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**Problematizing the (in)visibility of racialized and gendered British Chineseness in  
Youth Health and Physical Cultures**

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## **Abstract**

In an increasingly complex world marked by transnationalism and globalisation, the role of physical cultures in everyday life is undergoing change, as people with different orientations to movement and bodies, especially its dominant Western forms, negotiate their relationships to it. The examination of race in Europe and the United Kingdom (UK) in the current intellectual landscape is often located within a Black-White debate that often excludes the Chinese from any form of critical analysis. This lack of academic recognition and critical engagement is coupled with gendered and racialised British Chineseness in everyday discourses. The ambivalent positions of the hyper-visibility of high-achieving British Chinese students in educational research is in contrast to the invisibility of their other everyday lived experiences, such as physical activity, leisure, sport and health. This juxtaposition is reflected through the complexity of how discourses and practices, shaped by colonial and racial legacies, contribute to a form of Chineseness that remains ‘at risk’ and overlooked in research about their bodies and physicality. This paper calls for explorations of Chinese minority ethnic students’ voices to set the impetus for a critical sociology of Chinese diaspora and health and physical cultures research agenda. It critically engages with the contestable work of cultural norming in relation to Chinese diasporic students’ health and bodily experiences. In response to these challenges, this paper introduces the Rethinking Health Experiences and Active Lifestyles - Chinese Students (REHEAL-C) project in the UK (supported by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship 2019-2020) as one contribution to shifting the academic landscape.

**Key words:** Chinese diaspora, health and physical cultures, student voices, race, ethnicity, REHEAL-C

## Introduction

Two of the greatest challenges facing some countries in Europe, including the United Kingdom (UK) are enabling its increasingly ethnically diverse youth populations to lead healthy and active lives (Council for the European Union, 2014), and the promotion of social cohesion in its citizens' lifestyles amidst contestations about cultural diversity (Dobbernack & Moddod, 2012). Young people are identified as a target group in several European Union health initiatives. However, there is little recognition of the significance of physical activity, leisure, and sport as a specific aspect of health, or in strategies for social inclusion. Despite the Council's recommendation that the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity is important, the current, unacceptable rates of inactivity are overlooked (European Commission, 2015a). More helpfully, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (European Commission, 2015b) identifies the significance of age-friendly environments for the promotion of the importance of health, particularly with ethnic minority groups with low physical activity engagement. Given projections that the 'Chinese and Other' group is about to double in the UK by 2020, it is not surprising that addressing 'Asian' communities' low participation in physical activity is central to the UK government's attempts to reduce health inequalities (Long, Hylton, Spracklen, Ratna, & Bailey, 2009). The focus on British Chinese students in a UK setting is therefore both timely and significant in response to these European challenges.

Critical scholars have argued that minority ethnic students are often identified as a 'risk' group in 'deficit' (and Western) approaches to bodies (e.g. Burrows & Wright, 2004; Author). Chinese students in particular fall into such 'risk' categories, and are often invisible, silenced, or positioned as committed to STEM subjects (Archer & Francis, 2005), but uninterested in physical activity (Author). Yet, they are often absent from research or policy

initiatives. To date, there has been limited research on the intersections of Chinese diasporic<sup>1</sup> youth research and physical cultures; what there is has tended to be predominately quantitative in nature and with little extended analytical writing about Chinese young people's *experiences*. This paper conceptualises the study of physical cultures as:

A dynamic and self-reflexive transdisciplinary intellectual project, rooted in qualitative and critical forms of inquiry...is concerned with a process of theorizing the empirical, in identifying, interpreting, and intervening into the ways physical culture-related structures and institutions, spaces and places, discourses and representations, subjectivities and identities, and/or practices and embodiments are linked to broader social, economic, political, and technological contexts (Silk, Andrews & Thrope, 2017, p. 5).

