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**Social Integration and Perceptions of Racism among Chinese Immigrants in France: Findings from the Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region (ChIPRe) Study**

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## **Abstract**

We describe the heterogeneity of the Chinese immigrant population in France and investigate how immigrants' diverse patterns of social integration predict perceptions of racism, using survey data and in-depth interviews collected during the COVID-19 outbreak, a period during which anti-Chinese and anti-Asian xenophobia and racism were activated. Our unique data, collected for the Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region (ChIPRe) Study, enable a classification of Chinese immigrants at the intersection of their migration histories, socio-demographic profiles, broad social integration indicators, and attributes of their social ties that characterize distinct patterns of social interaction with co-ethnics and with the wider French society. Our classification highlights three distinct groups: an established ethnic enclave of Wenzhou Chinese, an immigrant underclass whose members arrived in France after the dismantling of China's centrally planned economy, and successive cohorts of international students, many of whom have gained professional employment in France or intend to stay in France after graduation from institutions of higher education. These distinct immigrant profiles predict different frequencies of subjective experiences of racism that are not attributable to the conventional predictors of racism perceptions alone and add nuance to the discrepancy between conventional social integration indicators and discrimination and racism found among the main immigrant groups and their children in many European countries.

## Introduction

The social science literature on the integration of immigrants in host societies has highlighted an important discrepancy between indicators of social integration and various forms of discrimination, whereas more integrated immigrants (described as those with socioeconomic success, longer duration in the host country, generational status, host-country language acquisition, and social interactions with mainstream society) report experiencing more discrimination than those at the margins. Evidence for this discrepancy, labeled the “integration paradox”, has been produced for the main immigrant groups and their children in several European countries, especially for groups that are easily identifiable because of their ethno-racial status or religion (Tolsma, Lubbers, and Gijsberts 2012; de Vroome, T., B. Martinovic, and M. Verkuyten. 2014; Verkuyten 2016; Steinmann 2019; Schaeffer and Kas 2023; Safi 2024). Many of these studies have relied on measures of perceived discrimination (how immigrants and their children perceive unequal treatment, attitudes and behaviours towards them) and raised the question of how different forms of discrimination primarily due to nationality, culture and ethno-racial status tap into different dimensions of immigrants’ social integration trajectories (Flores 2015; Vang and Chang 2018; Safi 2024). In this paper, we rely on unique data collected for the Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region (ChIPRe) Study to test the integration paradox in a less known immigrant group in France, and evaluate subjective perceptions of racism as a dimension of Chinese immigrants’ social integration.

Chinese immigrants in France are a growing and increasingly diverse group (Beraha 2012, Ma Mung 2015). They are characterized by differences in Chinese region of origin, migration history, sociodemographic characteristics, legal residence, labor market context and attributes of their social ties (Attané and Merli 2024). Yet, they have been largely invisible in French administrative data sources and quantitative surveys of immigration because these sources lack the information needed for an in-depth characterization or are not equipped to sample rare immigrant groups. The ChIPRe study recruited a sample of Chinese immigrants in the Île-de-France region (henceforth the Paris region) with a novel network-based sampling approach which efficiently and cost effectively recruited a large enough sample for inference to immigrants born in China. These data allow one to capture intragroup variation that is important for identifying immigrant subgroups, or

“specific configurations of attributes making up distinct types of immigrants” (Drouhot and Garip 2021:24), within a single national-origin group. The data reveal differences in the experiences and perceptions of racism and how these relate to integration indicators and other factors, such as the immediate social environments of Chinese immigrants, which may drive exposure to or shield immigrants from the sociopolitical context of reception.

ChIPRe was fielded during a period encompassing the onset and immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, when worldwide news and social media, including some heads of state, scapegoated Chinese for the spread of infection, triggering a worldwide surge of anti-Asian sentiments directed at individuals of Chinese descent (Cook, Huang and Xie 2021; Pew Research Center 2020; Turcsányi et al. 2021). In France, racist stereotypes, prejudices and insults othering Chinese and other Asian immigrants did not emerge with COVID-19. They were already prevalent in French society (Jullion 2017; Mayer et al. 2018) before the pandemic as were awareness and mobilization against anti-Chinese racism among first- and second- generation Chinese immigrants (Chuang, 2021; Le Bail and Chuang 2020; Chuang, Le Bail and Merle 2020). However, at no recent time might the discrepancy between indicators of social integration and perceptions of racism have become more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, which activated anti-Chinese attitudes, hardened racial stereotypes, and infused the anti-Chinese narrative with geopolitical undertones contrasting authoritarian vs. Western democratic approaches in the fight against virus (Attané et al. 2021; Chan and Strabucchi 2021; Frenkiel et al. 2020; Geisser 2020; Turcsányi et al. 2021; Wang et al. 2021).

ChIPRe data are well equipped to test the discrepancy between integration and perceptions of racism among Chinese immigrants, and to leverage the heterogeneity of this population group to explore how different integration experiences affect awareness of and exposure to racism thereby determining racism perceptions. In addition to the quantitative survey, ChIPRe conducted in-depth interviews with a subset of survey respondents. These interviews complement the survey’s single-item general measure of perceived racial discrimination with reports of recurrent racist insults and mistreatments that people encounter in their daily lives, providing a more nuanced understanding of Chinese immigrants’ everyday experience of racism.

We first present an historical overview of Chinese migration to France, highlighting the heterogeneity of Chinese immigrants in France. We then review theories of immigrant social incorporation in order to develop hypotheses suited to explain intra-group variation in the association between social integration indicators and immigrants' subjective perceptions of racism and test whether the results are consistent with the social integration paradox. We focus on novel factors that may drive the relationship between social integration and discrimination, namely Chinese immigrants' unique social environments and the attributes of their social ties, because these factors may limit or increase opportunities to face outgroup racism thereby reducing or increasing perceived levels of racial discrimination.

### **Chinese immigrants in France: Heterogeneity and invisibility**

With an average annual growth rate of 8% per year between 1982 and 2017, six times that of the other major immigrant groups (Attané 2022), Chinese have come to represent a rapidly growing segment of the foreign-born population in France. In 2020, there were an estimated 108,712 Chinese-born immigrants in France or 1.6% of the foreign-born population, representing the seventh largest (non-EU) immigrant group. 66% resided in the Paris region (INSEE 2020).

The history of Chinese migration to Europe, and France in particular, dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with recruitment of Chinese laborers during the First World War and some early Chinese presence in the Paris' leather work industry in the 1930s (Guillon and Ma Mung 1991). The next waves of ethnic Chinese immigration to France consisted of ethnic Chinese from former Indochina seeking refuge in the aftermath of the war of independence from France (1946 and 1954), and during the 1970s and 1980s from Vietnam and neighboring Southeast Asian countries in the aftermath of the American War (Poisson 2005; Latham and Wu 2013). China's post-1978 era of economic reforms and opening to the outside world ignited the most recent wave of Chinese immigration to France and other European Union (EU) countries (Ma Mung 2000; Wang S. 2021). The post-1978 cohorts of Chinese immigrants in France originate from Zhejiang Province, in particular the city of Wenzhou and neighboring counties including Qingtian County, an area historically known for emigration and trade (Li Z. 2017, Wang S. 2021). The influx of immigrants from Wenzhou continued during

the 1980s and 1990s, followed by the arrival of smaller groups mainly originating from the Chinese provinces of Fujian, Shandong and Guangdong and, in the late 1990s, from China's Northeastern industrial provinces Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning (also known as the *Dongbei* region) as well as other industrial Northern provinces, e.g. Hebei. This late 1990s wave of Chinese international migration to Europe was triggered by massive layoffs during the restructuring of the Chinese centrally planned industrial economy (Cattelain et al. 2005; Paul 2002; Poisson 2005; Pina-Guerassimoff 2006). According to the International Labor Organization, in 2000 immigrants from Zhejiang (the province encompassing the Wenzhou region) accounted for between 48% and 62% of all China-born immigrants in France while those from the *Dongbei* region accounted for between 17% et 26% (Attané 2022). More recently, in the years 2000s, France launched selective immigration policies aimed at fostering scientific cooperation with China by attracting and making it easier for Chinese international students trained in the French higher education system to obtain a work permit (Amiel et al. 2016, Li 2020, Wang 2021:28; Attané 2022). Currently, international students born in China represent the third largest group of international students in French institutions of higher education (Attané 2022; Campus France 2020). As a result, the mobility of Chinese international students into professional employment contributed to the diversification of the Chinese immigrant population.

