‘Someone’s Knocking at the Door’: Chinese Immigrants’ Intercultural Interactions and Friendship Dilemmas

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Abstract

This article explores Canada’s hidden forms of discrimination and racism and suggests ways of building bridges for the successful integration of immigrant parents and their children. By highlighting some key lived experiences of a small sample of Chinese immigrants, the article identifies dilemmas encountered when forming and developing friendships with non-immigrants. By sharing parents’ and their children’s perspectives and suggestions, this article takes positive steps towards promoting intercultural communications, understanding, and respect in Canada for people labelled as ‘the others’.

***Keywords*:** Chinese immigrants, intercultural friendships, social exclusion, internalized discrimination, systemic discrimination

Introduction

Canadian society is linguistically, religiously, racially, ethnically, and culturally pluralistic. There is a myth, however, that due to Canada’s demographic diversity, ethnic exclusion is non-existent in the country. In reality, however, ethnic and cultural diversity, the result of international migration can create “tensions and divisions… [given that] immigrants are often cast as outsiders who are different from, and sometimes opposed to, Canadian values and traditions” (Li, 2003, p. 131).

This article is based on a small section of my doctoral research conducted in a western Canadian city (Feng, 2018). In 2017, I completed the ethnographic, case study which explored the visible and hidden barriers Chinese immigrants and their children encounter when interacting with, and developing friendships with non-immigrant peers. In the study, qualitative data collection methods included the following: (i) Conducted 57 face-to-face interviews with Chinese immigrant parents and their children (39 Chinese immigrant youths from four senior high schools in Calgary, and 18 parents were recruited to participate in my research (See Appendix 1). From May 2013 to December 2014, I posted an advertisement on Calgary’s Chinese and China Smile website and updated it to recruit students and their parents. The interviews conducted in their homes or my office, were 45 minutes or so, on average. (ii) Examination of relevant literature. (iii) Developed the critical autoethnography (Feng, 2018).

In conducting my research, I employed theoretical perspectives of postcolonial theories, critical pedagogy, and acculturation in order to contextualize the historical impacts of social inequalities, cultural hegemony, and linguistic dominance on the immigrant parents and their

children. My focus was to explore the lived experiences of some marginalized youths in schools and to capture snapshots of their parents' experiences in the workplace. This article concentrates more on the parent's experiences and to a lesser extent on the youth experiences.

I hope that my research will have positive ripple effects. Specifically, that similar research and implementation of positive practices and actions in the workplace and school will promote a different reality for racialized immigrants. I hope that one day, Calgary and Canada will "adjust to the relatively new Canadian demographic profile challenged by the presence of otherness" (Oxman-Martinez and Hanley, in Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012, p. 386). Furthermore, I hope that existing, man-made policies and practices which foster educational inequities, and hidden types of racialized discrimination will be eventually eliminated.

This article consists of three sections. The first section, weaves together the lived experiences of several participants within the context of selected information from the relevant literature. The second section highlights some participants' voices concerning internalized oppression. Once again, the discussion is situated within the context of the relevant literature. Due to severe constraints of time and length prescribed for my article, a comprehensive literature review is not presented in this article, but in my dissertation completed successfully in 2018. Section three summarizes the conclusions.

Chinese Immigrant Parents' Experiences of Exclusion and Cross-Cultural Interactions

Intercultural friendship is a two-way process established only with concerted, deliberate and sustained endeavours on both sides. Thus, immigrants need to learn about the new workplace cultures and adapt to them. At the same time, the local people should try to understand that immigrants are going through many major types of cultural, social and economic adaptations as well as significant changes in their lives. Unfortunately, if one side views the other side with prejudice and negativity, it is highly unlikely that a meaningful, intercultural friendship between the two parties, can be created and developed. As Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) explain, prejudice:

> informs how we view others, it necessarily informs how we act toward others. This action may be subtle—as subtle as avoidance and disinterest. But this lack of interest is not accidental or benign; it is socialized and results in not developing relationships. (p. 34)

I suggest that without inclusive, constructive responses, and mutual understanding when interacting with local residents, immigrants are likely to encounter exclusionary practices in the workplace, communities and larger society (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). More than half of participants in my study, indicated that they experienced discrimination which may be due to contempt, infringement of benefits, implicit expectations, or even competing views because of significant differences in cultures, histories or ideologies.

