‘Belonging in Britain: The second generation Chinese in Britain’

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Introduction

ABSTRACT: Questions about ‘belonging’ are now of central concern for the British born Chinese (BBCs) who constitute the ‘second generation’ in Britain. The Chinese have been regarded as being rather separate from both the White Britons and the ‘Black’ (African Caribbean and South Asian) minority populations. What does the emergence of the British born Chinese, then, presage for their ‘integration’ into Britain in the 21st century? How should we characterize their place in Britain? Is their entrance into higher education and the wider labor market evidence of their entrance into mainstream British life and society? I do not think so. In this chapter, I discuss the ambiguous status and position of the Chinese in Britain, with a focus on second generation British born Chinese, and their sense of belonging (or not) in Britain.

In comparison with the second generation Chinese, concerns about ‘belonging’ were not of central concern (at least in the same ways) for their immigrant parents, most of whom immigrated from the New Territories of Hong Kong, with limited English language skills, and in some cases, limited educational backgrounds. The Chinese provide an interesting case study concerning ‘belonging’, because, as the third largest non-White minority group in Britain, they are a rather ‘invisible’ minority, especially in comparison with the more visible and publicly present second generation Britons of South Asian and African Caribbean heritage.[1]

Concerns about ‘integrating’ immigrants, asylum seekers, and more settled minority groups in Britain is prominent on the British national agenda, as illustrated by the Labour government’s concerns about ‘social inclusion’ and the current debate about the possibility of introducing identity cards and citizenship tests. In December 2001, the British Home Secretary, David Blunkett, made a major announcement, urging ethnic minorities in Britain to integrate and ‘to develop a greater sense of belonging in Britain’. It is suggested that with the rights of citizenship come the obligations to fit into the wider society. Another implication of this announcement is that minority peoples’ rights to difference are, in practice, limited by societal expectations of what kinds of behaviors and allegiances are normatively acceptable in mainstream Britain.

Britain now comprises a sizeable population of ‘second generation’ minority people in Britain, and there is ongoing debate about the viability and desirability of ‘integration’ by minority individuals and groups themselves. Assertions of ‘difference’ and distinctive ethnic identities are not straightforwardly in decline in multiethnic societies such as Britain (Song 2003). In the U.S., classical assimilation theorists, such as Gordon (1964), assumed that immigrants’ offspring would gradually

[1] Ching Lin Pang (2003) also observes that the Chinese are socially and politically ‘invisible’ as a minority group in Belgium.

assimilate into the dominant society and culture, with the inevitable loss of their parents' and grandparents' ethnicities and cultural practices. However, racialized immigrant groups and their children have not been able to assimilate as easily as White European immigrants of an earlier era. There appears to be growing evidence in both the U.S. and Britain that it is possible to retain both a minority ethnic identity *and* to be significantly acculturated into these societies. Furthermore, ethnic minority individuals and groups increasingly refuse to abide by the meanings, discourses, and stereotypes which are foisted upon them by the wider society (Cornell & Hartmann 1998).

One theory about the possible forms of adaptation for non-White immigrants which has been influential both inside and outside the USA is that of 'segmented assimilation'. While the theory of segmented assimilation is based on the American racial landscape, it is also helpful in analyzing the experiences of the Chinese in Britain. According to Portes and Zhou (1993), three possible forms of adaptation exist for immigrants: incorporation into the White middle-class mainstream, incorporation into a minority underclass and poverty, or a delayed or selective assimilation characterized by 'rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity' (p. 82). Portes and Zhou also argue that the strategy of delayed or selective assimilation can provide them with key forms of 'social capital', including job networks and access to loans through ties with coethnics. Embeddedness in the immigrant community is also said to shield immigrants from forms of racial prejudice in the wider society, by providing a positive frame of reference and coethnic identity which can provide support and a positive outlook on the difficult process of immigrant adaptation.

Generally speaking, many Chinese peoples' concentration in the ethnic food economy has been beneficial to the Chinese, at least in terms of economic mobility – though some family businesses have failed or produced relatively low incomes (Song 1999). The first generation Chinese have neither assimilated into the White British mainstream, nor become assimilated into a minority underclass. Their path of immigrant adaptation appears to most closely resemble the third path of delayed or selective assimilation.