Although Chinese immigration to France is diverse with respect to regional origin, level of education, socio-economic circumstances, migration history, and tenure in France (Li 2020; Wang 2019), immigrants from the Wenzhou region and their descendants are believed to dominate in terms of size, economic and political influence (Béraha 2014; Li 2017, Liu 2021). Their relatively large size has allowed members of this group to form subnational networks, to which barriers to entry are high because immigrants from this area often exclusively speak and interact with each other using the Wenzhou vernacular. This vernacular shares little lexical similarity with standard Mandarin Chinese, the universal mode of communication of Chinese immigrants from other provinces, and is unintelligible to outsiders (Li 2023; Liu 2020; Liu 2021).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Wenzhou vernacular is part of the Wu language family encompassing southern Wu languages spoken in Zhejiang, and northern Wu languages spoken in Shanghai and part of Jiangsu province. It is the most distinctive and mutually unintelligible amongst all the Wu varieties and to vernaculars spoken in other Chinese provinces.

Existing studies on the integration of Chinese immigrants in France describe Wenzhou immigrants living in neighborhoods with high residential concentration of same-group immigrants (often referred to as co-ethnics in the migration literature), operating in the co-ethnic labor market (Béraha 2012; Ma Mung 2015; Li 2017), and pursuing economic autonomy through service to the ethnic economy but also in response to the demand of the host country market (Ma Mung 1994). These factors may enhance economic integration while suppressing cultural assimilation. Low cultural assimilation is believed to be especially distinctive of first-generation Wenzhou Chinese who, unlike their children schooled in France, have low French language proficiency (Béraha 2014). Low French proficiency also characterizes immigrants from the *Dongbei* region who, for the most part, arrived in France in their middle ages after being laid-off during the early phase of China's industrial restructuring (Auguin and Lévy 2007). French integration and naturalization policies privilege knowledge of the French language (Schain 2010) as a form of adherence to the "French republican" model. It is thus not surprising that poor knowledge of French has been linked to outgroup discrimination of Chinese immigrants, display of racist behaviors towards Chinese immigrants and reports of Chinese immigrants' subjective perceptions of racial discrimination (Auguin and Lévy 2007, Wang et al. 2023).

In order to understand the heterogeneous experiences of discrimination and racism among Chinese immigrants in France, there is a need to analyze data that focus on categories on the basis of which people are stereotyped, discriminated against and made the target of racism. In France, immigrants born in China are relatively invisible in quantitative social science research, because, barring costly screening required for oversamples, conventional probability-sampling designs are not equipped for studying rare population groups. Trajectoires et Origines (TeO) (Beauchemin et al. 2016), the first-ever comprehensive nationwide survey of first- and second- generation immigrants in France conducted in 2008-2009, did not oversample Chinese. TeO only counted 69 respondents who were born in China or Hong Kong, so few that the publicly released data lumped respondents born in China together with those born in "Other Asian Countries." The TeO 2 survey, conducted in 2019-2020, oversampled Chinese to form a nationwide subsample of 593 respondents born in China, but did not collect information on regional origin or immigrants' social ties and acknowledged challenges in recruiting this immigrant group into the sample (Beauchemin et al. 2023). Similarly, larger data

sets such as the French census or the Echantillon Démographique Permanent (EDP) do not contain enough information for an in-depth characterization of immigrant population groups by region of origin and may miss undocumented or otherwise marginalized immigrants. Moreover, the French aversion to data collection on ethnicity in official statistics complicates efforts to separate ethnic Chinese immigrants originating from Southeast Asia from those originating from mainland China, as well as first- from second-generation immigrants, because the census only collects country and nationality at birth. These are the reasons why the experiences of the growing population of immigrants born in China and their descendants born in France are largely absent from our understanding of the landscape of anti-Chinese discrimination and racism in France.

Early knowledge of the experiences of Chinese-born immigrants in France mostly comes from qualitative studies informed by small samples of immigrants originating from a single province or region (Beraha 2012, Lévy 2012, Gao, Lévy and Poisson 2006, Wang & Le Bail 2016), or from studies that only provide very general information on new beneficiaries of a residence permit (Bèque 2007, d'Albis & Boubtane 2015). The surge in anti-Asian racial discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled interest in documenting the experiences of Chinese immigrant communities in France and their perceptions of discrimination and racism. These recent studies are grounded in small samples with unknown population representation, often collected with methods of convenience that disproportionately cover Chinese international students enrolled in French institutions of higher education, highly educated professionals (themselves former international students in France), and college-educated second generation Chinese, because they are easier to reach and recruit into surveys (e.g. Wang S. 2021; Wang and Madrisotti 2023a; Sellah 2023). Such studies have observed social differentiation in perceptions of racism among first- and second- generation Chinese (Wang 2021: N=255; Wang and Madrisotti 2023a: N=381) with younger individuals, naturalized first- and second-generation immigrants more likely to report experiences of racism since the COVID-19 outbreak compared with older immigrants and non-naturalized first generation immigrants. Studies on perceptions of discrimination that pre-date the pandemic are limited to small qualitative investigations of perceptions of discrimination among specific sub-populations. They especially highlight Chinese international students' concerns with job-seeking and work-place racial discrimination (Li 2020).

To our knowledge, our study is the first to recruit a sample of sufficient size and variation to enable the identification of distinct patterns of Chinese immigrants' social integration in France. These patterns transcend conventional individual-level predictors of discrimination and racism, and engage theories of Asian immigrants' integration in the French context of immigrant reception.

## **Divergent Trajectories of Social Integration: The Roles of Discrimination, Racism and Immigrants'**

### **Social Environments**

The classic "straight-line" assimilation model, largely developed based on the historical experience of European immigrants in the U.S., argues that assimilation results from the progressive structural integration of immigrants in social, educational, and economic life (Gerhards and Hans 2009; Goldsmith and Puga Jr 2019; Gordon 1964). According to this perspective, ethnic identity steadily fades among immigrant groups over successive generations as social integration increases (Alba 2014). Although this model has been criticized for ignoring the role of discrimination in the persistence of ethnic and racial differences over time, particularly for non-European immigrant groups in the U.S. after 1965 (Crul 2024; Safi 2024), the recent "new assimilation" perspective argues that assimilation is still the predominant outcome for non-European immigrant groups even in the contemporary context (Alba and Nee 2003; Drouhot and Nee 2019).