John (pseudonyms are used for all research participants quoted in this article), a parent and research participant, for example, shared a troubling experience of being treated unfairly when he first arrived in Calgary:

> When I had just moved to Calgary from China, I went to an auto repair shop. There I was told to go home because I did not make an appointment. Then, I called in to make an appointment when I got home. After that, I came to the shop again. I arrived there right on the clock of my appointment. Nevertheless, I was told to wait for some time.

> A white customer, who arrived a few minutes later after me, beat me to it immediately upon his arrival. So I inquired about this unfair treatment. However, the manager did not provide any explanations. He simply said, "You can do whatever you like" in an irritable manner. (John, interview, June 16, 2014)

A scholar, Orelus (2011), offers a succinct explanation of the reasons underpinning John's negative interactions with the garage manager, who is a member of the dominant culture: "From the other world to this world, …many have confronted the hideous and ugly teeth of monsters, such as white supremacy and individual racism" (p. 108). Sensoy & DiAngelo, two additional, and highly, respected scholars go even further to suggest that: "A key aspect to challenging our prejudices is challenging the social segregation that is built into the culture" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 35). I concur with the three scholars, and suggest that the need to develop ways of breaking through the icebergs of prejudice, stereotypes and negative ideologies concerning 'others' is essential. The rest of this section of the article, presents additional examples of negative experiences of Chinese immigrants in my study.

Common practices of being ignored and treated unfairly are identified by two parent participants. For example, Maria described the following incident in which she was ignored:

> During my son's parent–teacher interview, we were told to make appointments with the teachers ahead of time through the online system. I arrived at the scheduled time, and the parents in the library classroom had not finished talking [with the teacher]. Eventually, they walked out of the classroom while they continued talking. The teacher saw me waiting and nodded to me as to notify that he had noticed my presence. I stood there quietly a distance away from them. They were not preparing for saying good-bye but continued chatting.
>
> I was worried about the time as I had another interview following shortly after this scheduled one. Finally, they finished talking. What impressed me most is that another white couple popped up and immediately initiated a conversation with the teacher without lining up. It was rather disappointing because the teacher should know I was waiting for him. However, the teacher ignored me, and they started an interview in front of me. (Maria, interview, May 20, 2014)

Qiong, another parent participant, shared a few unpleasant experiences of being treated rudely:

> I have an unpleasant experience with a white female high school teacher. She is my classmate when I was taking a course for a master's degree. One day our instructor asked us to do a group discussion on a topic. After the discussion was over, I said, "Thank you for your presentation." She said, "Sarcastic." In fact, I did not really mind her dominating role in group discussions and tried my best to clarify her misunderstanding.
>
> However, the worst thing was that after the class was over, I asked another student about an English idiom our teacher mentioned, and said English is my second language in which I had poor listening. She jumped in our talk, cursing, "Are you deaf?" When another Asian boy explained that was not a listening problem but listening in a second language, she said, "I am teasing."

> At the end of the semester, we had a class potluck. Only two of us are ready to take food. It was my turn to take the food, while she was after me [in the line]. I would like to show my friendliness, so I asked her to take food first. What impressed me most is that she glanced at me with pride and priority, and got some food without showing any appreciation. It was a terrible and unexpected response. I realized that she was looking down upon me. It hurt me so much. I have no idea how to forget it. (Qiong, interview, April 6, 2014)

Here, we can see a picture of dominant intolerance in which the minority Chinese woman (Qiong) is belittled and teased. The question I have been grappling with is whether and how Canada's multicultural values matter in practice. For the professional Chinese immigrants who have lived and worked in China for a long time, and then migrated to Canada, they know well, that their customs, culture, work philosophy, and communication patterns are very different. It is likely that expected and unanticipated interactions, coupled with less effective cross-cultural communication skills, may cause cross-cultural misunderstandings between the Chinese immigrants and members of the dominant culture. Joe Kincheloe (2008) has identified, very concisely, patterns of dominance and subordination. He suggested the importance of white people learning to set aside their Eurocentric, imperialistic ways and to learn to listen to the others:

> Critical pedagogy is dedicated to resisting the harmful effects of dominant power. Advocates of critical pedagogy work to expose and to contest oppressive forms of power as expressed in socioeconomic class elitism, eurocentric ways of viewing the world, patriarchal oppression, and imperialism around the world. In this context, white people must learn to listen to non-whites' and indigenous people's criticism of them and of the cultural norms they have established and imposed on people of a lower socioeconomic class and non-European peoples at home and abroad. (p. 34)

