

DO CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS FACILITATE SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE-  
TRINIDADIANS INTEGRATION INTO THE WIDER SOCIETY?

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Vivian Hong, BA, Ryerson University, 2016

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

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Vivian Hong

Do Chinese Associations Facilitate Second-Generation Chinese-Trinidadians to Integrate into the Wider  
Society?

Vivian Hong  
Master of Arts 2017  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
Ryerson University

**ABSTRACT**

This research project explores Chinese Associations in Trinidad and their relationship with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. It asks whether Chinese Associations facilitate the integration of these individuals into the wider Trinidadian society. This is a qualitative research project that involves content analysis of published literature surrounding this topic, case study analysis, and interviews with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The discussions in this research include: the history of Chinese migration to the West Indies, the role of Chinese Associations for migrants, and the sense of belonging to the Chinese community for second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The potential benefits of this research include spreading further awareness and understanding of Chinese diasporic experiences in the fields of Caribbean and Asian American studies, and enriching the understanding of immigration and settlement strategies used by diasporic populations more generally.

Key words: Chinese migration, integration, creolization, imagined community

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research paper to second and subsequent generations of Chinese descendants whose narratives and experiences may still have not been told.

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## 1. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand if Chinese Associations in Trinidad<sup>1</sup> facilitate integration into the greater society. More specifically, it seeks to focus on second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians (defined as children with at least one parent who migrated to Trinidad and Tobago from China) and their experiences of identity and culture to determine what role, if any, the Chinese Association played to assist in their integration. By integration, I mean a successful social process of intermixing individuals and groups from different cultures and ethnicities within society. Measures to determine a successful integration include the ability for each member of society to have an equal opportunity to participate in the realms of civic engagement, social cohesion and to be acknowledged as a civic member of the nation. The reason for focusing specifically on second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians is because ample amounts of existing literature exclusively discuss the experiences of first-generation Chinese migrants<sup>2</sup>. It is essential to consider the experiences of second-generation children as doing so will not only extend our knowledge of the transnational experiences of first-generation Chinese migrants (as the transnational experiences of first-generation Chinese are often discussed), it will also deepen our understanding of the Chinese diaspora in the West Indies on a broader level. Second-generation children are rarely discussed in the research on transnationalism as it is believed that they do not have the same connections to the homeland of their parent(s) because

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<sup>1</sup> Although Trinidad is one island in the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, this research project only examines Chinese Associations in Trinidad.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Johnson, K. (2006). *Descendants of the dragon: the Chinese in Trinidad 1806-2006*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; Lee-Loy, A. (2003). '...The Chinese are preferred to all others': Nineteenth-century representations of the Chinese in Trinidad and British Guiana. *Asian Studies Review*, 27(2), 205-225; Look Lai, W. (2004). Chinese diasporas: An overview. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50(2), 1-14.

they are born and grew up in the host country to which their parents migrated. However, second-generation children of migrants are also considered subjects of transnational social relations and further analyzing their experiences allows for research relating to the identity formation and development of post-migration generations. Such research also creates room to compare and contrast the experiences of first-generation Chinese migrants to that of their second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian children, particularly in exploring generational differences and similarities in how their identity and perceptions of culture are formed (Haikkola, 2011). Second-generation children are involved in the networks of places of origin and destination, not only for themselves, but also that of their parents' and families (Haikkola, 2011). As there now exists subsequent generations of individuals who identify as Chinese in Trinidad, this research is a timely and necessary addition to the existing knowledge we have of Chinese-Trinidadian migrants, in that it opens up discussions surrounding the different and similar experiences that exist regarding identity formation, perception and attachments to Chinese culture and traditions between the first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians and second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians.

## **2. Introduction: Chinese Migration to Trinidad**

The rise of Chinese migration to countries outside of Asia, such as to the West Indies, first began after the Opium Wars in China during 1839-1856 and 1856-1860 (Priebe & Rudolf, 2015). These two Wars, motivated by the desire of the British and French to achieve “commercial privileges, legal and territorial concessions in China” (Pletcher, 2017), was a motivating factor for working class Chinese to migrate out of China in an attempt to escape the conflicts and poverty caused by the Wars within China, and start a new life with opportunities in other parts of the world<sup>3</sup>. This type of migration was commonly known as the

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the Opium Wars and their impact on Chinese migration, see Look Lai, W. (2006). The people from Guangdong. In Look Lai, W. *Essays on the Chinese diaspora in the Caribbean* (p. 1-10). St. Augustine, Trinidad &

'*huagong/huaqiao*' migration. The term *huagong/huaqiao* is a political term used to describe Chinese individuals who migrated and settled outside of China. Additionally, the unstable conditions in China contributed to what is commonly known as the 'coolie trade' in which large populations of Chinese (and East Indians) men left their homes to become cheap labourers, generally working as plantation workers, miners and construction workers in host countries; such as the West Indies (i.e., Trinidad and Jamaica), and North America (i.e., Canada and the United States). Approximately ninety-six percent of all Chinese who migrated to the Americas during the nineteenth century originated from the south of China in a region known as Southern Guangdong, consisting of Macao, Canton and Hong Kong. The remaining four percent came from the region of Fujian. Therefore, the majority of Chinese communities within the Americas and West Indies are identified as Cantonese.

The Chinese and East Indian<sup>4</sup> populations became common groups of indentured labourers in the British colonies due to the official abolition of slavery within the British Empire in the year 1833. These indentured workers were used to replace the freed African slaves. In Trinidad and Tobago, indentured labour was viewed as the only option other than slavery to maintain the sugar industry and the economy of the British West Indies (Lee-Loy, 2004).

The British colonizers in Trinidad and across the West Indies additionally favoured Chinese migrants because they served as a buffer zone between the British colonizers and the emancipated slaves. The Chinese migrants were perceived by the British colonizers as a type of 'middle class' because they served as a "barrier between themselves (the colonizers) and the

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Tobago; Pletcher, K. (2017, March 9). Opium wars Chinese history; Priebe, J., & Rudolf, R. (2015). Does the Chinese diaspora speed up growth in host countries? *World Development*, 76, 249-262.

<sup>4</sup>The term "East Indian" is used in the Caribbean and in this paper to refer to individuals who originated from India and migrated to Trinidad as indentured labourers for the sugar plantations during the period of British colonization.

slaves” (Look-Lai, 2006, p.13). Therefore, this was another benefit that British colonizers believed the Chinese migrants would bring to their West Indian colonies.

Chinese migrants first arrived to the island of Trinidad during the year of 1806<sup>5</sup>. How the Chinese population even ended up in Trinidad is connected to the suggestions and recommendations of Captain William Layman to the British colonists. Captain Layman served as a British Royal Navy who had lived in East Asia for years. He had observed and witnessed how hardworking the Chinese population was, they showed strength in creating team work and bringing about economic ideologies. Therefore, based on his observations of the Chinese population, Captain Layman believed that they would create many benefits for the plantation economies of the West Indian colonies as they were seen to be very good cultivators. As a result, in 1802, Captain William Layman proposed and convinced the British colonists to persuade Chinese migrants to travel to Trinidad to create an experimental Chinese colony on the island. A total of 200 Chinese migrants were recruited and sailed on *The Fortitude* and, on October 12, 1806, a total of 192 Chinese (all men), arrived in Trinidad. These migrants were to work in the sugar plantations and be paid six dollars per a month for one year. With the wages these men would make, they were able to support themselves with the bare minimum. Any migrant who wished to return to China was granted a free return ticket under the terms of the contract, given at anytime with no stipulation. Many migrants did decide to return home; in fact 61 Chinese migrants decided to return home with *The Fortitude* and three years later there were barely 30

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on Chinese migration to Trinidad, see Higman B.W. (2006). The Chinese in Trinidad, 1806-1838. In Look Lai, W. *Essays on the Chinese diaspora in the Caribbean* (p. 11-44). St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago; Look Lai, W. (2006). The people from Guangdong. In Look Lai, W. *Essays on the Chinese diaspora in the Caribbean* (p. 1-10). St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago; Look Lai, W. (2006). The Trinidad experience. In Look Lai, W. *Essays on the Chinese diaspora in the Caribbean* (p. 56-75). St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago.

remaining Chinese migrants in Trinidad. This first attempt at emigrating and settling Chinese migrants to Trinidad as an experiment was considered a failure.

Despite this early attempt to emigrate Chinese to Trinidad in 1806, it was not until 1850 when what is considered to be the beginning of the first wave of Chinese migrants to Trinidad as indentured labourers began. According to Look Lai (2006), between the 1850's-1860's Chinese migrants were dispersed around 70-75 different plantations across Trinidad; however, this time they were not given a free return passage after the completion of their five-year contract. Look Lai (2006) also notes that a second wave of Chinese migrants to Trinidad happened beginning in the 1890's and lasting all the way to the 1940's with an important difference: the second wave migration was voluntarily composed of free migrants who were interested in trade and commerce as opposed to the contracted indentured labourers of the first wave.

### **3. Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **i) Imagined Communities and Orientalism**

It is essential to incorporate Anderson's (2006) ideology of an imagined community into this discussion in order to have a more clear understanding of the development of the Chinese community and their lived experiences of migration to Trinidad and how these experiences may have shaped their sense of belonging and integration. According to Anderson, an imagined community is a socially constructed sense of belonging by the dominant group within society. This sense of belonging fosters nationalism and ideas of nationhood. Ideas of national belonging create a boundary within a nation that entitles the imagined community to limit who is included and who is excluded from their imagined community. In other words, to discuss Chinese integration into Trinidadian society is to speak about evidence of whether or not the Chinese

perceive themselves (and are perceived) as being part of the “imagined community” that is deemed “Trinidadian”.

The ability to imagine the Chinese as part of the nation was shaped by a number of factors. First, it should be noted that the image portrayal of the Chinese in Trinidad had also been influenced by popular perceptions and stereotypes of Chinese in the West that took hold during colonialism. In particular, Edward Said’s idea of orientalism provides some grounding for the idea that there may have been a predisposition to exclude the Chinese from Trinidad’s imagined community. Orientalism is a Western (i.e., Western European countries) attitude and practice that creates an exclusive division and hierarchy between the East and West. The West is viewed as developed, rational and humane and the East (i.e., including countries like China and India) is perceived as underdeveloped, irrational, spiritual and inferior. This hierarchical division can be seen in colonial discourses and attitudes towards the Chinese migrants in Trinidad. For the British colonizers, the Chinese migrants were valued as contributors to the labour force. They were categorized as a type of middle-class men; inferior to the British colonizers yet superior to the African and East Indian indentured labourers. Additionally, as Lee-Loy (2004) has argued, within the islands of Trinidad and British Guiana (presently Guyana), Chinese migrants were valued, as they were seen to be essential to contributing and fostering the power and privilege of the white colonizers. Even though they were never seen as having status equal to the white colonizers, Chinese migrants were seen as an important means by which the British colonizers were able to maintain social, political and economic power over Africans and East Indians because the Chinese indentured labour provided competition against these other groups. These ideas of the Chinese as a middle-class buffer zone and as being in competition against other

groups in society would remain long after colonialism ended and would continue to shape the place of the Chinese in the imagined community of the nation in the 20th century.

It is also important to analyze the theory of the ‘imagined community’ within the Chinese Associations and community in Trinidad. Due to the fact that Chinese Associations in Trinidad are primarily structured based on which district in China individuals are descendants from, this already creates an ‘imagined community’. As a result, those who are in power within the Associations (presidents, leaders) are able to create an imagined Chinese identity and define who is considerably ‘Chinese’. Therefore, even within the Chinese Associations, we are able to apply the theory of an imagined community to have a better understanding of the organization and the Chinese community in Trinidad.

## **ii) Intersectionality**

Crenshaw’s (1991) idea of intersectionality serves as a valuable concept that allows us to critique the migration of Chinese migrants within the West Indies. Intersectionality allows us to explore a phenomenon from various positions which allows us the ability to analyze from different points of views and to understand what processes might have taken place in order for this phenomenon to have happened (Crenshaw, 1991). The concept of intersectionality has been commonly used to discuss how different, but intersecting, factors shape one’s experience of class, race, and gender; in the latter case, the focus has been predominantly on the experiences of women (Davis, 2008). Davis (2008) claims, however, “it is not all clear whether intersectionality should be limited to understanding individual experiences, to theorizing identity or whether it should be taken as a property of social structures and cultural discourse” (p. 68). For this paper, I believe it is imperative to explore the experiences and identity formation of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians using an intersectional lens that focuses on social structures and cultural

discourses. By cross referencing the various experiences of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians with regards to integration as revealed in the in-person interviews to first-generation Chinese migrants' experiences of integration as revealed in literature on their migration and settlement, we can see whether any gaps exist in regards to the perception of identifying as Chinese and the relationship with Chinese Associations between both groups as well as whether there are any overarching discourses that shape their process of integration.

