



*Corresponding author:

Hala Mohammed Ali Ashoor
Asst. Prof Mayada Zuhair
Alkhafaji

University:

University of Baghdad

Wasit University

College:

College of Physical Education
and Sport Sciences

College of Education for
Humanities

Email:

mayada_karim59@yahoo.com

halama901@uowasit.edu.iq

Keywords:

British East Asian Theatre,
Cultural identity, Chinese
Migration, Ethnic identity,
Racial identity.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 Sep 2022

Accepted 27 Nov 2022

Available online 1 Jan 2023

Chinese Migration to Britain and the Impact of Cultural identity on the British East Asian Theatre

ABSTRACT

Cultural identification has a long history that dates back to colonial times. As globalization increased the frequency of cross-national encounters during the 1950s, researchers became more concerned with the question of cultural identity. Globalization had a significant influence on third-world culture in the late 1990s, therefore most researchers paid increasing attention to the question of national culture and national identity. The topic of cultural identity first arose in Britain in the nineteenth century. As a colonist, Britain improved its native culture, while weakening its foreign culture. The emphasis on British national pride in education for all countries distinguishes between internal and exterior cultures. According to Liu (2021), the issue of accepting mainstream culture while rejecting alien culture has entered the ambit of British cultural identity inquiry due to the increase of Chinese immigration to Britain. The history of the Chinese in Britain, the waves of immigration, their identity transitions over time, and numerous related subjects, including the economic and social position of the Chinese in Britain, have affected the new Chinese identity as being exposed in the British East Asian Theatre (BEAs). The aim of this study is to link the development of the British East Asian Theatre with the impact of the changes that happened to the cultural identity of the Chinese migrants in Britain throughout history since the 1880s. The researchers conclude that the various generations of Chinese migration to Britain from the early nineteenth century to the present have gone through many cultural changes. These changes affected their Chinese identity and resulted in a cultural conflict in terms of acculturation and loss of heritage. This is what the British East Asian playwrights try to expose in their theater.

© 2023 LARK, College of Art, Wasit University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31185/>

الهجرة الصينية الى بريطانيا وتأثير الهوية الثقافية على مسرح شرق آسيا البريطاني

هالة محمد علي عاشور / جامعة واسط / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
الاستاذ المساعد ميادة زهير الخفاجي / جامعة بغداد / كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة

الخلاصة:

الهوية الثقافية لها تاريخ طويل يعود إلى العصور الاستعمارية. مع زيادة العولمة من تواتر اللقاءات عبر الوطنية خلال الخمسينيات من القرن الماضي ، أصبح الباحثون أكثر اهتمامًا بمسألة الهوية الثقافية. كان للعولمة تأثير كبير على ثقافة العالم الثالث في أواخر التسعينيات ، ومن ثم فإن معظم الباحثين دفعوا اهتماما متزايدا بمسألة الثقافة الوطنية والهوية الوطنية. ظهر موضوع الهوية الثقافية لأول مرة في بريطانيا في القرن التاسع عشر. كمستعمر ، حسنت بريطانيا ثقافتها الأصلية ، مع إضعاف ثقافتها الأجنبية. دخلت مسألة قبول الثقافة السائدة مع رفض الثقافة الأجنبية في نطاق تحقيق الهوية الثقافية البريطانية بسبب زيادة الهجرة الصينية إلى بريطانيا. أثر تاريخ الصينيين في بريطانيا ، وموجات الهجرة ، وتحولات هويتهم مع مرور الوقت ، والعديد من الموضوعات ذات الصلة ، بما في ذلك الوضع الاقتصادي والاجتماعي للصينيين في بريطانيا ، على الهوية الصينية الجديدة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو ربط تطور مسرح شرق آسيا البريطاني بتأثير التغييرات التي حدثت في الهوية الثقافية للمهاجرين الصينيين في بريطانيا عبر التاريخ منذ ثمانينيات القرن التاسع عشر. استنتج الباحثون أن الأجيال المختلفة من الهجرة الصينية إلى بريطانيا من أوائل القرن التاسع عشر حتى الوقت الحاضر قد مرت بالعديد من التغييرات الثقافية. أثرت هذه التغييرات على هويتهم الصينية وأدت إلى صراع ثقافي من حيث التناقص وفقدان التراث. هذا ما يحاول الكتاب المسرحيون البريطانيون من شرق آسيا كشفه في مسرحهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : مسرح شرق آسيا البريطاني ، الهوية الثقافية ، الهجرة الصينية ، الهوية العرقية .