Chinese people, for example, have developed significantly different behaviours, attitudes and values. Due to the influence of philosophers such as Confucius, they think that humility is a virtue. In contrast, many people in Western countries regard humility as lacking in confidence. If, for instance, the immigrant reported that his work was 'not good enough' to his/her Western employer, the employer might think that the immigrant lacks the capability to do the job well. In addition, customs, procedures and rules in Canadian and Chinese workplaces are significantly different. For instance, in China, in employment assessments, leaders ask the employees' detailed questions regarding their work accomplishments, schedules and working conditions in order to evaluate their job performance. Whereas in Canada, in some organizations, it is the employee who is expected to assess and report his/her work performance. Such differences, in assessment procedures, are likely to result in serious misunderstandings.

Maria pointed out some of the dilemmas, so well:

> It is really confusing for me that my leader or colleagues seldom ask me anything. Normally I would ask them some questions since I'm new in this company and am not familiar with a lot of things. …I don't know if it is an isolated or universal phenomenon? If it is universal that I should come to report my work to them every now and then instead of otherwise.
>
> When I was in China, I rarely came to talk to my leader, while they often talked to me. …So, my problem is, first, I don't have local working experience; second, I still

> don't know much about the local culture. For example, when I do something, it is not recognized until I report it to the leader. If there is no report [from me], the leader would not owe it to me, but to someone else who reports it gets the credit. …, no leaders have asked about my feelings or my work after working here several months. (Maria, interview, May 20, 2014)

Moreover, people may understand discrimination in dissimilar ways. Sensoy and DiAngelo's definition (2012) of discrimination is useful for this discussion: "action-based on prejudices toward social others" (p. 32). Because of the official presence of multiculturalism policies, much of the discrimination in Canada has become obscured, coded, and/or is very subtle. When discrimination is not blatant, however, fewer people believe that it occurs. Individuals facing discrimination will find comfort with others who share their experiences and who live discrimination daily. Some immigrant parents might share their experiences of discrimination and exclusion with their children. It is possible that such unhappy parental recollections of their experiences might subconsciously impede their offspring's abilities to make cross-cultural connections. Even further, it might exert negative influences on their children's perspectives, attitudes and behaviours towards members of the dominant culture. For instance, Matthew, a student participant commented: "My mother's boss is a person who likes to bully the Chinese employees, but my mother can't do anything about it, after all, he is my mother's boss. I feel uncomfortable [to hear] about it."

Maria, a mother who works for a small company explained the complexity of workplace interactions eloquently. She further highlights her frustrations when she interacts with her European-Canadian colleagues:

> Although I am willing to make friends with them, they may not treat me as a true friend. So it is a double-sided question involving the society, other people and yourself. This issue can't be resolved with the effort from only one side.
>
> Integration is not about only actions by one part, which is why I say they are not inclusive. They view you from their own perspectives: whether you are a threat to them or whether they like you, which [views] are very subjective. If they don't like you or think you are not up to their standards, you are excluded.
>
> Sometimes I speak English with my native-speaking colleagues… Even if my pronunciation is clear, certain colleagues sometimes deliberately say, "Are you speaking Chinese?" Or "I cannot understand what you are saying." That means that they then ignore you. (Maria, May 20, 2014)

There is a hidden assumption concerning the use of the concept culture when applied to the other. Cruz and Sonn (2011), for example, argue that: [When] "culture is simply used as a euphemism, a proxy signaling dimensions of social inequality and oppression by way of race, ethnicity and/or class" (Cruz & Sonn, 2011, p. 203). I think that it is challenging for immigrants to have faith that the Canadian society can include and accept their different ways of thinking and acting in the workplace, or begin to understand the Chinese culture.