**ii. a) European Colonialism: An Intersectional Approach to First-Generation Chinese Integration in Canada and the West Indies**

It serves great importance, in my opinion, to examine this research question in the context of an awareness of the Chinese migration and settlement experience in other countries to which the Chinese migrated. Finding out whether Chinese migrants generally experienced similar forms of discrimination regardless of where they migrated to in the world, will help us to determine if there is an existing discourse that has contributed to controlling and framing their experiences and process of integration. For this research, I have also chosen to focus on Canada for my intersectional analysis on the 19th century migration of Overseas Chinese migrants. I selected Canada because there are particular similarities Canada shares with the West Indies in regards to the migration trends of Overseas Chinese populations. For example, Canada shared similar reasons with Trinidad to open up immigration to Chinese migrants. There were also differences in terms of the perception and treatment of Chinese migrants in the two areas. This will be discussed more in-depth in the following section.

First of all, both Canada and the West Indies were colonized by the British. Canada during the 19th century was also an 'imagined community' where the Anglo-Saxon population was viewed as superior above all races. Canada and specifically Trinidad (the region examined

in this paper) are both multicultural nations. In addition, Canada, like Trinidad, decided to open up immigration to allow Chinese migrants to help develop the nation. However, there are also many differences on how each region perceived Chinese individuals. By having an intersectional analysis of the two countries will allow for comparing and contrasting the experiences of Chinese migrants. Also, by cross-examining Chinese migration to Canada with Chinese migration to Trinidad, we are able to have a more clear understanding as to how this community came to be established in both nations. The following section will be discussing and comparing the history of Chinese migration in Canada and the West Indies during the nineteenth century (i.e., first-generation migration). The theory of intersectionality will be used throughout the following paragraphs to explore the experiences of Chinese migration to the West and any comparisons or contrasts related to how migrants from Canada and the West Indies express identity that may exist. It will serve as a groundwork for an intersectional approach to understanding second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian identity.

The start of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of Chinese migration beyond the Asian continent to places like North America and the West Indies. One of the central reasons for an increase in Chinese migration to the West Indies during this time was an expanding need for cheap, globalized labour in the Atlantic industrializing world-system (Look Lai, 2004). I would also note that this was the period in which slavery was abolished in the West Indies and it was also the period of nation building in North America. In many parts of the Western world, particularly in Canada, Chinese migrants, who initially arrived to join the gold rush or to work on the railroads, were seen as a direct threat to the already established order of finance and society<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> For more comparison of Chinese migration in Canada and the West Indies, see Lee-Loy, A. (2003). '... The Chinese are preferred to all others': Nineteenth-century representations of the Chinese in Trinidad and British Guiana. *Asian Studies Review*, 27(2), 205-225; Lee-Loy, A. (2015). An antiphonal announcement: Jamaica's anti-Chinese legislation in transnational context. *Journal Of Asian American Studies*, 18(2), 141-162; Li, P. S. (1998). *The Chinese in Canada* (2nd Ed.) Oxford University Press.

Canadian discourses that surrounded the Chinese migrant (who was, as in early Chinese migration to the West Indies, predominantly male) described the Chinese as “birds of passage” (and as “working too hard for less pay than white labour...that benefited the capitalists and undermined the white native worker” (Kil, 2012, p. 664). Chinese migrants in Canada were also viewed as ‘aliens’<sup>7</sup> and “moral lepers... engender(ing) disease and a curse and stain on the population” (Lee-Loy, 2003, p. 205). Thus, discourses surrounding the first-generation Chinese migrants in North America described them as being both an undesirable race and fierce competitors for the White working class.

In contrast, in 19<sup>th</sup> century Trinidad, Chinese migrants served as a key factor in maintaining the colonial financial and social order because the presence of Chinese indentured labourers contributed to labour competition between the pre-existing populations of Africans (who were imported to the West Indies as slaves) and East Indian population of labour force. As indentured labourers, the Chinese also helped to preserve the economic survival of plantations and the colonial social, economic and political hierarchies that the plantations supported. The Chinese migrants in the West Indies were not seen as a threat to the White working class but as a direct threat to the African and East Indian populations.

According to Li (1998), during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, “aside from the Indigenous people, no racial or ethnic group in Canada had experienced such harsh treatment as the Chinese” (p. 5). After their initial migration as miners and railroad workers, Chinese migrants continued to face oppression, discrimination and an anti-Oriental welcome from

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<sup>7</sup> For more on this subject see Kil, S. H. (2012). Fearing yellow, imagining white: media analysis of the Chinese exclusion act of 1882. *Social Identities*, 18(6), 663-677; Lee-Loy, A. (2003). '... The Chinese are preferred to all others': Nineteenth-century representations of the Chinese in Trinidad and British Guiana. *Asian Studies Review*, 27(2), 205-225; Lee-Loy, A. (2015). An antiphonal announcement: Jamaica's anti-Chinese legislation in transnational context. *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 18(2), 141-162.

politicians, union leaders, the white workers and employers, despite the fact that all such groups implicitly or explicitly received benefits from the Chinese presence in Canada (Li 1998). Chinese migrants were a benefit to the British colonizers and more generally to the wider society, because they were willing to perform the dangerous and life-threatening jobs that the Anglo-Saxon settlers did not want to do (i.e., coal mining) and also willing to accept a much cheaper wage resulting in economic benefits for the colonizers. Nevertheless, legal measures, such as the Head Tax, implemented in 1885 and eventually, the *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1923, known more commonly as the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, made it increasingly difficult and eventually prohibited all Chinese from immigrating to Canada, thereby explicitly excluding them from being considered valid members of the new nation (Baureiss, 1987).

Overall, Chinese migrants in Trinidad have been historically viewed by the British colonizers as a positive addition to the society. As they were often compared to the East Indian population in Trinidad, the Chinese were also seen as reinforcing, justifying and reaffirming the dominance of the British colonists by continuously supporting the colonial power's interests, whereas the East Indians did not<sup>8</sup>. As a result, there was no desire of the British colonizers to pose any anti-Chinese legislations as the Chinese population was the most desired and beneficial group to the British colonizers

Another striking example of the Chinese exclusion from the “imagined community” of Canada was the development of segregated areas for the Chinese to reside – Chinatowns – that both marked out their exclusion from the national community and at the same time, allowed for

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on the comparison of the Chinese and East Indian migrant experience in the West Indies, see Lee-Loy, A. (2004). *Kissing the cross: Nineteenth-century representation of Chinese and Indian immigrants In British Guiana and Trinidad*. In Wilson, A. *Introduction: New perspectives on the Caribbean Chinese* (25-40). Princeton, Nj: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Chinese businesses and living spaces to bloom<sup>9</sup>. Chinatowns in British Columbia, the province where most Chinese migrated in the 19th century, historically provide places of protection, community involvement and employment for Chinese migrants (Mar, 2007). Anderson (1991) argues that Canadian Chinatowns were shaped to fit the preference of the European society and space. She argues that, “‘Chinatown’ belongs as much to the society with the power (White majority) as it does to its residents (Anderson, 1991, p. 10). In other words, Chinatowns are spaces of social construction where it is a set of absences that in turn, reveal the biases of the dominant Anglo-Saxon settlers. Chinatowns were rooted in white racism since they came into existence at least partially because white landlords did not sell or rent their properties to Chinese merchants unless the properties were far away from the towns and cities or were in areas deemed unattractive to the Anglo-Saxon community. Residential segregation arguably happened not only as a voluntary choice on the part of the Chinese who wanted to find places where they could be safe and feel that they were part of a community, but because of hatred, racism and violence. As Anderson (1991) argues, Chinatown was created by European conceptualization of a designated, undesirable neighbourhood that is characterized by vice and unsanitary conditions inhabited by an inferior race. This racist framework was proof of European cultural hegemony that served as an excuse to allow unfair conditions for the Chinese and to deem the behavior of the Chinese as undesirable and the Chinese themselves to be an inferior race who were deemed a moral threat to the Canadian society. Thus, ‘Chinatown’ is a significant term within the Canadian media and public discourse that carries with it connotations of negativity and exoticism. The stereotypes

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on Canada’s Chinatowns see Lai, D. C. (1988). *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada* University Of British Columbia Press; Li, P. S. (1998). *The Chinese In Canada* (2nd Ed.) Oxford University Press.

and ideas surrounding Chinatown shaped and expressed wider ideas and attitudes about the Chinese in Canada.

Although Trinidad does not officially have a Chinatown, Charlotte Street in Port-of-Spain, the country's capital city is home to groceries, laundromats, bakeries, restaurants, and Chinese Associations, all owned and established by Chinese migrants<sup>10</sup>. The primary reason for having these businesses and organizations located on Charlotte Street was not due to the Chinese facing external forces from the British colonizers that excluded them from the colonial order. In fact, it was the Chinese businessmen and migrants of the 19th century, who decided to establish the Associations and businesses on Charlotte Street specifically because of the economic advantages of its location -- in the downtown area of Port-of-Spain where there is constantly heavy flows of traffic. Charlotte Street is known to be one of the busiest streets in Port-of-Spain.

Finally, it should be noted that discourses surrounding gender also played a role in excluding the Chinese from ideas of Canadian nationalism. In Canada, as in North America more broadly, Chinese men were stereotyped as deviant, "failed patriarchs and racial castrates" (Kil, 2012, p. 670). The Chinese who remained in Canada after the completion of the railways were only able to find jobs within the service sector, which were seen as 'feminized', such as laundromats, and food services, which reinforced the presumption of the failed masculinity of Chinese men. Chinese men in the Caribbean did not face similar labour constraints. They were not only involved in hard, physical labour on plantations, but their participation in the retail industry, in sectors that were not particularly perceived as

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on Trinidad's Charlotte Street, see Johnson, K. (2006). *Descendants of the dragon: the Chinese in Trinidad 1806-2006*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle.

“feminine”, suggests that there the Chinese were not necessarily subject to a similar ideas about gender.

An intersectional approach to the experience of first-generation Chinese migrants to Canada reveals multiple discourses and practices that represent the Chinese population in Canada as unable to assimilate into the settler nation. These discourses helped to construct the nation as a White community. However, in the 19th century West Indies, colonial discourses constructed the Chinese as positive additions to the colony, particularly in comparison to either the East Indians or the Afro-Caribbean populations. The experiences in both regions are similar, however, with regards to the fact the Chinese were favored by those in power for their cheap and mobile labour. Chinese migrants in North America and the West Indies were only seen as valuable in regards to the economic benefits they brought to those in power. They were not valued for what cultural influences they could bring, but rather only what they could economically contribute to benefit their host society.

In Look Lai's (2004) article on *Chinese Diaspora: An Overview*, he emphasizes, “In addition to analyzing white labour populations, local colour hierarchies or conflicts in a largely non-white colonial society (and how that) could play a quite different role in shaping the nature of the spaces open to an explanation of Chinese labourer in another context (p 4).”

An intersectional examination of the migration and settlement trends of first-generation Chinese migrants in Canada to those in Trinidad is necessary in order to contextualize the analysis of the experiences of their children – the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The 19th century experiences show how racist discourses and practices combined impacting the integration of the Chinese in both regions. This

analysis reveals that it is essential to consider the factors of racism and labour competition when considering the integration experiences of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians and their identity formation (Look Lai, 2004).

#### **4. Literature Review**

##### **i) Second-Generation Identities and Transnationalism**

For the purposes of this project, I am defining “second-generation” as the children of migrants who are born to parents where at least one of their parents are not native to the country in which the children are born. In other words, “second-generation” are children born in a host country to at least one migrant parent. For example, Chinese migrants who had first migrated to Trinidad as indentured labourers and stayed on the island would be classified as first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The children of these first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians – whether both parents are first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians or only one parent is – are, for the purposes of this research, identified as second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians.

Second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are, however, like their parents, part of a Chinese diaspora. As such, they have a “diasporic identity”. A diasporic identity forms when there is a strong presence of migrant populations in a host country (Khun Eng, 2006). A diasporic identity forms when a community of people who share the same country of origin or ancestry migrate from their original homeland and continue to maintain an active attachment to their homeland while in their host country. Individuals with diasporic identities collectively preserve and pass on the traditions, customs and cultures of their ancestral homeland even when they are settling and adjusting to their new host country. Diasporic identities are traditionally understood as a form of cultural identity, which remains unchanged and stable over time. Diasporic identities are often conflated with ethnicity as “ethnicity” is often described to be “a

sense of group belonging grounded in the idea of common ancestry, history, and culture” which is difficult to change despite the passage of time or movement of the individuals who claim the ethnic identity (Louie, 2006, p. 364).