In contrast to the straight line model, the theory of segmented assimilation argues that there are multiple trajectories of incorporation, depending on the resources that immigrant groups possess and the ways in which they are received by the host society (Portes and Zhou 1993). These trajectories include an intergenerational process of upward mobility and assimilation akin to the straight-line model, upward mobility combined with a resistance to acculturation and the continued maintenance of ethnic identity, or downward mobility into an "underclass" as the result of discrimination and the reproduction of class disadvantage (Rumbaut 2015). As an additional demonstration of the heterogeneity of immigrants' trajectories of integration, there is evidence that Black immigrants anticipate racial discrimination by prioritizing the retention of ethnic identification and resisting complete acculturation (Adida and Robinson 2023). Nonetheless, despite its focus on heterogeneity in the experiences of integration among different immigrant groups, the segmented assimilation perspective has

been criticized for a lack of attention to the role that racialization may play in the process of group formation as a result of discrimination in the host society (García 2017), and because processes of acculturation and racialization may simultaneously affect the incorporation of immigrants, as observed in the context of contemporary Asian immigration to the U.S. (Lee and Kye 2016).

European perspectives on the incorporation of immigrants tend to emphasize the role of ethnic differences rather than race while recognizing the diversity of outcomes for recent immigrant groups (Safi 2024). Silberman, Alba, and Fournier (2007), for example, use survey data on immigrants in France and find that respondents are more likely to report discrimination on the basis of characteristics related to nativity or ethnicity, such as language ability or names, rather than skin color. In contrast, Flores (2015) uses survey data from Spain and argues that among second generation immigrants, race rather than national origin is the key source of perceived discrimination, suggesting that race emerges as a source of marginalization as nativity-related markers fade over time. Thus, while being careful not to ascribe the primacy of race-related processes developed in U.S. sociology to the European context, it is possible that religion and race are important sources of difference for the second generation (Talpin 2023; Safi 2024).

Overall, the trajectory of integration that immigrant groups experience is likely to be affected by their experience of discrimination in the host society as suggested by the contrasting views of straight-line and segmented perspectives on assimilation (Vang and Chang 2019). At the macro level, discrimination towards immigrant groups is an important determinant of their process of social and cultural integration (Esses 2021), and there is evidence of substantial variation in host-country attitudes towards immigrants, nation-origin subgroups, nativity-related characteristics, and immigration policy (Fussell 2014). Experiences of discrimination increase the level of identification with pan-ethnic minority subgroups (Golash-Boza 2016) and contributes to resistance to assimilation (Adida and Robinson 2023), elevated perceptions of group distance (Lindemann 2020) and negative views towards the “mainstream” of the host society (Schaeffer and Kas 2023; Verkuyten 2016).

In the U.S., for first- and second-generation Asian immigrants, the continued sense of being perceived as “perpetual foreigners” despite high levels of socioeconomic success represents a barrier to integration with the

mainstream (Casarez et al. 2022). There is evidence that perceived discrimination differs among Asian immigrant origin groups in the U.S. (Zainiddinov 2023), suggesting that group characteristics and migration history are important; that reports of discrimination increased substantially during the pandemic for Chinese and other Asian immigrants in the U.S. and Canada (Lou et al. 2022; Stolte et al. 2022) as old racist stereotypes related to “yellow peril” and racial contagion were activated (Lu and Wang 2021); that perceived discrimination is related to preferences regarding marital homogamy and out-group friendship among Asian immigrants (Gibson 2022) and that perceived discrimination affects feelings of group solidarity towards other non-Asian minority groups (Huang 2021).

In recent research, evidence of higher levels of perceived discrimination among immigrants who are more integrated in terms of time since arrival, host-country language acquisition, socioeconomic success, and social interactions with natives has been termed the “paradox of integration” (Safi 2024; Verkuyten 2016). The possibility that more integrated immigrants report higher levels of discrimination is puzzling because, according to the straight-line model of assimilation, structural integration should be accompanied by lower levels of discrimination and less perceived difference vis-à-vis the host society (Steinmann 2019). Possible mechanisms explaining this apparent paradox are that integration increases immigrants’ awareness of and exposure to discrimination perpetrated by members of mainstream host society, in addition to increasing their tendency to frame experiences in terms of discrimination. Empirically, however, while indicators of these presumed mechanisms predict more reports of discrimination, “they do not seem to reduce the association between reported discrimination and broad indicators of integration if controlled for in the same regression models” (Schaeffer and Kas 2023, p.21). For Asian immigrants in the U.S. in particular, there is evidence that acculturation is associated with higher rates of perceived discrimination (Chan 2020) and stress (Stolte et al. 2022) and, at least in the U.S. context, substantially higher rates of group-level identification with people of color than Whites despite high levels of educational and economic success among Asian immigrants (Lee and Sheng 2024).

Where people live and whom they interact with can influence their experiences and perceptions of discrimination and racism. Social integration indicators may predict one’s neighborhood choice and choice of

friends. For example, higher education may lead to residence in ethnically mixed neighborhoods and exposure to members of mainstream society, which may drive opportunities to face discrimination and increase immigrants' awareness (Schaefer and Kas 2023). However, in a study of immigrants integration in Germany, where higher educated migrants often live in ethnically less-segregated areas, social exposure to mainstream society, as indicated by the neighborhood share of mainstream members, was not associated with increased reports of discrimination but having a higher share of highly educated friends was, because high educated networks are more aware of societal inequalities (Steinmann 2019).

People who live in ethnic enclaves may be protected from discrimination. Ethnic enclaves are defined as areas of high residential concentration of same-group immigrants, with business expertise and access to capital, labor and economic opportunities for newcomers (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). They are especially important for immigrants who lack the cultural and language proficiency of the host country and benefit most from cultural and language-concordant businesses and amenities. Portes and his collaborators have argued that selective acculturation is especially important for groups facing discrimination and acculturative stress during acquisition of cultural knowledge and language, because “individuals and families do not face the strains of acculturation alone but rather within the framework of their own communities. This situation slows down the process [of acculturation] while placing the acquisition of new cultural knowledge and language within a supportive context.” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, p. 54). This suggests that ethnic enclaves can shelter immigrants during the stressful process of acculturation that include ethno-racial discrimination but also possibly delay social incorporation (Portes 1984). Morey et al. (2020) and Viruel-Fuentes (2007) consider the protective effect of living in an area with high co-ethnic residential and economic concentration because proximity to similar others may reduce the opportunity to encounter outgroup perpetrators of racist acts, behaviors and “othering” messages and may also reduce exposure to competition within the mainstream job market. However, while this association was observed among recent Asian and Mexican immigrants in the U.S. who are more likely to lack host-country language and cultural proficiency, for the more established immigrants who live in co-ethnic neighborhoods but share different social status and goals, co-ethnic residential concentration was associated with higher perceived discrimination, general stress, and immigration stress. More acculturated immigrants

have more contacts with groups outside of their own neighborhoods (Viruell-Fuentes 2007; Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2013), leading to more frequent opportunities to face discriminatory outgroup attitudes and behaviors directed at them because of their residence in an ethnic enclave, or they may become exposed to the competition of the mainstream labor market and be more aware of existing inequalities (Portes 1984). Due to higher proficiency in the language of the host country, more acculturated immigrants may be more aware of what's going on in mainstream society, more able to recognize the cues of unfair treatment and micro-aggressions, more sensitive to experiences of racism and discrimination and more likely to report them (Finch 2000; Portes, 1984; Portes and Bach, 1985).