However, one of the most interesting aspects of theorizing on delayed or selective assimilation is the question of agency and the presumption that this is a deliberate strategy employed by non-White immigrants themselves. As I will discuss below, while some immigrant groups, including the first generation Chinese in Britain, have concentrated their efforts in the ethnic Chinese food sector (largely out of necessity), it may not be possible for second generation Chinese to automatically enter the mainstream or to control, selectively, the ways in which they enter it. Nor can we presume that BBCs wish to 'enter the mainstream' in any straightforward, unambivalent sense. What is still open to question is the path to be followed by second generation British born Chinese.

The mixed experiences of the Chinese in Britain

The Chinese presence in Britain today dates from the late 18th century, at a time when Britain's imperial expansion included East Asia (Parker 1998b).[2] Most of the foreign born Chinese came from the New Territories of Hong Kong, followed by smaller numbers from Malaysia, Singapore, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Of a total population of 58 million Britons (of which 54 million are White), 247,403 are of Chinese heritage (Office of National Statistics 2001). More than 53% of the Chinese live in Southeast England, but they are also the most widely dispersed minority group in Britain (Owen 1994). As the third largest minority, they are significantly smaller in number than African Caribbean and Black African Britons (1,148,738 – 2% of the population) and South Asian Britons (2,048,643 -- 4%) (Office of National Statistics 2001).

(Class and socioeconomic indicators)
According to various socioeconomic indicators, the Chinese are a relatively successful group, both in relation to the White majority and other non-White minorities such as African Caribbeans and Muslim South Asians. Generally speaking, British minority groups can be separated into two groups: African Caribbeans (especially male), Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis have lower than average qualification levels than White Britons, while Indian, African Asian, Chinese, and Black Africans possess higher qualifications (A-levels and above) than White Britons (Modood et al. 1997). Chinese people are more likely to stay in full-time education after the age of 16 (school leaving age in Britain) than White people, and to stay in full-time education for longer than White people (Owen 1994). The percentage of Chinese people (25.4%) aged 18 and over with higher educational qualifications is about twice as high as for White people (13.4%) (Owen 1994; see also Cheng 1994). However, the Chinese who attain higher education, especially men, tend to be heavily concentrated in science and engineering (Parker 1998b:81).

The official rates of unemployment for the Chinese are similar to those for White Britons (Chinese men 10.5%, Chinese women 8.3%, compared with White men 10.7%, White women 6.3% -- see Owen 1994) but lower than those of South Asians or African Caribbeans (Modood et al. 1997). The average earnings of Chinese families are also higher than for any other group, including White Britons (ibid).

While there is evidence that Chinese people, as a whole, are doing well in terms of educational attainment, and low unemployment rates, these important indicators tend to obscure some of the less than rosy underside to being Chinese in Britain. For instance, the Chinese are doing well in terms of educational attainment, but, as in the case of other ethnic minority groups, highly qualified Chinese people experience higher unemployment rates than White people with similar qualifications (Owen 1994).

And although many of the Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong are self-employed business owners, their business ownership obscures the grinding and unglamorous reality of running a family-based Chinese take-away food business or restaurant from day to day – not to mention the preceding years of hard work in the Chinese catering industry, in order to finance the opening of a small business (see Song 1999; Chung 1990). Indeed data from the 1991 British Census found that Chinese people work

[2] For the history of the Chinese in Britain, see Ng (1968), Watson (1975; 1977), Jones (1979), Shang (1984), and Wong (1989) among others.

longer hours per week than either White or other minority Britons (Owen 1994). Rather than necessarily being a sign of success, their high rate of self-employment is indicative of the fact that many first generation Chinese people have had limited labor market opportunities and have been absorbed into their family-based restaurants and take-aways (Song 1999). Because we still have relatively little data on the Chinese second generation, some of whom are still teenagers or young adults, we do not have all of the labor market outcomes which would provide a clearer picture of how they are faring. Nor do we know if their investments in higher education are paying off in terms of their desired careers, incomes, and home ownership rates.

Despite the relative success of the Chinese, according to national data on incomes, unemployment, and higher education, I do not think that we can presume that the Chinese are necessarily privileged or 'integrated' in Britain. In fact, their overall experience in Britain is neither wholly positive, nor negative, but rather mixed – as is the case with most other minority groups. As I'll argue below, we need to broaden our understanding and conceptualization of 'integration' and 'social exclusion' in order to discern some of the overlooked aspects of Chinese disadvantage and social exclusion in Britain. In doing so, I explore the some of the unfounded assumptions about minority groups' ability to become full citizens and participants of the wider society.