Introduction

The disintegration of social interactions caused by globalization processes is mirrored in the growing number of competing for sociological initiatives to adapt to perceived significant developments. Much sociological discussion has centered on determining the scope and orientation underlying social and cultural change. The concept of 'identity' provides intellectual and political space for rethinking racialized social interactions and ethnicity. At the moment, the idea of culture has emerged as a major subject in a wide range of arguments about societal change in the social and human sciences (Ghail, 1999). Over time, academics of communication and culture have been intrigued, interested, and maintained their attention to the notion of "cultural identities" within the field of communication. The study of cultural identity, like the idea of "culture," has been studied from a variety of perspectives, whether theoretically,

methodologically, or metaphysically. In one view, cultural identity may be defined as the experience, performance, and articulation of dynamic social identifications by members of the group within specific contexts. Furthermore, how one perceives her/his overlapping cultural identities with others varies based on the situation, the issue at hand, the individuals involved, and so on. Not unexpectedly, intercultural communication academics have contributed a plethora of ideas about cultural identities in communication encounters, including co-cultural theory, cultural contract theory, and identity negotiation theory, to name a few. Furthermore, intercultural communication experts have provided rich case studies that explore dynamic enactments, negotiations, or conflicts of cultural identities in situations as diverse as race, media, and globalization. Finally, the study of cultural identities provides valuable insights on oneself and others. As the world we live in becomes more varied, the study of cultural identities will gain momentum inside the communication discipline and beyond (Lin, 2016).

By the turn of the century, a new generation of British-born Chinese had formed that could be defined as middle-class in terms of educational credentials and earning power, reflecting the community's significantly better economic position. The rise of this new generation of British Chinese, along with parallel trends in other ethnic minorities, has sparked new arguments about the consequences of 'identity shift' among migrants and their descendants for British culture. Despite their integration into mainstream culture and the economy, British continue to regard British-born Chinese as 'outsiders,' migrants,' or members of a 'Diaspora' who occupy 'spaces' in British society. This line of thought is intimately linked to studies that portray Chinese in Britain as a transnational group continually crossing national borders, rather than as a constituent of the British nation (Gomez, 2008).

These experiences were filmed and reflected in the Chinese theaters in Britain, or what is known as the British Asian Theater. The theater adopted many plays that dealt with the many experiences that the Chinese were exposed to while they were in the host country, which we referred to above.

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the difficulties that immigrants go through while leaving their country of origin. How does this experience affect individuals and groups? Does being in another country affect the culture of the individual? How do the citizens of the host countries view Asians coming from East Asia? The researchers, therefore, will divide this study into two parts; the first is to give a wide range of definitions of cultural identity and aspects of cultural identity including ethnic and racial identities. While the second part will be

devoted to the impact of Chinese immigration to Britain on the Chinese cultural identity and its reflection on the BEAs theater.

1. Cultural identity and its main aspects

In her essay, Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen (2014) identifies cultural identity as a sense of belonging to a certain group based on cultural factors such as country, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion. Cultural identity is built and preserved by the exchange of communal information such as traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, norms, and practices. Cultural identity is complicated and multidimensional since most people belong to more than one cultural group.

In its Social Report, the Ministry of Social Development(2016) explains that cultural identity, also conceptualized as the habits, practices, languages, attitudes, and worldviews that characterize social groupings based on country, ethnicity, geography, or shared interests People's sense of self and how they connect to others are influenced by their cultural identity. A strong sense of cultural identity can benefit people's general well-being (p. 175).

Meanwhile, Cultural identity is defined roughly as the embodiment of culture. It is all of the cultural components through which individuals and groups identify and express themselves in order to be recognized. Cultural identities are fluid and multifaceted. They are produced in spaces of interaction rather than limited locations. Individual and communal cultural identities exist. Relationships with other people and communities help to build it. Individuals and communities value it because it provides a sense of belonging (Donders, 2016).

For Seth J. Schwartz et al (2008) cultural identity concentrates largely on (i) cultural values and practices, (ii) the ethnic or cultural groups to which one belongs, and (iii) relativistic prioritization of the individual and the group, from viewpoint of (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez, and Wang) that under the rubric of cultural identity several constructs can be included such as ethnic identity and racial identity. They concentrate on how individuals see and interact with others, as well as with the groups to which they discern themselves as belonging.

Cultural identities, once developed, provide a vital framework for organizing and understanding our encounters with others. This is due to the fact that cultural identities are important, dynamic, and diverse components of one's self-concept. Cultural identities have an important role in a person's sense of self. Myron states that culture, like nationality, race,

ethnicity, and religion, is more fundamental since it has a broad influence and is related to a variety of other components of self-concept (Lustig, 2010).

Franck C Worrell (2020) identified Cultural identity as a wide term that encompasses identity categories associated with many demographic groupings such as ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. However, the main two identities that are more closely connected with terms of cultural identity are ethnic identity and racial identity as they emphasize the sense of belonging.

