

Migration, Mobility, & Displacement

Vol. 7, 2025

Chen, Xiaobei - "Crises, Scapegoating, and Anti-Chinese Racism"

Migration, Mobility, & Displacement 7: 7-28

Migration, Mobility, & Displacement is an online, open-access, peer-reviewed journal. It seeks to publish original and innovative scholarly articles, juried thematic essays from migrant advocacy groups and practitioners, and visual essays that speak to migration, mobility and displacement and that relate in diverse ways to the Asia-Pacific. The journal welcomes submissions from scholars and migrant advocacy groups that are publicly engaged, and who seek to address a range of issues facing migrants, mobile and displaced persons, and especially work which explores injustices and inequalities.

We welcome submissions and inquiries from prospective authors. Please visit our website (journals.uvic.ca/index.php/mmd/about/submissions), or contact the editor for more information.

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Feng Xu
capi@uvic.ca

Special Editors for this Issue:

Xiaobei Chen, Carleton University
Jiyoung Lee-An, Thompson Rivers
University

Published by

The Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives
University of Victoria
3800 Finnerty Road, Victoria, BC, V8P 5C2, Canada
journals.uvic.ca/index.php/mmd/index



Licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International.
creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/



Crises, Scapegoating, and Anti-Chinese Racism¹

Xiaobei Chen

Xiaobei Chen is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University. She served as President of the Canadian Sociological Association (2020-2021). Her research and teaching interests include: sociology of childhood and youth, governance and power, citizenship, racism, colonialism, citizenship, Asian diasporas especially the Chinese diaspora, and Buddhist social thought. Her latest book is a co-edited volume *The Sociology of Childhood and Youth in Canada*. Her current research and community engagement are focused on anti-Asian racism and Sinophobia.

Abstract

This article takes a historicizing and structural approach to anti-Chinese racism, a stream of anti-Asian racism, understood as a system of meaning making for power advantages in changing contexts (Hall 2021[1997]). Based on textual data, observations, and interviews and drawing on literature on scapegoat racism and the sacrificial politics of threat and security (Girard 2021[1977]), it advances the following arguments: first, current discussions about anti-Asian racism are often narrowly focused on individual acts of hateful attacks, overlooking the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse that is at the root of discriminatory and hostile treatment of the Chinese, particularly those with Mainland Chinese background. Second, the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse has revived the anti-Communist Sinophobia during the Cold War with exaggerated claims about the threat of China and perceives the “Bad Chinese” in the Chinese diaspora as threats to Canada. Third, the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse not only fuels racist and discriminatory treatment of the Chinese, it also diverts our attention away from serious issues in Canada that do not have much to do with China or the Chinese diaspora.

Introduction

“millions of sleeper cells”

“commies!”

“intern all Chinese nationals”

“you must go back now!”

These chilling, hateful, anti-Chinese, mostly anonymous comments appeared on the YouTube page of a Global News TV broadcast segment on April 30, 2020 (Global

¹ I am indebted to Janet Siltanen and Patrizia Albanese for their generous and essential help. I would also like to thank Anna Chen for her efficient research assistance and reviewers for their constructive criticism.

News TV 2020). The segment, based on the then Global News investigative journalist Sam Cooper's account (Cooper 2020a), reported a news story about the Chinese diaspora in Canada helping China's Communist government stockpile PPE supplies and sabotaging Canada's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Chinese Canadians were alarmed by the anti-Chinese undertone of this untrue and inflammatory news report. Some individuals and at least one group wrote letters to Global News to demand an apology and corrections. However, Global News rejected all demands. I open this article with this incident because it is a good case for understanding how a scapegoating discourse against the Chinese diaspora has been built, the significant role that some journalists and news outlets have played in the emergence and persistence of this discourse, and the 'binary conceptual map' ('Good' Chinese vs 'Bad' Chinese) applied to the Chinese diaspora.

The main purpose of the article is to sketch the emergence of the scapegoating discourse targeting the Chinese diaspora that is specific to our present time and to identify some of its conceptual characteristics. It is based on my research, personal experiences, and community engagement as a public sociologist around anti-Chinese, anti-Asian racism since 2020. There are three main sources of data for this article. The textual data was collected from print media, broadcast media, and social media since early 2020. It includes Cooper's report on April 30th, 2020 and other writings, as well as texts generated on the Internet (YouTube, Twitter, WeChat, Change.org) in response to his report. Observation data was collected from public events related to the topic of anti-Asian racism such as online rallies and panels, which were organized by community organizations, advocacy groups, or networks of professionals. I also included interview data from my ongoing research project on Mainland Chinese Canadians' experience with racism prior to and during COVID-19 times.

When reflecting on these experiences, it seems especially relevant to remember British sociologist Stuart Hall's conception of 'race' as "the floating signifier" (Hall 2021[1997]). What insights from critical theory about racism via British cultural studies, in particular the idea of race as a discursive construct, may be helpful here to reveal and dislodge "common-sense assumptions and everyday ways of talking about race, and making sense about race in our society today (Hall 2021[1997], 359)"? Of relevance to this article is Hall's rejection of an essentialist understanding of race and racism. Hall subscribes to the discursive concept of race, which understands racism as a language, a discourse, that organizes certain differences into systems of meaning and is "subject to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation ...in different historical formations at different moments of time (p.362)". Hall's discursive concept of race has several implications to the analyses developed here, against the grain of much prevailing views about anti-Asian racism: firstly, there is no generic racism, there is no generic anti-Asian racism, and there is no generic anti-Chinese racism that totally traces itself straight back to the 19th century. We cannot properly understand anti-Asian racism in the 21st century by only, or mostly, referencing the history of anti-Asian racism in the past. We must historicize anti-Asian racism in our analysis, in the sense of analyzing the specific set of contemporary conditions within which the old ideas are

woven together with new ones. Secondly, racism is not a slur or a fist; those are but the overt effects of racism. Racism is a language, a system of concepts and classifications that construct/produce discursive meaning-making about different groups. A discourse of racism circulates and gathers force through mass narratives in news broadcasting, social media, and public documents. It structures discursive meaning-making like “a texture of life” (Arendt 1973; Stanley 2011) on diffuse sites: street corners, office hallways, playgrounds, broadcasting, social media, policy deliberations, and governance measures such as risk assessment and registry. Racism, in this case against the Chinese, is a systemic condition, that is, anti-Chinese racism is pervasive, deeply rooted in the culture of a society, and imbricated with the system of power and privilege. Thirdly, racism says more about the projectors’ fear and anxiety than about the targets of racism. The discourse of racism organizes select differences into systems of meanings, through which the targeted audience find the world intelligible and identify consequent solutions to perceived problems, especially in times of crises.