In considerable detail, Maria explained the differences between Chinese and Canadian work habits, as follows:

> When I was seeking a job, the requirement was two years' working experience in Canada. I had worked in this career for 20 years in China, but I think they didn't accept that. Otherwise they would not have [the two year] requirement.
>
> Chinese are industrious and hard-working, which would sometimes be misinterpreted by others. My friend knows a person who used to keep his working habits in China and worked overtime when others were off duty. He didn't do it for money but to leave a good impression for his colleagues and leaders that he was working hard. But what he was doing made others suspicious of his ability. After that, he stopped working overtime because it was not the result he was expecting… (Maria, interview, May 20, 2014)

Zhiqiang another respondent, originally from Taiwan stated that:

> "…knowledge is the same, while ways of thinking are different in this culture. I agree with that. But some local residents are not so inclusive. In terms of the job, the results are the same but [completed] through different ways of thinking. It is rather rigid for them to deny these flexible ways.
>
> …I was working for a European company instead of a state-owned company for 10 years when I was in China. [Even with my relevant experiences in the foreign company] they still don't accept my way of working.
>
> I think it's a cultural shock for both sides. They are not that inclusive, because there are many ways to figure out some problems apart from their methods… (Zhiqiang, interview, March, 10, 2014)

Based on their work experiences in Calgary, the majority of parent participants consistently voiced comments regarding the locals' reluctance to accept the ways in which immigrants work and communicate. Cruz and Sonn's (2011) apt arguments are applicable to the immigrants' work experiences:

> From the relationship between self and others, how the cultures of "others" are typically treated as static and antiquated was central so as to reveal how understandings of self and others are produced through historically situated discourses, taken for granted knowledge and everyday practices within social and political contexts. (p. 207)

Some parent participants discussed a few more of their unpleasant experiences of being discriminated against. For example, Shan, a mother, recalled the following troubling incident when she was a volunteer:

> There was this experience that was extra impressive to me. At that time, I worked as a volunteer at an immigration agency. It was during a special event to show thanks to volunteers.
>
> There was an empty position at the reception desk, which I filled in because I thought no one was there so I can help the other volunteers out. After 20 minutes or so a young white girl, who was staff in the agency, suddenly rushed towards me with a hostile attitude.
>
> She demanded that it was her seat. Her face was red with eyes staring at me. I quickly removed myself from the chair, but I felt extremely uncomfortable from her rude demeanour.

> I apologized while it was never confirmed that it was her seat. Such a rude attitude made my self-esteem wear down. (Shan, July 6, 2014)

For several immigrant parents, experiences of exclusion and discrimination have led them to two extremes when advising their children about how to be successful in Canada. They recommend either associating only with Chinese friends, or fully immersing themselves in the Western culture in the hopes of fitting in and being accepted. In my study, the first-generation of immigrant parents, generally, experience more inequality and discrimination resulting in some psychological feelings of inferiority due to rejection. The parents' negative experiences and feelings, to some extent, affect their children's abilities and the likelihood of forming intercultural friendships. A number of immigrant parents would check on, interfere in, or restrict their children's social lives and put too much pressure on the children's academic development in order to avoid their offspring experiencing similar workplace discrimination and/or exclusion in the future. On the other hand, a few Chinese immigrant parents' experiences, with being excluded, in turn strengthened their desire for their children to integrate fully into the mainstream culture. Yingyong, for instance, stated:

> In fact, I am very clear on why the child has so many psychological problems, why his parents must take their children to the white church, why his parents must put their children in a white child dominated school, why they do not allow his children in a school with more immigrant cultures.
>
> They themselves created a cage for the child, while experiencing exclusion and marginalization from their more assimilated colleagues at their workplaces. This experience and comparison drove him to make more white friends and identify himself as Canadian in relation to his friends, such as "I must put my children in an environment with pure whites. I must let my child integrate into the mainstream society." "You must have white friends." (Yingyong, August 2, 2014)

In the course of acculturation, it is indispensable for local colleagues and employers to offer immigrants open-mindedness, patience, understanding, and training concerning the processes of gradually making changes in the workplace in order to support social integration and acculturation of minority ethnic groups. Given the dramatic changes in the world today, ethnic and cultural ideological lines may hamper the progress towards integration. Two-way interactions and understanding are effective means of intercultural friendship building. Such behaviors help locals and immigrants to practice thinking in another's shoes and prevent stereotypes, assumptions, and value judgements from influencing interactions and decision-making in the workplace.