In his seminal article “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, Stuart Hall argues for a different understanding of diasporic identities as a cultural identity that is unstable, metamorphic and contradictory (Hall, 2003). Hall claims that diasporic identity formation is both based on similarities and differences of individuals who originated from the same country. Diasporic identity formation then, allows us to have multiple ways of being and positioning ourselves, including in relation to narratives of the past. For example, for Chinese migrants to Trinidad, their diasporic identity is created by the similarities they may share with each other such as various aspects of their Chinese tradition and/or culture, sense of connection to their homeland, kinship and ancestry. The differences can include the difference of which region in China these migrants are from, the various Chinese dialects spoken and whether or not the migrant decides to interact with members of the Trinidadian community who are of different ethnicities or choose to only interact amongst other Chinese migrants. These similarities and differences help to create the diasporic identity of these Chinese individuals. If, as Hall argues, identity is a production that is always processing, never completed and always constructed from within representation but never outside of it, then diasporic identity formation will always contain a politics of identity and positioning which does not have an “absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental law of origin” (Hall, 2003, p. 237). Despite Hall’s argument for an understanding of diasporic identity as being flexible, diasporic identity continues to be primarily understood to be an identity developed in separation from the “home country”.

A “transnational identity” is the term that is used to describe an identity through which migrants are able to maintain their connections from their country of origin and host country at the same time. It differs from the traditional concept of a diasporic identity where diasporic identity is understood, as Hall argued against, to be a fixed, stable phenomenon that is marked out by an ongoing separation from “home”<sup>11</sup>. In contrast, a transnational identity is fostered by transnational connections that allow for cross border linkage of people and institutions. Transnationalism is a concept which describes how migrants live daily across borders and the ongoing relationship they have between their sending and host country. This concept “refers to the phenomenon of immigrants maintaining connections to their country of origin and using a dual frame of reference to evaluate their experiences and outcomes in the country in which they have settled” (Louie, 2006, p. 262). Transnationalism can be measured by the flows of people, capital, images and information via technology such as the internet. It is this idea of ongoing “flows” and exchanges, and of straddling borders that differentiates ideas of the transnational identity from the diasporic identity as diasporas suggest a community that is exiled, rather than connected, from its “home”.

Transnationalism has a greater influence on first-generation migrants’ construction of identity as they have a tight knit connection to the experiences of how life was in their country of origin and how life is in their host countries. However, transnationalism plays an influential, if not as important role for second-generation children, when it comes to identity formation. For second-generation children, transnational identity formation is often negotiated through practices

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<sup>11</sup> The construction of diasporas can be seen as positive for migrants in the sense that it fosters a sense of connection and belonging to their homeland. However, the discourses of diasporas can also create the experience of displacement in the new homeland. For more information on diasporas, see Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302-338.

such as back and forth movements between the country where they were born and raised and the homeland of their parent(s), sending/receiving of remittances, and an interest in business and involvement with politics of the country of origin of their parent(s) (Louie, 2006). Second-generation children rely on the lived experiences of transnationalism to have a more clear understanding of their cultures of origin in order to identify and select what values and aspects of their cultures and ethnicity form their identity.

Second-generation individuals' transnational connections to their ethnic and cultural identities of origin can be fostered in a variety of ways. One such method is to turn existing family ties that these second-generation children have into meaningful social relationships (Haikkola, 2011). Examples of these meaningful social relationships include gathering for traditional family events or celebrations, cultural ceremonies, and holidays. Creating meaningful relationships with family and friends allows for the transnational feelings of attachment and belonging to a family, ethnic and cultural history to develop. Returning to the parent(s)' country of origin can also play a significant role in creating a transnational connection for second-generation children. Visiting their parents' country of origin allows second-generation children to build a personal relationship with their parents' ethnic culture, traditions and connections to the places and people of where their parents grew up. These experiences help form a transnational identity (Haikkola, 2011).

Other social contexts such as ethnic enclaves can also play an important role in allowing second-generation individuals to develop transnational practices and/or orientation (Louie, 2006). This is due to the fact that these enclaves create realistic 'imagined communities' that resemble the first-generation community's country of origin. Constituent structures within ethnic enclaves include ethnic grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants and clothing stores which carry

items unique to the country of origin which would not be sold in general stores. These stores allow for second-generation individuals to have access to items that may, at one time, only have been available in the country of origin, but because of globalization and transnationalism, are now available elsewhere.

Furthermore, for second-generation individuals to identify with their parental country of origin and to fully participate in their ethnic society, requires a certain level of fluency in the language of that ethnicity (Louie, 2006). The family unit serves as an important link for ensuring that this fluency occurs. If there lacks a dialogue in the ethnic language between the parent and child, this would account for the loss of the ethnic language for these second-generation individuals. According to Louie's (2006) study of second-generation Chinese-Americans, the loss of the ethnic language resulted in a loss of understanding the general history of the parental homeland and family histories.

The concept of dissonant acculturation is essential to discuss regarding the maintenance of a Chinese dialect for second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians as a majority are not able to speak or communicate in the first language of their Chinese parents(s). Dissonant acculturation describes the "language maintenance and language shift across two generations in many immigrant families (Zhang, 2010, p. 42). For first-generation parents and their second-generation children, dissonant acculturation occurs when second-generation children adapt and integrate into the country to which their parents migrated and where they were born and are categorized as the second-generation. These children are able to quickly integrate into the culture and language(s) as opposed to their first-generation parents. Therefore, this may lead to a loss of their ethnic identity, which would have been passed down by their parents. Language maintenance in this context is whether second-generation children are able to preserve the ethnic language of

their parent(s). Certain factors account for language maintenance, or more specifically, for the purposes of this study, the maintenance of a parent's mother tongue. According to Zhang (2010) the continuity of language for the second-generation also relies on "the face of competition from a regionally and socially powerful or numerically stronger language" (p. 43). If there exists a dominant language different from the parent's ethnic language, second-generation children may be discouraged from maintaining their parent(s)' ethnic language due to their determination of how important or helpful they feel that language may be for the individual in their social, economic and political spheres in society. As a result, language shift, which is a "change from habitual use of one's minority language to that of a more dominant language under pressures of assimilation from the dominant group" (Zhang, 2010, p. 43), may be more common among second-generation individuals when their parent(s)' ethnic language is not that of the dominant group in the second-generation individual's country of origin. Nevertheless, knowledge of a parent's ethnic language is important when it comes to understanding the meanings behind the traditions, cultures and material objects of one's ethnicity and is therefore an important means of establishing the transnational connections that create transnational identities (Louie, 2006).

Some of the debates in the field of second-generation identity argue that in order for these individuals to relate to the culture and ethnic identity of their parent(s), there needs to be a high influence and desire of their families to pass on culture and traditions to these second-generation children. In addition, the level of connection to the homeland and ancestry of first-generation parents play an important role in the transnational and ethnic identity of their second-generation children. If these first-generation parents cling strongly to their culture and traditions, these would get passed down to their children. For example, if speaking a particular Chinese dialect is important within the household to first-generation Chinese migrants in Trinidad, they would

highly encourage their second-generation children to understand and learn the language. However, if these parents become more integrated into Trinidadian society, and the maintenance of their Chinese dialect is not of importance, it is not likely that their children would be speaking the dialect. As a result, this would push second-generation individuals to integrate more into the Trinidadian society, because they do not share strong connections to that of their Chinese identity.

## **ii) Creolization in Trinidad**

Creole is a term that came from the sixteenth century New World Spanish word of ‘criollo’ which means “a committed [white European] settler, one which is identified in the area of settlement” (Ballengee, 2013, p. 210). Creole came to mean an individual of European descent who was born within New World colonies, such as in the West Indies. Eventually, in Trinidad, the term “creole” began to mean someone who has foreign origins but has now been localized and blended within society. It also suggested cultural hybridity, that is, the intermingling of cultural phenomena (religious, linguistic, etc.) amongst locals that occurred as the various ethnic groups who entered Trinidad to meet the labour demands of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century interacted with each other. It also can suggest mixed-race. Brathwaite (1995) claims that it was the “intimate area of sexual relationships [between various ethnic groups where] . . . the greatest damage was done to white Creole apartheid policy and where the most significant—and lasting—inter-cultural creolization took place” (p. 203).

For the purposes of this paper, I use the term “creole” to refer to both a locally forged culture where two or more different cultures produce a new blended and distinct society within the West Indies and to suggest racial hybridity created by interracial liaisons. Creolization can therefore be considered to be the adaption to the New World and the intertwining of different

cultures and languages; that is, the integration of the various ethnicities who settled in Trinidad to create a unique Trinidadian identity involving the fusion of multicultural and multiethnic identities from the original Trinidadian Indigenous population, African, East Indian, Chinese, and Europeans who have migrated and settled in Trinidad. In Trinidad, I associate creolization with integration as it is the process by which an individual is accepted as a contributor to the broader community regardless of social status or ethnicity<sup>12</sup>. Thus, for the Chinese in Trinidad, creolization is understood to be a process in which the second-generation may have a distinct ethnic appearance and may have retained some traditional Chinese cultural practices, but the culture that they participated in is, for the most part, that of the culturally blended dominant culture.

Creolization of the Chinese in Trinidad is generally associated with second-generation Chinese Trinidadians and with divisions in the Chinese community. In Trinidad, Chinese communities are divided by categories of social class status, generation (for example China-born and Trinidadian-born), and place of origin in China (Ho, 1989). The segmentation between China-born and Trinidadian-born in Trinidad created a segregation in which those who are born in China view those who are Trinidadian born as being too westernized (Ho, 1989). According to the article “Hold the Chow Mein, Gimme Soca”, the China-born community also viewed women who were locally born in Trinidad to be less frugal, industrious, and self-sacrificing in comparison to women who were born in China (Ho, 1989). Ho (1989) argues that the segregation between China-born and Trinidadian-born Chinese, as well as social class divisions,

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on creolization, see Ballengee, C. L. (2017). *Tales, tunes, and tassa drums: Retention and invention in Indo-Caribbean music*. Chico: California Folklore Society; Brathwaite, E.K (1995). Creolization in Jamaica. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (p. 202-205). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Routledge. The term ‘creolization’ in this paper is to be distinguished from the term ‘creolité’ which is defined more specially as arts aesthetics and literature developed by the French Creole population within the West Indies. See also Chamoiseau, P., Confiant, R., Bernabé, J., & Taylor, L. (1997). *Créolité bites* Duke University Press.

discouraged the Trinidadian-born second-generation population from maintaining Chinese traditions and encouraged them to engage in the process of creolization. As Ho puts it, the second-generation Chinese “could care less about China” (Ho, 1989, p. 11). As a result of being disconnected from their own Chinese population, the Chinese who were locally born in Trinidad (and some Chinese migrants) focused on the importance of obtaining a western education and blending in with different cultures of Trinidad (that is, of creolizing) in order to move up the social ladder (Ho, 1989). The difference between the Trinidadian-born Chinese pursuit of creolization and those of the first-generation China-born immigrants must also be attributed to other factors, such as language barriers and the first-generation’s focus on obtaining financial security, which left them with very minimal to no interest in being engaged in Creole culture or society (Johnson, 2006).

Despite the fact that there were few incentives or opportunities for first-generation Chinese to become creolized, it would be inaccurate to claim that first-generation creolization did not exist. During the introduction of the Chinese to Trinidad as indentured labourers prior to slave emancipation, there were also many Chinese who were involved in the process of creolization. Chinese creolization was facilitated at least partially due to the absences of Chinese women in Trinidad. Many Chinese men formed sexual liaisons with the African slave women, which resulted in a population of creolized children. These relationships encouraged the process of Chinese creolization in Trinidad, as there was an emergence of a population of individuals who were creolized in the sense of being both mixed-raced and of mixed cultural background. These second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians also absorbed the creole side of their culture through institutions such as schools, neighbourhood peer groups and their mothers who are predominantly not of Chinese ethnicity (Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, the comparatively long

gap between the original 1806 migration of Chinese and the so-called first wave of Chinese immigration in the 1850s suggests that, with neither a large nor renewing community of Chinese in the island, those Chinese that remained would become creolized simply as a matter of survival.