The notion of systemic racism has several layers of meanings and scholars using this term may refer to one or a combination of these: racial prejudice and discrimination is not limited to a few prejudiced or ignorant individuals, rather these ideas and practices are enduring parts of a society’s or an organization’s culture; racial hierarchy is structurally related to material, political, and cultural inequality between groups; social and political institutions (e.g. systems of schools, governments, policing, the labour market, the media, and the popular culture) interact to produce outcomes that have widespread impact on racialized groups (James 2023). Covert and subtle forms of racism, racial prejudice, racial harassment have become more prevalent. Instead of seeing racism only in its direct and explicit forms and as a result of individuals’ prejudice or ignorance, it is important to recognize systemic racism that is resistant to change. The anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse, which I define as a prevailing narrative in the west in the context of US-China rivalry that blames the Chinese diaspora for crises ranging from national debt, housing affordability, to public health responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, is a core, structural element of our contemporary anti-Asian racism and it manifests at societal, institutional, and individual levels.

I have also drawn on the small but important literature on scapegoat racism (especially Allport 1959[1948]; Girard 1986, 1987, 2021[1977]; Brown & Stivers 1998; O’Flynn et al. 2014; Denike 2015; McClain 2021). Girard identified a series of key components in scapegoating: social crisis, accusation, and choice of victim (Girard 2021[1977]; Brown and Stivers 1998). In white settler colonial societies, racialized differences from the white norm have been organized into signifiers, or packages of meanings, and racialized minorities made into convenient scapegoats for many of the crises that these societies have experienced, as Paula McClain observed in her 2021 Presidential Address for the American Political Science Association (McClain 2021). Scholars (e.g. Hoffman & Modi 2012; Denike 2015; McClain 2021) have documented that immigrants in the United States and Canada have long shouldered the blame for any kind of real or perceived threat. The current trend of blaming the Chinese diaspora is the latest in the tradition of race-based anti-immigrant scapegoating in the wake of social and political

crises (Allport 1948/1959; Girard 2021[1977]; Li 2009; McClain 2021). In times of acute international tensions and conflicts, an ethnic or religious minority group is particularly at risk of becoming scapegoats. In Canada's history and present, scapegoats for a faraway enemy that cannot be reached include the Ukrainian immigrants in the Great War (Kordan 2002), the Japanese communities in the 1940s and 1980s (Adachi 1991, Oikawa 2012), Canadians with Arab and Muslim backgrounds after 9/11 (Arat-Koc 2006; Hage 2002), Russian Canadians since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (CBC 2022; Jenkins 2022; Pringle 2022), and, as I argue in this paper, the Chinese. Girard's analytical framework about the dynamics of scapegoating is useful for understanding the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse in the 21st century.

The following sections highlight different aspects of analyses in turn. First, I examine the recent narrative about anti-Asian racism that should be by now familiar to many readers. I argue that these discussions about anti-Asian racism often tend to narrowly focus on individual acts of violence that are easily recorded and attributed to, often disregarding the central existence of the specific anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse. This discourse, which blends deep-rooted anti-Chinese racism and anti-communist Sinophobia during the Cold War (Li 2009), targets more recent immigrants from Mainland China, who are seen as either "victims of China's Communist government" and thus "with us", or "puppets of China's Communist government" and thus "against us". In the second and third sections, I argue that the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse is articulated with broader, structural conditions of widespread crises caused by neoliberal financial capitalism, the impact of defunding public institutions, and the erosion of democracy and the US-China rivalry. Using Girard (2021[1977])'s analytical framework, I discuss examples of government debt crisis, housing affordability crisis, and Cooper's Global News story of the PPE crisis as incidents through which a second crisis of accusing a scapegoat takes shape. The fourth section concludes by arguing for critical awareness of and resistance against the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse.

Anti-Asian Hate Attacks, #StopAsianHate, and Beyond

Following Hall's view about the discursive nature of racism, it is important to observe and diagnose what is particular about a racism targeting a group and responses to it in any given set of historical conditions. In the case of anti-Asian racism in our time, a sharp rise in hate attacks against Asians and, in response, protests rallying around the message of #StopAsianHate are the most visible characteristic of this particular current of racism and community resistance against it. To both the Canadian public and the Asian diasporic groups, anti-Asian racism in the last several years has been overwhelmingly associated with hate. Going against the grain, I problematize this narrow focus on hate, which, I argue, prevents us from understanding anti-Asian racism as a systemic phenomenon that is discursive and inextricably connected to structural economic, political, and cultural conditions of our time in North America.

To be sure, one widely noted feature of the recent wave of anti-Asian racism is the frightening rise of direct, hateful attacks by strangers in public places since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hateful attacks on Chinese Canadians, Asians Canadians because of similar physical features, and even Indigenous peoples mistaken as Chinese skyrocketed since 2020. There has been a continuous stream of reports about people being refused service, coughed at, spat at, pushed, beaten, and threatened with violence. An Angus Reid Institute survey in June 2020 estimated that 50% of Chinese Canadians routinely experience verbal assaults and 60% of Chinese Canadians change their routines to avoid attacks (Angus Reid Institute 2020). A follow up survey in June 2021 showed intensification of anti-Asian discrimination (Angus Reid Institute 2021). Vancouver, despite its reputation as the most Asian city outside Asia and supposedly “the bastion of progressive multiculturalism”, registered more anti-Asian hate crimes reported to the police than in the top 10 most populous US cities combined; it experienced a 717% increase in anti-Asian crimes, despite underreporting, and was thus dubbed the world’s capital of anti-Asian hate crimes (Pearson 2021; Baylon and Cecco 2021). A 2022 Statistics Canada study reports a 301% increase in the number of police-reported hate crimes against East or Southeast Asian population across Canada from 2019 to 2020 (Wang and Moreau 2022).

This wave of anti-Asian hate crimes is often explicitly, though not exclusively, associated with blaming the Chinese diaspora and by extension Asians for the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in one of the well-reported cases, photojournalist Justin Tang, when entering an Ottawa downtown mall, was threatened by a man that wearing a mask made him want to “kill Asians” (Cotnam 2020). Some Chinese Canadians were fearful that threats would escalate into real violence (field note, February 6, 2021). Tragically, on March 16, 2021 a perpetrator drove to three different businesses in Atlanta, United States to kill Asian spa workers. This sparked continent-wide protests against anti-Asian racism. These killings are widely seen in Asian communities as the culmination of growing hate and hostility against them. These appalling and reprehensible racist hate crimes are the face of what has been described as anti-Asian hate. Indeed, the hashtag #StopAsianHate quickly became the slogan for many protests across North America. Hate and how the government should respond to hate through stronger legislation and policing emerged as central concerns to many individuals and advocacy groups. In 2022, the Canadian federal government launched consultations for the National Action Plan on Combating Hate to “address the troubling rise of hate and hate groups” (Canadian Heritage 2022). However, its stated focus only on hate crimes and hate groups already indicated a narrow and likely ineffective focus for addressing pervasive racism.