Whilst quantitative analysis helps to identify patterns of differences between subjects (e.g. boys and girls, Chinese and White) and within subjects (e.g. individual change across time), it is less helpful in terms of deconstructing categorical thinking and discovering the nuances, contradictions, and everyday experiences of physical education, sport, leisure, and physical activity within Chinese diaspora youth (Flintoff & Webb, 2012; Pang, 2016). As Gillborn, Warrington and Demack (2008) highlighted, although racialised categories in crude measures of educational achievements can support anti-racist work by highlighting structural

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'diaspora' originally referred to the exile of Jews from their historical homeland, Israel, and their involuntary mass dispersion to other parts of the world (Safran, 1991). It was then extended to describe categories of people living outside their homeland, and they can be temporary sojourners, transnational migrants, first-generation emigrants and their descendants (Gamlen, 2008). The diasporic Chinese community have long been known for their disposition of migration, and is becoming increasingly visible in multicultural societies (Mu & Pang, 2019).

inequalities, such research can also work against minority groups and perpetuate essentialised bodily differences. Exploring the experiences of Chinese diaspora youth in physical cultures could serve to complement survey-based research and provide relational understanding of the meanings and engagement of young people.

In response to these multifaceted challenges, this paper is situated within the UK context. It outlines understanding and representations of Chineseness in physical cultures, including physical activity, leisure and health-related experiences. It also provides a rationale and direction for future theoretical and empirical work for a critical sociology of Chinese diaspora youth and health and physical cultures research agenda. Focusing on Chinese diaspora youth, previous research in Australia has examined how gendered and racialized discourses complicate, obfuscate, and enrich Chinese students' understandings and representations of their bodies. This research has focused on how primary pedagogical work through the family (Pang, Macdonald & Hay, 2013) and secondary pedagogy work through schools (Pang & Soong, 2016; Pang & Macdonald, 2015a, 2015b; Pang & Hill, 2016) and social media (Pang & Hill, 2018) influence Chinese Australian students' subjectivities in health and physical activity.

Building on these understandings and challenges, the author has established the Rethinking Health Experiences and Active Lifestyles- Chinese (REHEAL-C) project in the UK (supported by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship 2019-2020). The project aims to draw on a range of theoretical perspectives and methods to explore Chinese diasporic students' voices by critically engaging with the contestable work of cultural norming in relation to their bodily experiences. This paper outlines the current intellectual landscape by first discussing how various contexts, including historical, situational, discursive and

relational shape the (in)visibility of racialised and gendered British Chineseness. Secondly, it reports on the early stages of REHEAL-C showing the methodological advancement on researching the topic. Lastly, this paper provides a rationale for the development of a critical sociology of Chinese diaspora research in relation to students' health and bodily experiences to move the field forward. An overview of Chinese communities in the European/UK context will first be discussed.

### **Historical Context: Chineseness and Chinese Diaspora in the UK and Europe**

Chinese diaspora is the most widely spread diaspora in the world, being the third largest after German and Irish diasporas (Poston & Wong, 2016). It is estimated that there are more than 40 million Chinese residing outside Greater China, of which about 29.5 million live in other Asian countries, 7.5 million in the Americas, 2 million in Europe, 1 million in Oceania, and 0.25 million in Africa (Priebe & Rudolf, 2015). The Chinese are among Europe's oldest and largest immigrant communities. The European Chinese ethnoscape (Appadurai, 1990) is characterised by three main waves. The first wave of Chinese immigration into Europe can be traced back to the First Opium War (第一次鴉片戰爭) (1839) through which Chinese were recruited as coolies<sup>2</sup> and many of them settled in northern Europe (Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). The second wave of Chinese migration to Europe were mainly Hong Kong Chinese who moved to the UK throughout the 1960s to 1980s, and with many of these immigrants opened Chinese restaurants. During the 1970s, another wave of overseas Chinese fled from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia amidst the Vietnam war. The third wave of Chinese diaspora started in the late 1980s, after Deng Xiaoping's economic reform and 'open door'

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<sup>2</sup> Coolies are indentured labourers working at overseas mines, plantations, and infrastructural sites. This is the dominant pattern of Chinese emigration during the colonial era. This labour force was important for European expansion of trading overseas and of the development of European colonial empires (Engerman, 1986).

policies (Pieke & Benton, 1998). The migrants from post-1980s are often referred to as the ‘new Chinese’. Described by Goldstone (1997) as a ‘tsunami on the horizon’, the ‘new Chinese’ in increasing numbers have posed new anxieties and risks about a ‘Chinese problem’ in receiving countries, expressed by growing nativist protectionism and heightened racism and Sinophobia<sup>3</sup> (Zhou & Benton, 2017). The modern migration of these ‘new Chinese’ is characterized by complexity in terms of its origin, education, economic activity, and migration experiences (Liu, 2011).