The perception of the Chinese migrants in various regions of the West Indies was not uniform. In some locations, like Jamaica, the locals often perceived the Chinese as negative introductions to the community<sup>13</sup>. In Trinidad, the Chinese communities did not experience the levels of violence that Chinese in other areas, particularly Jamaica, sometimes had to overcome, such as riots directed against them. Trinidad also did not establish exclusionary anti-Chinese legislation as occurred in Jamaica. It has been argued that this lack of violence was due to the high levels of Chinese creolization in Trinidad (Ho, 1989). The early creolization of the Chinese in Trinidad may have a part to play in what is understood to be the comparatively high levels of creolization on the part of the Chinese community in Trinidad.

### **iii) Chinese Associations and Cultural Identity**

The family unit has always played an important role in preserving the ethnicity and culture of Overseas Chinese populations; however, as Chinese migration often involves individuals as opposed to family units, the activities of the family unit in preserving cultural identity have often

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<sup>13</sup>A small number of Chinese migrants arrived to Jamaica in 1854 as labourers in the agricultural production sector; but the Chinese in Jamaica arrived in large numbers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and soon were known for dominating the grocery retail trade and became widely known as 'shopkeepers'. During World War I, the Jamaican population encountered wartime inflation and food shortages (Lee-Loy, 2015). As a result, the Chinese population was blamed for increasing prices of commodity which served as the basis and justification for an increased amount of violence directed towards the Chinese community that eventually led to what is known as the 1918 Anti-Chinese Riots in Jamaica. See also, Lee-Loy, A. (2003). '... The Chinese are preferred to all others': Nineteenth-century representations of the Chinese in Trinidad and British Guiana. *Asian Studies Review*, 27(2), 205-225; Lee-Loy, A. (2010). Unfinished synthesis: Georg Simmel's adventure, two Chinese Jamaican migration narratives, and the negotiation of modern identity. *Caribbean Studies*, 38(1), 147-167; Lee-Loy, A. (2015). World war I's "exciting effects": The construction of Chineseness and Jamaica's 1918 anti-Chinese riots. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 61(4), 40-60,163; Lee-Loy, A. (2015). An antiphonal announcement: Jamaica's anti-Chinese legislation in transnational context. *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 18(2), 141-162.

extended to Chinese Voluntary Associations (the “Chinese Associations”) in the new host countries (Bohr, 2004). For the Chinese, the Voluntary Association (also known as *shetuan*) has been defined as “any public, formally constituted and non-commercial organization of which membership is optional, within a particular society” (Liu, 1998, p. 582). Chinese Associations can be found in any area in which Overseas Chinese populations reside<sup>14</sup>. It has been argued these organizations are a response to the emphasis on kinship in Chinese culture as the Associations become a means of creating close knit communities in the new host country and of holding on to traditional Chinese culture and practices. Current research on the role of Chinese Associations in the lives of Chinese migrants has shown that the main objectives of Chinese Associations is to preserve ethnic solidarity and maintain close networks for economic, social and political purposes (Liu, 1998). There is, however, other research that suggests that the community leaders of Overseas Chinese communities, who are also known as “neo-kapitans”, who initially set up Chinese Associations did so for not only the maintenance of the Chinese culture, but also their own economic self-interests (Liu, 1998). Such research brings into question what the actual purpose and objectives of Chinese Associations really are, and whether these associations are for culture preservation or for individual economic gains. Both streams of research can help provide a better understanding as to whether Chinese Associations are helping

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<sup>14</sup> For sources discussing Overseas Chinese Associations see, Bohr, A. C. (2004). Identity in transition: Chinese community associations in Jamaica. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 50(2), 44-73; Khun Eng, K. (2006). Transnational self in the Chinese diaspora: A conceptual framework. *Asian Studies Review*, 30(3), 223-239; Liu, H. (1998). Old linkages, new networks: The globalization of overseas Chinese voluntary associations and its implications. *The China Quarterly*, (155), 582-609; Tan Tsu Wee, T. (1985). Political modernization and traditional Chinese voluntary association: A Singapore case study. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 13(1), 67-79.

to push second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians into the greater society or pulling them in to maintain Chinese traditions and culture.

Traditionally, Overseas Chinese Associations act as a governing body for Chinese migrants in their new countries. They establish written duties and responsibilities for their members that create a sense of duty and obligation to other members of the Association which, in turn, helps to create a common identity and sense of community amongst the migrants (Liu, 1998). Chinese Associations provided social services, maintained cultural and traditional practices, and negotiated and protected members from threatening or competing outside forces (Bohr, 2004). In short, these institutions helped to advocate and represent on behalf of the Chinese community within the larger community and also provided support for adjusting to a new society. Also important, Chinese Associations allowed its leaders to have opportunities to participate in local political and business systems and to provide a connection to China (Bohr, 2004). It is no wonder that the Chinese Association, along with Chinese schools and newspapers, are known as one of the major social pillars that support Overseas Chinese communities.

Both Liu (1998) and Bohr (2004) have shown that, in addition to facilitating social connections amongst its members, Chinese Associations also provide contacts and build trust amongst Chinese businessmen. Establishing trust between Chinese businessmen in the new country decreases the costs of business transactions and organizes dependable information of individuals' credibility and reputation. Liu discovered that it is the mutual trust and obligations within clan memberships fostered in Chinese Associations that holds multinational reliability for Chinese businessmen. Furthermore, Liu found that these Associations also facilitated

investments and charitable organizations and provided cultural agency in the formulation of identities.

Liu's research also outlines the significance of Chinese Associations as a result of globalization with regards to international influences and developments of organizations. According to Liu, globalization provided the opportunity for cultures and traditions to be promoted and preserved by Chinese Associations; that is to say, Chinese Associations played a role in creating an imagined perception of a homeland for members of the Overseas Chinese diaspora. For example, the frequent and massive arrangements of meetings between different Chinese Associations internationally allowed for international recognition and networking, but also created opportunities to showcase food festivals, and other traditions such as folkloric dancing that may have gone extinct any other way (Liu, 1998). Hosting international Chinese Association conventions allows for the remembrance, renewal and reinforcement of a collective past and current present of Chinese diasporas, albeit through the acts of romanticizing a particular dialect or region of China (Liu, 1998); or as Bohr (2004) puts it, Chinese Associations "sought to keep the Chinese, Chinese" (p. 57). The desire to "keep the Chinese, Chinese" exhibited by members of Chinese Associations also facilitates informal types of relationships between Overseas Chinese communities that are based on family, personal ties and ties to their *qiaoxiang*, the ancestral hometowns of the Overseas Chinese communities (also known as the *huaqiao*). In terms of financial networks, the Overseas Chinese Associations also provided economic benefits not only directly to the Chinese diasporas but also to their *qiaoxiang*.

Overseas Chinese Associations can be categorized into two general types of organizations: Chinese Associations from the experiences that are based from China; and Associations that are constructed based on a non-Chinese model. More specifically, within the

Chinese diaspora in the West Indies, there exists three types of Chinese Associations. First, there exists the classic migrant place of origin Associations. This type of Association is well established throughout diasporic communities, especially in Trinidad (Pan & Chinese Chinese Heritage Center (Singapore), 1998). To seek membership in this type of Association requires the individual to be a descendent of that particular province in China. For example, if you are a descendant from the Toy Shan province in China, you would be accepted as a member of the Toy Shan Association. The second type of Chinese Association is the ‘origin-based’ organizations. They are inclusive in that they accept Chinese people of any Chinese region to obtain membership. The final type of Chinese Association may be officially titled “Chinese” in form, but may not be only representing Chinese members. For example, although the organization is characterized as a ‘Chinese Association’, it does not strictly provide services and participation for only Chinese members. These Associations also welcome individuals of other ethnicities to use the facilities and services of the organization.

In Trinidad, there exists five Chinese Associations: the Taishan Association, the San Wui Association, the Sam Yup Association, the Chung Shan Association and the Fui Toong On Association (all require you to be a descendant of that province in China in order to obtain membership). In addition, there is the Chinese Society and Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago that are organizations that branched from the Associations but contain a more loose federation. Those who are elected as leaders of a Chinese Association in Trinidad automatically become a figure of influence who also serves as the representative for the internal politics of the Chinese community (Bohr, 2004).

As with Chinese Associations elsewhere, Chinese Associations in the West Indies assist in the maintenance of ethnic solidarity and provide networking for Chinese migrants in terms of

economic, political and social spheres (Bohr, 2004). However, it has also been argued that Chinese Associations can also create barriers to integration by keeping the Chinese communities separated from other ethnic groups (Bohr 2004; Tan Tsu Wee, 1985).

Paradoxically, the Chinese Association in Jamaica was said to both promote Chinese ethnic solidarity and encourage acculturation into the creole culture in Jamaican society (Bohr, 2004). Acculturation is defined as a process in which there is an adoption of the cultural traits and/or social patterns of another group, in this case the acculturation of creole Jamaican culture. It is argued that there are three essential factors that demonstrate acculturation on part of the Overseas Chinese diasporas in Jamaica that also applies to Trinidad (Bohr, 2004). The first factor is an increase in the loss of Chinese dialects. In the West Indian colonies of Jamaica and Trinidad, where English is the official language, migrants would be encouraged to learn to speak and communicate in English if they want to be able to economically, politically and socially participate in the wider society. This dissuades Chinese migrants from continuing to speak a Chinese dialect and encourages them instead, to learn to speak and communicate in English. The second factor pertaining to the acculturation of the Chinese in the West Indies is connected to their migratory history. Because early migration of Chinese to the West Indies was predominantly male and included very scarce amounts of Chinese women, there was an increase of interracial marriages and liaisons between Chinese men and local women which contributed to both the acculturation of Chinese migrants and to their creolization and that of their children. Lastly, the final factor contributing to Chinese acculturation into the wider West Indian society is creolization, the process which created communities that were culturally creolized; communities where cultures, traditions and languages are blended together and where the existence of a 'pure' ethnicity is said to be going extinct (Bohr, 2004).

I would argue that the Chinese Associations of Trinidad promote segregation, rather than integration, of the Chinese community from the wider society. This is because the majority of Chinese Associations in Trinidad are based on the affiliation to specific provinces in China (i.e., the Chung Shan province has the Chung Shan Association of Trinidad). Therefore only individuals who are descendants of that particular province can become members, which creates a segregated community even within the broad Chinese community. By doing so, individuals who are not from the specific provinces of China in which established Associations in Trinidad would not be able to join and may not want to join the more general China Society or Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago. This focus on affiliation with a specific province can discourage the participation of Trinidadians with Chinese descent to seek membership, and with membership, and ability to learn and connect more to their Chinese identity, and encourages them to identify with and integrate into the wider creole Trinidadian society.

The literature on Chinese Associations amongst the Overseas Chinese also reveals that one of the limitations that occurs when examining Chinese Associations is that the increasing globalization of these Associations is rarely discussed in the English-speaking world and has not received any systematic scrutiny by academics (Liu, 1998). In addition, current research suggests that Chinese Associations have limited emotional and practical appeal to the younger Overseas Chinese generations. For example, Liu's (1998) research reveals that younger generations of Overseas Chinese (such as second and third generations) who obtain membership within a Chinese Association primarily participate for the benefits of business opportunities and not for the purpose of preserving the Chinese tradition and culture. As a result, concerns have been raised that Chinese Associations could become extinct; particularly since the central issue that many Chinese Associations are involved with is to help organize funerals (as the first-generation

of Chinese migrants are getting older, many already deceased) and ancestral worshipping (Liu, 1998). Thus, as second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are not a primary concern of the Chinese Association, this may implicitly be the Association's attempt to encourage the second-generation to integrate into the wider society instead.

## **5. Methodology**

### **i) Research Questions and Ethics**

This research took a qualitative approach that involved examining various secondary sources on Chinese Associations in Trinidad and interviews with members of Chinese Associations in Trinidad. The qualitative approach was best suited for this research due to the fact that the research process involved an evolving set of questions and response tactics instead of having a fixed plan which quantitative research comprises of (Locke, Silverman & Spirduso 2010). As per Maxwell's (2009) definition of a case study, this research used a case study design involving one sample of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians participants who are members of a Chinese Association and makes generalizations about the experiences of the second-generation Chinese based on the data collected from my participants. A case study is a form of qualitative research involving an ethnographic group (second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians), and investigating a single phenomenon (whether Chinese Associations facilitate integration into the wider society). Therefore, I believe it was most appropriate to approach this research using the techniques of a case study. As there has been very limited amounts of scholarly literature regarding Chinese Associations in Trinidad and/or Tobago and more specifically the Associations' relationships with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, the case study approach fills an important gap in knowledge of how some second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians negotiate their identities, as well as how Chinese Associations function on the

island. The research proposal was vetted and passed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board.