There are several problems with the preoccupation with only hate. First, contrary to many people’s perception that we can fight hate crimes with law enforcement, the legal tools against hate are very limited. Canada’s Criminal Code does not explicitly define hate crime; in other words, a person cannot be charged with a hate crime. The few sections concerning hate are about the prohibition of hate propaganda and mischief motivated by hate. Hate as a motivation can factor into sentencing considerations,

however, Canadian police are known to rarely classify crimes as hate-motivated, partly because it is difficult to produce proof for motivation. Second, calling for hate crime laws and more policing are not only ineffective solutions, moreover, it may damage solidarity and a collective struggle against racism (Talusán 2021; 18millionrising.org; see also Park's article in this volume). Third, contrary to common understanding, these racist abuses are not the beginning but only a part of growing hostility in the last decade targeting the Chinese diaspora in Canada, who have been scapegoated for complex fiscal, financial, economic, and public health challenges (Yang 2016; Bui 2019; Ng 2019; Wu 2019), the latest in the tradition of race-based anti-immigrant scapegoating in the wake of crises. Social and political institutions including the media, popular culture, government policies, and organizational practices interact to produce and sustain an anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse. The preoccupation with hate crimes directs attention to the pathology of a few individuals or general remarks about a lack of education about the history of racism in Canada, while sidestepping the specific trend of anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse driven by the US-China rivalry.

The logic of the anti-Chinese accusation is comparable to that in anti-terrorism, Islamophobic hysteria (Denike 2015) and anti-Japanese hysteria in the 1940s and the 1980s, whereby a form of race-thinking translates collective anxiety about the foreign threat into a presumption of guilt-by-association and a desire to punish the surrogate victim in order to restore perceived control (Rothschild et al 2012, p.1149; Girard 2021[1977]). Girard (1986) observes that the scapegoat bears universal signs, in that they are always different ethnically, culturally, or physically, and they are marginal to society (Brown and Stivers 1998). In the case of anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse circulating in everyday life, institutional operations, and policymaking processes, the victim is identified through group/racial profiling criteria, i.e. through how they look, where they migrated from, and what they say or not say about the foreign country and government. Specific to immigrants from Mainland China and their children born in Canada, a prevailing prejudice they are faced with is a binaried conception of them as either victims of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or accomplices of the CCP, the latter being the scapegoat to be punished.

The set of binaries applied to the Chinese, especially immigrants from Mainland China, are organized with corresponding meanings:

good Chinese	vs.	bad Chinese
victims of CCP	vs.	agents of CCP
anti-China	vs.	pro-China
loyal to Canada	vs.	disloyal to Canada
free thinking	vs.	duped
grateful	vs.	ungrateful
defenders of democracy and human rights	vs.	enemies of democracy and human rights

This conceptual map is a key component of the structural, ideological framework of anti-Chinese race-thinking through which the Chinese diaspora are made sense of, evaluated, and reacted to accordingly. In the paradigm of “Good Chinese” versus “Bad Chinese”, the “Good Chinese” are those who behave in ways that fit the image of victims of communism, who narrate only stories of communist oppression, who categorically take an anti-China position, and who profess the expected emotions of gratitude for Canada’s rescue of them from the claws of communism. The “Bad Chinese” who deviate from these indicators are classified as “pro-China”; they are suspected as puppets and even accused to be communist agents, who collude with the Chinese government and sabotage the interest of the Canada. In this case, the scapegoat is racially and, importantly, also politically marked, in other words, they are Chinese and “pro-China”.

This framework has pre-determined that only two subject positions are available for the Chinese; in other words, the Chinese are slotted into either of these opposite categories of victims or accomplices (Chen 2008). In reality, most of the Chinese diaspora would not see themselves as fitting either of these categories because they have complex and even contradictory views about China, that is, they are neither ideologically anti-China or pro-China. In many instances, because of pervasive traumatic experience during the Cultural Revolution and other brutal political movements in China and transgenerational transmission (Markert 2011), Mainland Chinese immigrants tend to go to extra lengths to be apolitical and distance themselves from politics. Nonetheless, this anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse structures how Chinese Canadians are seen, what stories can be told and heard, and what identity and life script (Appiah 2005) they are expected to take up. It is notable that to the western audiences the most desired, sympathized, and celebrated narratives about China by the Chinese diaspora are those that tell stories of suffering in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party (Chen 2022). This racist binary construction as well as anti-communist logic of making meaning of Chinese immigrants is even present among children, as journalist Crystal Tai related in her article about the gathering force of the anti-Chinese sentiment. Growing up in Toronto, she was interrogated by her peers on the playground about “what kind of Chinese” she was: “‘Good Chinese’ (a liberal democrat at the age of seven), or ‘Bad Chinese’ (a communist)” (Tai 2020).

Racial profiling of the Chinese diaspora from Mainland China as communist spies sabotaging national interests is a direct result of the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse and is occurring with increasing frequency in the media, governments, and other institutions such as universities. This is especially the case for those with evident connections with China because of their immigration route and those who do not take a categorical anti-China position. As how racial profiling works, these biographical and political characteristics operate to mark Mainland Chinese Canadians as suspected agents of foreign interference for questioning, scrutinizing, filtering, and silencing. In ridings with high proportion of ethnic Chinese voters, many citizens’ rejection of Conservative candidates in the 2021 federal election are simply red smeared as a result of Chinese voters being influenced by or even acting for the Chinese government (Ng 2022). My interviews with Mainland Chinese Canadians and participant observations so far show

that those who organized anti-racist protests were routinely suspected of being master-minded by the Chinese government and thus dismissed. STEM and even social sciences researchers with Chinese background are also profiled and targeted as agents for China (Lewis 2021; Lewis-Kraus 2022; Chase 2021; Ling 2022; Lorinc 2023).

The anti-Chinese scapegoating is a serious problem and is one of the main drivers of anti-Asian hate in the present. However, it is generally overlooked, not just by mainstream institutions but even by some veteran anti-racist activists and organizations. For example, at a webinar on anti-Asian hate, a question came from the audience: “The latest anti-Chinese hate crime in Canada was due to American anti-China policy and its misinformation/disinformation against China. How to tackle this type of hate crime in Canada driv[en] by macro political environment?” However, the response from the Chinese Canadian panelist referred to the history of anti-Chinese hate dating back to the 1800’s, Head Tax, and Chinese Exclusion Act, eliding any mentioning of the broader anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse (field note, November 16, 2021). There are likely multiple factors involved in the unconscious or conscious avoidance of discussing the structural, pervasive anti-Chinese scapegoating and its connection to geopolitics, including the complex divisions within the Chinese diaspora. My argument, however, is that it is crucial to examine and understand western imperialist semi-colonization of China, settler colonial racial order, and contemporary geopolitical shift and ramifications as conditions from which the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse emerge and functions as the core of systemic anti-Chinese racism at present (Chen 2021, 2022). Overlooking the problem of scapegoating, or worse, participating in it, assists the growth of the discourse and results in a dangerous situation for the Chinese diaspora.