Immigrants' social ties may also mediate the relationship between integration indicators and perception of discrimination as they may directly expose individuals to outgroup racism, or they may be the conduit of information about mainstream society and others' experiences of racism. But the extent to which they are also depends on the type of ties, the information that flows through these ties and how this information is utilized. Dense, close ties such as those observed in some immigrant co-ethnic neighborhoods (Kalmijn 2022) are more likely to indicate reduced levels of discrimination (Schaefer and Kas, 2023 p.5), because they imply interactions with similar and trustworthy others that protect immigrants from discrimination and racism. Yet, as noted by Ryan (2011): "...while protecting disadvantaged groups from discrimination and abuse, these networks may cut off members from information about the wider society" (p. 710). In contrast, bridging ties that connect to acquaintances from circles different from one's own, can channel ideas, influences, and information because they allow access to information different from that received from close social ties (Granovetter 1973). Racist attitudes and behaviors may reach members embedded in dense networks of close co-ethnics through their weak ties that bridge to social contacts who move in different circles and have access to different type of information. Small (2013) argues that important matters may be discussed with "unimportant alters [i.e. members of one's social network]." Using data collected in an online nationally representative quota survey in the U.S., Small examined which matters are considered important in discussion networks, and why people turn to weak ties to discuss them. He found that people purposely mobilize weak ties who are knowledgeable about matters of importance to them or opportunistically turn to ties who are available when important issues arise. In the ethnic

enclave context, members of enclaves who operate in social circles of close, trustworthy others that protect them from the direct experience of racism may acquire information about racism in conversation with weak ties, for example other co-ethnics who are not part of their inner circle and whose host country language proficiency is better than theirs, and vicariously experience racism via exposure to information flowing through these ties.

Especially relevant to Chinese immigrants in France is the role of linguistic networks in channeling information about the wider society. In her study of political incorporation of Chinese immigrants in Eastern Europe, Amy Liu (2021) focused on the role of spoken vernaculars in forming linguistic networks, how membership in these networks affects Chinese immigrants' political incorporation as measured by their involvement in political institutions and by the level of civic engagement. Liu distinguished between bonding (cf. Putnam 2000<sup>2</sup>) networks of Chinese immigrants, defined by linguistic homogeneity with high barriers to entry, and bridging networks, characterized by linguistic diversity and the use of a shared *lingua franca* (*lingua franca* being Mandarin Chinese or the language of the host country). In bridging networks, "migrants have a greater diversity of regularized contacts. When entry barriers are low, the composition of the networks will naturally include people of different backgrounds. Under such conditions, migrants are less likely to interact exclusively with co-ethnics" (Liu 2021, Chapter 2, p. 28). This diversity in contacts serves to build intergroup trust that, according to Liu, is instrumental for political incorporation (Liu, Brown and Dunn 2015). Migrants in bonding networks are simply less likely to have opportunities to meet people who are different from them, but even when these cross-group contacts occur, trust is applicable only to members of their linguistic network (Liu 2021, Chapter 2, p.28). Immigrants' linguistic repertoires therefore determine which kinds of networks they have access to and whom they rely upon for the provision of information, goods and services. Liu hypothesized that these two different types of networks determine different levels of Chinese immigrants' political incorporation using Chinese immigrants in Eastern Europe as a case study. She shows that Wenzhou Chinese and Fujian Chinese, two immigrant groups who speak vernaculars with high barriers to entry and with a size large enough to be self-sufficient (Liu, 2021:24), display lower political incorporation. Conversely, members of

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<sup>2</sup> Putnam (2000:23) distinguished between close, bonding ties with members of one's group, which may be important for "getting by," and weak, bridging ties with members of other groups, which may be important for "getting ahead."

bridging networks consisting of Chinese originating from other provinces who use Mandarin Chinese as a shared *lingua franca* are more politically incorporated in the host country, because they become exposed to information about government policies through bridging connections to different groups, are more engaged in political institutions and are more civically minded (Liu 2021, Chapter 4). In in-depth interviews with eight immigrants, all but one born in China, who frequent the Triangle of Choisy neighborhood of Paris, Chen and Lu (2020) took a further step, arguing that interest in civic participation is not necessarily reduced by membership in an ethnic enclave. Information, resources and support constantly flow in and out of co-ethnic networks through members with good knowledge of French and long tenure in France who act as bridges to the wider French society for members of ethnic enclaves who lack the social capital or French language proficiency to access resources and information on their own. In sum, in the Chinese immigrant context of the Paris region, bonding linguistic networks may cutoff members from the wider society and protect them from outgroup discrimination and racism but weak, bridging ties may expose people to information about important matters or facilitate vicarious exposure to racist experiences lived by others.

## **Hypotheses**

Based on the review of the literature, we develop the following hypotheses to be tested with ChIPRe data. First, membership in an ethnic enclave is expected to be protective against outgroup discrimination and experiences of racism.

H1: Despite their longer tenure in France, Wenzhou Chinese will report experiencing racism less frequently than Chinese originating from other provinces because their enclosure in an established ethnic enclave with the supporting environment and resources it provides limit exposure to mainstream French society. By contrast, immigrants from other Chinese regions with different histories of migration, who lack the same critical mass and co-ethnic resources of the Wenzhou Chinese and have more direct outgroup involvement with mainstream French society, will experience more frequent direct exposure to racism.

H1A: Among Wenzhou Chinese, younger age, higher education and better French language proficiency are expected to be associated with higher levels of perceived racism because these indicators increase their ability to recognize the cues of unfair treatment and micro-aggressions due to national origin and race.

Second, social networks may channel information and host discussions relevant to racism that shape individuals' perceptions of racism. Information about racism directed at Chinese immigrants may reach members of an ethnic enclave through peers who navigate heterogeneous social circles and have higher French language proficiency. Weak ties may also be mobilized to gather important information about anti-Asian racist attitudes and behaviors in the wider French society. Whereas close, inward looking ties with close friends and family are protective against racism, weak bridging ties with acquaintances are the channels through which information about the wider society spreads and vicarious exposure to anti-Chinese racism is experienced.

H2: Across all Chinese immigrant groups, individuals with the majority of their close ties restricted to other Chinese are less likely to experience racism than peers with a smaller share of close ties that are Chinese. Individuals with the majority of their weak ties restricted to other Chinese are more likely to experience racism.

H2A: These associations will be especially strong for Wenzhou Chinese who are members of dense networks of close ties which shield them from racism and who may receive information about what is going on in wider society from their acquaintance networks, or may activate their acquaintance networks to gather information about the wider society.

Third, Wenzhou Chinese are the largest and most established Chinese immigrant group in France. They benefit from co-ethnic social capital in terms of trust and support networks and most of their daily interactions are with trusted co-ethnics (family and friends originating from the same place), with whom they discuss personal and business matters. This trusted bond is uniquely signified by a shared vernacular that is unintelligible to other Chinese and represents a high barrier to entry for outsiders. Although other Chinese immigrants, such as those originating from Fujian or Guangdong province, also share vernaculars with a high barrier to entry, the size of these groups in France is too small to sustain bonding linguistic networks that require a critical mass.

H3: Wenzhou Chinese are large enough in size to sustain bonding linguistic networks. Those who are members of a bonding network with a shared linguistic repertoire will report racist experiences less frequently than members of a bridging network.

H3A: For Wenzhou Chinese, membership in a bonding network trumps the protective effect of close ties because a Wenzhou Chinese's regular use of the Wenzhou vernacular with another signifies a trusted close tie.

## **Data**

### ***The ChIPRe (Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region) Survey***

Between September 2020 and June 2021 the Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region (ChIPRe) Study was conducted to provide a description of the heterogeneity of immigrants born in China and living in the Paris region, which is France's most populous administrative region centered on the capital Paris, and the region where the majority of Chinese immigrants in France reside. ChIPRe utilized an innovative network-based sampling strategy, Network Sampling with Memory (NSM, Mouw and Verdery 2012), which recruited a sample of Chinese immigrants age 18+, born in China and living in the Paris region. NSM sample recruitment typically starts with a small convenience sample of seed respondents, and relies on the social networks of study participants and a peer referral process that encourages survey participation. The NSM algorithm probabilistically recruits successive waves of respondents from the population network revealed by nominations by previous respondents until a desired sample size is reached. This method is a statistically efficient (Mouw and Verdery 2012) and cost-effective (Merli et al. 2022) strategy to recruit samples of rare immigrant population groups. NSM samples were previously tested and successfully recruited among Chinese immigrant populations in the U.S. and Tanzania (Merli et al. 2022; Merli et al. 2016) and Mexican immigrants in the U.S. and Mexico (Mouw et al. 2014). Comparisons between NSM sample recruited in the U.S. and the American Community Survey (ACS) revealed good population representation of the NSM sample (Merli et al. 2022).