The goal of the interviews was to allow second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians a voice in articulating narratives of identity formation and the sense of belonging amongst the Chinese in Trinidad. Twelve voluntary semi-structured questions were posed at the interviews. The questions were open-ended to allow participants to discuss or not discuss topics such as stereotypes that may exist about Chinese people in Trinidad that reveal a general idea of how the Chinese in Trinidad have been characterized and how this may influence the second-generation's sense of 'Chineseness'. Other questions involve discussions of what events Chinese Associations had in place for these participants to see how much of an impact and effort Chinese Associations may have for these second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The interviews provided a platform for individual participants to provide insights on both how they experience and perceive Chinese and Trinidadian culture, how they identify themselves and the role that Chinese Associations play in their integration into Trinidadian society. The interviews conducted with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians provided a wide scope of various levels of experiences and knowledge of Chinese Associations and the Chinese culture. The information obtained allowed the research of Chinese Associations to be seen from different perspectives but also provide a general viewpoint of where the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian population stands in regards to the organization and operation of Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago. The shared and collected information generously provided by each participant is kept strictly confidential in this research.

## **ii) Researcher Experience**

I am a second-generation Chinese and Vietnamese Canadian. I was interested in conducting research on Chinese-Trinidadians in part, because I believe there already exists ample amounts of research and literature available discussing Chinese migration to North America and other parts of Asia. I am very interested in learning about the migration of Chinese populations to other parts of the world, specifically to the West Indies as there are so many diverse West Indian cultures. I decided to conduct interviews with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to gain more knowledge on how they have shaped their identities and perceive Chinese culture through the use of Chinese Associations. I am also interested in discovering whether these Associations are driving second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to integrate into the great Trinidadian society.

In addition, Chinese populations are generally not the first group of people that are discussed when talking about West Indian cultures. Even though they remain a very small population today within Trinidad and the Caribbean islands, they continue to play a very important role in the social, political and economic atmospheres. In the West Indies, the Chinese historically accounted for 1% of the total population, while Africans and East Indians each respectively represent 40% of the total population (Yamamoto, 2008). To this day, Chinese populations in the West Indies remain as a small minority. Even though they account for such a miniscule portion of the West Indian population, the Chinese community played and continues to play a very influential role in maintaining economic power (Yamamoto, 2008). This includes having a strong presence in opening up businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries and laundromats. Therefore, I wanted to shed some light on the topic of Chinese migration and settlement to other parts of the world, and the influences of Chinese culture and traditions in their

destination countries. I hope that this research will lead into many discussions of the experience of Chinese Caribbean people, as well as research into subsequent Chinese generations that have become creolized into their host country.

### **iii) Selection and Recruitment**

The criteria for selecting the target group required participants to be over the age of 18, identify as a second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian (having at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago) and to be active members/participants of a Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago. It is important to note that traditionally, Chinese Associations only granted membership to Chinese-Trinidadians who are deemed 'pure' Chinese. 'Pure' Chinese would be defined as anyone who was born and raised in China or, for second-generation Chinese, individuals who were descended from two China-born parents. But today, Chinese Association allow individuals who are not of 'pure' Chinese descent to obtain membership. The sample size of the research interview was idiographic, as it is a small set of cases that provides the ability to create cross-case generalizations (Robinson, 2014). Participants included five second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians from the Chung Shan Association and the Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago. Three of the five participants were identified as half Chinese; two of the five participants were identified as 'pure' Chinese. 'HalfChinese' in this research will define anyone who has one parent who originated from China (first-generation Chinese migrants to Trinidad); 'pure Chinese' is anyone who has both parents who originated from China and moved to Trinidad. Interviews took place in the city of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The interviews were conducted in English, permitting only participants who are fluent in English to be interviewed. The reason for only having English speakers participate was to allow the responses that were collected from participants to be analyzed without the need of a

translation and the help of a translator. As English is the official language spoken in Trinidad, the probability of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians being fluent English speakers is very likely. Therefore, I believe that limiting the recruitment of participants who are able to speak English fluently did not limit candidates from participating.

Recruitment was obtained by the distribution of recruitment flyers in the Associations by the help of my recruitment gatekeeper-- an individual who is from an organization that can aid to provide channels of communication and networks by helping to publicize the research study (Robinson, 2014), and through the technique of snowball sampling (referral chain), which asked participants to recommend other voluntary participants who would qualify for participation. The selection and recruitment of participants was based on convenience sampling strategy. This strategy is based on a selection of participants who conveniently match the criteria outlined (Robinson, 2014). Interviews were conducted based on a first-come first-serve basis as the interviews were held abroad and I had a limited timeframe to be in Trinidad and recruit participants. Although convenience sampling is a strategy commonly used in quantitative and not qualitative research, for my qualitative research, this strategy is most effective because convenience sampling encourages a specific sampling. As a result of the limited time I had in Trinidad and because my research is geographically and demographically specific, convenience sampling allowed the research I retrieved and conducted to be on a local scale (Robinson, 2014).

Participants who were interested and contacted me to be interviewed were given a consent form and letter of introduction (See Appendix I and Appendix V). I also allocated one business day after giving participants the consent form to review and pose questions or concerns if they had any, prior to signing the form and conducting the interview. The interviews were conducted over a four-week time span. Interviews took place in private reserved study rooms at

public libraries in Port-of-Spain, each taking approximately one hour to complete. To protect the participants' privacy, interviews were spaced out to limit the possibility of participants bumping into each other. As an additional measure to protect participants' privacy, interviews were held at different library locations lessening the likelihood that participants would run into each other.

Some of the questions asked included: What is your perception of Chinese Associations? What services/events does the Chinese Association offer to you? Does it play an important aspect in your day-to-day life? By being a member of a Chinese Association, do you think it helped to strengthen your 'Chinese identity'? A total of twelve open-ended interview questions were posed to each participant voluntarily (see Appendix IV). Participants had the right to refuse to respond to any questions they felt uncomfortable answering.

#### **iv) Data Collection, Validity and Reflexivity**

All interviews were semi-structured. Identities of every participant were kept confidential and remain anonymous within this research, following the guidelines laid out by Ryerson's Research Ethics Board (REB). Each participant received a copy of his or her signed consent forms. Interview notes were safely kept on a hard drive in an encrypted file on a locked laptop. Hard copies of the consent forms are kept in a locked file cabinet at Ryerson University.

As this major research paper is based on qualitative research involving interviews with members of the Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago, a content analysis was conducted to identify common themes surrounding the interviews. Content analysis was an appropriate means of identifying themes in the literature on the Chinese in Trinidad and Chinese Associations more generally. When extracting research information from various pieces of literature such as scholarly textbooks, journals and articles, I attempted to code these materials using manifest content as the manifest content approach examines "what the text says, deals with

the content aspect and describes the visible, obvious components” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 106). The pieces of literature referenced in this research are invaluable information supporting my claims regarding the themes and reasons as to whether Chinese Associations helped to foster integration.

The use of literature and in-person interviews conducted and examined through a content analysis strategy helped to develop general themes in relation to second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians and their opinions on Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago in relation to identity formation and integration. Incorporating both a literature review and interviews allows for a greater amount of validity. As Kvale (1995) states, the “concept of validity indicates a firm boundary line between truth and non-truth” (p. 21). Therefore, by providing support from different forms of information, the research methodology helps to defy the correspondence criterion of truth of the knowledge and how it would correspond objectively to the world (Kvale, 1995). The correspondence criterion is one of the three classical criteria of measuring truth and validity within philosophy.

Moreover, this research methodology helps to prove the validity of my research findings by examining the results in relation to the discourses, themes, statements and content found in the work of other researchers (Kvale, 1995). In any research paper and interview, it is of significance for the writer and researcher to acknowledge the importance of reflexivity. According to Berger (2015), “reflexivity is commonly viewed as a process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome” (p. 220). Reflexivity contributes to also self-examining and self-appraisal, which allows me to recognize and take on the responsibility of the position I am situated within the

research. Reflexivity allows me to recognize that self-identifying myself as a second-generation Chinese-Canadian individual may have had an effect on how my interview participants responded to questions, the quality of the data collected, and how it will be interpreted. For example, although I only conducted interviews with second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian members from Chinese Associations, I have to acknowledge the fact that I may receive a more honest and in-depth answer to my research questions than other non-Chinese researchers in this field because my interview participants and I share a similar ethnic and racial background. Participants may have experienced a sense of familiarity with me due to our sharing a common ethnicity. It is important as the researcher and interviewer to remember that I may be perceived to share similar experiences that the participants may have and this may have caused participants to feel comfortable and confident.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

The following section will discuss themes uncovered from the interviews conducted. The interpretations of the data retrieved from participants' responses occur when it is attached to the meaning and significance of what is being analyzed (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Each theme discussed will be a subtopic in this section based on the responses of participants corresponding to the questions asked.

### **i. Construction of Chinese Identity**

*-Before, there was a big stereotype that we (Chinese people) eat dogs. I grew up in the South of Trinidad, but Chinese tend to stay in Port-of-Spain, the West side of Trinidad. The Chinese people from the South are different from those in the West and North. Chinese in the North and West act more Americanized than in the South. It was also believed that all Chinese in Trinidad knew kung fu, and [were] related to either Bruce Lee, Jet Li or Jackie Chan. In terms of integration and made up knowledge about Chinese people there were a lot; we have nine lives, we don't die, that we are cheap.*

The response of the participants to questions regarding stereotypes of the Chinese indicates that there is some ambivalence as to whether the Chinese are seen by non-Chinese Trinidadian as being fully Trinidadian. In other words, the stereotypes of the Chinese identified by the participants show an awareness of the Chinese as distinct from – that is, not integrated with – the overall Trinidadian community. Other stereotypes believed to be held about the Chinese in Trinidad identified in this research are that the Chinese are exclusive – they tend to stick to their own ethnic group; they are passive and also cheap; and, particularly if they are ‘pure’ Chinese and not creolized, they must come from rich families and therefore have a high status in Trinidad. This latter stereotype is based on another stereotype -- that the majority of Chinese migrants that came to Trinidad own restaurants, laundromats, and supermarkets. Respondents also indicated that non-Chinese-Trinidadians see the Chinese-Trinidadian community as very traditional and suggested that this belief created an increasing level of separation between Chinese-Trinidadians and the wider Trinidadian society

Racial stereotypes are an important means of categorizing people into distinct ethnicities. These categories are understood to be stable and ignore the fact that individuals who are stereotyped can hold multiple identifications beyond their ethnicity or racial identity. Additionally, in this case, racial stereotypes also identified Chinese-Trinidadians, regardless of whether they were first-generation or second-generation as different from other Trinidadians. For second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, stereotypes of the Chinese can be difficult to cope with because they are generally negative, especially for those who are only half Chinese, but find themselves still subject to the same negative stereotyping that a ‘pure’ Chinese person may experience. Additionally, based on how they were raised in Trinidad and the amount of Chinese

influence they have in their lives, individuals associated with Chinese stereotypes may not actually have a personal attachment to Chinese culture or traditions.

*-When I was a child, I was often called 'Chinee boy' even though I was only half Chinese. It was because I had slanted eyes which are stereotyped to be Chinese style eyes. However I could not speak a Chinese dialect nor knew much about Chinese culture or tradition. Growing up, it's not that we detached ourselves from our Chinese heritage by only identifying as Trinidadian. It still remains a part of our culture, but it is not dominant. Chinese heritage is something I picked up at home, for example seeing what my parents do more than them actually teaching us. We have not detached ourselves; it's just not a great influence as much as Trinidad culture itself.*

Despite the fact that stereotypes of the Chinese identified Chinese individuals as distinct from other Trinidadians, a majority of participants mentioned that while they were growing up, they were identified as and called Chinese, however, once transitioning out of the adolescent phase they had more control over their identity and self-identified as Trinidadian. Interestingly, participants who are only half Chinese (having one parent who is first-generation Chinese and migrated to Trinidad) stated that the only times they identified themselves as Chinese-Trinidadian is when they are usually outside of Trinidad such as in North America. In these instances, due to the fact that they may have distinct Chinese features or because they have a Chinese last name, these participants would have to explain their ethnicities and do so by identifying as Chinese-Trinidadians.

This research finds that, second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, regardless of whether they are 'non-pure' or pure Chinese self-identify themselves as Trinidadian. These individuals do recognize that there exists a distinct 'Chinese' identity and still place importance on their Chinese culture; however, Chinese-Trinidadians also expressed a desire to differentiate themselves from the negative stereotypes of the Chinese that exist in Trinidad and sought integration, that is claiming a Trinidadian identity, as a means of doing so. Chinese Associations do not appear to have taken a role in challenging these stereotypes in the broader society. In not

doing so, they may unintentionally contribute to the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians attempts at integration.