Crises and Accusations

The anti-Chinese scapegoating perception of the Chinese as the culprit of social and economic ills is an enduring cultural tradition in Canada since the beginning of settler colonial state (Li 2009). Nevertheless, the current rendition of the yellow peril discourse (Yang 2016, Lou 2021) can only be understood properly when we also situate it in the new global political economy. Neoliberal deregulation and the unchecked growth of financial capitalism have resulted in stagnating economies and significant increase in income inequality and “the astonishing rise of the 1%” in Canada (Osberg 2018) and many other western countries in the last several decades. Relatedly, the marketisation of public institutions, including universities but also many others, has created commodification of public goods, inequality, and precarity (Berman 2012; Brown 2013, 2022). Another major challenge that western liberal democracies face is the erosion of democracy. Many have cautioned about the drift of liberal democracies toward proto-fascism or authoritarian populism, accompanied by worsening political polarisation (Graves and Smith 2020; Reich 2021; Brown 2022). Distrust in corporate media, due to the competition of digital social and alternative media, right-wing strategic disinformation attacks (Freelon, Marwick, and Kreiss 2020), and credibility damages from journalist ethical blindspots (Mitrovica 2006; Mastracci 2020, 2023; Ng 2021a, 2012b, 2021c;

Sun 2021), is also placing democracy in jeopardy. These are what Girard describes as “the initial crisis.” While “the initial crisis” could be anything, Girard observes that the real crisis is the reaction to the first one. The reaction, or the second crisis, is a social crisis of homogeneity where social differences are momentarily suspended and “virtually everyone acts the same in an emergency – hoarding food, looting, becoming violent or angry (Girard 2021[1977]; Brown and Stivers 1998)”. The secondary crisis involves formulating an accusation and choosing a victim.

Many scholars and pundits agree that the great power competition, especially that between the US and China, is the defining feature of the 21st century (Gains and Sinkkonen 2020). Indeed, in a short span of four decades China has quickly become an economic superpower; it is ruled by an authoritarian regime explicitly set against liberal democracy; it has ambitions that challenge the US interests as the singular, supreme dominating power. However, while the rivalry between the US and China is real, some argue that these are also utilized by demagogues to demonize China and to shift blame to China from real drivers of domestic crises (Yang 2016; Bui 2019; Luo 2021; Reich 2021; Wolff 2023). The Chinese state, Chinese money, Chinese people, and by extension the Chinese diaspora are blamed for growing national debt, runaway housing cost, competition over intellectual property, and since the year 2020 a public health crisis.

In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, China became the target of accusations in what Fan Yang described as “fiscal orientalism”. Yang (2016) analyzed cultural artefacts such as a 2009 Super Bowl commercial sponsored by a conservative think tank, a 2012 Super Bowl commercial for a Republican candidate, and the widely circulated “Chinese Professor” advertisement by Citizens Against Government Waste. Concertedly these advertisements promoted the notion that “U.S. owes China most of its debt”, which is blatantly untrue. In 2021, 25% of the total federal debt (28.43 trillion U.S. dollars) was owned by foreign investors. Japan and Mainland China were top foreign holders, with Japan holding 4.6% and China 3.9% (USAspending.gov). China’s US Treasury debt purchases started to increase in 2000, peaked in 2014 and gradually declined since then (Lee 2020). US government debt is a reasonable investment destination for China’s large foreign exchange reserves because it is widely considered as a “safe haven”; however, China is also becoming increasingly wary of risks associated such as low returns and threats of financial sanctions by the US government. Despite these facts, China has been consistently and successfully constructed in American public imagination as a “threatening foreign creditor (Yang 2016, p.377).” Relatedly, Long Bui (2019) also coined the term “monetary orientalism” to describe the representation of China as a “prime currency manipulator and cheater” when China was accused of devaluing its currency in the so called “currency wars (p.482).” China’s currency intervention, a common practice that other countries have employed before, is singled out and interpreted as “foreign exchange dark arts” by the “Chinese red menace” to “drag currencies onto the battlefield” (Tom Rees 2018, quoted in Bui 2019). As Bui (2019) observes, “China’s attempts to respond to global market pressures are not always viewed as rational approaches to deal with a fickle economy, but a mad dash by a one-party state to undermine Americans (p.487).” This indeed becomes the paradigmatic frame

for interpreting China as an oversized threat. To apply Girard's analytical framework, this marks the beginning of the second crisis whereby the consolidation of accusations against China and the Chinese diaspora occurs.

In Canada, a similar anti-China and anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse proved to be convenient for shifting blame for Vancouver's rising housing cost to Chinese money and Chinese immigrants since the 2010s. Canada's housing prices have been inflated by a range of factors, including a shift in housing policy away from social housing to home ownership, low interest rates over a long period of time, record lending by banks and other financial institutions, population increase, limited housing supply, and foreign capital from the US, Europe and Asia. However, there has been a persistent message from the media and even government officials that the cause of housing unaffordability is "Chinese money". While foreign investment, including investment from China, certainly contributed to the problem, with the exception of a handful of critics (e.g. Hern 2015; Ng 2019; Wallstam 2019; Smith 2021), the mainstream media, academia, and the public generally fail to examine the range of factors that are not as sensational and believable to the Canadian public as menacing Mainland Chinese investors. Far from being unique, Vancouver's housing cost problem is a symptom of what housing policy specialists call "housing financialization", a growing phenomenon in wealthy economies especially after the 2008 global financial crisis, manifesting in practices such as multiple property ownership and foreign investment. Decades of neoliberal economic and financial policies have produced unprecedented global inequalities, including in Canada (Osberg 2018). We see the global growth of the super-rich and an expanding global middle class, for whom domestic and foreign real estate investment is a popular choice; in other words, select cities have been used as a "safe deposit box" (Wallstam 2019). Furthermore, the steady and immense increase in the supply of money in the trillions because of US-led monetary policy and low interest rates over an extended period has also significantly contributed to wealthy elites' demand for investment housing (Ng 2019). Nonetheless, even though there is insufficient and unreliable data to prove it (Wallstam 2019), a scapegoating discourse about the housing cost crisis being caused by foreign, specifically Mainland Chinese, property investment solidified from 2015 onwards (see for example Cooper 2015). In contrast, the increasing and changing patterns of multiple property ownership, among other factors, had rarely been examined. In Canada, as in other wealthy economies, multiple property owners are a growing group and are concentrated in Vancouver (accounting for 20 per cent of homeowners) and Toronto (16.5 per cent) (Gold 2021; Lavery 2021). In fact, in 2022 news broke out that at least 20 per cent of Canadian Members of Parliament and about one-third of Liberal cabinet ministers hold rental and investment real estate, including the then Conservative leadership candidate Pierre Poilievre (Connolly 2022a, 2022b), whose decry about rising housing prices avoids pointing the finger at wealth polarization and housing financialization. Indeed, how lawmakers' financial interest may influence their analysis about housing issues and decision on housing policy has become an important question (Connolly 2022b). This new phenomenon of housing financialization is so notable that the *International Journal of Housing Policy* devoted a special issue on the

topic in 2020. Housing financialization, exemplified by multiple property ownership and foreign ownership, results in more macroeconomic instability, greater intergenerational, geographical and tenure-status inequality, and produces new political cleavages. Experts have called for it to be treated as a central subject of broad financial and social policy (Fuller 2020). The scapegoating narrative, however, “construes Vancouver as a ‘victim’ of foreign capital” and dresses the problem of housing financialization as a foreign and Chinese problem to be solved by restricting foreign investment (Wallstam 2019, p.92).