### **Situational Context: Chinese populations within the UK and the research sites**

Historically Chinatowns functioned as the pre-eminent spaces for Chinese immigrants for identity belonging, of collective effort in survival, and of seeking refuge from the hostile environment in Western contexts (Ang, 2016; Anderson, 1991; Mu & Pang, 2019; Zhou, 2010). Significant changes have taken place in the settlement patterns of recent Chinese immigrants. The focus on Leeds and Manchester in the REHEAL-C project will provide the specific data on local circumstances and can contribute to the existing studies which have largely examined those cities where the Chinese have a long established community, and a high concentration or clustering such as in London and Liverpool. To ascertain estimates for the total Chinese population, the TREND projection (Rees, Wohland, Norman & Boden, 2011) showed that there is a huge difference in the potential growth of the different ethnic groups. Between 2001 and 2031, the Chinese group can be expected to grow by 202% and the White British group by 4%. Given the projections that the ‘Chinese and Other’ group is set to double in the UK by 2020, it is not surprising that addressing the communities’ low

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<sup>3</sup> Owing to the rising economic power of China, Sinophobia is an anti-Chinese sentiment or racial discrimination brought about by economic privilege rather than the misrecognition of body and colour.



participation in physical activity is central to the UK government's attempts to reduce health inequalities (Long et al., 2009).

Research about British Chinese students has been mostly conducted in London where the dominant Chinese communities reside (e.g. Archer & Francis, 2006; Yeh, 2014); others also include larger metropolitan cities such as Liverpool and Birmingham (e.g. Archer, Francis & Mau, 2010). These growing studies nonetheless still present a stereotypical image of Chinese students, focusing on their educational aspects, while ignoring the specific localized nature of their everyday lives such as physical activity, sport, and leisure. One exception is in Nottingham where the Chinese community is demographically scattered and where research has provided some evidence to suggest that parents were supportive of their children's involvement in extra-curricular activities including piano, violin, drawing, ballet and sport. All the child participants said they played a musical instrument because they were themselves interested and were not forced by their parents (Gates & Guo, 2014).

Chinese complementary schooling<sup>4</sup> is seen as an important social, cultural and political context for British Chinese students to develop their linguistic identities, accumulate social and cultural capital (Archer & Francis, 2006), and provide a safe space for them to escape from everyday racism (Archer, Francis & Mau, 2019). These schooling environments receive various criticisms as being 'old fashioned', 'boring' and are not providing the best teaching approaches as they are run mostly by volunteers who have their own full-time jobs, and not professionally accredited teachers (Archer, Francis & Mau, 2010). Despite these negative perceptions of Chinese complementary schooling, Archer et al. (2010) noted that

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<sup>4</sup> Chinese complementary schools are attended by students with Chinese ethnic backgrounds at weekends. The students have the opportunity to learn about Chinese language, and Chinese cultural activity classes such as Chinese dance, drama and singing.

some Chinese students found these spaces enabled them to express playful identities where they can talk more, wear their own clothes, and be ‘noisy’ and boisterous. These forms of embodiment and performativity are in contrast to mainstream teachers’ perceptions of Chinese students as always conformist and deferential (Francis & Archer, 2005). For these kind of reasons, the REHEAL-C project has chosen to work with the British Chinese students recruited mainly from community schools in Leeds and Manchester, to provide important insights not previously obtained in studies of more connected and homogeneous ethnic communities.