## **ii. Restrictions of a Chinese Identity**

This section of analysis will explore how participants view Chinese Associations and the roles these organizations have played, if any, for each participant's sense of cultural identity. Three of the five participants are members of the Chung Shan Association of Trinidad and Tobago. The remaining two participants are members of the Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Chung Shan Association of Trinidad and Tobago was established in 1958. The organization represents the Chung Shan province of China located South of Canton. There are approximately one hundred Chinese-Trinidadians who identify as being members or having connections with this Association. The Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago was founded in 1945. What is interesting about this Association is that it does not have any specific attachment or affiliation with any particular district or region of China, therefore individuals who cannot establish the distinct province in China from which their ancestors originated have the opportunity to be a part of a Chinese Association. This Chinese Association provides cultural, social, educational and economic services for the Chinese-Trinidadian community and this role was recognized by one participant:

*-I spent my entire life in the Chinese Association, in terms of meetings and being part of it. It is very segregated. The only experiences that Chinese Associations taught me were things like the dragon dances, martial arts demonstrations, the food... Growing up in the South of Trinidad, we were the only Chinese family at that time...so I didn't have much to relate to. Learning the Chinese culture was only through what my father knew, which were tidbits of information.*

One participant stated that the Chinese Associations claimed to help and provide settlement services for new migrants, who have become members in a Association. These members must, however, follow the rules and restrictions of the Association -- and to identify as Chinese -- to access these supports. The participant suggested that these requirements create a sense of a loss of freedom as members must follow what the Association sets out in order for them to be provided with help or a service. Four out of the five participants state that membership in their Association creates a feeling of imprisonment and led to their disinterest in the Association and to the Association's idea of what it means to be Chinese.

In addition to restrictive rules established in the Chinese Association, other expectations of what it means to "be Chinese" that are felt to be restrictive come from the parents of these second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. Many first-generation parents, especially if both parents are first-generation Chinese migrants to Trinidad, expect their children to marry someone who is also of Chinese descent. Those who choose to marry outside their ethnic circle tend to be rejected by their parents. Participants in this study suggested that these expectations and restrictions created a loss of identification with the Chinese community on the part of second-generation Chinese. Second-generation Chinese expressed that they do not feel like they belong in the Chinese Associations, that they resent the restrictions on how they are expected to act, and believe that the limited idea of their Chinese identity fostered through the Associations is one that is only just imaginary. Therefore, they seek other ways of identifying themselves that are less restrictive. As one participant claims:

*-After awhile [in the Chinese Association] it feels like in a prison... Chinese here tend to stay home or stick to only the Chinese community. They try to implement restrictions and rules which make younger generation just want to leave the community on the whole. Parents reject those who marry outside of the culture. There is a lost sense of togetherness, I feel like I don't belong. Its almost like its imaginary...*

*-Chinese Associations want you to stick to the old ways, which are the traditions and culture, and to an extent characteristics and personalities that first-generation Chinese migrants brought with them to Trinidad. I am not a migrant from China... I am a Trini with Chinese descent. But for me as a member in the Association I have to act like them? Not happening. Even when the migrants settled here, they started to change and adapt to Trinidad and interact with other ethnicities... we are so diverse now how can you tell me to be only one ethnicity when Trinidad is creolized, we are all multicultural and multiethnic.*

Due to the fact that the wider Trinidadian society is creolized -- having one unique sense of nationhood that is a combination of multicultural and multiethnic identities rather than a restrictive ethnic-based identity such as that perpetrated by the Chinese Associations -- second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians expressed feeling more comfortable and included in the identity of “Trinidadian” rather than “Chinese”.

Chinese Associations have also helped foster a stagnant and restrictive idea of Chineseness in their membership practices. Traditionally, Chinese Associations resisted granting membership to individuals who were not ‘pure’ Chinese.

*-Chinese Associations cannot be strictly Chinese nowadays, they are now realizing...now accepting the reality of a multicultural society. Unfortunately, this realization was by force and not by the Association's' own will. Many of us decided to not stick with the Chinese community. A lot of the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are creole; there is a very small population of pure Chinese. The Associations are known to be against having creole Chinese members and non-Chinese speakers but had to make many changes so that future generations would join.*

While the Chinese Associations in Trinidad appear to be grudgingly opening their membership to ‘non-pure’ Chinese as a means of survival, many second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians have decided not to participate or have any affiliation with Chinese Associations due to the history of their exclusion from these organizations. A majority of the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are not considered ‘pure’ Chinese but are creole Chinese. Participants who are only half Chinese claim that the Chinese Associations used to be against

accepting members who are creole Chinese and/or those who could not speak a Chinese dialect. The Chinese Associations now allow membership to Chinese-Trinidadians who are not necessarily of 'pure' Chinese descent, but can claim some amount of Chinese descent. However, as Chinese Associations are primarily based on which province in China an individual is a descendent from (except the China Society and Chinese Association of Trinidad and Tobago), there already exists another form of segregation within the Chinese community that continues to fracture the Chinese community and discourage second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, who may have very loose ties to specific regions of China, from joining the Associations or from identifying as Chinese. The limitations surrounding what it means to "be Chinese" can make integration into the wider Trinidadian society, which embraces diversity and appears to be more inclusive, more attractive.

As Chinese Associations have existed for decades in Trinidad, I wanted to know whether the Associations had become spaces of creolization; that is, spaces that promoted and produced a creole Chinese-Trinidadian identity. To my surprise, all of the participants indicated that there was no process of creolization in Chinese Associations.

*-I have seen people of other ethnicities in the Association, there are people outside of the Chinese ethnicity who play steel pan, badminton, they are allowed to come to do their sport. They may not be members but are allowed to play there.*

*-[The Chinese Association] is a good thing but it is run by older heads. The reason I left is because it doesn't involve change, change in the dynamics, ways in which culture is evolving the Association is not keeping up, not enforcing Chinese culture here in terms of making connections, helping businesses, not enough support, nothing going on. If you go to a Chinese Association now, there is badminton, not only Chinese activities, and other things like steel pans, which anyone can join. But the reason for this is because the Association has all this space which they don't use, so they open it for the public to use... I don't think it is to be more involved with other groups; it's just putting use to the empty space.*

The participants made it clear that while Trinidadians who are not of Chinese descent are allowed to use the Association's facilities to play badminton, steel pan and engage in other activities, these non-Chinese-Trinidadians can only participate in these activities; they are not welcomed to become a member of the Association because they are not of Chinese descent and/or not from that particular province in China which the Association is affiliated with. While the intention of the Chinese Associations in opening up their facilities may simply be, as one participant suggested, to utilize space, not to participate in creolization, one could argue that such activities actually facilitate the integration of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians who participate in these activities with non-Chinese Trinidadians. In other words, when used as a space for general recreational use, rather than as a Chinese space, the Chinese Associations foster a loss of a sense of belonging into the Chinese community and encourage identification with belonging to the wider creolized Trinidadian community.

### **iii. Second-Generation Perceptions of Chinese Associations**

Although the research involved second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians who either have both parents of 'pure' Chinese descent or have only one, the responses to many of these interview questions about their perceptions of the Chinese Associations are very similar. Collectively, the perception of Chinese Associations is that they were tailored to provide services and help build networks for first-generation Chinese migrants and were largely irrelevant to the daily needs of the second-generation. Second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians believe that a lot of the prominent Chinese in Trinidad had already made their mark. Therefore there is no need for Associations anymore, as second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians do not need the type of help that a new migrant would need to settle in a new country. They also note that many of the social services provided by the Associations are also provided by other organizations, such as the

government, who do not force individuals to have to be members of a specific organization in order to access to these services.

*-Nowadays, Chinese Associations do not do much... they used to provide services for immigrants who migrated to Trinidad. Now, as these migrants have become well-established, the Associations are more for them to socialize, to stay in contact with each other and create their own networks here and overseas for business. To be honest, it is more of a network society for the first-generation. They don't really do much now, they don't really care about what to do or provide for second-generation Chinese to keep us involved or interested.*

*-Nowadays, I would say we do not need Chinese Associations, there really is no purpose now as the historical migration of Chinese are completed and now there are generations of Chinese-Trinidadians born and raised here. For Chinese who are immigrating to Trinidad today, there is the Government who will take care and provide services for them. So now, I don't really see a purpose of the Associations, except as a place for the first-generation to socialize and play mahjong.*

Some participants saw the role of the Chinese Associations in the lives of new Chinese immigrants as being similar to the role that the Associations played in the early phases of Chinese immigration; however, they complained that in taking on this role, the Chinese Associations encouraged the new migrants to remain segregated from the rest of the Trinidadian society, a position that the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians found unattractive.

*-Chinese Associations don't play an important role in my day-to-day life. What it does sometimes, is when someone immigrates to Trinidad, the Association is a good way to connect people. But, the people they connect you to are members in the Association (paying their membership fees), which limits your contacts in Trinidad and in a sense operates as a business.*

Participants contend that even Chinese who are migrating to Trinidad today (also known as the fourth generation), many of whom work in construction, are not totally reliant on the Associations to become settled as they are often housed and settled by the government or by their contractor. Participants did note that new migrants to Trinidad can receive a good amount of

connections and assistance provided by these Chinese Associations, however, they are only given the networks of people who have contributed to and are members of an Association. This limits the ability of these new migrants to explore Trinidad and how they build their network connections. The help provided by Chinese Associations in this context can create a possibility that new migrants have a bias and/or preference of the connections they received. This can create ongoing division amongst the Chinese in Trinidad, as new migrants would only rely on the trusted network connections developed through the Chinese Association. They would be discouraged from making connections outside their network circle. For second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian individuals, they may not necessarily want to limit their networks to only within the Chinese community. As opposed to first-generation Chinese migrants who did not know about Trinidadian culture, the climate, or environment, second-generation individuals are born and grew up in Trinidad, they are able to develop their own networks without the need of the Associations' help (if they would provide help). Because these individuals do not necessarily need the networks within the Associations, the Association has little relevance to their daily existence or current needs.

One participant suggested that some of the new activities that some Associations are engaged with, such as providing space for lessons on how to play the steel pan, may make the Associations more relevant to second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. However, as mentioned previously, allowing non-Chinese-Trinidadians to use space at the Associations should not be interpreted as an entirely inclusive practice. As one of the participants noted, such activities are held at the Association because of the free use of space. Thus, it would be difficult to argue that the impetus behind such activities was to meet the needs of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians.

Both 'pure' and 'non-pure' participants claim that the many second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are disinterested in getting a membership with a Chinese Association or have decided to leave because these Chinese Associations do not seem to be able to change. It is argued that these Associations are not keeping up with Trinidadian culture but instead decide to stay ostracized from the greater society. For first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, Chinese Associations were a benefit because they provided opportunities for community building for Chinese migrants and a jump-start for immigrants to become established and settled. However, as a community, the Chinese in Trinidad are now well established in society as business owners and do not, for the most part, require settlement services. Multiple participants argued that Chinese Associations do not provide new services or support for the second-generation and subsequent Chinese-Trinidadian populations, but instead are for the businessmen who are members to network with other overseas Chinese Associations. In other words, the Associations directly benefit the members who are in charge of the Association, and provide no real meaningful services to second-generation individuals who, therefore, look outside of the Chinese community to meet these needs.

Participants stated that Chinese Associations should be a place for the subsequent generations of Chinese to be able to hang out, connect with others who are of Chinese descent and learn more about Chinese history, culture and traditions. Ironically, some of the common services that Chinese Associations across Trinidad provide include teaching and performances of the traditional Dragon dance, martial arts, learning to speak Mandarin and learning about the traditional food dishes served on particular occasions. They also host cultural festivals and celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and other annual festivals, as well as other events and family days. However, the participants in this study suggest that participation in these events

means membership in the Association and membership means conformity to the rules and regulations of the Chinese Associations and segregation from the wider community. As such, it appears that it is the perception of the Chinese Associations clinging to the “old ways” and segregation from the wider society that seems partially to underlie the complaint that the Associations do not meet the needs of the second-generation on cultural levels, especially in conjunction with the perception that the Associations’ other main interest is to foster international business connections, an activity that may not be of interest to all Chinese-Trinidadians. In doing so, Chinese Associations miss out on an opportunity to be perceived as relevant to second-generation Chinese. As one participant put it:

*-I learnt about Chinese culture from my dad...even then, he did not tell me much. Just some of the common knowledge such as dragon dances at Chinese New Years, what is in the different dishes of food. Once I became a member of an Association, I still felt like I didn't learn anything about Chinese culture... I actually learned more about Chinese through Chinese-creole culture (Chinese fused with African culture)...*

The participants in this research expressed the perception that Chinese Associations have put a lack of effort into establishing themselves as centers of knowledge on Chinese culture and traditions or as a center of socialization, and that they have little interest in determining and meeting the needs of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. Chinese Associations were also seen as divisive because they maintained practices such as basing membership around which province in China individuals are descendants from, and separated themselves from the wider Trinidadian community. These perceptions lessen second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians attachment to the Chinese Association, and sometimes, to their Chinese heritage, make the Chinese Associations seem irrelevant to their daily lives, and encourages them to seek to meet their needs in the wider society.