Broadening our understanding of 'integration' and 'social exclusion'

Despite the relatively widespread belief that the Chinese are a successful group who suffer little or no racism, the British government and policymakers have recognized the specific ways in which the Chinese in Britain suffer 'social exclusion', which stems from their concentration in intensive, family-run Chinese take-aways and restaurants which are dispersed throughout Britain. In 1985, The Home Affairs Committee Report on the Chinese highlighted some of the social problems and difficulties of Chinese catering work, including the extremely anti-social hours associated with running Chinese restaurants and take-aways, and the sequestered and isolated lives of the parents and elderly relatives in these families, especially since many of them are unable to speak much English. Associated with this arduous lifestyle and English language barriers are the risks of mental illness, depression, and poor health more generally. Without reasonable fluency in English, the Chinese are obviously unable to access resources, whether it be medical care from a GP or various forms of advice or redress which are available to the wider public.

While the HAC report was important in highlighting the specific needs of the Chinese 'community' in Britain, its framing of Chinese social exclusion was too narrow, and today its findings are mostly pertinent to immigrant parents, and much less so to British-born Chinese – many of whom have entered into higher education, in the hopes of leaving catering behind. [3] Nevertheless, another aspect of the report concerned the ways in which the Chinese could integrate into Chinese society without compromising their distinctive ethnicity and cultural heritage. This report captured the views of some Chinese witnesses, who spoke of 'the need to become a full part of British society without abandoning their own culture and language as the basic

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[3] Successive British governments in the last few decades have also tended to view immigrant entrepreneurship, which they have encouraged, as evidence of immigrant.

problem facing their community' (HAC 1985, quoted in Chan 1999:2). This latter concern is clearly still of relevance to British born Chinese today.

As discussed in the previous section, the fact that the Chinese are doing well on socioeconomic indicators such as low unemployment rates, earned incomes, and high educational attainment, does not preclude the possiblity that the Chinese are 'socially excluded' and disadvantaged in particular ways. Social inclusion or 'integration' can be achieved, to some extent, through the workings of the market (and in the case of the Chinese, this has meant through small businesses in catering), but there are real limits, not to mention some potential difficulties, which result from their concentration in a racialized small business sector (Chau & Yu 2001). As important as material resources are for overall well being, this does not, in of itself, guarantee a group's ability to participate fully in society (Dahrendorf 1994).

The recent interest in the idea of 'social exclusion' has resulted in analysts paying attention to 'relational issues' in addition to 'distributional issues' (Chau & Yu 2001). 'Integration' involves more than having a good job and access to higher education, as valuable as these evidently are. 'Becoming a full part of British society' (to quote from the Home Affairs Committee Report in 1985) entails more than the formal rights accorded by British citizenship, and we must not overlook other areas of social experience which truly give meaning to the ideal of 'becoming a full part of British society' and hopes of 'belonging' in the wider society. The Chinese are still socially excluded in the sense that they are very much at the margins of British society.There is hardly any Chinese participation in political parties in Britain (Chan 1999; Chau & Yu 2001) – though there is evidence of regional community and political initiatives and organizations, such as the Tower Hamlets Chinese Youth Project and the Chinese Information and Advice Centre in London, which has been invaluable in providing advice on immigration and supporting victims of domestic violence (Parker 1998b).

The Chinese have virtually no public presence in the arts or popular culture of Britain. In the realm of popular culture, while contemporary Hong Kong culture is heavily consumed by today's BBCs, no analysts of 'new ethnicities' in Britain, other than David Parker, has paid any attention to how the Chinese fit into second generation diasporic cultural identities in Britain. According to Parker (1995:153): 'Unlike Bhangra, rap or reggae, Hong Kong popular music is not asserting a diasporean identity on behalf of a minority community in an English-speaking society. The English language plays only a miniscule part in the lyrics. The content of Hong Kong lyrics has few elements of explicit political comment or resistance within it' – in comparison with the often explicitly political messages found in African Caribbean and South Asian British music.

While there is a Chinese language daily newspaper, *Sing Tao,* as well as *Siyu*, a monthly bilingual paper based in Manchester, there is still relatively little 'home grown' Chinese media and popular culture in Britain. Rather, many BBCs and their immigrant parents look to Hong Kong or China. British Chinese can enjoy Chinese cable and satellite channels, and a common late night activity for many families running take-away businesses is to watch videos of Hong Kong and Chinese films.