### **Discursive context: racialised and gendered British Chineseness**

As a result of the historical and situational dynamics of diverse linguistic, temporal and locality among the Chinese communities who might position themselves or be positioned within the Chinese diaspora, the ways in which ethnic/racial categorisations take place and their effects, is contentious. Discourses of ‘British Chineseness’ emerged in the late 1980s and became institutionalised under the multiculturalism era (Yeh, 2000). The term ‘Chinese’ in itself as a category is often used unproblematically as a taken-for-granted monolithic group, erasing the generational and linguistic diversity, ‘mixed’ race, socioeconomic and geographic differences, and diverse migration trajectories across lifespan (Benton & Gomez 2011). Equally problematic is its function as a racial category (Parker, 1998). For some, ‘British Chinese’ refers to any ‘Chinese’ in the UK, and associated terms such as ‘British-born Chinese’ are often assumed to have originated from Hong Kong because of the legacy of the British empire and migration histories. Unlike in Australia, the United States and Canada, where Chinese are grouped under Asians, in the UK the term Asian refers to South Asians from the Indian subcontinent and excludes the Chinese and other East Asians (Yeh, 2014). Diasporic Chinese, whether identified as primarily Chinese or as citizens of another country,

have to constantly (re)negotiate their identities and tensions around stereotypes (Yeh, 2014). It is critical to be aware that any labels given and their effects upon people's experiences are contentious and potentially problematic. Nonetheless, this paper uses 'British Chinese students' in order to carve out a position for their cultural visibility in a context of normative White Britishness.

The mobilisation of 'British Chinese' renders more visibility when Chinese is arguably at the bottom of the 'racial hierarchy' in cultural representations (Yeh, 2018). This lack of visibility contributes to contemporary racialisation processes, or in Fanon's (1970) term the 'racial epidermal schema', that draws on long-standing perceptions of racial ideas of the Chinese as 'model minority' (Yeh, 2014). Researchers have long argued that the crude representations and 'positive' stereotype of the Chinese as the 'successful ethnic minority' is based on popular Western stereotypes of the Chinese as collectivist, deferent, and conforming to Confucian values which ignores the specific British Chinese construction of ethnic identity (Parker, 2000). This stereotype is also fuelled by their long-standing high academic achievement such as in GCSE results and university entrance numbers in the UK (Archer & Francis, 2006). Thus, the relatively high achievement of many British Chinese students is taken to signal that they do not constitute or experience any disadvantage and thereby no further attention is needed. However, their needs in other lived experiences perhaps are overlooked.

Racialized discourses intersect with gendered discourses and some groups are accorded more importance than others. As Cheng (2019) noted, a White, masculine center has perpetuated the racialised femininity in Western modernity, and in which 'Oriental fetishism' describes how Asiatic femininity is racially constructed, desired and consumed.

However, the ‘yellow woman remains largely absent from critical theory’ (p.1), the ‘yellow woman remains mute and absent’ (p.xi), and this ‘undocumentedness’ of yellow voices is part of their lived experiences (p. xiii). Here she uses the colour ‘yellow’ to acknowledge its subsumed existence within the broad category of ‘woman of colour’. The colour ‘yellow’ emerged out of racial science to denote Oriental racial groups. Later the term ‘Yellow Peril’ (Yeh, 2018, p. 34) was used to describe the global disperse of the Chinese through indentured migrations (Benton & Gomez, 2008). While migrants in the nineteenth century were associated with ‘Yellow Peril’, current generations are constructed as ‘invisible model minorities’ (Yeh, 2018, p. 31). The discourses of the ‘Yellow Peril’ entail risks and fear while the model minority with academic advancements and economic prosperity as discussed previously, both operate within the same racial logic.