#### **iv. Chinese Association Interactions with Second-Generation Chinese Trinidadians**

There is also very minimal interaction between the Associations and second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. The only real interaction appears to be when members of the Association approach these second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to encourage membership into the Association. Otherwise, Chinese Associations showed no substantial signs of interest or intentions for these second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to become active members of a Chinese Association. There are some community gatherings and luncheons that require second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians who are members of the Association to attend, and many do show up to support these events, but there appears to be little other opportunities for the second-generation to interact with the Associations. Participants also state that members who are well known in businesses do not mind donating money to the Associations, but they do not have the time to dedicate to being actively involved in the Chinese Associations.

The lack of interaction between the Chinese Associations and the second-generation Trinidadians can also be partially attributed to the limited effort on both sides to reach out to each other. This has created repeated instances of poor communication and interactions that damage any existing relationships that may have been built between the Associations and the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian population. The poor communication and interaction between the Associations and second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians urge these individuals to integrate into the wider Trinidadian society rather than the Chinese community as the wider Trinidadian society is perceived as being more welcoming, and fostering a sense of inclusion and unity through the practice of creolization as opposed to the isolated Chinese Associations and community.

#### **v. The Future of Chinese-Trinidadian Associations and Integration?**

*-The future of the survival of Chinese Associations depends...there used to be a lot of Associations which mainly exist on paper. But, they do not gather together anymore, people who are suppose to continue running the Associations are losing interest. There is no sense of connection; we (the second-generation) can not find anything to relate to. The other problem is the leaders of these Associations try to instill what is right and what is wrong to us, we are also being forced to like or dislike something based on their ideologies.*

As this research has shown, there are many negative feelings towards Chinese Associations on the part of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. As a means of exploring whether or not Chinese Associations have pushed second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to integrate, I asked participants their opinion of whether Chinese Associations will continue to survive, evolve or go extinct. If these Associations do go extinct, this would suggest that Chinese-Trinidadians whether 'pure' or 'non-pure' will directly be integrated into creolized Trinidadian society. Only one participant expressed positively that there is hope for the survival of these Associations, although only if the Chinese Associations are able to encourage and recruit more members, especially amongst those who are partially Chinese. The participant also stated that for the Associations to survive, they must be more accepting and open to being involved with other ethnic groups and to understanding that Trinidadian nationhood and identity is creolized involving multicultural and multiethnic identities.

The rest of the participants had negative assumptions about the future of the Chinese Associations in Trinidad. Many claim that the Associations will never be able to evolve; in fact they might go extinct. Participants suggested that the Chinese Associations are only now realizing the possibility of their extinction but, instead of adjusting certain restrictions and criteria to improve the attractiveness of the Association for second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, the Chinese Associations have chosen not to make changes, particularly if these

changes would diminish the power of certain members in these organizations. The continued efforts of the first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians to instill traditional Chinese ways creates miscommunication between the generations and distances the second-generation as they find little to relate to in the Associations. The inability of the Chinese Associations to respond to their contemporary situations suggests that there will be a continuing movement of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians away from the Associations and towards integrating into the wider Trinidadian society where they are able to feel accepted not based on their 'race' but as members of a unique nationality that is composed of various ethnicities and cultures intertwined.

#### **vi. Chinese Association and Second-Generation Chinese Identity**

When participants were asked about whether being a member of a Chinese Association helped to strengthen their identity, only one out of the five participants had a positive response about the role of the Chinese Association. This participant claimed that events such as luncheons, being able to interact with other Chinese Association members helped them to increasingly gain a sense of belonging. It also helped to strengthen and acknowledge their Chinese identity through the stories of migration and the history that was retold by first-generation migrants at these events.

*-Everything I do that relates to my Chinese culture and identity is done by my own will. There was no encouragement by the Association...when we gather around for events, we just talk but nothing related to brainstorming how to improve the Chinese Associations. Because I am only half Chinese, I do not look Chinese, they [members of the Chinese Association] look upon me as an outsider, because I am a mixed Chinese.*

The remaining participants claimed that everything that was done to strengthen their Chinese identity was done by their own will. They were not encouraged by the Associations to learn about Chinese cultures, traditions and norms. This was particularly true for the half-Chinese participants who indicated that because they were not 'pure' Chinese they are looked

upon as not really Chinese in the Associations, despite the fact that restrictions barring ‘non-pure’ Chinese members from joining the Associations have been lifted.

When participants were asked about whether events hosted by the Chinese Associations provided a better understanding of Chinese culture and traditions, many identified the Chinese New Year celebrations as helping to reinforce their Chinese identity. Participants indicated that for Chinese New Year, the Chinese ambassador would give a historical speech, which provides knowledge that these second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians may not know about. In addition, there are luncheons, dinners and social gatherings that allow members to mingle and feel a sense of belonging. Another important event introduced by the Chinese Associations is the Dragon Boat festivals. Dragon Boat racing has become a very popular sport involving not just members of Chinese Associations, but also the wider Trinidadian society. Dragon Boat racing is open to anyone and is not strictly affiliated with any particular Chinese Association. However, the Chinese Associations come out to support the Dragon Boat festivals annually to show support by performing traditional Chinese dragon dances.

Not every participant shared this positive response to the events held by Chinese Associations in terms of helping them form a Chinese identity. Many second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians believe that Chinese Associations are just social clubs for the elders (first-generation Chinese migrants to Trinidad). They believe that there is no real purpose for these Associations as they are not providing services or encouraging more second-generation involvement within the organizations. Participants state that events hosted by the Associations are just to eat, socialize for a bit and then leave the social gathering. It is also believed that these luncheons, dinners or events with food are the only reasons why members still attend these

events. If there were no food or drinks provided, it is very unlikely the Associations would be able to gather a large volume of members to attend events.

One of the final questions asked of participants was whether they identify as Chinese in a manner similar to how their parent(s) might. Two out of the total of five participants indicated that they identify as Chinese in the same way their parents do; however, the explanation how this identification occurs was very different for each participant. One participant (who is half Chinese) explains that they do identify as Chinese similar to how their parent identifies as Chinese because of the frequent influences and discussion of the Chinese culture by participant's father. Therefore, this participant has a very strong sense of connection to their Chinese roots. On the other hand, the other participant also agrees that they identify as Chinese similar to how their parents identify as Chinese due to the fact that both parents migrated to Trinidad at a very young age and became very well integrated into the wider community. As a result, the participant's parents had very little influences or interactions with Chinese culture and traditions in a manner that is very similar to the participant's identification with their Chinese identity.

The other participants stated that they do not identify as Chinese the same way their parent(s) do. A typical response was as follows:

*-Because my father is pure Chinese and I am not, I did not experience the upbringing the way my father did. Also, because most second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians did not have grandparents, as most of them are still in China or have migrated to countries such as Canada. Most second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians are not able to speak a Chinese dialect, because our parents are always working...you'll pick up some slang here and there but we usually just speak English at home. I think that because many of us did not have our grandparents here, which serve as culture barriers, we were not taught a Chinese dialect.*

One participant stated that because they are only half Chinese, they were not able to relate to how their parent identifies as Chinese as the influences of their other ethnicity

introduced by their other parent is influential as well. Therefore, they would not have experienced the same upbringing as their Chinese parent and do not share the same way of identifying as Chinese. For other participants, the only way they identified as Chinese is because of their Chinese last name.

## **7. Limitations of the Study**

As this study only consists of a small sample size, it precludes a generalization about the overall sense of identity and the role that Chinese Associations play in the integration of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians. In addition, there can be a possibility that the participants that I recruited were disgruntled with the practices of Chinese Associations because the sample population was very small (only five participants) and dominated by half-Chinese, a group that have been traditionally marginalized in these Associations. The results of this research may be skewed to better explain the relationship between Chinese Associations and integration for half and creolized Chinese.

The five participants of this research are respectively from only two out of the seven Chinese Associations in Trinidad. Therefore, results of this research were dependent on the lived experiences within these Associations. In addition, I had a limited timeframe of four weeks in Trinidad to organize and conduct interviews, which may have limited the opportunity for me to be able to recruit more participants from various Associations.

Nonetheless, the data collected provides valuable insight into the shared perspectives of the role of Chinese Associations in the integration of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians regardless if they are 'pure' or 'non-pure' Chinese. Instead of interviewing first-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, the second-generation of Chinese Association members provide a new perspective of how Chinese Associations function in Trinidad. Chinese Associations were set up

by the first-generation Chinese migrants to Trinidad, however exploring their functions from a second-generation member allows for alternative insights that may not be shared by first-generation Chinese migrants.

## **8. Conclusions and Potential Benefits of the Research**

This research sought to explore the role that Chinese Associations might play in the integration of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians into the wider, creole Trinidadian society where “integration” is defined as a successful social process of intermixing individuals and groups from different cultures and ethnicities within society. This paper concludes that Chinese Associations do facilitate the integration of second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians into the wider Trinidadian society in multiple ways. For example, the Chinese Associations maintain ideas of what it means to “be Chinese”, along with obligations, duties and responsibilities that this identity entails, that remain largely unchanged from the ideas of Chineseness espoused by the first-generation Chinese migrant. These ideas around which a traditional diasporic Chinese identity are built, such as limiting interactions with other ethnic groups in Trinidad, marrying within the Chinese ethnicity, and excluding half-Chinese from the definition of “real Chinese”, do not interest the second and subsequent generations of Chinese-Trinidadians as is demonstrated by the second-generation’s consistent self-identification as “Trinidadian”. The second-generation, many of whom are creolized, is supportive of inclusiveness and interactions with other cultures and manifest more fluid definitions of Chineseness, attitudes that are in line with the imagined community of a creole Trinidad. Despite the fact that most participants indicated that there was some orientalizing of the Chinese in the wider Trinidad community, as evidenced by the existence of negative stereotypes regarding the Chinese, this did not seem to prevent them from being comfortable in claiming a Trinidadian identity. These stereotypes may

actually also push the Chinese to integrate as a way of separating themselves from the stereotypes.

Chinese Associations do not envision themselves as participants in the wider imagined creole community of Trinidad. This further reinforces that second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians do not or can not rely on Chinese Associations to help them form their identity. In particular, the Associations' resistance to accept creolized Chinese identities as valid expressions of Chineseness plays a large part in pushing these second-generation individuals out and into the wider society. The wider society is where these individuals are able to relate to many other creolized Trinidadians and form a unique Trinidadian identity that is a mixture of all the cultures and ethnicities which has made an influence in Trinidad- including the Chinese.

Chinese Associations have been unable to retain relevancy for second-generation Trinidadians. They are no longer needed to provide essential services, such as they once did for first-generation migrants, and their programming, and retention of "old China ways" is often unappealing to the second-generation Chinese. Although second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians appear willing to donate money to various projects organized by the Chinese Associations, they do not invest their time and appear uncommitted to the continuing existence of the Associations. Limited interactions and miscommunications with the Associations has also reduced the relevancy of the Chinese Associations for second-generation Chinese Trinidadians.

Transnational ties and identifications with the homeland are also weak for second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians and the Associations do not provide deep connections or build a stronger relationship to the Chinese culture. Participants in the study indicated that events such as the Dragon Boat races and Chinese New Year celebrations were appreciated but fostered only a superficial identification with a Chinese identity. Second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians

were also excluded from the international networks with Chinese businessmen if they did not want to adhere to the restrictions inherent in membership in a Chinese Association. In addition, with the absence or loss of being able to speak a Chinese dialect further created a sense of segregation for the participants. As language is an important element for preserving culture, participants who did not have the ability to speak and communicate in Chinese were not viewed as truly Chinese by the Chinese Associations and the broader Chinese community. Therefore these second-generation Chinese Trinidadians are not able or desirous of developing a strong connection to their Chinese identity.

Previous research has shown that, traditionally, Chinese Associations around the world have been interested in “keeping the Chinese, Chinese” (Bohr, 2004) and in doing so, foster segregation and isolation on the part of the Chinese community from the rest of the community in which they reside. This research concludes, however, that such findings may apply primarily to first-generation migrants. In Trinidad, the tactics of isolation and segregation practiced by the Chinese Association in their attempts to maintain a ‘pure’ and traditional sense of Chinese identity has had the effect of driving second-generation Trinidadians to find a sense of identity and to meet their social needs, that is, to integrate with, the wider Trinidadian society.