Anti-Chinese Scapegoating in Action: the COVID PPE Supplies Story in Global News

In this section, I examine Cooper’s report about the Chinese diaspora in Canada helping the Chinese government stockpile PPE supplies as a critical incident in constructing the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse. I consider Cooper’s report a paradigmatic case (Flyvbjerg 2011) because of its richness in illustrating the context to the scapegoating story, the developmental process of constructing and spreading the scapegoating story narrative, and the impact of inflaming hatred. One aspect of the context is the decade long topic of the China threat in Canadian media. As one of the most prolific journalists writing on this topic, Cooper has focused his journalistic work since about 2015 on how the Chinese government and its alleged “agents” have harmed Canada and Canadians through causing housing unaffordability (2015), money laundering (Global News 2018), stockpiling PPE (2020a), silencing Chinese dissidents (2020b), and engaging in foreign interference (Global News 2023). Even though his work has been challenged by critics (Ng 2021c), he had been afforded the platform of Globe News until 2023 (Mastracci 2023) and his influence in shaping the prevailing discourse is evidenced by his affiliation with the McDonald-Laurier Institute and his best-selling book *Willful Blindness* (Cooper 2021; for a critical review, see Ng 2021c). The narrative in Cooper’s story about “millions of overseas Chinese” stockpiling PPE for the Chinese government exemplifies the “Good Chinese” versus “Bad Chinese” race-thinking in anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse in Cooper’s other work as well as in much of the Canadian discourse on other incidents such as the detainment of Meng Wanzhou by Canada and of the two Michaels by China. Cooper’s PPE story is also significant because it provoked the first large-scale and Canada-wide grassroots resistance to scapegoating by Chinese Canadians.

The first outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was in Wuhan in central China. In late January, 2020, China moved quickly to place Wuhan under a strict lockdown for 76 days. Across the country, effectively 50 million people were quarantined, and additional preventive measures were implemented, including mandatory face mask wearing, social distancing, massive contact tracing, severe restriction of population movements, and strict border control (Burki 2020). Through these measures, by the beginning of April 2020, the spread of the coronavirus in China was brought to a temporary halt (Uretsky 2020) and schooling, traveling, everyday going about was back to normal for almost

two years¹. However, independent journalist Davide Mastracci (2020) noted, "towards the end of March [2020], just as it was becoming obvious that China's COVID-19 response, despite some flaws, was impressive, the amount of anti-China articles ramped up". In other words, the almost doubled output of anti-Chinese articles about China's COVID-19 response was not actually due to any new evidence about the Chinese government's wrongs, but rather, "the situation within Canada was just getting much worse, and so everyone was looking for someone to blame, including these columnists" (2020). Sam Cooper's April 30th, 2020 story was part of the spike of articles demonizing China in Canadian corporate press, presenting itself as an expose of nefarious activities of "millions overseas Chinese" to help China's communist government stockpile PPE supplies for exorbitant profits and sabotaging other countries' struggles with the pandemic.

A significant volume of face masks and other protective equipment was indeed imported to China in January and February 2020. To put that in context, it is important to remember that in those two months, China was the epicentre of the pandemic while there was hardly any infection in the rest of the world. Hospitals in Wuhan suffered from a severe shortage of protective supplies, so much so that Chinese doctors sent desperate pleas for help on the internet. There was also a severe shortage of face masks that ordinary people were required to wear. It is plausible that some Chinese Canadian associations responded to the Chinese consulates' and the central and local Chinese governments' call for help. However, it is crucial to note that these associations do not represent the vast majority of Chinese Canadians, even though they and the Chinese government may claim that they do in state propaganda. Furthermore, the Chinese government's open call for help and some associations' response to them are also normal behaviours in a public health crisis. Similar calls and responses occurred before in times of disasters such as Great Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008 and they are no different from actions of other embassies and diaspora communities.

My research on Mainland Chinese Canadian² participants mentioned that they purchased face masks to send to their family, friends, and hospitals in China, however, some also decided not to. In fact, they had different views and took different actions about PPE in January and February 2020. Those who sent face masks to China did so out of their own volition, not because the Chinese government asked them to. Most significantly, one finding that came out of my interviews is that private purchase agents (代购 daigou), grassroots Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs who are typically women and who do transnational trade business using the social media platform WeChat, likely accounted for the most significant volume of the export of face masks to China³.

However, in his reporting, Cooper did not mention these diverse contexts and varied actions of Chinese Canadians and he did not seem to be aware of the intense and significant activities of private purchase agents in those months. His article focused on painting a picture of the Chinese government directing the Chinese diaspora en masse. Cooper's report described the actions related to PPEs as being "quiet", "covert", "sur-reptitious", "underground", and "under the radar". However, the report did not provide

any evidence that any organization or individual tried to hide their action from public view. To the contrary, Cooper himself cited Chinese official statistics on the import, Chinese consulates' call for help, and Chinese news reports. Cooper also claimed to have exposed that the mobilization of "millions of 'overseas Chinese'" in a "state-level operation" made possible the import of 2.02 billion face masks to China in January and February 2020. He wrote: "through clandestine United Front networks run out of Chinese consulates in cities from Vancouver to Toronto to New York to Melbourne to Tokyo, the Communist Party urged millions of 'overseas Chinese' to bulk-buy N95 masks in order to ship 'back batches of scarce supplies for the motherland'". It should be noted that Cooper's source for the alleged massive scale of 'overseas Chinese' involved in "a state-level operation" is a Chinese state media article originally published in the municipal *Fuzhou Daily* and then republished in the national government news outlet Xinhuanet. This raises the question why Cooper, a major Canadian news outlet journalist who has been for almost a decade focusing on problematizing the Chinese government's interest in extending its influence abroad, readily accepted the reports from the Chinese government as plain facts, instead of what a rational and responsible person would scrutinize and qualify, if not reject, as Chinese state propaganda. In an ironic sense, it seems that the Chinese state media's propaganda - in this case, propaganda about its capacity to mobilize "millions of overseas Chinese" - is what Cooper apparently would like to believe. Clearly this is a classic case of confirmation bias, where one seeks out and readily accepts information that supports one's beliefs, without due diligence to discover other evidence.

The same confirmation bias is also evident in a critical error in the English translation of a sentence in the same reporting. The original sentence in Chinese in the Chinese state media article reads '每一位侨胞都是战“疫”者'. The anonymous Chinese writer used a common literary device of homonyms and used quotation marks to indicate the substitution: '战“疫”者' (a warrior against the pandemic, 疫 means epidemic or plague) in the quoted sentence is a play on the more commonly used term "战役者" (a warrior, 役 means service in battle or war). A correct English translation should be "Every overseas Chinese is a warrior against the pandemic." The Global News report misleadingly printed "Every overseas Chinese is a warrior," dropping the key reference to "the pandemic," which distorted the meaning of the sentence to fit not just the hysteria of the story about PPEs, but also the broader anti-Chinese discourse about the disloyal Chinese diaspora. This mistranslation is a failure in meeting journalist standards of accuracy and contributes to the already growing discriminatory slander against Chinese Canadians. This mistake was pointed out by Chinese Canadians who wrote or called Global News but Cooper and Global News insist that there was no mistake (research field notes).