1.1. Ethnic identity

Ethnicity is a social-psychological process that provides an individual with a sense of belonging and identity. In fact, it is one of the social processes that contribute to a feeling of identity. Ethnic identity may be described as the way people mentally identify themselves in connection to one or more social systems based on their ethnic background, and how they perceive others to locate them in reference to those systems. By ethnic origin, it is understood that a person was socialized in an ethnic group or that his or her forebears, actual or symbolic, were members of the group. The social systems may be one's ethnic group or society at large, other ethnic communities and societies or organizations, or a mix of all of these (Isajiw, 1993). Ethnic identity has been studied in a variety of areas, including sociology, psychology, and education, and has been interpreted quite differently by academics in each of those fields. Several studies see ethnic identification as a fixed psychological state that may be connected with or utilized to predict aspects such as psychological distress, scholastic success, and self-esteem, among others. In reality, many scholars describe ethnic identity as one or more of the following elements, some of which are fixed qualities by definition, while others are not: Generational status, language competence, and usage, attitudes toward ethnic and dominant languages and cultures, understanding of ethnic cultural beliefs and practices, and engagement in cultural events and organizations are all factors to consider (Tse, 1996).

Lu Kuang and Saori Nishikaw (2021) explain in their essay 'Ethnic Socialization, Ethnic Identity, and Self-Esteem in Chinese Mulao Adolescents', that Self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging, and an attitude toward the group are all components of ethnic identity. Furthermore, ethnic identification is a component of social identity and a phenomenon that occurs across communities. Ethnic identification has been the most often studied effect of parents' ethnic socialization during the last three decades. According to the

Theory of Identity Development, ethnic identity emerges via a process of commitment and investigation. Commitment is primarily defined as a deep relationship and personal involvement in a group.

The most frequently accepted definition of ethnic identity is that offered by Phinney, who defines it as a feeling of self as a member of an (in-group) that claims shared ancestry or has at least a comparable culture, race, language, family, religion, or place of origin. Moreover, Phinney also clarifies that ethnic identity has subcomponents such as language, friendship, political activity, religious practices, and other cultural activities involving media, literature, arts, and sports (Manguvo, 2013, p. 9).

In his study, Jean S. Phinney (1990) provides various definitions of ethnic identity. One of them is Tajfel's definition, who defines ethnic identity as that element of an individual's self-concept that emerges from his awareness of his membership in a social group (or groups), coupled with the value and emotional importance associated with that membership (p. 500).

Therefore, identity is frequently regarded as a social construct as well. It is defined as "a part of a wider community whose members are regarded, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and share portions of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are key factors." Ethnic identification appears to be a frame in which individuals identify consciously or subconsciously with others with whom they share common customs, behaviors, values, and beliefs. These points of connection enable people to make sense of their surroundings and to be proud of who they are (Guido-DiBrito, 1999).

Amelie F. Constant (2014) in her work *'Ethnic Identity and Work'* clarifies that in contrast to ethnicity, or ancestry, which is a permanent and outwardly detectable attribute, ethnic identity can change during a person's life., their ethnic identification might change. Age, relationships, experience with others, prejudice, religious influence, time, and migration, among other variables, might cause it to change or develop. However, because it is subject to change and involves self-evaluation, it is difficult to capture and evaluate it in a form that allows for comparisons or evaluation.

1.2. Racial Identity

Particularly, the concept of racial identity has been misinterpreted and debated. Some of its meanings are drawn from its biological dimension, while others are derived from its social dimension. As a biological classification, race is determined by an individual's "physical characteristics, gene pools, and behavioral attributes." Using these attributes as differentiating characteristics, Europeans organized individuals into hierarchies by physical ability and moral character, with Caucasians at the top, followed by Asians and Native Americans, and Africans at the bottom. Looking beyond these qualities, however, there are more similarities than differences across racial groupings, as well as more differences than similarities within these categories. Today, literary and theoretical manifestations of racial identity are discussed not in biological terms (which may imply a racist viewpoint), but as a social construction that "refers to a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common ancestry with a particular racial group." However, racial identity, on the other hand, seems to be a frame in which individuals categorize others. The usage of skin color is one of the numerous labeling strategies that allow individuals and groups to differentiate themselves from others who are seen to be different from them. Racial identity is a surface-level expression based on appearance, yet it has profound ramifications on how we are treated (Guido-DiBrito, 1999).

Helms defines racial identity as "a sense of group or collective identification based on one's impression that he or she has a shared racial background with a specific racial group" [emphasis in original]. Phinney and Kohatsu defined racial identity similarly, defining it as the notion of shared racial history and identification with one's racial group. The commonalities between the two definitions are obvious: a sense of shared heritage with a racial group to whom an individual ascribes membership (Gardner-Kitt, 2006).

Racial identity is a multidimensional construct that includes the degree to which an individual identifies with his or her racial group, a sense of attachment to other group members, and evaluation of group membership (e.g., how much the individual likes or dislikes being white, for example), as well as group-relevant attitudes and behaviors (Broman, 2015).