### **Relational context: social isolation and otherness**

Earlier, in the 1990s, Lau (1997) noted that British professionals had been accused of failing to provide adequate support to Chinese families. This is because of the limited understanding of Chinese family values, and as a result Chinese parents ‘feel their voices are not heard’ (p. 26). It has been argued that there is a lack of social support for Chinese students and families who have suffered from double detachment and experienced isolation from both host and home country (Chau & Yu, 2001). When compared to other ethnic groups in the UK, the Chinese have been perceived as the ‘minority among minorities’, ‘quiet’ or ‘reserved’. For example, Archer and Francis (2005) noted that British Chinese students experienced racialised discourses that are based on the dual positionings of either ‘geeks’ (high achieving, clever, good at maths, but passive/repressed) or ‘tags’ (associated with violence, martial arts, and Triadism) (p. 391-392). Living within this intersection of isolation and otherness associated with limited visibility, the British Chinese require more social recognition. Yet,

favourable social recognition as a result of positive discourses such as resilience, high achievement, and ‘model minority’ labelling, can also be damaging through erasing experiences of racism and racial disadvantage, thereby perpetuating marginalisation. The historical, situational, discursive, and relational contexts mediated by demography, gender and racial categories, and intergenerational differences have an impact on how British Chinese students are positioned, represented and examined in an increasingly multicultural society. How this knowledge is enacted in the academic context is discussed next.

### **Academic context: critical scholarship in Chineseness and physical cultures**

An increasing number of research studies on British Chinese are found in the 2000s. These studies have presented a panoramic picture of Chinese diasporic communities in the UK in the areas of education (Francis, Mau & Archer, 2017), gender (Lee, Chan, Bradby & Green, 2002), arts (Thorpe & Yeh, 2018), social media (Parker & Song, 2006), identity (Parker, 1998), and a historical approach on their economy and transnationalism (Benton & Gomez, 2008). Despite this diverse research conducted over two decades, a focus on British Chineseness has been largely absent from the mainstream critical academic discussion, with the exception of the special issue on Asian Migration and Education Cultures in the Anglo-sphere in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. As a result, there is also a lack of consolidation of a visible body of work to the same extent as the Black British or South Asian British history of scholarship and movement. For example Black feminist theorists have strongly criticized the marginalization of minority ethnic groups from academic debates around social class, and point instead to intricate inter-relationships between ‘race’, class and gender (e.g. Hill Collins, 2002; hooks, 1992). Yet, the Chinese diaspora absence in academic research has not been critiqued in the same way as those by Black feminists. In part, there is a lack of critical mass of Chinese scholars in academia, as well as a reflection of how

Whiteness (and its contrast to Black) perpetuated debates. Although arguably there is a growing critique that counters popular narrow, stereotypical representations of Chinese families and their ‘success’ (e.g. Archer & Francis, 2005; Chau & Yu, 2001), Chinese are severely underrepresented in the social sciences in higher education and professional managerial positions when compared to their White peers (Arday & Mirza, 2018).

Within the field of Physical Education (PE), Sport and Leisure, the myth of these sites as a tool for social integration/inclusion has elevated its false claims to universality (Long, Welch, Bramham, Hylton, Butterfield & Lloyd, 2002). Among the traces of this history are examples of everyday and institutional racism found in, for example, the micro-aggression and overt racism towards non-White communities in English-speaking countries (Long & Spracklen, 2010). The hidden and deeply embedded histories of cultural imperialism and racial oppression, and compounded by intersectional contexts (Watson, 2018), penetrates our everyday experiences of PE, Sport and Leisure (Dagkas, Azzarito & Hylton, 2019). In PE, Fitzpatrick (2013) has problematised the ‘naturally talented’ brown/Black bodies in Māori and Pasifika students. The study highlighted the dominant perceptions of the brown bodies being innately physical and non-intellectual motivated the students in engagement in PE, but also restricted their alternative ways of performing their identities and locked them into their racialised bodies. Similarly, in the US, research has focused on Black bodies and examined how young people negotiate and take up and/or resist dominant discourses of race in sport in PE. Azzarito and Harrison (2008) concluded that Black boys seemed to be ambivalent about their positions within dominant discourses of race and ‘natural’ athleticism while White boys adhered to the notion of ‘natural’ physical superiority. While in the UK and England, Dagkas, Benn and Jawad (2011) focused on Muslim girls in PE by giving voice to the students’ lived experiences and to take into account parental attitudes when planning inclusive policies

