "the Chinese." Media reports mentioned gill-net fishing, seal culling, rhino horn and ivory poaching, credit card fraud, gang warfare, and labor abuses (Yap and Man 1996; Park 2008). A clear "us" and "them" divide formed as Chinese South Africans grew increasingly frustrated that no one could tell the difference between them (the law-abiding citizens) and the newcomers. Chineseness, again, was in the spotlight. These conflicts also surfaced in politics at various levels: over leadership positions within local Chinese associations, over growing tensions between the Republic of China and PRC activities in South Africa, and over public pronouncements of support for local political parties in the lead-up to the 1994 elections. One Chinese South African woman complained:

> The new (Chinese) immigrants make announcements on behalf of the Chinese in South Africa. Meanwhile, we don't wear our political allegiance on our sleeves, okay? And also, the (local) Chinese feel that a lot of them trade in black areas and you know, to say that "I am DP (Democratic Party)" or "I am NP (National Party)" is just not on. Because, you know, you lay yourself wide open for victimization again, because you are identifiable. I mean, for a Greek or an Italian to get up and say "I support the ANC" or "I support the Freedom Front"—nobody is going the recognize that man after he walks down the street. (Interview, from Park 2008: 163)

As Taiwanese business leaders came out in support of the ANC, an acknowledgement of the changing tides, they exacerbated tensions with the Chinese South Africans who found that their primary mode of survival—being inconspicuous and invisible in South African politics was challenged by these newcomers. These newer arrivals, both Taiwanese and mainland Chinese, were often unaware of the vulnerable position of the Chinese South Africans during (and even before) apartheid. With no experience of discrimination, of second-class citizenship, and of the uncertainties and fears of living under apartheid as a "non-white, they blindly pursued their own ambitions in South Africa. For a small handful of Taiwanese, these included political ambitions.

In 2004, ethnic-Chinese civic engagement reached new heights when it was announced that the newest members of parliament included four Taiwan-born South Africans. Interestingly, there was one Taiwanese South African for each of the major political parties represented: the ANC, the Democratic Alliance, the Inkatha Freedom Party, and the

Independent Democrats. Such inclusivity in the political institutions of South Africa and the higher-level engagement of Taiwanese in those institutions is regarded by some as evidence of the increasing integration and acceptance of Taiwanese (and therefore other Chinese) residents, both citizen and immigrant.

While differences between Chinese South Africans and the Taiwanese South Africans remain—as evidenced in their separate community organizations—the gaps are closing as they gradually become more identified with South Africa. There is anecdotal evidence of greater social interaction, especially among the younger members of these communities, both between these two communities and with other South Africans. They also seem united in their concerns about the growing community of new Chinese migrants from mainland China to South Africa.

New Chinese Migrants: Love Affair with the ANC

With the ongoing influx of new migrants from across mainland China to South Africa (and the African continent), the politics of being Chinese in South Africa and the politics of Chineseness continue to morph as various (and increasing numbers of) people negotiate for power, privileges, or simply survival. One of the primary elements of Western narratives of "China-in-Africa" has been the influence of a rising China over African leaders: China is criticized for buying influence from corrupt and unsavory dictators.[11] At the same time, the Chinese in Africa also seem to be wielding influence as and when they can, exploiting their Chineseness when it suits them. However, this has also been a double-edged sword because their identity as Chinese (and stereotypes of ethnic Chinese) also leaves them vulnerable to crime, corruption, and criticism.

Rising China and Its Influence on South Africa

South Africa and mainland China began the current stage of their official relationship relatively late, in 1998. From 1949 until 1998, the government of South Africa officially recognized Taiwan. To further complicate matters, the ANC had established its own ties to the People's Republic of China as far back as the Bandung Conference in 1955. However, with the Sino-Soviet split of the 1960s, the ANC chose to align itself with Russia, while China maintained its support for the more radical Pan Africanist Congress. With the end of apartheid, loyal ANC cadres engaged in fierce debates

about changing recognition from Taiwan to mainland China. At the end of the day, those supporting PRC recognition won the day with both moral and practical arguments: (1) Beijing had always supported African freedom movements whereas Taiwan was a partner to the apartheid government; and (2) China's huge population and growing economic engine promised greater long-term economic benefits for South Africa (for more, see Park and Alden 2013; Alden and Wu 2014). Since establishing official ties, a multifaceted relationship between the two countries has continued to grow and China is now one of South Africa's principal economic partners.