Ethnicity, as well as, Racism is the most phase that East Asian faces during their settlement in Britain. They try by any chance to show people in their theatre in Britain, how these factors affect them and how western society looks at them. These components are reflected in their works, whether Literary, socially, or politically. The next part of the study is going to dive deeply into East Asian history especially China, waves of emigration to Britain, the new Chinese community, and cultural changes with a brief history of British East Asian Theatre.

2. History of Chinese migration

This part is going to explore the most important migration and integration matters facing many nations across the world, through an examination of Chinese migration to Europe. These matters include the political, and leadership challenges of managing the increasing mobility of various peoples that confront all levels of government (including supranational and transnational levels), as well as the more local and private concerns of communities, families, and individuals about life goals, identity, and belonging.

Chinese people in the United Kingdom come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Those born in Hong Kong are the biggest group, accounting for one-third of the population. In contrast, more than a quarter was born in the United Kingdom, and the remainder were born in China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, or Malaysia. It should be noted that the Census data included the international student population, who may depart the country after their studies are completed. The Home Office statistics records show a trend and pattern comparable to that of the Chinese from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia for those who were allowed for permanent settlement (Chan, 1997).

From the nineteenth century to the present, there have been three waves of Chinese migration to the United Kingdom, according to the literature on Chinese migration to the United Kingdom. The first wave arrived in the second part of the nineteenth century, the second in the postwar period, and the third, since the 1980s, has brought the majority of today's Chinese population to the United Kingdom (Wang, 2016).

Various waves of Chinese migration have led to the community's establishment of various and overlapping identities. Initially, a mainly marginalized minority with little education or skills and working mostly in catering and laundry, much of the community is now highly educated, socially mobile, and increasingly represented in the professions and high-tech

industry. The many waves of Chinese migration over the last two centuries resulted in the emergence of several varieties of ethnic Chinese, based on place of origin and social level. What industries did these migrants hunt for work in? What economic disciplines did the entrepreneurs among them explore as they looked for means to survive in a foreign environment? What kinds of social and political organizations did they form? How far did such organizations go in adopting a transnational strategy in order to retain relationships with the Chinese homeland while preserving their culture, language, and identity? How did institutions change over time, and how far did they contribute to the long-term reinforcement of ethnic Chinese identity? To what degree have new generations of Chinese distanced themselves from the migrant generation in terms of ethnic and national identity? After a long time of residence in Britain, how have individuals of the migrant generation grown ethnically different from their families in the homeland? Why do such distinctions occur? Has social mobility and generational change resulted in 'ethnic passing,' or the loss of a strong Chinese identity? (Gomez, 2008).

Since the mid-1970s, the number of Chinese migrants to the United Kingdom has begun to decline. The 1981 British Nationality Act made it impossible for even dependents to enter the UK. The long-term residential Chinese community in the United Kingdom has expanded mostly as a result of the birth of a British-born generation. They currently account for almost a quarter of the Chinese population in the United Kingdom. This grouping is not always similar to the three-generation groups of parents, children, and grandchildren (for example, many grandparents are sponsored immigrants, and some British-born Chinese have now become parents), but it serves as a useful reference point for studying the social organization and social behaviors of Chinese in the UK (Wei, 1994).

2.1. The early arrival

Today, the majority of Chinese-descent persons residing outside of China were not born on the mainland and are not citizens of China. However, only a minority of Chinese residing in the UK, and even fewer in mainland Europe, were born in Europe, despite the fact that the majority were born outside China (excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan) and are citizens of their countries of residence. The subject of what to designate persons of Chinese ancestry who live outside of China has sparked controversy in ethnic and China studies. The common phrase 'Overseas Chinese' is a conventional rendition of the word *Huaqiao*, which means a Chinese native residing

or sojourning overseas. As a result, its implications are improper for persons who, on the whole, are neither sojourners nor refugees. Chinese settlers with Chinese ancestors as a compromise, Wang Gungwu has advocated the name "Chinese abroad." In Southeast Asia, where most Chinese identify as Thai, Indonesian, Malaysian, and so on, the phrase "ethnic Chinese" has gained popularity as a neutral descriptive word similar to the Chinese *Huaren*. In Europe, where Chinese ethnic identification is more complicated and diversified, the word is not yet universally relevant, since older generations continue to adopt a Chinese identity as the majority. This ethnic connection is the result of recent Chinese settlement, white prejudice, and the in fact embrace of a multiculturalist philosophy by governments in various European nations (Gomez, 2008).

With the contact of Sino-British in the early days of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, a bunch of Chinese arrived in Britain as individuals, many types of research document the early European existence in China, Nonetheless, Europe's early Chinese visitors have largely gone unnoticed despite the fact that they represented the spirit of intellectual interchange and mutual respect that characterized Sino-European interactions before the nineteenth century and had a significant effect on various parts of early modern European culture. According to Chinese tales, these lone pioneers take pride in place. They, like us, don't have anything to say about them.