related to physical activity. Likewise in sport, a number of scholars (e.g. Adair & Rowe, 2010; Carrington, 2013; Hylton, 2008) have problematised how capabilities in sport are often rationalised in relation to ‘natural’ differences in physicality. These popular beliefs dictates understandings of the superiority or inferiority of sportsperson and reproduced preconceptions of Others in what they can or cannot do. The racialised social structures of sport therefore provide stability and safety yet crude stereotypes to understanding and perceptions of our own and others’ identities. While such phenomena have long been discussed in these fields over several decades, they still remain largely unacknowledged in relation to Chinese youth communities around the world today. However, as global politics shift with the political-economic rise of China, such invisibility and oppressions are beginning to be re-imagined in fresh light. While this paper focuses on British Chinese students in the UK, the positioning of Chinese communities more globally is worthy of examination on another occasion.

British Chinese invisibility is further entwined with broader contemporary health concerns about the lack of physical activity of ‘Asians’ in academic discourse and everyday social representations. Compelling global research evidence has revealed the positive effects of physical activity on health (Biddle, Gorely, Marshall, Murdey & Cameron, 2004). This kind of research unpicks the determinants and mediators of health and physical activity, resulting in a ‘risk-factor analysis’ and prevention approach, and an ‘exercise= fitness= health’ triplex in promoting youth health and physical activity (Mansfield & Rich, 2013; Kirk & Colquhoun, 1989). For Gard and Wright (2001), this message constitutes health in terms of a moral imperative of self-control which creates the stigmatisation of obesity and the idealised body images of thinness. Recent work underpinned by such triplex has advanced through its impact on population surveillance with school children in food choices (Leahy &

Wright, 2016), and quantifying the body with digital technologies (Lupton, 2013). These forms of knowledge are reflected in statistics that tend to focus narrowly on reporting minority ethnic groups living in Western contexts as inactive and therefore not receiving the many health benefits of physical activity. For example, statistics have consistently shown that BAME groups in the UK, when compared to the White population, have lower physical activity levels (Long, et al. 2009). ‘Chinese’ are often discussed with the other ethnic minority groups in physical activity surveys. The Active Lives Survey (Sport England, 2019) reported that Chinese (and ‘Other’), who are +16, are more likely to be physically inactive compared to those from White British groups. Survey reports have also consistently shown that females from Chinese and Other, and Black backgrounds are less likely to take part in sport, compared to people from White British backgrounds (Sport England, 2017). Minority ethnic youth are thus either under-represented or represented in public health messages as ‘bodies-at-risk’ because they do not conform to the Western parameters of physical activity and health regimes (Pang, Alfrey & Varea, 2015). Author noted that current social media space is dominated by representations on minorities, highlighting their differences to the West. Chinese young people are often seen as obese, fragile, reserved and/or disinterested in physical movements. These racialised stereotypes in relation to bodies and physicality provide few alternatives for describing and analysing Chinese people in health, physical activity and sport.

Equally problematic are studies such as Wang, Blake and Chattopadhyay (2019) that frame ‘ethnic Chinese’ globally as a monolithic category and compare their physical activity levels to global standards (e.g. WHO’s physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes of Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity per day). This ‘groupism’ (Brubaker, 2003) effect - that is to take discrete and sharply differentiated boundaries of ethnic group, and the



subsequent intervention approach to increase their physical activity levels - continues to reify and racialize physical activity practices. As Sen (2007) noted, this creates an Othering through 'cheap classification' of identities. In other words, there is a need to capture the gamut of experiences, such as ambivalences, agencies and choices, generational differences and broader sociocultural factors that construct individuals' practices which are assembled within specific geographic and local contexts. The REHEAL-C project concurs with Ang's (2013, 2014) direction, that a more processual and flexible understanding and analysis is much needed to move beyond the groupness of 'the Chinese' experiences.