It is also important to note that the intersectional aspects of racism and labour market demands that first-generation Chinese migrants experienced finds no direct parallel with the experience of the second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians in this research. In other words, for second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, stereotypes about the Chinese do not seem to be closely connected to a racialized economic structure as was the case in 19<sup>th</sup> century Canada and Trinidad. For first-generation Chinese migrants in Trinidad, Chinese Associations were traditionally established to help with retaining an ethnic Chinese identity and also provide

settlement services. Due to the fact that these individuals were the first group of overseas Chinese migrants to Trinidad, Chinese Associations were important organizations to allow for the development of a close-knit Chinese community, which also provided settlement services to allow for the construction of transnational ties between the homeland (China) and Trinidad. An intersectional analysis of the experiences of first and second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians, in relation to the greater Trinidadian society, allows us to understand why first-generation Chinese migrants place importance on Chinese Associations and why second-generation Chinese-Trinidadians do not.

A potential benefit from this research is that it opens up discussions further acknowledging, recognizing and appreciating the history of Chinese-Trinidadians, a topic that is still not widely discussed. In particular, it advances knowledge on the second-generation of Chinese in Trinidad, as opposed to the migrant generation -- the topic that is most commonly researched -- and may prompt more discussions of the post second-generation Chinese migrants in Trinidad and how their culture and identity may have changed, evolved and creolized. In addition, this project will put the experience of the Chinese in Trinidad in dialogue with research being produced on the Chinese diaspora and Chinese Associations elsewhere and encourages further research on the viability of Chinese Associations in Trinidad in the future.

## **APPENDIX I**



### **Ryerson University Consent Agreement**

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

**TITLE: Do Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago Facilitate Second-Generation Chinese-Trinidadians to Integrate into the Wider Society?**

#### **INVESTIGATORS:**

This research study is being conducted by Vivian Hong, currently a Masters graduate student from the Department of Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University. She will be under the supervision of Dr. Anne-Marie Lee-Loy, an associate professor at Ryerson University and the English Undergraduate Program Director. Dr. Lee-Loy's area of research focuses on postcolonial identities and Chinese Caribbean experiences.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Vivian Hong at: [vivian.hong@ryerson.ca](mailto:vivian.hong@ryerson.ca).

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

This study aims to understand if Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago facilitate integration into the greater society. More specifically, it seeks to focus on second generation Chinese-Trinidadians (defined as children with at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago) and their experiences of identity and culture to determine what, if any role the Chinese Association played to assist in integration. This study aims to include five (5) second generation Chinese-Trinidadians who are active members of a Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago and must be over the age of 18.

#### **WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS:**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will take approximately one hour to complete. Interviews will take place in a private room at the Association or in an alternate public setting at a time that is convenient for you. The principal investigator will take notes during your interview. At least twelve (12) open ended questions will be asked. These questions are posed to gain an understanding of the following:

- the history of Chinese migration to Trinidad and Tobago;
- the perception of Chinese Associations perceived by different members;
- the ability of Chinese Associations to facilitate and preserve Chinese culture and tradition in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- how second-generation Chinese formed their identity

You will be asked open-ended questions such as: in your opinion, how do non-Chinese Trinidadians perceive Chinese-Trinidadians? What is your perception of the Chinese Associations? Do you think Chinese-Trinidadians of your generation interact with Chinese Associations similar to how the previous generation interacted?

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

To date, there has been very little research that discusses whether Chinese Associations in Trinidad help to foster integration into the wider society for Chinese migrants and particularly for second generation Chinese Trinidadians. Participation in this research may contribute to a better understanding of the influences of Chinese culture in Trinidad and identities of younger Chinese Trinidadian generations. Additionally, this study may provide useful information on Trinidadian culture and the question of ‘who is a Trini’? This study will also advance knowledge and literature around Chinese Trinidadians and generally Chinese in the Caribbean, particularly as there has been very little research regarding the second and subsequent generations of Chinese Caribbeans. This research can also help to provide further understanding of Chinese Trinidadian identities and cultures which can benefit current and future generations.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS:**

There are some risks associated with participation in this study. You may feel uncomfortable responding to some of the questions. **Please note: you may skip any question and discontinue participation from the interview altogether at any time during and after the interview.** If you choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed.

Other potential risks can involve the social risk participants may feel of being exposed and a potential loss of privacy if they speak negatively of the Association. The risk will be minimized by keeping the participant's identity confidential. In addition, interviews will be held privately in a meeting room in a library.

The risk of having personal identity revealed is similar to the social risk as participants may fear of being directly or inadvertently revealed of their identity should they speak negatively of the Chinese Associations. This risk will be minimized by keeping participants’ identities confidential. There is not direct contact or connection with the gatekeeper or Chinese Association, therefore confidentiality is completely private. As well, interviews will be placed in a private meeting room in a library which will not coerce participants to speak only positively of the Association as it is not located within the Association.

Necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that your identity will remain confidential. Your information will remain confidential Your identity will not be revealed to anyone including the Chinese Associations.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The interview questions will ask for your knowledge, perception and experiences of the Chinese Association. I plan to collect participants’ names, telephone numbers and email addresses in order to contact participants should I need further clarifications regarding the answers that they have provided. In addition, once this research has been completed, I would also like to be able to inform participants of the findings and how these findings will be presented and disseminated. **Providing this demographic data is optional.**

Signed consent forms, hand-written and typed interview notes will be transferred and stored in a locked and encrypted laptop. The hand-written interview notes will be shredded once the information is transferred to a password protected laptop. The signed consent forms will eventually be moved to a locked cabinet at Ryerson University. Data will be held for 18 months and destroyed in February 2019. Only the principal investigator, Vivian Hong, and her supervisor Dr. Lee-Loy will have access to the data.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. **You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating at any time.** If you choose to stop participating, your data will be destroyed. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with any Chinese Associations, Ryerson University, or the principal investigator.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY:**

If you have any questions about the research, **please ask now**. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact me directly:

Vivian Hong  
Email: [vivian.hong@ryerson.ca](mailto:vivian.hong@ryerson.ca)

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study please contact:

Research Ethics Board  
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation  
Ryerson University  
350 Victoria Street  
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3  
416-979-5042  
[rebchair@ryerson.ca](mailto:rebchair@ryerson.ca)

**DO CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FACILITATE  
SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE-TRINIDADIAN TO INTEGRATE INTO THE  
WIDER SOCIETY?**

**CONFIRMATION OF AGREEMENT:**

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Do Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago Facilitate Second-Generation Chinese-Trinidadians to Integrate into the Wider Society?**

**CONFIRMATION OF THE COLLECTION OF CONTACT INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PRESENTATION DATES AND DISSEMINATIONS:**

Please check the box if you, the participant will agree to share with the researcher. Please note that sharing this information **is completely voluntary** and will have no effect on your affiliation with any Chinese Associations or participation in the research project. Should you not wish to share your information, please disregard this agreement page.

I hereby agree to share my address, telephone number(s) and email address(es) to the primary investigator to receive information regarding how this research will be presented and disseminated

---

Name of Participant (please print)

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone number(s)</b>	
<b>Email(s)</b>	

**APPENDIX II**



**PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN**

**“Do Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago Facilitate Second-Generation Chinese-Trinidadians to Integrate into the Wider Society?”**

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, identify as second generation Chinese-Trinidadians (defined as children with at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago), who are active members of a Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago and can fluently communicate in English.

This study aims to understand if Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago facilitate integration into the greater society. More specifically, it seeks to focus on second generation Chinese-Trinidadians (defined as children with at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago) and their experiences of identity and culture to determine what, if any role the Chinese Association played to assist in integration.

This study will be seeking five (5) participants to be involved in a one-on-one interview that will take approximately one hour to complete. At least 12 questions will be asked. These questions are posed to gather knowledge on the following:

- the history of Chinese migration to Trinidad and Tobago;
- the perception of Chinese Associations perceived by different members;
- the ability of Chinese Associations to facilitate and preserve Chinese culture and tradition in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- how second-generation Chinese formed their identity

If you are interested in participating in this study or for more information please contact:

vivian.hong@ryerson.ca

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board

Vivian	Vivian	Vivian	Vivian	Vivian	Vivian
Hong	Hong	Hong	Hong	Hong	Hong
Email:	Email:	Email:	Email:	Email:	Email:
vivian.hong@ryerson.ca	vivian.hong@ryerson.ca	vivian.hong@ryerson.ca	vivian.hong@ryerson.ca	vivian.hong@ryerson.ca	vivian.hon@ryerson.ca

### **APPENDIX III**



#### **In person recruitment script**

Hello,

My name is Vivian Hong. I am a graduate student at Ryerson University in the department of Immigration and Settlement Studies. I am contacting you to see if you might be interested in participating in a research study.

This research is being done as part of my Masters project and my supervisor's name is Dr. Anne-Marie Lee-Loy. The focus of the research is if Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago facilitate integration into the wider society.

To participate you need to be at least 18 years of age, identify as a second-generation Chinese-Trinidadian (defined as children with at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago), and an active member of a Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago and can fluently communicate in English.

If you agree to volunteer you will be asked to participate in an in-person interview involving written and typed notes. At least twelve (12) open-ended questions will be asked. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview that will take approximately one hour to complete. Interviews will take place in a private meeting room at a library that is accessible to you and at a time that is convenient for you.

Your participation is completely voluntary and if you choose not to participate it will not impact your relationship with any Chinese Association, the investigator (me), or Ryerson University.

The research has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in more information about the study or would like to participate, please contact me at [vivian.hong@ryerson.ca](mailto:vivian.hong@ryerson.ca)

## APPENDIX IV



### **Interview Guide**

1. Are there certain stereotypes of 'being Chinese' that exist in Trinidad?
2. Do you identify yourself as Chinese only or a hyphenated identity (as Chinese-Trinidadian)?
3. In your opinion, how do non-Chinese Trinidadians perceive Chinese-Trinidadians?
4. What is your perception of the Chinese Associations?
5. Do you think Chinese-Trinidadians of your generation interact with Chinese Associations similar to how the previous generation interacted?
6. In your opinion, are Chinese Associations facilitating a sense of integration or segregation to the wider community?
7. Are there certain aspects of the Association(s) that you would say, involve creolization of other cultures in Trinidad?
8. Within the next decade, would you say Chinese Associations would evolve or slowly go extinct?
9. What services/events does the Chinese Association offer to you? Does it play an important aspect in your day-to-day life?
10. By being a member of a Chinese Association, do you think it helped to strengthen your 'Chinese identity'?
11. In your opinion, were there festivals/events within the Chinese Association that provided a better understanding of Chinese culture and traditions?
12. Would you say how you identify as Chinese would be the same as how your parent(s) identify as Chinese? Why?

## **APPENDIX V**



### **Letter of Introduction**

**Title:** Do Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago Facilitate Integration into the Wider Society?

**Investigator:** Vivian Hong, Graduate Student in the Master's Program of Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University.

This study aims to understand if Chinese Associations in Trinidad and Tobago facilitate integration into the greater society. More specifically, it seeks to focus on second generation Chinese Trinidadians (defined as children with at least one parent originating from China and migrated to Trinidad and Tobago) and their experiences of identity and culture to determine what, if any role the Chinese Association played to assist in integration. This study aims to include five (5) second generation Trinidadians who are active members of a Chinese Association in Trinidad and Tobago, can fluently communicate in English and must be over the age of 18.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an in-person interview that will take approximately one hour to complete. Interviews will take place in a private meeting room at a library accessible to you and at a time that is convenient for you. Interviews will not be audio-recorded, however, written or typed notes will be taken during the interview. At least 12 questions will be asked. These questions are posed to gather knowledge on the following:

- the history of Chinese migration to Trinidad and Tobago;
- the perception of Chinese Associations perceived by different members;
- the ability of Chinese Associations to facilitate and preserve Chinese culture and tradition in Trinidad and Tobago; and
- how second-generation Chinese formed their identity

You will be asked open-ended questions such as: in your opinion, how do non-Chinese Trinidadians perceive Chinese-Trinidadians? What is your perception of the Chinese Associations? Do you think Chinese-Trinidadians of your generation interact with Chinese Associations similar to how the previous generation interacted?

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

If have any questions or for more information prior to your participation, please contact Vivian Hong at [\*\*vivian.hong@ryerson.ca\*\*](mailto:vivian.hong@ryerson.ca).

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board.

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