In the days following Cooper's defamatory report, a group of Chinese-Canadian professors in different academic disciplines and institutions launched a petition to demand corrections of the reporting⁴. The petition collected more than 8,000 signatures in merely a week, a remarkable success for a group who usually shy away from public actions. Others have also written to Global News numerous times to protest (See Ng

2021). However, Global News steadfastly refused to talk to petitioners about their concerns and to apologize for and to correct its serious editorial and factual errors (Ng 2021). Furthermore, Cooper went a step further by accusing those who stood up to voice objection as compromised individuals who acted for the Chinese government using the cover of anti-racism. In the summer of 2021 Cooper published a book about “how drug dealers, the CCP agents, and billionaire tycoons” have infiltrated the west (Cooper 2021). At the online book launch, the first example that Cooper gave about “the hand of Beijing” was the petition about his Global News Report that the Chinese Canadian professors’ group organized. His framing of this grassroots petition in line with “drug dealers, the CCP agents, and Billionaire tycoons” shows how the anti-Chinese scapegoating discourse works in painting legitimate dissenters as puppets or, worse, agents of the Chinese government.

I argue that Cooper’s April 30th, 2020 report, uncorrected and in circulation to this day⁵, contributed to distorting Canadian public view in believing that the Chinese diaspora as a collective are to be blamed for the public health challenges in Canada. It stirred up hostility towards “disloyal” Chinese Canadians and hateful remarks erupted in response to the report. As mentioned earlier, some readers of Cooper’s report had no hesitation in describing the Chinese diaspora as “millions of sleeper cells” and demanding to “intern all Chinese nationals”, which remained on the YouTube page of the TV segment for months before being quietly removed (research notes).

Conclusion: Countering the Scapegoating of the Chinese Diaspora

Anti-Asian racism has been part of the cultural tradition in white settler colonial societies since their beginning. A characteristic of racism targeting Asians is that it is intertwined with anti-immigrant sentiments and geopolitics. The content of racist ideas and actions against Asians tend to vary depending on the situation that provoked the wave of heightened hostility against a specific group. As “a floating signifier”, racism against the Chinese in the opening decades of the 21st century must be understood for its meaning constructions in the context of both historical racist ideology about the Chinese and contemporary political economic conditions. Using Girard’s (2021[1977]) insight about second crisis in scapegoating, i.e. the more serious social crisis of homogeneity through which societal reaction to the first crisis becomes uniform, typically expressed as suspicion, distrust, anger, and violence (Brown and Stivers 1998) and the accusation of a group supposedly of some moral failure is accused to have caused the initial crisis, I have discussed the emergence of a widespread discourse that scapegoats China and the Chinese diaspora as threats and causes of major problems in the US and in Canada. This discourse is a systematic anti-Chinese construction of China as a threatening foreign debtor to whom the “U.S. owes most of its debt”, a “prime currency manipulator and cheater”, Chinese investment as the cause of the housing cost crisis in Vancouver, and the Chinese diaspora as “warriors” commanded by the Chinese government to sabotage Canada in the COVID-19 pandemic. China “as a communist nation, a military power, and economic powerhouse (Bui 2019)”, the Chinese investment, and

the Chinese diaspora are perceived by many individuals and institutions in the US and no less in Canada as posing the most significant threat in the twenty-first century; they are accused for having caused a host of major crises, despite evidence to the contrary. Scapegoating China and the Chinese diaspora may give some a sense of control and purpose, but it blocks us from understanding the serious structural problems we must address domestically. In other words, the scapegoating and racializing logic functions to divert attention from devastations caused by neoliberal financial capitalism, as seen through the case of the housing crisis in Canada, and precludes alternative visions for Canadian foreign and domestic policy.

No less importantly, scapegoating China and the Chinese diaspora fuels racist and discriminatory treatment of the Chinese and other Asians. The deafening silence around the structural dimensions of the anti-Chinese racist discourse sits in stark contrast to the hypervisibility of attacks on individuals by individual perpetrators. In discussions about anti-Chinese racism, our attention has consistently been directed towards the less educated, the working class, the mentally ill, fringe white supremacists, and sometimes other racialized minorities in the case of anti-Chinese hate crimes, missing the role of the racialized structure in producing and sustaining racist prejudices through news broadcasting, social media, and public documents. If we are to take anti-Chinese racism seriously and to contest it, we must recognize and refute the scapegoating discourse at the root of it and institutions, such as media, must be held accountable for its role in the perpetuating this discourse. The anti-Chinese racism that insists on a Manichean set of categories of either victims of communism or puppets of communism operates as a mental framework that organizes meanings for Chinese Canadians and dehumanizes them. The Chinese diaspora should be understood on their own terms who have their own history and multiple complex relationships with their country of origin, rather than being slotted into the west-centric, Orientalist, ideology driven categories of victims of communism or agents of communism. The current situation whereby taking the ideological position of being against China is considered the condition of belonging to Canada should be named and rejected. The Chinese diaspora's range of experiences, relations, beliefs, and positions deserve to be heard, understood, and accepted. They should not just be acceptable to Canada only when they present themselves as victims of the Chinese government. The Canadian society needs to resist applying this conceptual matrix of "Good Chinese" or "Bad Chinese" that refuses to recognize their rich lives, complex emotions, and importantly political agency on their terms.

References

- Adachi, Ken. 1991. *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Allport, Gordon W. 1959 [1948]. *The ABCs of Scapegoating*. 3rd ed. New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith.
- Korzinski, David. 2020. "Blame, bullying and disrespect: Chinese Canadians reveal their experiences with racism during COVID-19." Angus Reid Institute, June 21, 2020. <http://angusreid.org/racism-chinese-canadians-covid19/>.
- Korzinski, David. 2021. "Anti-Asian Discrimination: Younger Canadians most likely to be hardest hit by experiences with racism, hate." Angus Reid Institute, June 8, 2021. <https://angusreid.org/anti-asian-discrimination/>.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2005. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1973. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harvest/HBJ.
- Backhouse, Constance. 1996. "The White Women's Labor Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada." *Law and History Review* 14, no. 2 (Fall): 315–368.
- Bayon, Johna, and Gecco, Leyland 2021. "Attacks make Vancouver 'anti-Asian hate crime capital of North America.'" *The Guardian*, May 23, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/23/vancouver-anti-asian-hate-crimes-increase>.
- Brown, Lauren E., and Stivers, Richard. 1998. "The legend of "nigger" lake place as scapegoat." *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 6 (July): 704–723. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193479802800602>.
- Bui, Long. T. 2019. "Monetary Orientalism: Currency Wars and the Framing of China as Global Cheater." *Global Society* 33, no. 4 (May): 479–498. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1622513>.
- Burki, Talha. 2020. "China's successful control of COVID-19." *The Lancet. Infectious Diseases* 20 no. 11 (November): 1240–1241. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(20\)30800-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30800-8).
- Canadian Heritage. 2022. "Federal government launches national consultations for Canada's first ever National Action Plan on Combatting Hate." Last modified, March 29, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2022/03/federal-government-launches-national-consultations-for-canadas-first-ever-national-action-plan-on-combatting-hate.html>.
- Canada Broadcasting Corporation. March 5, 2022. "Police investigate after Russian Community Centre in Vancouver vandalized."