Chinese Immigrants' Internalized Oppression

When immigrants depreciate or reject their own culture, it is a form of internalized oppression. According to Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012), such oppression is "internalizing and acting out (often unintentionally), the constant messages circulating in the culture that you and your group are inferior to the dominant group and that you are deserving of your lower position" (p. 186). Specifically, internalized oppression means self-inferiority and contempt for one's own culture and country. It means submission to unfair treatment, and/or evasion, denial and avoidance of one's culture or racialized group.

My research identified the following three distinct types of internalized oppression experienced by the Chinese immigrant parents and their children.

The first type applies mainly to second-generation Chinese immigrant youth. Many of them appear to be immersed in the Western culture and know very little, if anything, about China. Some of their parents are proud of their children abandoning the Chinese culture, in order to assimilate fully, and be accepted by members of the dominant culture. As one mother participant, Suzan, told me,

> …My colleague felt particularly proud of his son staying with local children, [for example] with the rich local family without any Chinese children friends. I think my colleague's child had great self-confidence and independent points of view, so he can get along with local peers because of these characteristics… If you always appear weak and always follow others, people will find you boring, no personality… But I don't think my colleague's child had a strong sense of national [Chinese] self-esteem. (Suzan, interview, October, 1, 2014)

Shan, another parent, reiterated this point:

> …Some second-generation youths dislike or distain their ethnic Chinese identity, feel bitter about being Chinese and not Canadian…they try to make assertions of being of the white culture. They deliberately alienate themselves from first-generation immigrant youth or other Chinese peers. (Shan, interview, July 6, 2014)

Internalized oppression causes immigrant youth to exhibit a lack of self-confidence and self-worth, due to cruel realities and social challenges encountered. For example, Cason, a student participant, echoed: "I really wish I were born here so that I would not have so much difference from them." Additionally, some student participants stated that they do not really want to be the high achieving academic students that their parents expect. This may be due to internalized oppression. Instead, they would prefer to be just like their local peers in order to fit in. If they excel academically, they think and feel that they are not accepted, are teased and bullied by their local peers.

The second type of internalized oppression is the sense of inferiority when the generation 1.5 immigrant youth and newcomer groups are treated unfairly due to stereotypes and prejudices, as well as, negative representations in the mainstream media and in public education. Newcomers who migrate after the age of 10 years old tend to be very sensitive to the differences in treatment between themselves and their local peers. These differences resulted in obvious or hidden obstacles to building intercultural friendships.

The study, to my surprise, unexpectedly indicated that the parents made the distinction between their lack of subjective Canadian citizenship despite being legal citizens. Some immigrants yearn to integrate into the society, but are always regarded as second-class citizens, which results in their frustration, shame, and a feeling of unworthiness. This kind of rejection can make the vulnerable immigrant population withdraw from trying to build intercultural friendships and return to focusing on their intracultural relationships.

A vast majority of Chinese immigrant parents develop a significant inferiority complex, feeling insecure about their survival in Canada because of painful encounters with members of

the dominant culture, and their sense of helplessness, despair, fear, worry, and frustration. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) explain that

> …when a person of color, consciously and subconsciously, accepts the negative representation or invisibility of people of color in media, education and all other aspects of society. Over time, the person comes to believe that (s)he is less valuable and may act this out through self-defeating behaviors and sometimes by distancing him/herself from others of his/her own or other non-white racial groups. (p. 113)

One father participant, Terry, made comments regarding his daughter's first experiences at school:

> My daughter just came here three months ago as an immigrant, and [she] participated in community centre activities and met her classmate. My daughter was very excited to greet her… and [was disappointed] when her classmate almost showed no expression. (Terry, interview, July 19, 2014)

Kitty, 16 years old, conveyed her experiences of being bullied and teased which she has attempted to downplay:

> A lot of times at school I think I suffer[ed] from slight bullying. There was a time at my old school where my name is quite weird. It is Kitty… because I'm an Asian, it's not even that English and Asian…I was not even a nerd or a teacher's pet. I was just small and my name was Kitty…there are a lot of things to pick on about me. So they would just pick on me, like they would push me, call me some names, but it wasn't something that I couldn't take… There was one day where he [a student] shut the door in my face and I got a really bad nose bleed. …it is difficult for me to participate in intercultural social activities (Kitty, interview, September 20, 2014)

The reasons for the formation of the psychological state of self-inferiority are quite complex. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) proposed that those in the vulnerable group believe that "dominant group members are deserving of their positions" (p. 50). A mother participant offered her perspective:

> Not belonging to the mainstream part of the society, Chinese immigrant parents have a sense of humility, so they choose tolerance and distance [themselves] when their children are bullied or excluded by local peers.
>
> They don't want to waste their time and make trouble to claim something. …Language barriers and great life pressures to meet essential life needs make them choose to remain silent when their children suffer from peer exclusion. (Lianna, interview, June 2, 2014)

The third type of internalized oppression regards resignation and acceptance of the status quo. It occurs in situations when, some Chinese immigrant parents and youth are bullied or excluded by local peers, their response is to make a greater effort to be accepted by their local counterparts. Those in the vulnerable group, for example,

> behave in ways of the model minority discourse that please the dominant group and do not challenge the legitimacy of its position [and] silently enduring micro-aggressions (everyday slights, insults, and insensitivities) from the dominant group in order to avoid penalty. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 50)

Due to reasons such as being harmed, treated unfairly, or shocked, some immigrants may begin to think everything in their motherland is inferior, including the lifestyle, systems, culture, or even ethnicity. One mother, Suzan, shared her son's responses to being bullied and further contrasted his behaviour with her own:

> After the child was bullied, he realized that he was Chinese and different from his peers. Take my son, for example. He first felt frustrated, and then he believed he could integrate into his peers or even make greater effort to make change and try harder to conquer them.
>
> He did not withdraw, but he might not find an appropriate way to integrate into his peers, so there was no good effect and it was not necessary. But in his deep heart, the bullying he suffered in his childhood stirred his desire to pursue the establishment of cross-cultural friendship.
>
> Perhaps because of my femininity or my character, if you ignore me once, I will never interact with you unless you are aware of your mistakes, and apologize for your behaviour, or I will not accept you. Otherwise, I will never interact with you if you ignore and exclude me.
>
> But my son has different reaction to the same kind of rejection. He believes that if you ignore me, I still want to communicate with you and try to show you I am an excellent boy. For example, he likes playing basketball with his high school local peers. He is the only one Asian basketball player. Some local peers do play basketball, very skillfully, while my son is not very capable despite his slow and steady progress. He always wishes to play basketball with those local peers.
>
> I have read their text message communication and found the peers' language is particularly disrespectful. I can't understand why my son still wants to communicate with them who do not respect him. (Suzan, interview, October 1, 2014)

This quotation shows a Chinese youth trying to be accepted, but it does not show that he rejects his culture. These types of stories from the participants made me believe that Chinese immigrant youth's attitudes and behaviours are contradictory, to some extent. The Chinese immigrant youth find it hard to believe that multiculturalism really exists when they regularly face discrimination. Although, immigrant youth accept the values and the policy of multi-culturalism, in reality they are discriminated against unless they conform to Western values.

Concerning the issues that provoked Chinese immigrant parents to experience internalized oppression, it may be due to the absence of feelings of national pride, dignity, self-worth and self-confidence. As Terry suggests: "for people who want to live in an immigrant country for a long time, their national self-confidence and image is particularly important. As a face saving ethnic [population], people should keep their self-esteem and help themselves out" (Terry, interview, July 19, 2014).

Reshaping cultural identity to reconstruct individual self-confidence means to take up the challenge to negotiate identities in 'the in-between spaces' and to avoid getting lost in insularity and xenophobia. (The in-between spaces are more fully discussed in my 2018 Dissertation).

Conclusion

For Chinese immigrants and their children, building intercultural friendships with residents often involves a one-way process of adaptation. Indeed, it is a one-way dance. In other words, Chinese immigrants and people of colour are expected to set aside their home cultures and conform to the European-Canadian ways of life, values, and ideologies in order to gain acceptance. This article, however, demonstrates that immigrants instead dance to different music, tunes and lyrics. They dance to the music and lyrics of exclusion, rejection and discrimination, instead of dancing to the happy music and songs of welcome and acceptance.

The article uncovers the shallow version of multiculturalism that exists in Canada by describing some negative lived experiences of some Chinese immigrant parents and their children. The article further summarizes how Chinese immigrants view prejudice, exclusion and discrimination, and explains that some parents respond by developing an inner sense of inferiority and internalized oppression. The participants who are permanent residents and/or Canadian citizens feel that citizenship is merely a legal certificate. They feel that they are not treated as valued and respected citizens. They referred to experiences of exclusion, in which (despite being citizens) they are perceived negatively, by members of the mainstream society. They are referred to as being Chinese immigrants, Asians, strangers, or outsiders who have different values.