In recent years, both opposition leaders and ANC insiders and loyalists have criticized the ANC government for kowtowing to China. South Africans were particularly angered by the ANC government's (mis)handling of visa requests for the Dalai Lama.[12] There have now been three incidents—in March 2009, October 2011 and October 2014—when the Dalai Lama was refused a visa or when his visa application was so delayed as to cause him to cancel his trip. Responses to these events from people ranging from Patricia de Lille, the then mayor of Cape Town, to Archbishop Desmond Tutu were almost unanimously hostile to the Zuma-led government for ostensibly succumbing to pressure from Beijing. The most recent incident also elicited a petition with more than 10,000 signatories, all repudiating the government's decision. All this opposition seems to have had little impact on the ANC's love affair with China. For government leaders, it would appear that business deals, including both trade and investment, take precedence over all other matters.[13]

As indicated by Ross Anthony in a Centre for Chinese Studies commentary, the South African government has done its cost–benefit analysis and China appears to be the big winner (see note 14). The Chinese government and the CCP are doing their part to woo their ANC counterparts, often through the distribution of all-paid trips to China, either for short business trips or for longer "educational" jaunts. By all accounts, Chinese investment in South Africa is growing, but South African investment in China is also keeping pace (Alden and Wu 2014).[14]

Criticisms of the ANC because of the Dalai Lama episodes illustrate that most South Africans are concerned about China's lack of democracy and the Zuma government's sacrifice of South African sovereignty. The increased entanglements at the level of both the state and the political parties are also reflected on the interpersonal level.

New Chinese Migrants and the ANC

Sometimes a picture speaks a thousand words. In the run-up to the last South African elections in 2014, a political poster was seen on a lamp-post in Cyrildene, Johannesburg's new Chinatown. It is unclear who was behind the Chinese-language ANC campaign poster (Fig. 2.1). Regardless of whether it was the brainchild of an ANC official or some wealthy and influential Chinese business leader, it certainly speaks to some sort of courting in the relationship between members of new Chinese migrant communities and the ANC.

Researchers examining these newer Chinese migrant communities in and around Johannesburg have described the presence of prominent local ANC officials at Chinese community events and Chinese-owned shops in Cyrildene featuring photos of ANC leaders. In the course of my research, I also came across one Chinese migrant from Fujian, not five years in South Africa, who showed me his ANC membership card. He explained that flashing his card worked to his advantage in many business interactions. Across small towns and in large cities across South Africa, there is growing evidence that Chinese migrants are learning that to do business in the country it is beneficial to have friends in high places. In South Africa, this means making friends within the upper echelons of the ANC. And, increasingly, it would appear that some in the Chinese migrant business community are playing the "China card," using their Chineseness and exploiting the close ties between South Africa and China for their own benefit.

Being Chinese in South Africa also comes with costs. While Chineseness can be used as a trump card, it can also be used to target ethnic Chinese. At one end of the spectrum, South Africans can be guilty of stereotyping and discriminating against the Chinese. At the other end, increasing numbers of the Chinese have been murdered and have been victims of other crimes. Most South Africans are unable to distinguish between Chinese groups. As such, there has been a tendency to paint all the Chinese with one brush, disregarding differences in citizenship, language, and legal status, as indicated by the outcry in the CASA affirmative-action case. Chinese people, as in the past, are seen as part of China, even if they happen to be third- or fourth-generation South Africans. In this vein, grievances against China also become grievances against Chinese people.

Racialized stereotypes have resulted in an increasing number of attacks against the Chinese. It is true that some Chinese are victimized by other Chinese as business competition or criminal syndicates spiral out of control.