The first Chinese arrives in Britain, was Shen Fuzong (who's also known as Michel Shen FoTsung or Shen Fu-Tsung) is a citizen from Jiangxi, the son of a famous Christian physician. Chitqua and Tan-chetGua, both Chinese, worked as a model in London. Other visits, including artists, were mentioned on rare occasions in period documents. Men like Shen and Chitqua helped to spread the idealized vision of China that influenced European intellectuals and authors (Gomez, 2008)

Several individual Chinese visited Britain as tourists prior to the nineteenth century. However, these early Chinese tourists went mostly unnoticed in the United Kingdom. The small number of early Chinese tourists (not yet migrants) reflects the Chinese government's anti-emigration and overseas Chinese sentiments. The fall of China in the Opium Wars (1839– 1843 and 1856–1860) compelled the country to open up as a trade zone for British merchants, increasing the demand for Chinese mariners. The East India Company, which had a monopoly on the China trade, was responsible for bringing the first wave of Chinese mariners to Britain. During this time, the vast majority of Chinese immigrants to Britain were known as *Huagong* (, contract emigrant laborers). The *Huagong* recruited were all male Chinese nationals,

predominantly from the Guangdong region of southeast China. During World War I, the British, French, and Russian allies recruited tens of thousands of Chinese contract workers to operate as battlefield ancillaries. Almost all were impoverished and illiterate, and their trips overseas were unplanned. The documented Chinese population in the early migratory wave of Chinese to Britain was limited, owing to the difficulty of adequately registering a nautical community. The vast majority of Huagong went home after the war, but some stayed and gathered together, constituting the early Chinese communities in London, Liverpool, and Cardiff. The majority of these contract laborers were from Siyi. Huaqiao was the second group of Chinese migrants to Britain during this period of time and included officials, journalists, and students. Faced with the threat of the two Opium Wars, the Qing courts (1644–1911) sent well-educated young Chinese to America, Japan, and Europe to 'learn foreign technologies to fight against foreign invasion.' Some parts of this migration pattern, which was strongly linked to nation-building, have survived to the present day. From the Qing to the Republic of China (ROC) (1912–1949), and later the People's Republic of China (PRC) (1949–now), Chinese governments recognized education abroad as an opportunity for self-development, but more importantly, for the purpose of developing China economically and politically, as well as promoting Chinese culture (Wang, 2016).

2.2. Hong Kong's new territories

The fresh inflow of Chinese immigrants into postwar Britain, on the other hand, was primarily comprised of traditional farming families from Hong Kong's New Territories communities. Following the Japanese occupation, when Britain reestablished the colonial administration in Hong Kong in 1945, many Chinese citizens claimed Hong Kong's origins and obtained the right to settle in Britain. Unlike early Chinese migrants who were compelled to flee as a result of foreign invasion and domestic strife, the New Territories villagers came to Britain of their own volition. The majority of these Cantonese or Hakka-speaking peasants were uneducated, knowing little English, but they had a "sojourner's dream": to work hard and save conscientiously overseas, then to re-join their family in their hometown for a peaceful and comfortable existence (Wang, 2016).

The major outcome was a short surge in so-called secondary immigration, which included wives and other dependents of previous immigrants, a trend that changed Britain's Chinese society and economy. The two migrations – from the mainland up until 1950, and then from the New Territories – were very distinct in many ways. The two types of migrants arrived

in Britain in distinct ways, with different aspirations, rights, and resources, and in different political contexts. Furthermore, the two tribes had a history of animosity. Ethnic disputes, some of them recent, others fostered by colonial policies in Hong Kong, crossed the border into Britain with the migrants.

Few people who came to Britain from the New Territories in the 1950s and 1960s had more than a few pounds in their wallets, so they were initially reliant on established Chinese restaurants for work. Many of the owners were mainlanders who had been shut off from China by the revolution. They welcomed the migration from the New Territories, whose residents had unlimited access to Britain until 1962 since they were unable to attract employees from their own areas. Given the mix of ethnic and class antagonism that separated them, the migrants' connections with the proprietors were never going to flourish. Except for a handful, everyone jumped at the chance to start their own firms. Some went to work for other villages who had migrated to Britain in the early days, alongside the Siyinese and northerners, but they, too, yearned for independence. Chinese immigration to the United Kingdom was never as large as international labor migration from other areas of China. Immigration from the New Territories was organized internally rather than via intermediaries. Furthermore, its geographical roots were limited in contrast. These distinctions assist to explain why it never created successful umbrella groups of the type found in larger Chinatowns (Gomez, 2008).