- Chase, Steven. 2021. "Academics of Chinese origin warn new national security screening for research funding could lead to 'racial profiling.'" *The Globe and Mail*, August 2, 2021. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-academics-of-chinese-origin-warn-new-national-security-screening-for/#:~:text=Two%20organizations%20representing%20academics%20of,Chinese%20researchers%20as%20foreign%20agents.%E2%80%9D>.
- Chen, Xiaobei. 2008. "Olympics Cartoon Uses Racist Representation." *Ottawa Citizen*, August 9, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002743215704400236>.
- Chen, Xiaobei. 2019. "Governing Cultures, Making Multicultural Subjects." In *Governing the Social in Neoliberal Times*, edited by Deborah R. Brock, 94–142. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Chen, Xiaobei. 2021. *Understanding the Roots of Systemic Anti-Asian Racism*. One Pacific News, November 7, 2021.
- Chen, Xiaobei. 2022. "Anti-Asian Racism". In *Reading Sociology* (4th ed.), edited by Jean-Pierre, Johanne, Vanessa Watts, Carl James, Patrizia Albanese, Xiaobei Chen, and Michael Graydon. Oxford University Press, 2022, pp.169-174.
- Chomsky, Noam. "Work Together or Perish Together." *Canada at a Crossroads on China*. Event Talk. University of Victoria. February 4, 2022.
- Cooper, Sam. 2020a. "United Front groups in Canada helped Beijing stockpile coronavirus safety supplies." *Global News*, April 30, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6858818/coronavirus-china-united-front-canada-protective-equipment-shortage/#:~:text=Through%20businesses%20and%20%E2%80%9Ccoverseas%20Chinese,China%2C%20Chinese%20state%20reports%20say>.
- Cooper, Sam. 2020b. "Chinese-Canadians 'suffering in silence' as China's United Front reaches into Canada." *Global News*, May 12, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6920433/chinese-canadians-communist-party-influence/>.
- Cooper, S. 2021. *Wilful Blindness: How a Network of Narcos, Tycoons and CCP Agents Infiltrated the West*. Optimum Publishing International.
- Cotnam, Hailie. 2020. "Police investigating racist incident at Rideau Centre." *CBC News*, October 13, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/anti-asian-racist-incident-rideau-centre-ottawa-police-investigating-1.5760245>.
- Denike, Margaret. 2015. "Scapegoat racism and the sacrificial politics of 'security.'" *Journal of International Political Theory* 11, no. 1 (January): 111–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1755088214555596>
- Girard, René. 1986. *The Scapegoat*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girard, René. 1987. "Generative Scapegoating." In *Violent Origins: Ritual Killings and Cultural Formation*, edited by Walter Burkheart, René Girard and Jonathan Z. Smith. Stanford, page numbers. CA: Stanford University Press.
- Girard, René. 2021/1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by Patrick Gregory. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Global News. 2018. "Exclusive: VIP linked to top Chinese officials, real estate, corruption allegations, gambled with \$490k at B.C. casino." <https://globalnews.ca/news/4240091/exclusive-vip-linked-to-top-chinese-officials-real-estate-and-corruption-allegations-gambled-at-b-c-casino/>.
- Global News. April 30, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGcl7hNRbBQ&t=6s>.
- Global News. March 8, 2023. "Two high-level memos allege Beijing covertly funded Canadian election candidates," <https://globalnews.ca/news/9534893/high-level-memos-beijing-2019-election-candidates/>.
- Gold, Kerry. 2021. "In Vancouver and Toronto, as many as 1 in 5 homeowners own more than one property." *The Globe and Mail*, April 28, 2021. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/vancouver/article-in-vancouver-and-toronto-as-many-as-1-in-5-homeowners-own-more-than/>.
- Graves, Frank, and Smith, Jeff. 2020. "Northern Populism: Causes and Consequences of the New Ordered Outlook." *The School of Public Policy Publications*, 13 (June): 1-37. <https://doi.org/10.11575/sppp.v13i0.69884>.
- Hage, Ghassan. 1998. *White Nation: fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society*. Annandale: Pluto Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 2021[1977]. "Race, the Floating Signifier: What More Is There to Say about 'Race?'" In *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, edited by Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, 359-373. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Haunss, Sebastian. 2013. *Conflicts in the knowledge society: the contentious politics of intellectual property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hern, Matt. 2015. "Vancouver's core real-estate problem is profiteering and not whether buyers are of Chinese ancestry." *The Georgia Straight*. <https://www.straight.com/news/573631/matt-hern-vancouvers-core-real-estate-problem-profiteering-and-not-whether-buyers-are>
- Hoffman, Geoffrey. A., and Modi, Susham M. 2012. "The war on terror as a metaphor immigration regulation: a critical view of a distorted debate." *The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice* 15, no. 2-3 (Spring): 449-468.
- Hvistendahl, Mara. 2021. "'Ridiculous Case': Juror Criticizes DOJ for Charging Scientist with Hiding Ties to China." *The Intercept*, June 23, 2021. <https://theintercept.com/2021/06/23/anming-hu-trial-fbi-china/>.
- James, Carl E. 2023. "'Not a Tangible Asset': What Keeping Canada White Has Meant for Its
- Enrichment." In *Reading Sociology: Decolonizing Canada*, 4th ed., edited by Johanne Jean-Pierre, Vanessa Watts, Carl E. James, Patrizia Albanese, Xiaobei Chen, and Michael Graydon, 314-319. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, S. 2022. "Britain's Kafkaesque boycott of Russian culture plays straight into Putin's hands." *The Guardian*.