Unlike their second generation African Caribbean and South Asian counterparts, for whom specific forms of ethnic popular culture are now parts of mainstream British

culture and society, British-born Chinese (BBCs) are a much less visible presence in society and in popular culture. Interestingly, the evidence of anti-Asian and anti-Muslim sentiment and prejudice in Britain, especially post-9/11, has actually helped to mobilize second generation Asian people as an oppositional force, both socially and politically, who are claiming a stake in British society. The very fact that the Chinese are typically depicted as unproblematic and hardworking has actually contributed to the suppression of their public identity and presence in Britain. The essentialist portrayal of Chinese people in Britain (and elsewhere) as respecting authority and hierarchy and anxious to avoid conflict has reinforced not only the expectation that they act as purveyors of 'Chinese' food (Song 1999), but also the expectation that they remain a quiescent (non)presence.

Nor is the Chinese 'community' a cohesive one, at least on a national scale. There are cities such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Cardiff, where there are 'Chinatowns' and significant populations of Chinese people. Because immigrant parents setting up family-run take-away businesses needed to secure a patch where they were ensured a healthy clientele, many families settled in far-flung places, including suburban and even village settings, where there were often few Chinese or other minorities present. The Chinese in Britain – unlike the Chinese in New York City, or San Francisco, or other major metropolitan areas in the USA -- are the most geographically dispersed minority group in Britain. Their spatial dispersal therefore limits their access to all of the benefits which can accrue from the kinds of tightly knit ethnic enclaves in which immigrant groups selectively delay assimilation, as described by Portes and Zhou (1993). Related to this, there is a real question about the extent to which existing Chinese immigrant networks help to shield first generation Chinese from racial prejudice in the wider society. Because the first generation Chinese have concentrated so significantly in the Chinese restaurant and take-away food sectors, many of their customers are White Britons in often predominantly White regions, resulting in various kinds of racialized encounters in 'the shop' (see Chung 1990; Parker 1994; Song 1999).

Where do the British born Chinese 'belong'?

Chinese young peoples' significant dispersal and location in suburban areas appears to have had a major impact on their sense of cohesion as BBCs – not to mention their sense of cohesion and commonality with other second generation minority young people, as some Chinese may have had limited contact with other minority people. And when we consider issues of 'belonging' and integration, there is some evidence that BBCs are not invested in a national sense of Britishness -- though they may embrace more regional and localized senses of belonging, such as Liverpudlian, Glaswegian, or Geordie, in addition to being Chinese (Parker 1995).

The diversity of transnational experiences

Chinese peoples' sense of 'belonging' and identity are also shaped and complicated by migrations and transnational ties. For example, it is not unusual to be 'twice migrants' to Britain, such as the people who immigrated from India to East Africa, then from East Africa to Britain (Bhachu 1985), or those who immigrated from India to the Caribbean, and then to Britain (Vertovec 1994). Given the complicated trajectories of many ethnic minorities, in terms of moving from one place to another, one's ethnic

identity and affiliations need not be bounded territorially to one's birthplace in Britain, Pakistan, Tanzania, or Hong Kong.

Thus the conceptualization of transnational identity requires the de-coupling of cultural identity with national identity. In the context of globalization, immigrants and their children today are much more *able* to maintain a variety of transnational ties with their 'homelands'. In addition to the availability of many forms of ethnic media, second generation children can be sent to their ancestral homes and relatives for summer holidays in order to help them learn the culture and language 'back home' (Min 1999; Louie 2002).

In his study of Chinese young people in Britain, David Parker (1995) found that less than half of his sample saw their future in Britain. According to Parker, several hundred BBCs have moved to Hong Kong, citing more attachments and interest in Hong Kong than in Britain (Parker 1998a).[4] One respondent, Lily, had this to say: 'I can't see England having a lot to offer me. I see Hong Kong as being a land of more opportunities but I don't know if I could fit in. It scares me. The day I decide to go over there I would have decided that England isn't for me. Hong Kong has to be the place' (quoted in Parker 1998b:89). Song (1999) too found that some BBCs, such as David (who worked as a computer analyst), said that he planned on going to Hong Kong to live and work: 'I have some friends who have gone, and they're telling me to come along as well. Besides, Britain is kind of boring and slow, in comparison with Hong Kong, where it's all very fast paced'. While a more comprehensive study to document the actual rate of BBCs 'return' (and transition) to Hong Kong is needed, the belief that they do not fully 'belong' in Britain is in of itself very significant. By comparison, while second generation Asian Americans in the USA still encounter xenophobic hostility and racism, most Asian Americans consider the USA to be their homes (see Tuan 1998; Kibria 2002).