2.3. The development of Chinese Communities in Britain

Since the 1880s the Chinese community has been resident in Britain. According to the 1991 Census, the overall Chinese population was 156,938, accounting for 0.3 percent of the British population. Their political and social significance, however, is not proportional to their numerical size. They appear to be a peaceful group, and rarely turn private grievances into public issues, and their demands are rarely brought to the notice of the government. Even in comparison to other minority ethnic groups, very little public money is spent on enhancing their quality of life, and social services to suit their needs are undeveloped. Furthermore, Chinese people are not politically involved. They are rarely involved in political activity. There is no powerful political organization defending its interests. Some Chinese victims of racial harassment are even hesitant to disclose their experiences to the authorities. Many Chinese are not integrated as full members of British society in terms of access to social rights and services associated with citizenship (Yu, 2001). From approximately 1885 onwards, the first London Chinese community began to emerge, centered on a single street, Limehouse Causeway, next to

West India Docks. At the same time, a similar community was forming around Pitt Street in Liverpool. There were 502 Chinese in Liverpool and 668 in London in 1911. Limehouse has attracted 102 seamen from the London group.

These early Chinese towns were all located near docks in London, Liverpool, and Cardiff, and were economically tailored to serve the requirements of Chinese workers arriving at, and traveling between British ports. As a result, the initial leaders of these communities were Chinese boarding-house keepers, who were frequently Chinese crew contractors and shops as well (Jones, 1979).

With the loss of shipping and the laundry business, as well as the damage of Limehouse during the wartime bombardment, many Chinese people relocated to what is now Chinatown, the Gerrard Street district of Soho, which was then run-down and filthy, and infamous as a sex club hotspot. With the conclusion of the war and the reorganization of colonial rule, fresh migrants poured in from Hong Kong and the New Territories, with migration peaking in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These new immigrants were mostly males who knew little English and had few options for work outside of 'ethnic' businesses. As a result, they supplied a cheap source of labor for Chinatown's companies, which were mostly focused on catering.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Chinatown remained a "dangerous" neighborhood, with illicit gambling dens proliferating in the basements of houses along Gerrard Street, frequently under unsafe conditions. However, as the neighborhood grew in popularity, Chinese residents began to leave Chinatown and establish enterprises in other districts of London and across the United Kingdom. Chinese restaurants have become a fixture in almost every British town and metropolis (Lam, 2009).

2.4. The New migrants' identity: the transnational identity

Because the Chinese population has become increasingly diversified in terms of both place of origin and motivations for migrating over the last two decades, the personal experiences and aspirations of new migrants differ from those of their forefathers. The more recent arrivals come from a variety of Southeast Asian countries where economic and political events have prompted emigration. Many of the so-called "boat people" who emigrated from Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s were Chinese, and the transition of sovereignty in Hong Kong in 1997 resulted

in further waves of migration. By the early 1990s, it was estimated that a quarter of the Chinese population in the United Kingdom was British-born, a third were born in Hong Kong, and the remainder were from Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and mainland China (Lam, 2009).

The conference subject, 'New Chinese migrants,' was inspired by a relatively new concept among PRC migration researchers, government-related organizations working in the issue of Chinese migration, and the popular media. Instead of referring to Chinese migrants as 'overseas Chinese' [huaqiao] or 'ethnic Chinese' [huaren], the term 'new migrants' appears to be most commonly used to encompass Chinese who have left China to settle elsewhere since the early 1980s, regardless of their purpose, legal status, or citizenship. Despite Chinese central authorities' reluctance to accept and employ the concept of "new migrants," its existence and widespread use indicate a need to distinguish recent migrants from Chinese contract labor migrants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (who were hired to toil in mines and plantations in European colonies or semi-colonies mainly in South-east Asia). In reality, the origins, destinations, and constitutions of current Chinese migrants differ substantially from previous contingents of migrants, as do the causes for migratory movements (Thunø, 2007).

According to Chan et al. (2004) in the study of the use of Chinese community organizations, found that they were an important source of support for Chinese people, with 25% of their respondents using services in the previous year. Most of these organizations, however, were established to meet the needs of older migrants, predominantly from Hong Kong, and their research suggests that they are ill-equipped to respond to the needs of newer migrant groups. The majority of newcomers speak Mandarin or a Chinese dialect other than Cantonese as their first language or primary mode of communication. Although the most recent newcomers are likely to be the most in need of assistance, current services serve them the least well. A tiny number of Chinese groups provide modest services to new migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. Traditional service providers, on the other hand, are finding their knowledge to be restricted in the face of changing demands (Thunø, 2007).

The chain migration, whereby new migrants join relatives already in the destination country, leads to geographical or occupational concentration and strengthens ethnic cohesiveness. When the migratory stream is unbroken, ethnic identity is greater than when it is broken. Modern communication strengthens links to one's place of origin and aids in the preservation of ethnic emotions. Changes in the nation of origin, such as wars, revolutions, and advances in its position, can also have an impact on ethnic identification.