- Lewis, Margaret. K. 2021. "Criminalizing China." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 111, no. 1 (Winter): 145–225.
- Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. 2022. "Have Chinese Spies Infiltrated American Campuses?" *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2022. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/03/21/have-chinese-spies-infiltrated-american-campuses>.
- Li, Peter S. (1998). *The Chinese in Canada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Li, Peter S. 2009. "The Social Construction of Chinese in Canada." In *Asian America: Forming New Communities, Expanding Boundaries*, edited by Huping Ling, 223–243. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Ling, Justin. 2022. "A brilliant scientist was mysteriously fired from a Winnipeg virus lab. No one knows why." *Maclean's*, February 15, 2022. <https://macleans.ca/longforms/winnipeg-virus-lab-scientist/>.
- Lorinc, John. 2023. "Chinese research collaborations under the microscope." *Canadian Association of University Teachers Bulletin*. <https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2023/09/chinese-research-collaborations-under-microscope>.
- Luo, Nina. 2021. "The American Victims of Washington's Anti-China Hysteria." *The New Republic*, May 20, 2021. <https://newrepublic.com/article/162429/yellow-peril-rhetoric-selling-war-with-china>.
- Mastracci, Davide. 2020. "Columnists Demonized China's COVID-19 Response. They Were Wrong." *The Maple*, August 10, 2020. <https://www.readthemaple.com/columnists-demonized-chinas-covid-19-response-they-were-wrong/>.
- Mastracci, Davide. 2023. "A Farewell to Sam 'Scooper' Cooper, The Spy Agency Microphone." *The Maple*, June 7, 2023. <https://www.readthemaple.com/a-farewell-to-sam-scooper-cooper-the-spy-agency-microphone/>.
- McClain, Paula. D. 2021. "Crises, race, acknowledgement: The centrality of race, ethnicity, and politics to the future of political science." *Perspectives on Politics* 19, no. 1 (January): 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720004478>.
- Ng, Weng Hoong. 2019. "Sinophobia In Canada: The Vancouver Housing Crisis." *One Pacific News*, July 22, 2019. <http://www.onepacificnews.com/2019/07/22/sinophobia-in-canada-the-vancouver-housing-crisis-with-chinese-characteristics/>.
- Ng, Weng Hoong. 2021a. "What the Chinese scapegoaters didn't know about Metro Vancouver's housing boom or crisis." *The Georgia Straight*, March 11, 2021. <https://www.straight.com/news/what-chinese-scapegoaters-didnt-know-about-metro-vancouver-housing-boom-or-crisis>.
- Ng, Weng Hoong. 2021b. "Flawed Tax Study Fans More Fearmongering About Canada's Housing Crisis." *One Pacific News*, September 30, 2021. <http://www.onepacificnews.com/2021/09/30/another-taxing-story-about-canadas-housing-crisis/#:~:text=The%20study%20allegedly%20found%20massive,likely%20aggravated%20the%20housing%20crisis>.

- Ng, Weng Hoong. 2021c. "The Wilful Blindness of Wilful Blindness," <http://www.onepacificnews.com/2021/08/07/the-wilful-blindness-of-wilful-blindness/>.
- Ng, Weng Hoong. 2021d. "Canada at risk as media struggles with Chinese conundrum." *The Georgia Straight*, December 10, 2021. <https://www.straight.com/news/canada-at-risk-as-media-struggles-with-chinese-conundrum>.
- O'Flynn, Michael, Monaghan, Lee F., and Power, Martin J. 2014. "Scapegoating During a Time of Crisis: A Critique of Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland." *Sociology* 48, no. 5 (October): 921–937. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038514539059>.
- Oikawa, Mona. 2012. *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Osberg, Lars. 2018. *The age of increasing inequality: the astonishing rise of Canada's 1%*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd.
- Paltiel, Jeremy, Bell, Daniel. A., Chen, Xiaobei, and Jiang, Wenren. 2021. Stop poisonous prejudice against Canadians of Chinese descent. *The Hills Times*, July 29, 2021. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2021/07/29/stop-poisonous-prejudice-against-canadians-of-chinese-descent/269338/>.
- Pearson, Natalie Obiko. 2021. "This is the Anti-Asian hate crime capital of North America." *Bloomberg*, May 7, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2021-vancouver-canada-asian-hate-crimes/>
- Price, John. 2021. "A red under every bed? Canada, racial profiling, and the Five Eyes." *Canadian Dimension*, December 23, 2021. <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/a-red-under-every-bed-canada-racial-profiling-and-the-five-eyes>.
- Pringle, Josh. 2022. "Ottawa's Moscow Tea Room receives hateful messages, bad reviews." *CTV News Ottawa*.
- Reich, Robert. 2021. "The US's Greatest Danger Isn't China. It's Much Closer to Home." *The Guardian*, June 20, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/20/the-uss-greatest-danger-isnt-china-its-much-closer-to-home>.
- Rothschild, Zachary K., Landau, Mark J., Sullivan, Daniel, and Keefer, Lucas A. 2012. "A dual-motive model of scapegoating: Displacing blame to reduce guilt or increase control." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 102, no. 6 (June): 1148–1163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027413>.
- Ronald, Richard. 2020. "Transformations in housing and housing policy research: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." *International Journal of Housing Policy* 20, no. 1 (February): 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2019.1706889>.
- Roy, Patricia E. 1989. *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

- Smith, Charlie. 2021. "Eby-Yan study defended by those who advanced the foreign-money argument in Vancouver housing debates." *The Georgia Straight*, May 8, 2021. <https://www.straight.com/news/eby-yan-study-defended-by-those-who-advanced-foreign-money-argument-in-vancouver-housing>.
- Stanley, Timothy James. 2011. *Contesting white supremacy school segregation, anti-racism, and the making of Chinese Canadians*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Stanley, Timothy James. 2017. "John A. Macdonald, "the Chinese" and Racist State Formation in Canada." *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 3, no. 1 (Spring): 6–34. <https://doi.org/10.24908/jcri.v3i1.5974>.
- Sun, Wanning. 2021. "Between watch dog and guard dog: the China threat and the Australian media." *Pearls and Irritations*, December 5, 2021. <https://johnmenadue.com/between-watch-dog-and-guard-dog-the-china-threat-and-the-australian-media/>.
- Tai, Crystal. 2020. "Being Chinese-Canadian in a brave new world." *Toronto Star*, April 24, 2020. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/being-chinese-canadian-in-a-brave-new-world/article_7d9cef13-f710-554d-b908-7eaa1812531d.html.
- Wallstam, Maria. 2019. "The making of a middle class housing crisis: the ideology and politics of foreign real estate investment in Vancouver 2008-2018." Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University.
- Wang, Jing Hui, and Moreau, Greg. 2020. "Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2020." Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>.
- Wu, Rose. 2019. "Vancouver's 'Race Estate' Market Has Hurt Many of Us." *The Tyee*, July 4, 2019. <https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2019/07/04/Vancouver-Race-Estate-Hurt/>.
- Yang, Fan. 2016. "Fiscal Orientalism: China Panic, the Indebted Citizen, and the Spectacle of National Debt." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 19, no. 3 (October): 375–396. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2016.0032>.
- Yu, H. (2021). *The white elephant in the room: Anti-Asian racism in Canada*. <https://beyond.ubc.ca/henry-yu-white-elephant/>

Endnotes

1 The two-year normalcy ended in early 2022 when, faced with Omicron variant, the Chinese government imposed what are seen by many as excessive and poorly managed restrictions.

2 The research project is on "COVID-19 and Anti-Chinese Racism", funded by a Carleton University internal grant.

3 The growing, gendered phenomenon of Chinese migrants mobilizing information and communication technologies for transnational commercial activities has attracted scholars' attention who characterized it variously as "petit capitalism", "digital migrant entrepreneurship", and "transnational entrepreneurship" (Zani 2022; Yang et al 2016; Chen 2006).

4 I was one of the few social science scholars in this group and took a lead role in organizing the petition.

5 In a recent story (Cooper 2022) about two murders in Vancouver, Cooper included a live link to his April 30th 2020 report defaming and accusing Chinese Canadians of working for the Chinese government.

6 I was invited to participate in writing this article after leaving my work at CCNCTO, and my reflections here represent only my personal opinions and do not reflect the views of any organizations.