Respondents in the ChIPRe sample recruited with NSM were administered an individual questionnaire and a network roster questionnaire. In the individual questionnaire respondents were asked about their sociodemographic characteristics, household composition, education, job and migration histories, earnings,

legal status, experiences of discrimination and racism, characteristics their social environment including information on the nativity composition of their family, friends and acquaintance networks in France. The network roster elicited nominations of a respondent's *alters*, i.e., members of the respondent's social network, using a name generator worded to elicit the nomination of local ties with other Chinese immigrants: "Six people you know who were born in China who are 18-65 and reside in the Paris region." Partially identifying name information (last name in *pinyin* including number corresponding to the character's tone<sup>3</sup> and initials of first name) was collected for Chinese alters as part of the network-based sampling process, which (when combined with demographic information) allows one to match roster alters across respondents and waves in order to progressively reveal the underlying social network and recruit new waves of respondents over this network. This question was followed by name interpreter questions aimed at collecting attributes for each alter (gender; education; birth region in China; time spent in France) and attributes of the relationships between ego (respondent) and alter, with a focus on the mutually exclusive relationship type (kin, friends, neighbors, or coworkers) and the closeness of the tie (captured by communication frequency).

The ChIPRe sample consisted of 501 respondents interviewed between September 2020 and June 2021. Of these, 16 were seed respondents selected by convenience to ensure seed stratification by age, gender, region of origin and immigrant type (e.g. whether a current international student, former international student or never an international student in France). The remaining 485 participants were selected from previous respondents' nominations. Of the 501 respondents, 405 accepted the invitation to nominate alters, yielding a total of 1,689 nominated social ties between ego and alter. In addition to the 16 seeds, a total of 820 nominated alters were selected using NSM procedures, deemed eligible and invited to participate in the study. Of these, 485 agreed to participate for an overall response rate of 59.15%. This rate is much higher than the response rate of 39.9% documented among Chinese immigrants selected and contacted for participation in the project Trajectoires et Origin 2 (TeO2) (Beauchemin et al. 2023). Because the ChIPRE survey was conducted during the COVID-19 outbreak period in France, most respondents were interviewed by phone (N=355) or video (N=94) due to social

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<sup>3</sup> In Chinese, the combination of *pinyin* and a unique tone makes up an individual character.

distancing and lockdown measures. Only 52 were interviewed in person.<sup>4</sup> All interviews were conducted in Chinese. In sum, the ChIPRe individual dataset consists of 501 valid observations and the roster network consists of 1,689 nominated ties.

A two-stage weighting scheme combined NSM sampling weights that compensate for unequal selection probabilities (Mouw and Verdery 2012; Merli et al. 2022) and calibrate estimates to the age-sex-place of residence (*département*) distribution of the 2018 census sample. Even after applying these weights, there remain stark differences between the characteristics of the ChIPRe sample and the census. Compared with the census, in ChIPRe, there are 29 percentage point fewer people with less than highschool education, 17 percentage point more people with college or more education, 17.1 percentage point fewer arrivals before 2014 and 19.7 percentage point fewer home owners. These discrepancies are consistent with an overrepresentation of Chinese current international students and former international students turned professionals in ChIPRe and an underrepresentation of Wenzhou Chinese who have lower levels of education, are members of earlier immigrant cohorts and are more likely to be settled and own a home (Poisson 2005; Attané, Chuang and Wang 2023, 18-19). Nonetheless, the ChIPRe sample size is larger and covers the main Chinese immigrant subgroups than previous studies, permitting meaningful analyses disaggregated by region of origin.

### ***ChIPRe in-depth interviews***

At the end of the ChIPRe survey interview, respondents were asked for permission to be re-contacted for a follow-up in-depth interview. Of the 342 who agreed to be re-contacted, a subsample of 35 respondents were selected for participation in in-depth interviews, balanced by age of the Chinese population in France (median age 36), region of origin representation (7 from Zhejiang including Wenzhou, 6 from the *Dongbei* region, 7 from Shanghai and Beijing, and the remaining 15 from a number of other provinces), gender (62% women) and education level (the sample was split evenly into current international students, former international students

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<sup>4</sup> ChIPRE respondents were interviewed in several phases. The first and third phases went into the field in September-October 2020 after the first lockdown restrictions were lifted and again in May-June 2021 following the end of the second lockdown. The middle phase was fielded between the end of October 2020 and beginning of May 2021 during the second lockdown.

and individuals who were never international students in France). All interviews were conducted in Chinese and in person between September and December 2021 by the two lead interviewers of the ChIPRe team, both native Chinese speakers and former international students themselves, who have lived and worked in France since 2009. Participants were asked to provide responses to a series of open-ended questions about two topics of interest to our present inquiry: (1) participants' social ties in France, and (2) experiences and contexts of discrimination and racism. In questions on the second topic, the concept of discrimination (歧视 *qíshì*) was purposely left undefined, but participants who provided comments about discrimination used racial discrimination and racism interchangeably implying they were the victims of discrimination and racism because of their race. Questions on the first topic focused on subjective descriptions of participants' interpersonal relations with other Chinese immigrants, in particular with people from Wenzhou, Fujian and the *Dongbei* region. The purpose was to probe respondents' perceptions of intra- and inter-group networks and the attributes and contents of these ties. ChIPRe interviewers relied on network visualization and asked respondents to write their contacts on a target sociogram consisting of two concentric circles divided into four quadrants labelled as family, friend, work, and people met through leisure, religious and other events. Besides capturing the type and strength of network ties between a participant and their alters, this visualization approach facilitated inquiry into participants' assessments of structure and domains of interactions of their own intra- and inter-group networks (Ryan, Mulholland, and Agoston 2014).

Among the 35 ChIPRe participants in in-depth interviews, four originated from the Wenzhou area of Zhejiang province. 29 participants commented on their perceptions of the networks and intra- and inter-group contact with specific Chinese immigrant groups, namely Wenzhou, Fujian and *Dongbei* immigrants and on the type of intragroup support that underlies co-ethnic networks. 25 participants provided 50 comments on discrimination. Comments on social networks and discrimination were coded by two different coders. We rely on these comments to (1) complement our descriptions of the networks of Chinese immigrants in the Paris region based on quantitative data and (2) complement the ChIPRE survey's single-item measure of frequency of

racist experience with descriptions of direct and vicarious experiences of racism reported by respondents of in-depth interviews.

## **Results**

### ***Patterns of Social Integration of Chinese Immigrants in France***

We first provide a detailed description of the differences across subgroups of Chinese immigrants in socio-demographic characteristics, acculturation indicators (Table 1), work and social environment indicators (Table 2) and perceptions of racism and the domains of these perceptions (Table 3). In all three tables, percentage distributions of respondent's characteristics are adjusted with two-stage weights and are based on observations with no missing values.

Overall, Chinese immigrants in the Paris region (Table 1, second to last column) are 59 percent female, the median age is 40, half are married or in a civil union, half arrived in France after 2008 and have spent, on average, 14 years in France. 60 percent have attained more than highschool education and just over half (16.7%+36.6%) have ever been international students in a French institution of higher education. 63 percent report a precarious administrative status, i.e. they are undocumented, have a short-term residence permit or their residency status is in progress. Only about half report speaking French well or very well.