Ethnic boundaries change, as new generations rise. Immigrants' progeny may be identified with predominantly values of the host community or with their ancestral culture, but they may also opt to construct new, liminal identities that embody the ambiguities of living between cultures. This notion of ethnic identity as amorphous and multifaceted is strongly related to transnational studies, which contend that ethnic communities exist at three levels at the same time: in a state of global dispersion, in different national sites of settlement, and in ancestral homelands (Gomez, 2008). The 'Chinese' identity varies by region, and there are several ways to be Chinese. Chineseness is molded not just by transnational factors, but also by the intergenerational effect of memory and imagination as individuals develop their identities across the world (Davidson, 2008).

Chinese identity in which is held within the regional and family sphere, Parker does not see it as the same crossover potential that finds in certain emerging races in Britain; instead, Chinese identity is something that is maintained within and safeguarded from these everyday clashes, held in reserve as a source of pride. This helps to explain the lack of a visible and easily recognized British-based Chinese identity shared by Britain's emerging generation of Chinese (Parker, 1994).

2.5. The reflection of cultural identity on British East Asian Theater

BEAs is a term that carries a various and complex set of experiences. Many of them claim to be part of contemporary British life. However, BEAs' ethnic heritages extend beyond Britain to include places in East Asia such as (China and adjacent territories, Korea, and Japan). South-East Asia (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam), and across the globe (including the Caribbean, West and South Africa, and other parts of Western Europe). Many BEA writers were born and raised in the United Kingdom, and some of them migrated when they were younger, while others may have lived and worked in Britain. The playwrights in this thesis have international profiles, which enable them to create works that relate to different cultures, identities, and belonging. (Thorpe, 2018).

The term oriental was used for those from "East Asia" like China, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, depending on the context this term might be considered derogatory for them. So in the late 1990s some organizations like Mu-Lan Theatre (1988-2004), and Yellow Earth Theatre (1995 to the present), along with other artists aggressively advocated for the abolition of the term "Oriental," and the use of " British East Asian" instead (Thorpe, 2016).

BAE theatre has a long history, and Chinese plays were the first to appear on the British stage in early 1759 when the play of Arthur Murphy's *The Orphan of China* was performed at Drury Lane. The play was adapted from Voltaire's 1755 play *L'Orphéline de la Chine*, which was itself based on a French translation of the thirteenth-century Chinese classic *The Orphan of Zhao* (*ZhaoshiGu'er*), which was published in 1735, and this play brought East Asian's literature to the British stage (Thorpe, 2016, p.26). The more significant play was *Lady Precious Stream* (1934) by Hsiung Shihyi's which was an adaption of spoken drama from Chinese opera and the first West End plays written and co-directed by a Chinese practitioner, the play gives its author a degree of visibility in British society at a time when Chinatowns in Liverpool and London were in decline, and the anti-Chinese xenophobia was obvious. The mercantile success of the play and its printed deliberation until the 1960s make it the most successful play for young people as well as in BEA theatre until now.

The first BEA theatre company in the contemporary period was Mu Lan theatre, which was established in (1998), and won the fringe theatre award (Koh Buck Song, 2017, p.124). Several performances have been sponsored by the Mu Lan Theatre Company, including Anna Chen's play *Suzy Wrong Human Cannon*, and Chay Yew's *Porcelain* (1992) (Benton ,1998) In 2002 the discussion made by the Arts Council England and forced Mu lan company to close in 2004, declaring at Mu Lan's production of works was not made for and by BEAs (Thorpe, 2016). Another important theatre is Yellow Earth theatre, which has lately emerged as one of the most noticeable UK theatrical companies with long-standing ties to East Asian culture, Founded in 1995 by five British East Asian actors (KwongLoke, Kumiko Mendl, Veronica Needa, David Ka- ShingTse, and Tom Wu). YET asserts that its mission for the East Asian community is to ' explore and celebrate cultural heritage and contemporary experience'. YET also has known for producing intercultural performances that mirror the ethnic background and cultural concerns of the founding members, like Loke, Mendl and Tse co-directed an adaptation of Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon*. The central themes in several of YET's productions are Immigration, such as *New Territories* (1996), *Behind the Chinese Takeaway* (1997), and *Face* (2002). These works reconnoiter the lives of Hong Kong immigrants and the East Asian diasporic experience of the UK (Liang, 2009).

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that the various generations of Chinese migration to Britain from the early nineteenth century to the present have gone through many cultural changes. These changes affected their Chinese identity including their names, food, drink, clothes, habits, home, lifestyle, beliefs, and language. The 'Chinese' identity has varied by region, and there are several ways to be Chinese. Chineseness is molded not just by transnational factors, but also by the intergenerational effect of memory and imagination as individuals develop their identities across the world. They are no longer living in the diaspora since they become Britain citizens by birth and get melted into the hosting society. Their Chinese icons like Chinatown, Chinese tea, Chinese food, and Chinese year become global yet the heritage of the first arrivals' ancestors starts to fade. The new multicultural or transnational or intercultural identity of the British Chinese descendants has gone through two important processes; acculturation and loss of heritage. Such contemporary problems as losing identity or seeking identity led playwrights to establish their own BEA Theater. They try to expose and interpret the intercultural problems that mirror the ethnic background and cultural concerns of the present and future generations.