Why do some BBCs 'return' to Hong Kong? British Chinese young people with degrees in British universities and British passports are well placed to find jobs in Hong Kong. While economic opportunities are clearly a significant consideration for BBCs who are thinking of going to Hong Kong, this alone is only part of the explanation. A more potent explanation may be that, in addition to the very real perception and possibility that their jobs and advancement may be blocked by their being Chinese in Britain, they are seeking social inclusion – not just a good job, but the desire to 'belong' in Hong Kong, which some idealize as being more attractive and fulfilling than staying in Britain – even though these BBCs would not seamlessly 'belong' in HK either, and are likely to hang out with other 'expat' British or American Chinese, rather than 'native' HK Chinese. In this way, BBCs who 'return' to Hong Kong appear to be seeking an imagined and/or real affinity with it (Ang 2001).

However, it is not possible to generalize about the transnational ties and experiences of disparate minority groups; nor can we assume a homogeneous experience within a

[4] This is interesting, because there is no real comparison with other second generation groups in Britain 'going back' to the Caribbean or to the Indian subcontinent, other than for visits to relatives or to find out more about their cultural heritage. One reason for this difference may be that both the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean islands are still less developed than Hong Kong, within the global economy.

group (such as British born Chinese), without reference to individuals' specific settlement histories and class locations. For instance, although there is some evidence of Chinese American interest in exploring their Chinese heritage (see Louie 2002), in another large study of second generation groups in New York City, the Chinese, who are often attributed an enduring notion of Chineseness by the wider society, exhibited low levels of transnational practice, as indicated by the possession of language skills, the amount of contact with their parents' national origin country, interest in parental home countries, and the sending of remittances 'back home' (Kasinitz et al. 2002). By comparison, second generation Dominicans and South Americans (Ecuadoreans, Peruvians, Columbians) manifested the highest levels of transnational practices in New York City. Many questions about the nature, depth, and experiences of such diasporic ties still remain (Levitt & Waters 2002).

The Chinese are not 'Black' in Britain

Another important issue which shapes BBCs' 'place' in British society concerns their relationship to and perceived similarities (and differences) with other second generation groups such as South Asians and African Caribbeans. Because the Chinese have been relatively successful in socioeconomic terms, and because it is widely believed that the Chinese are not a racially targeted group, they have not been seen as 'Black' -- a term applied primarily to African Caribbean and South Asian Britons, which connotes a disadvantaged but politicized status and identity.[5]

The term Black was widely used throughout the 1970s and 80s in reference to people of African, Caribbean, and South Asian origins in Britain, and its usage was intended to convey a sense of common interest and ethnic mobilization based upon the politics of anti-colonialsim and anti-racism.[6] African Caribbean and Asian groups worked together in major campaigns against fascist violence, immigration controls, police harrassment, and racism in employment and trade unions (Solomos 1993; Brah 1996:106).

A further reason why the Chinese have not been included in the category 'Black' is that they have not been a significant oppositional minority presence in British society, as have South Asians and African Caribbeans. The Chinese have not entered into a significant dialogue with the wider British public, and have not presented themselves as an oppositional presence which is concerned with fighting racism, and achieving fuller participation in society on their own terms. So while there is growing evidence of an assertive 'public' ethnicity by many second generation Britons (Modood 1996), this assertiveness and public presence is by no means equal across groups.

In recent years there has been increased attention to the diversity of experiences of ethnicity and 'race' among minority groups in Britain. For one thing, the composition of both the African Caribbean and South Asian populations in Britain has changed considerably in the last few decades. There is now some evidence of diverse outcomes for ethnic minorities in higher education and in the British labor market, and some analysts argue that generalized arguments about the racial barriers in employment

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[5] In the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, only 1 of the 118 Chinese people surveyed on this question said that they considered themselves to be Black (Modood et al. 1997:295).

[6] This broad understanding of the category Black is in stark contrast with how Black is conceived of in the USA, where Black refers specifically to the experiences of people of African origin.

faced by all ethnic minorities are now untenable (see Iganski & Payne 1996). As such, there has been growing debate about the legitimacy of the collective term ‘Black’. Analysts such as Tariq Modood (1994; 1996) have argued that the term ‘Black’ can obscure the particular forms of racial oppression suffered by South Asian, and in particular, working class Muslim Asians, in Britain.[7] The recognition of the diversification of minority experience has also helped to highlight the particular circumstances and experiences of the British born Chinese.