Fig. 2.1 2014 ANC campaign poster in Chinese, as seen in Cyrildene, Johannesburg

Exact figures are unknown because the South African police no longer track the ethnicity or race of perpetrators and victims. However, newspaper accounts would seem to indicate that Chinese-on-Chinese crime is significant enough to warrant attention. According to the only scholar to have studied Chinese triads in South Africa, Peter Gastrow stated, "Violence aimed at settling turf battles or at extorting money is perpetuated primarily by members of the respective groups ... some contract killings have been performed by professionals brought in from China ... Access to firearms is not difficult in South Africa" (Gastrow 2001). Chinese criminal syndicates have been active in South Africa since the 1980s (ibid.).

The Chinese are also targeted by corrupt government officials and common criminals. In a study of xenophobia in South Africa, immigrant retailers from China and the Indian subcontinent complained that they were constantly harassed by police officers and other authorities for bribes (Park and Rugunanan 2009). While the study found that Asians in South Africa are not primary targets of xenophobic violence, they are seen as "soft targets" for extortion and petty crime. Because so many of the new Chinese migrants are engaged in the retail sector, they are vulnerable to robberies, break-ins and looting. The targeting of the Chinese is exacerbated by rumors that they keep large quantities of cash on their persons, in their shops and in their homes. This sort of stereotyping puts all the Chinese (and those who appear to be Chinese) in danger. Such was evidenced in the tragic tale of Alan Ho, a 77-year-old Chinese South African shopkeeper who was found dead, bound and gagged, in his shop in Johannesburg. Police hypothesized that he had been tortured because the criminals believed he was hiding money somewhere in his shop.[15] While Chineseness and links to "rising China" might be used strategically to get ahead in business, they can sometimes also be used against people as racialized stereotypes, perpetuating myths of wealth and hordes of cash.

Conclusion: Becoming South African or Using Chineseness to Get Ahead?

Even as South Africa is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse, particularly with increasing in-migration since the end of apartheid, definitions of South Africanness appear to be narrowing. South Africanness is, in some discourses, increasingly equated with blackness.[16] However, as indicated by the continued if sporadic outbursts of xenophobic violence targeting black

Africans, not all blacks are viewed as South African. Ethnic minorities, specifically members of the colored, Indian, and Chinese South African communities, complain that they are increasingly being excluded, and the common refrain heard across these communities is that before "we weren't white enough," but now "we are not black enough." [17] Processes of inclusion and exclusion are uneven and, at times, contradictory. For example, it would appear that even with a predominantly black government, the white minority continues to benefit economically, while those defined as *amakwerekwere* (foreigners), especially the black African *amakwerekwere*, suffer the most vicious attacks.[18]

The negative responses to the Chinese South Africa affirmative action court case decision indicates that these shifting and narrowing social perceptions may ultimately determine the levels of acceptance of any ethnic minority or new migrant group. Perceptions of ethnic Chinese in South Africa are confused and ambiguous at best.[19] In the South African case, despite the protection afforded by citizenship, the constitution and other progressive legislation, all Chinese people in the country continue to occupy an ambiguous, marginal, in-between, and sometimes precarious position within South African society.

This may be changing. As the love affair between China and South Africa continues to grow, we have seen that ethnic Chinese in the country can (and often do) take advantage of certain relationships and privileges afforded to these most valuable economic partners. However, close identification with China also poses a potential danger. As several prominent scholars of overseas Chinese have noted in other countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, such (perceived) close ties with China have been used to single out and target ethnic Chinese (Purdey 2006, Reid 1999). Perhaps the best road for Chinese in South Africa to take, then, would be to become *luodi shenggen* (seeds that take root where they fall) (Wang 1998). Some Chinese migrants to South Africa have clearly taken this road, but it will likely take a much greater critical mass for it to make a difference in how Chinese are perceived in the country—as more South African than Chinese. Given the extent of social media use and the ease and relatively low cost of air travel, it would appear that many more Chinese have maintained their close ties with China. Chinese South Africans, too, are traveling to China and reconnecting with long-lost family. Still, conversations with both Chinese South Africans and long-time Chinese residents of South Africa indicate that they are home; South Africa, while sometimes uncomfortable and occasionally dangerous, is home.