### **Moving Forward: Mapping a New Terrain of Critical Sociology of Chinese Diaspora and Physical Cultures Research**

Rather than lamenting the 'lack' of research/researchers in Chinese diaspora studies in physical cultures, it is essential to examine how racial and gendered constructions play out in understandings of the communities' experiences. The ambivalent positions of hyper-visibility in education and hyper-invisibility in other, everyday lived experiences, is further explicated by the positionings of British Chineseness, and in relation to 'British' and 'Black minority groups' in terms of their bodies and physicality. This position is reflected through the complexity of how discourses and practices, shaped by colonial and racial legacies, contribute to both an invisibility that excludes the Chinese from everyday cultural representations, and at the same time, a form of visibility that sees them remain 'at risk' and overlooked in research about their bodies and physicality. The point here is not to posit an essentialist difference between the Black, White, and yellow, nor to use 'yellow' as a real racial category but rather as a critical conceptual tool. With a clear intention that in order to move beyond the current silenced 'yellow' voices, there is a need to first explore and recognise this (lack of) racial imaginary that has been at once pervasive and taken for granted.

This is the first step to reclaim British Chineseness within the dual invisibility and visibility racial logic of their representations. The impasse between recognition and reification in the racial and gender hierarchy in relation to theoretical understandings of experiences in physicality is worthy of examination on another occasion.

Data collection in the REHEAL-C project is underpinned by an ethnographic approach, using traditional (e.g. interviews, observations and field notes) and contemporary mobile application and arts-based methods. The combination of using mobile ethnographic approach and arts-based methods with British Chinese students is innovative in physical cultural studies in Europe, seeking to bring a shift to current research focus (Pang, 2018). The use of digital methods and arts-based methods aims to disrupt intellectual forms of knowledge that is often privileged over other ways of knowing (Mason & Davis, 2009; Sparks, 2002). A range of digital and art forms (audio, visual and performative) will be used in order to move beyond a one-dimensional level of communication and that could resonate with different people and communities the project involves (Finley, 2008; Safron, 2019). Existing work on the physical culture experiences of ethnic minorities has largely been conducted by Western (White) researchers who have rarely reflected critically on the impact of their own social and cultural differences to the ‘others’ that are the focus of their attention. The author’s position as a Chinese, bi-lingual female Australian will bring an important, additional dimension to the research in relation to positionality and reflexivity (Author).

The REHEAL-C project will contribute to a critical sociology of Chinese diaspora studies in youth physical cultures research program that is globally situated. It examines the taken-for-granted aspects of experiences in physicality, human movement, and health-related practices in the Chinese diaspora, and the processes that (re)produce the social segregation

(e.g. class, gender, ethnicity, ability, generation, sexuality, religion) become visible and changeable. Building on these initiatives, the research aims to widen the current knowledge base by exploring Chineseness in health and bodily experiences; translating results into playful and artful resistance for promoting discussion around Chinese students' active lifestyles and health related experiences; and enabling diverse Chinese students to voice out their experiences and needs in relation to their healthy lifestyles. It further contributes to the global research community of Chinese scholars and/or Chinese diaspora research (e.g. the Network for Research into Chinese Education Mobilities, Forum of Critical Chinese Qualitative Research), with an original and particular focus on Chineseness and health and bodily experiences. As such, the research agenda has potential not only for Physical Educators and sociologists interested in race/ethnicity, but also those working in the fields of Chinese diaspora, health inequalities, race, ethnicity and post-colonial thought, feminism and the sociology of the body. The results will significantly contribute to the minimal research conducted in two fields: that of the Chinese diaspora and the broader structural issues and experiences in physical activity, leisure, sport and health, and the intersection of race/ethnicity and other 'identity' groups (i.e. Chineseness) across the world in sport-related research.

### **Postscript**

Since the acceptance of this manuscript, the coronavirus has flooded social media outlets in the UK and globally. The long standing invisibility of the British Chinese community in other spheres of lives has once again turned into a visibility that is underpinned by fear, uncertainty, exclusion and racism. As history repeats itself, there is an uncanny parallel between the discourses of the 'Yellow Peril' and the coronavirus that entails risks and fear that is germinating in local UK and global communities. In other words, this is not just a virus that

destroy people's immune systems but a racial epidemic that penetrates our minds. This split between visibility and invisibility of a monolithic racial/ethnic group is two sides of the same coin that breeds the racial logic that haunts our everyday thinking and practices.

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