The work and social environments of Chinese in the Paris region are predominantly co-ethnic (Table 2, second to last column). 43 percent of those who ever worked in France, are currently (or were in the last job) employed in an ethnic business, defined as having Chinese colleagues and a Chinese employer, speaking Mandarin and/or a Chinese vernacular at work, or, if an employer, presiding over a labor force that is more than half Chinese. The large majority of Chinese immigrants report that more than half of their close and acquaintance ties are with other Chinese in the area and 34 percent report that their close ties are with people from their same region of origin.

Tables 1 and 2 also identify three subgroups of Chinese immigrants based on the intersection of educational level, levels of acculturation (conventionally measured with mean duration in the host country, age at arrival, host country proficiency and naturalization), economic enclosure in the ethnic labor market and

attributes of their social ties. These are: “Wenzhou Chinese” (N=82) who were born in the Wenzhou region of China<sup>5</sup>; “Other Chinese” (N=73) who were born in other locations in China and were never an international student in a French institution of higher education; Current and former international students (henceforth “International Students”) (N=344) who are or have ever been an international student in France.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Social Integration Indicators of Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region, age 18-69, by Region of Origin, ChiPRE, 2020-2021.

	Wenzhou Chinese (22.8%)	Other Chinese (24.5%)	Current/former students (52.7%)	Total (100%)	N
Chinese administrative units contributing about 55% of group size, ranked in order of size of subgroup	Wenzhou	1. Hebei 2. Fujian 3. Guangdong 4. Dongbei	1. Dongbei 2. Beijing 3. Guangdong 4. Hubei 5. Jiangsu 6. Hunan		
<b><i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i></b>					
Female %	50.9	56.7	63.0	58.7	499
Mean age (median)	48.3 (47)	49.0 (50)	34.4 (31)	41.2 (40)	499
Age 40 or younger %	22.5	18.0	78.3	50.8	499
<b><i>International student status</i></b>					
Current	1.1	0.0	31.2	16.7	499
Former	1.3	0.0	68.7	36.6	
Never	97.4	100.0	0.0	46.7	
More than highschool education %	12.1	19.9	99.5	60.1	499
Married or in civil union %	64.5	62.4	38.6	50.3	499
Lives alone %	1.02	20.6	32.2	25.0	499
<b><i>Migration intention</i></b>					
Intend to return to China	20.5	43.7	23.3	27.7	497
Intend to stay in France	66.4	40.6	55.8	54.5	
Don't know	13.1	15.7	20.9	17.8	
<b><i>Acculturation</i></b>					
Age at arrival in France (mean)	24.6	36.6	23.1	26.8	497
Duration in France (in years, mean)	23.8	12.5	11.2	14.4	499
Year of arrival in France (median)	1999	2011	2011	2008	499
Speaks French well or v. well %	29.6	15.5	77.7	51.5	499
Has precarious administrative status (=YES if undocumented/short-term residence permit/ in progress; NO if French/EU citizen/long-term legal resident) %	38.7	69.8	70.7	63.2	494
N	82	73	344		499

<sup>5</sup>“Wenzhou Chinese” includes people born in Wenzhou city and the surrounding counties, districts and cities (Ouhai, Qingtian, Rui’an, Yueqing, Yongjia).

First, in Table 1, at 22.8 percent, Wenzhou Chinese represent the largest single origin group of Chinese immigrants in the Paris region. 57 percent of Other Chinese originate from six of China's 32 administrative units (provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, and special administrative regions) reported as the place of birth. These are, in order of group size, Hebei, Fujian, Guangdong and the three northeastern provinces constituting the *Dongbei* region (Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning). Whereas Fujian and Guangdong province, similar to the Wenzhou region, are historical sending regions of migration to Europe and elsewhere, emigration from the heavily industrial *Dongbei* region and Hebei province only started on the heels of the restructuring of China's heavy industry and subsequent massive layoffs of the late 1990s-2000s. Fifty-five percent of International Students originate from eight administrative units including the three *Dongbei* provinces, Beijing, Guangdong, Hubei, Jiangsu and Hunan, with the remainder of the 32 provinces represented in ChIPRe each contributing very small percentages. Second, consistent with what we already know about the history of Chinese migration to France, Wenzhou Chinese arrived earlier and have been in France, on average, 11-12 years longer, than members of the other two groups. Wenzhou Chinese are more likely to be married and live in France with their family, almost no one lives alone, compared with 32 percent and 20.6 percent of Other Chinese and International Students ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ). But Wenzhou Chinese are more similar to Other Chinese than to International Students, along several socio-demographic characteristics. Both groups are older ( $p < 0.001$  and  $p < 0.001$ ), more than 60 percent are married (compared with 38.6 percent of International Students;  $p = 0.02$  and  $p = 0.03$ ), and both groups are significantly less likely to have attained a university degree ( $p < 0.001$  and  $p < 0.001$ ) than International Students for many of whom obtaining a university degree from a French institution is the first step on the path to immigration. 56% of International Students report they do not intend to return to China.

Perhaps by virtue of their longer duration in France, fewer Wenzhou Chinese report precarious immigration status compared with members of the other two groups ( $p = 0.004$ ;  $p = 0.021$ ) as many of them hold are naturalized French citizens or hold a long-term residence permit. Yet, despite their longer duration and legal permanent status in France, Wenzhou Chinese's level of French language proficiency is low. Only 30 percent report speaking French well or very well (compared with 78 percent percent of International Students,  $p < 0.001$ ).

While Wenzhou Chinese and International Students arrived in France in their early to mid 20s, the mean age of arrival of Other Chinese is significantly older (36.6,  $p<0.001$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Only 15.5 percent of Other Chinese speak French well or v. well (although their low level of French language proficiency is not significantly different from that of Wenzhou Chinese,  $p=0.11$ ), and, similar to International Students, the majority of the “Other Chinese” group have precarious administrative status. Based on age at arrival in France, mean duration, French language proficiency and legal status, the acculturation level of Other Chinese is the lowest and, of the three groups, members of this group are likely to be the most socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Table 2. Work and Social Environment Indicators of Chinese Immigrants in the Paris Region, Age 18-69, by Region of Origin, ChiPRE, 2020-2021.

	Wenzhou Chinese (22.8%)	Other Chinese (24.5%)	Current/former students (52.7%)	Total (100%)	N
<b><i>Current Employment Status</i></b>					
Self-employed/business owner	23.1	3.7	16.8	15.0	499
Employed by private business	30.1	22.9	48.1	37.8	
Employed by an individual	2.1	7.5	0.2	2.4	
Employed in public sector	0.2	0.9	19.6	5.9	
Not currently employed	44.5	65.1	24.3	38.9	
Current or last job in ethnic labor market %	71.7	62.9	20.2	43.2	492
<b><i>Composition of social ties, tie type and other social environment indicators</i></b>					
More than half of R's close ties are Chinese (or Chinese origin) (Yes) %	96.6	92.1	75.3	84.3	498
More than half of R's acquaintance ties are Chinese (or Chinese origin) (Yes) %	87.9	97.4	62.5	76.8	496
Most of R' close ties are from same region of origin (Yes) %	86.4	37.1	10.3	34.5	483
Mean % of R's nominated ties who are from Zhejiang	82.0	8.03	6.2	21.1	404
Mean % of R's nominated ties who are family or close friends	69.6	40.7	56.6	55.7	404
Speaks a vernacular at home (i.e. Wenzhou/Qingtian vernacular, Fujianese or Cantonese) that is unintelligible to other Chinese (member of a bonding network) %	71.0	0.0	2.7	24.3	382
Speaks a vernacular at work that is unintelligible to other Chinese	40.0	0.24	2.0	10.9	449
Never worked in France %	1.1	14.0	8.0	7.9	499
Is a member of an association consisting of people from the same region (%)	39.1	7.6	4.8	13.2	493
N	82	73	344		499