Notes

1. Several of the Indian Ocean nations, including Mauritius, Reunion and Madagascar, also have multigenerational as well as newer ethnic Chinese communities. Note that "communities" is used very loosely because these three groupings have more differences within than between them.
2. From 1995 to 2010 I was resident in South Africa, allowing for regular interaction with the various communities of Chinese.
3. The Chinese were the second "Asian" group to arrive in South Africa. The first were the more numerous Indians. The Indian population had arrived in South Africa both as indentured laborers and as free migrants a decade or more earlier. The various governing bodies of the time referred to them broadly as "Asiatics" and they formed the fourth major group in South Africa's racial classification system after the black/"Bantu", white/European, and "colored" (or mixed-race) groups. It should also be remembered that the Chinese were among those who set up the first permanent (Western) settlement in the Cape of Good Hope with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in 1652. These earlier Chinese were few. Some eventually returned to their homes, while others perished in the Cape. Those who stayed on were too few to establish a lasting Chinese community and instead became part of a growing mixed-race (now colored) community.
4. These laws were passed in response to two separate issues. The first was the long-term settlement of indentured Indian workers who, freed from their periods of indenture and part of the British Empire, were given land and had begun to compete with the white petit bourgeoisie. The first set of anti-Asian laws was designed to restrict their mobility, residence and occupations. The second was the proposal to import indentured Chinese to work in the gold mines of the Transvaal. Extremely controversial, the idea that thousands of pigtailed "Mandarins" might roam the streets or might eventually gain their independence to also compete with white business owners caused fear among segments of the white population. As a result, the importation of nearly 65,000 Chinese miners took place under the strictest conditions and was curtailed within a few years. Both the Transvaal and the Cape colonies also passed the laws mentioned here to restrict or entirely prevent the immigration of the Chinese.
5. Hart explains that, at the same time, large numbers of small-scale industrialists in Taiwan came under enormous pressure to leave the country owing 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 (Hart 2003: 2).
6. A quick internet search for "corruption in home affairs-South Africa" resulted in more than 8 million hits. This is a well-known problem.

7. Recent research conducted on Chinese migrants in Namibia and Lesotho revealed similar classes of migrant throughout these neighboring countries as well (see Dobler 2009; Hanisch 2013).
8. The older generation of Chinese South African shopkeepers depended for their livelihood on their black and coloured customers. However, with each passing decade, fewer and fewer Chinese remained in the shops as ever-larger numbers completed tertiary degrees and became professionals.
9. Headlines such as this could be seen on media platforms around the globe. See, for example, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7461099.stm, accessed August 3, 2016.
10. To be fair, this is the case throughout Africa, that anyone from East Asia is identified as Chinese. Increasingly, too, whites are also identified as the Chinese, indicating that at least in some parts of Africa, the Chinese have become the most significant and most familiar face of the "other."
11. Many recent articles attest to these concerns See, for example, http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/china-and-the-us-compete-for-influence-in-africa/ and http://tribune.com.pk/story/428026/chinas-growing-influence-in-africa/, both accessed on August 3, 2016. The Western media, in particular, seems concerned about "competition" between China and the USA, or China and Europe, as they vie for influence in Africa.
12. See http://mg.co.za/article/2014-10-02-zuma-accused-of-selling-sas-sovereignty-to-china and http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2015/12/04/how-to-read-the-tea-leaves-grown-and-brewed-in-china, both accessed August 3, 2016.
13. See http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CCS_Commentary_Dalai_Lama_RA_2014.pdf for one of many analyses and comment, accessed August 3, 2016.
14. Regarding Chinese investment, see http://www.scmp.com/business/china-business/article/1512517/winery-factories-chinese-firms-investing-billions-south, accessed August 3, 2016.
15. Ufrieda Ho, http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-23-allan-hos-death-stirs-hope-out-of-tragedy
16. This is not "black" in the Steve Biko, political and broad definition of "blackness" as inclusive of all those who fought against white rule but rather a narrow view of South African "blackness", which will be elaborated in this chapter.
17. For examples of exclusion, see Lewis (1987), James et al. (1996), Adhikari (2005) and Wicomb (1998).
18. A. Botha, "Could Affirmative Action Be Helping White People?" thought leader, *Mail & Guardian*, March 24, 2011.

19. I use the term "ethnic Chinese" here and in various places throughout this chapter as an inclusive term for all three communities of the Chinese in South Africa: Chinese South Africans, Taiwanese South Africans and the newer Chinese migrants from mainland China.

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