This study explored acculturation concepts and understandings regarding barriers to intercultural friendships through the lens of critical pedagogy. I suggest that my findings, concerning the hidden forms of prejudice, stereotypes, polite racism and discrimination encountered by some Chinese parents and their children, are also applicable to members of other minority groups who have been racialized in Canada.

Note:

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Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1

Participants' Student Profiles

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Grade	Birthplace	School	Years in Canada	Identity	Single Child
Cason	M	17	11	Shanghai	C	3	Newcomer	Y
Lisha	F	17	11	Beijing	B	10	G1.5	Y
Lily	F	17	11	Hong Kong	A	17	G2	Y
Steven	M	17	11	Xinjiang	A	5	Newcomer	Y
Sherry	F	17	11	Macao	A	3	Newcomer	Y
Wesley	M	18	12	Ha'erbin	C	15	G2	Y
Wang	M	18	12	Shenyang	D	10	G1.5	Y
Zihao	M	17	11	Xi'an	A	11	G1.5	Y
Ningyu	M	18	12	Zhengzhou	B	10	G1.5	Y
Guo	M	18	12	Nanjing	D	10	G1.5	Y
Ziwen	F	17	11	Changsha	A	4	Newcomer	N
Salina	F	16	10	Yinchuan	A	6	G1.5	Y
Anna	F	16	10	Shanghai	A	15	G2	Y
Weike	M	18	12	Guangzhou	B	10	G1.5	Y
Kitty	F	16	10	Hong Kong	A	5	Newcomer	Y
Eva	F	17	11	Taiyuan	A	9	G1.5	Y
Maxiu	M	16	10	Zhuhai	D	8	G1.5	Y
Tracy	F	18	12	Canada	A	18	G2	N
Lujie	F	16	11	Wuhan	A	9	G1.5	Y
Rena	F	17	11	Tianjin	B	8	G1.5	Y
Panson	M	16	10	Tianjin	D	2	Newcomer	Y
Matthew	M	16	10	Taiwan	D	8	G1.5	Y
Yani	F	18	11	Beihai	D	5	Newcomer	Y
Mary	F	18	12	Zhengzhou	B	10	G1.5	Y
Michael	M	18	12	Canada	C	18	G2	N
Nancy	F	17	11	Beijing	A	5	Newcomer	N
Helen	F	16	10	Jinan	C	10	G1.5	Y
Wen	M	18	12	Beijing	B	11	G1.5	Y
Wendy	F	17	11	Taiyuan	B	7	G1.5	Y
Yuqian	F	18	12	Beijing	D	6	G1.5	Y
Yahe	F	18	12	Xi'an	A	13	G2	Y

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Grade	Birthplace	School	Years in Canada	Identity	Single Child
Hao	M	18	12	Nanjing	D	6	G1.5	Y
Warren	M	17	11	Chongqing	D	15	G2	Y
Julia	F	17	11	Shijiazhuang	A	6	G1.5	Y
Irene	F	17	11	Shenyang	C	15	G2	N
Kong	M	16	10	Guangzhou	A	3	Newcomer	Y
Hetty	F	16	10	Hong Kong	A	2	Newcomer	Y
Ancy	F	17	11	Zhuhai	C	12	G2	Y
Shiruan	F	17	11	Nanjing	D	12	G2	N

Note: All students spoke both English and Mandarin. G1.5 = Generation 1.5; G2 = second generation.

Table 2

Participants' Parents' Profiles

Name (pseudonym)	Mother	Father	Years in Canada	Occupation
Suzan	√		15	Engineer
Terry		√	9	Engineer
Lina	√		10	Massage Therapist
Victor		√	15	Technician
Chenjie	√		5	Worker
Qiong	√		12	Insurance Staff
Zhijun	√		10	Legal assistant
Tianyi		√	11	Accountant
Maria	√		2	Assistant in logistic
Zhang		√	6	Airport Staff
Reba		√	8	programmer
Lianna	√		6	Paramedic
Laochen		√	5	Electrician
Huang		√	10	Estimator
Shan	√		13	Teacher
Yingyong		√	17	Self-employed
John		√	10	Technician
Jing	√		15	Engineer

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