Table 2 reveals important similarities but also differences in the work and social environments of Chinese immigrants in France. Members of the first two groups are significantly more likely to be employed (current or last job) in the ethnic labor market in France (72 percent and 63 percent compared with 20 percent of International Students  $p<0.001$  ;  $p<0.001$ ). Most Wenzhou and Other Chinese are embedded in webs of predominantly Chinese close and acquaintance ties while the ties of International Students are more heterogeneous. ChIPRE respondents were asked to estimate the fraction of their close (亲近的人) and acquaintance (普遍朋友) ties in the Paris region who are Chinese with the question: “Would you say that people you are close to here in the Paris region are: 1. All or almost all Chinese, 2. More than half Chinese, 3. About half Chinese, 4. Less than half Chinese, 5. None Chinese?” followed by the same question about acquaintance ties. Almost all members of Wenzhou and Other Chinese subgroups (96.6 percent and 92.1 percent,  $p=0.22$ ) report that more than half of their close ties are with other Chinese, while only 75 percent of International Students do so ( $p<0.001$ ;  $p=0.002$ ). Most Wenzhou Chinese (87.9 percent) and virtually all (97.4 percent) Other Chinese report that their acquaintance ties are with other Chinese, compared with only 62.5% of International Students ( $p<0.001$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), suggesting that a significant fraction of international students have heterogeneous networks that include both Chinese and non-Chinese social contacts.

But, what sets Wenzhou Chinese apart from the other two sub-groups is the insularity of their social ties. 86 percent of Wenzhou Chinese report that their close ties in the Paris region are mainly with people who originate from the same province (compared with 37 percent of Other Chinese ( $p<0.001$ ) and 10.3 percent of International Students ( $p<0.001$ )). The mean percentages in the next two rows of the table are estimated from information provided by the 404 ChIPRE respondents who filled out the network roster questionnaire,<sup>6</sup> which elicited nominations from respondents of up to six Chinese alters in the Paris area. These figures represent the percent of an individual Chinese ties with a particular attribute averaged across respondents in each of the three immigrant groups. On average, 82 percent of the Chinese ties nominated by Wenzhou Chinese are from the

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<sup>6</sup> An unadjusted 24.39% of Wenzhou respondents, 23.29% of Other Chinese and 16.86% of former and current students interviewed in ChIPRE did not fill out roster questionnaires.

same province (Zhejiang) and 70 percent of their nominated ties are family members or close friends (with the remaining 30 percent being acquaintances, colleagues or neighbors). In contrast, only 8 percent and 6 percent of the ties respectively nominated by the average members of the Other Chinese and International Students groups are from Zhejiang and their nominated ties are approximately equally divided between (a) family or close friends and (b) acquaintances, colleagues or neighbors, suggesting a low rate of cross-over ties between immigrants from other provinces and Wenzhou immigrants despite the large relative size of the Wenzhou Chinese community in Paris compared to Chinese from any other single province. Wenzhou Chinese are surrounded by similar others at home and at work, with whom they speak their regional vernacular. Most Wenzhou Chinese (71 percent) speak their vernacular at home and 40 percent speak it at work while very few members of the other groups speak a vernacular that is unintelligible to outsiders at home or at work. This descriptive evidence confirms the insularity of the Wenzhou Chinese linguistic networks. Membership in a regional association is also relatively common among Wenzhou Chinese (39.1 percent are member) but rare among members of the other two groups (7.6 percent and 4.8 percent respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ), suggesting the unique connections of Wenzhou Chinese to local power and resources.

The insular character of Wenzhou Chinese networks is further evinced from comments drawn from in-depth interviews with ChIPRe participants. Four participants from Wenzhou discussed the social capital entailed in co-ethnic Wenzhou networks which they rely upon when in need of financial loans to open a new business venture or turn around an old one. Comments contributed by Wenzhou interviewees identify the shared Wenzhou vernacular as a key to access networks of trust and reputation: “It is because of our language connections. The Wenzhou vernacular is a special language, so when we speak it, we feel that there is a difference [between us and outsiders]. ... just like when we Wenzhou people borrow money from each other, as long as one speaks in the vernacular, it's easy, it resonates and then you can borrow money. It's a very unique culture, so I think it has to do with our vernacular” (47 year old Wenzhou male arrived in France in 1999). “Generally speaking, if the other person is also from Wenzhou, they are closer, they are part of your inner circle, and if they are from the same place, it is natural for people to feel that they are closer than others... If you are looking for help or if you receive any request for help, you will give priority to Wenzhou people, that is to

say, this is like knowing people and trusting them.” (29 year old Wenzhou male arrived in France in 2006). Yet, there are difference across generations. In the words of a 20-year old Wenzhou woman born in Wenzhou who arrived in France with her parents when she was 6: “When you meet Wenzhou people, you have to differentiate by age. With someone of my age, I speak Mandarin, but my parents' generation, naturally they all speak Wenzhou dialect. You can't speak Mandarin with them.” Of the 31 participants of in-depth interviews who originate from other provinces, 15 offered comments on the “close”, “united”, “tight” networks of Wenzhou Chinese. These respondents variously attributed barriers to entry to the Wenzhou networks to their homogeneity, exclusivity (only kin and close friends from Wenzhou), the unintelligible Wenzhou vernacular (n=6), and described Wenzhou Chinese as privileged peers with a shared origin over outsiders (外地人) (n=4). A few noted that the only way to enter a Wenzhou network is to marry into it (n=2). The Wenzhou networks are also described by outsiders as crossing multiple domains of interactions, channeling information about network members to people back in Wenzhou (n=1), lending money to members of the network who need it (n= 4) and providing functional help (e.g. with French translation, n=1). In the words of several participants from other provinces, the lack of parallels between Wenzhou and other regional networks (e.g. Fujian, *Dongbei*) is due to the latter groups' small size in France (n=6).

In sum, quantitative survey data and the contents of in-depth interviews suggest that, despite their early arrival in France and their legal status, most Wenzhou Chinese display a relatively low level of acculturation, they are enclosed in co-ethnic social and work environments, their networks are insular, multiplex (i.e. they cross multiple domains) and composed by trusted co-ethnics, mostly family and close friends. Their social interactions at home and at work are, for the most part, in the local vernacular which is unintelligible to outsiders. Members of the younger generation of Wenzhou Chinese, because of their higher French proficiency and their common use of Mandarin Chinese in interactions with non-Wenzhou Chinese may have more opportunities to engage with mainstream French society. Members of the second group, Other Chinese, appear to be the most vulnerable, due to their low level of education, late age of arrival in France, low French proficiency, and precarious administrative status. Members of the International Students group have the highest

level of education by virtue of attending or having attended tertiary education in France. They have the highest French language proficiency and comparatively smaller fractions report that their close and acquaintance ties are predominantly Chinese. They are the group with the broader direct exposure to and engagement with mainstream French society.

Unlike Wenzhou Chinese, the networks of Other Chinese and of International Students rarely include Wenzhou immigrants, and often include people who are not family or close friends, and, for a notable share of International students, non-Chinese social contacts. In line with our hypotheses, these differences in socio-demographic characteristics and levels of acculturation of Chinese immigrants signifying different patterns of social integration may drive different levels of exposure to discrimination and racism among members of each of these three groups. This will be further examined in ordered logit models of the frequency of racist experiences presented below.