References

- Broman, C. L. (2015). Race identity. *international encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences*, 833–836. doi:10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.32120-1.
- Chan, Y. M. (1997). The chinese in britain. *journal of ethnic and migration studies* 23(1), 123–131. Doi:10.1080/1369183x.1997.9976579 .
- Chen, V. H.-H. (2014). Cultural identity. *center for intercultural dialogue: technological university, singapore*.
- Constant, A. F. (2014). Ethnic identity and work : *george washington university, temple university and iza*.
- Davidson, K.-P. K. (2008). *At home in the chinese diaspora 'memories, identities and belongings'*. palgrave macmillan.
- Donders, Y. (2016). Culture and human rights: the wroclaw commentaries. *in a. wiesand, k. chainoglou & a. sledzinska-simon* (pp. 134-136) <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110432251-046>.
- Gardner-Kitt, F. C. (2006). The relationship between racial and ethnic identity in black

adolescents: the cross racial identity scale and the multigroup ethnic identity measure. *identity: an international journal of theory and research*, 6(4), 293– 315
doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0604_1.

Ghail, A. B. (1999). *Thinking identities ' ethnicity, racism and culture'*. macmillan press ltd.

Gomez, G. B. (2008). *The chinese in britain, 1800-present: economy, transnationalism, identity*. palgrave macmillan.

Guido-DiBrito, A. F. (1999). racial and ethnic identity and development. *new directions for adult and continuing education*, 1999(84), 39–47. doi:10.1002/ace.8405.

Isajiw, W. W. (1993). Definition and dimensions of ethnicity: a theoretical framework. *canada-united states: challenges of measuring an ethnic world: Science, politics and reality*, 407-427.

Jones, D. (1979). The chinese in britain: origins and development of a community. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 7(3), 397–402. doi:10.1080/1369183x.1979.9975588.

Kuang , L ; Nishikaw, S. (2021). *Ethnic socialization, ethnic identity, and self-esteem in chinese mulao adolescents. original research* 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.730478.

Lam, T. S. (2009). The changing Chinese community in London: new migration, new needs. *project report. middlesex university: school of health and social sciences, available at: <https://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/5540/>*.

Liang, L. W.-C. (2009). Negotiating new terrains: yellow earth theatre's lear's daughters and king lear. *Contemporary theatre review*, 19(3) , 289-297. doi:10.1080/10486800902985949.

Lustig, M. W. (2010). *Intercultural competence: interpersonal communication across culture*. Allyn & Bacon.

Manguvo, a. (2013). The relationship between ethnic identity, perceived acceptance, and sociocultural adjustment of african students in the US. *University of missouri*.

Ministry of Social Development. (2016). The social report 2016. *Ministry of social development*.

Parker, D. (1994). Encounters across the counter: young chinese people in britain. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 20:4, 621-634, doi:10.1080/1369183x.1994.99764.

Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: *Review of research. Psychological Bulletin*, 108(3), 499–514. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.499.

Pieke, G. B. (1998). *The chinese in europe*. Macmillan press ltd.

- Schwartz, S. J. (2008). Broadening the study of the self: integrating the study of personal *identity and cultural identity*. *Social and personality psychology compass* 635–651,
- Song, K. B. (2017). *Brand singapore: nation branding after lee kuan yew, in a divisive world*. Marshall cavendish international (asia) pte ltd.
- Thorpe, A. (2016). *Performing china on the london stage 'chinese opera and global power, 1759– 2008'*. Palgrave macmillan.
- Thorpe, A. (2018). *British east asian Plays*. Aurora metro publications ltd.
- Thunø, M. (2007). *Beyond chinatown ' new chinese migration and the global expansion of china'*. Nias press.
- Tse, L. (1996). The effects of ethnic identity formation on attitudes toward ethnic language development. *University of southern california school of education*.
- Wang, D. (2016). *imagining china and the chinese: cultural identities of british chinese young People in and around London. Doctoral dissertation, university college london*.
- Wei, L. (1994). *Three generations, two languages, one family: language choice and language shift in a chinese community in britain*. (Vol. 104). Multilingual matters, ltd.
- Worrell, F. C. (2020). Ethnic and cultural identity. *The encyclopedia of child and adolescent development*. 1–10. doi:10.1002/9781119171492.weca.
- Yu, R. C. (2001). Social exclusion of chinese people in britain. *Critical social policy*, 21(1), 103– 125. doi:10.1177/026101830102100103.