Conclusion

While British scholarship has begun to investigate White-Black interethnic friendships and alliances (see Hewitt 1986; Back 1995; Modood et al. 1997), relatively little is actually known about how BBCs interact with White or other second generation minority Britons. We still know very little about the extent to which BBCs form friendships in schools, date, or marry other Britons – all of which can be seen as indicators of ‘social inclusion’.

The high levels of White-Black (African Caribbean) partnering (and friendships) in Britain suggests that there is a deep ‘mix’ of White and Black people and cultures in Britain, and this ‘mixing’ has been understood as a form of inclusion in the wider, predominantly White society (see Modood et al. 1996). Interestingly, in the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, Modood et al. (1997) found that 15% of children with Chinese heritage also had one White parent – in comparison with 39% of African Caribbean children, 3% of Indian/African Asian children, and only 1% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi children (p.31). Thus the findings of this survey suggest the very real possibility of growing rates of intermarriage for Chinese people with White Britons -- raising questions about inclusion and the distinctiveness of Chinese ethnic boundaries and ethnicity in the future.

Yet growing rates of intermarriage should be interpreted with caution, as this alone does not necessarily signal ‘social inclusion’ and fuller participation in British society. In the case of Black Britons, a ‘deep mix’ does not preclude racial abuse or the relatively high rates of unemployment they suffer. Similarly, increased intermarriage with White Britons would not necessarily mean that the Chinese would no longer encounter racial prejudice or that they would be able to enjoy full social acceptance. Thus we need to examine the specific ways in which minority groups such as African Caribbeans, Asians, and Chinese, can be both *simultaneously* ‘integrated’ and ‘socially excluded’ in particular ways, depending upon the specific dimension of experience (Song 2003).

The second generation Chinese, many of whom are leaving the catering trade, will no longer encounter the same sets of difficulties or concerns as their immigrant parents, since many of these difficulties are specific to their intensive work-family lifestyles in the take-away and restaurant trades. Furthermore, for most BBCs, English, not

[7] In addition to socioeconomic differences, a key basis of division among Asians in Britain is their religion, particularly between Muslims (predominantly Bangladeshis and Pakistanis) on the one hand and Hindus and Sikhs on the other hand -- an issue which has gained prominence in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and the predominantly negative depictions of Muslims.

Cantonese or Hakka, will be their first language, and they will face fewer, if any, language barriers in the wider society. Certainly the spatial dispersal which was largely dictated by the economic competitiveness of family-run take-aways and restaurants will abate in the future, so that more second generation Chinese are likely to concentrate in particular metropolitan areas than before; this alone could encourage a new consciousness of what it means to be British Chinese, both in relation to the White majority, and also in relation to other British minority groups. And despite some evidence that BBCs may feel excluded from the term 'British', British –born Chinese are also more likely, than their immigrant parents, to be more emotionally invested in 'belonging' in Britain.

Now that second generation BBCs are leaving the take-away and restaurant trade, in favor of more mainstream forms of professional employment, they will literally be more present in the wider public, hopefully in a variety of capacities – thus transcending their circumscribed interactions with their customers in Chinese food businesses. In doing so, their collective and political consciousness may be enhanced by the forms of racism which they will continue to encounter, though it may be outside of the prescribed realm of the Chinese take-away.

While the evidence is still inchoate, a mixed picture is emerging. It appears that the second generation Chinese are trying to 'enter the mainstream', at least in terms of their entry into higher education. At the same time, there is also evidence of a social disaffection with Britain, at least for a significant proportion of British born Chinese. In addition to the continuing fascination with Hong Kong, some BBCs may aim to retain a separate Chinese social space and identity, via predominantly Chinese social networks, which are facilitated by the growth of Chinese websites (Parker forthcoming). Thus for most BBCs, despite the evidence of their successful entry into higher education, 'belonging' in Britain will be partial and ambivalent, and they are beginning to carve out their own meanings of what it means to be Chinese in Britain.

In the future, studies addressing racial inequalities within and across groups therefore need to pay more attention to the varied manifestations of both social inclusion and exclusion, the emergence of complex interethnic relations, and the fact that it is increasingly common to possess a 'mixed' heritage – all of which attests to the growing racial and ethnic complexity of the British population (Parker & Song 2001).

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