### *Perceptions of Racism Among Chinese Immigrants in France*

ChIPRe respondents were administered a single-item measure of perceived racial discrimination: “Over the course of the last 12 months, have you been the target of racist insults, or other racist attitudes and behaviors?<sup>7</sup>” with responses ranging from Never=1 to Very often =5 (reverse coded in our analyses). The term “racist” in the Chinese version of the question “种族歧视” literally means “racial discrimination” or racially discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. This question was followed by three multiple-choice questions about the domain, the reason and the perpetrators of racism, elicited from respondents who reported any experience of racism in the last 12 months. Table 3 shows the (adjusted) mean frequency of racist experiences of Wenzhou Chinese, Other Chinese and International students and answers to the domain, reason and perpetrator questions. Because the

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<sup>7</sup> The Chinese version was: “在过去 12 个月里, 您是否收到过辱骂或遭遇了其它与种族歧视相关的态度和行为?” and the French version was: “Au cours des 12 derniers mois, avez-vous été la cible d’insultes de propos ou d’attitudes racistes?”.

domain, reason and perpetrator questions permitted the selection of multiple options, only the most frequently named options are reported<sup>8</sup>.

Table 3. Frequency of the experience of racism reported by ChIPRe respondents, contexts, reasons and perpetrators, by region of origin group. ChIPRe, 2020-2021. Sampling weights applied.

	Wenzhou Chinese (N=82)	Other Chinese (N=73)	Current or former international Students (N=344)	N
Racism mean (SE) (Range 1 Never to 5 Very Often)	1.29 (0.10)	1.68 (0.17)	1.96 (0.09)	498
3 most frequently named (out of 9) contexts of racism (% of those who report any racism)	Street (50.3) Transportation (25.6) Public admin. offices (23.8)	Transportation (40.4) Public admin offices (37.8) Street (34.1)	Street (63.3) Transportation (38.3) Public admin offices (31.2)	256
4 most frequently named (out of 11) reasons for racist experiences (% of those who report any racism)	National origin (100.0) Illness (61.1) My accent (7.3) My gender (6.8)	National origin (84.4) Illness (34.2) My social status (18.8) My accent (12.3)	National origin (94.2) Illness (34.9) My gender (16.4) My accent (13.6)	257
Who perpetrated racism	Non-Chinese (100.0) Other Chinese (0.5)	Non-Chinese (85.0) Other Chinese (19.2)	Non-Chinese (99.8) Other Chinese (1.8)	257

Wenzhou Chinese report significantly lower frequency of racist experiences compared to Other Chinese ( $p=0.05$ ) and International Students ( $p=0.000$ ). Of the three groups, International Students report the highest frequency of such experiences, but the difference between International Students and Other Chinese is not statistically significant ( $p=0.14$ ). The rankings in the bottom three rows of Table 2 suggest that for Wenzhou Chinese and International Students experiences of racism occur mostly on the street or public transportation, most likely in the form of racist insults and microaggressions (as revealed by in-depth interviews shown below), while Other Chinese, who have more opportunity to interact with public administration because of their

<sup>8</sup> The response options for the domain where racism was experienced were 1. work, 2. school, 3. transportation, 4. public institution, 5. street, 6. job search, 7. housing search, 8. family relations, 9. other domain. The response options for the reason why racism was experienced were: 1. My age, 2. My gender, 3. My national origin, 4. The reputation of my neighborhood, 5. My vernacular, 6. My region of birth in China, 7. My accent when I speak French; 8. My social status, 9. My legal status, 10. My sexual orientation, 11. My religion, 12. The way I dress, 13. My illness (COVID), 14. Another reason. The response options on the perpetrators of racism were: 1. Chinese born in China, 2. Huaren (华人) or ethnic Chinese not born in China, 3. Neither Chinese nor Huaren.

precarious legal status, report transportation as the first and public administration offices as the second most frequent domain linked to these experiences. Among all three groups, national origin is the most frequently cited reason for these experiences, followed by “illness” which we take to refer to COVID. Having a foreign accent while speaking French ranks third among Wenzhou Chinese and fourth among members of the other two groups. Members of the Other Chinese subgroup, probably aware of their low structural position compared with Wenzhou Chinese and mainstream society, cite “my social status” among the top three reasons of racist experiences. Gender is the fourth and third most cited reason among Wenzhou Chinese and International Students. In terms of the perpetrators of racism, outgroup racist behaviors and attitudes singlehandedly define racism, although it should be noted that 19.2 percent of Other Chinese also name intragroup (Chinese-on-Chinese) discrimination which is not surprising given this group’s lower structural position and the perceptions expressed by numerous participants of in-depth interviews of being treated as outsiders by Wenzhou Chinese, who are often their employers.

Racist experiences reported by ChIPRe respondents reflect subjective perceptions of racism. These perceptions may involve sensing racist attitudes (beliefs and attitudes such as acceptance of racist stereotypes) and racist actions (overt discrimination based on one’s race, race-based microaggressions such as remarks that communicate hostility towards members of a group, or outright physical aggression) (Williams, Neighbors and Jackson 2003). These actions can be experienced directly or vicariously through the experience of others or through exposure to social media. The ChIPRe single-item measure of frequency of racist experiences does not allow one to distinguish between actions and attitudes or the attribution of domain, reason or perpetrator to any particular experience. To add content and nuance to our ChIPRe single-item measure of racism, in Table 4, we rely on 50 comments on racism and racial discrimination provided by 25 of the 35 participants in the in-depth interviews. We examine racial discrimination and racism-related comments jointly because, as mentioned above, participants who described these experiences tended not to make specific distinction between the two terms.

Table 4. Participants' Comments Elicited in In-depth Interviews on Discrimination and Racism (N=50)

Types of outgroup racism/discrimination	Comments	Selected quotes
<p>Political/societal discrimination: Participant identifies a negative political climate in conjunction with racism, expressed by the press, political authorities or society in general</p>	<p>n=6 (12%)                      "Invisibility of the Chinese community"                      "China does not have a free press"                      "China oppresses ethnic minorities"                      "Dislike towards people from communist countries"</p>	<p>"It is very obvious to me that there is discrimination against the Chinese community as a whole in society, implied by: 'We don't look at them, we don't discuss them, we just ignore them.' To me, that's the real discrimination. [31 year old woman born in Beijing]</p> <p>"I remember my history teacher in junior high. He did not like people from communist countries. [...] He didn't have to say anything directly, but you could tell his aversion from what he said." [30 year old man born in Wenzhou]</p> <p>"There are stereotypes about China in France: 'China oppresses ethnic minorities'; 'China's rapid expansion is hurting its people'. But instead of looking deeper into the background and reasons for these situations, and instead of considering the Chinese particular context, they want to solve all problems by simply invoking democracy" [33-year old woman born in Shanghai]</p> <p>"As a Chinese, there are a lot of things that make you feel uncomfortable in France. For example, my French classmates would ask me: 'Do you think you have freedom in China?' Or [the professor] would ask me: "What role do you think the press plays in society?" Well, he actually pretends to ask for your opinion, but without waiting for my answer he would continue: "Is there a free press in China?" [32 year old woman born in Jiangsu province]</p>
<p>Direct Overt discrimination: Participant identifies direct experience of unjustified, unfair treatment and attributes it to their race, poor knowledge of French or gender</p>	<p>n=9 (18%) (7 attributed to participant's race, 1 to gender and 1 to poor French knowledge)</p>	<p>"Many Chinese people cannot get the 10-year residence permit because they cannot speak French well. I wonder.. Isn't this a type of discrimination? Today, you need an A2 level [equivalent to Intermediate French] to get your 10-year residence permit, which is equivalent to a French middle school diploma....it is too difficult for us Chinese. It's not that we don't want to learn, but when we arrive here, we go to work right away.. We work very hard every day. Some elderly folks, they really cannot learn French. We work so hard, why don't they just give us a ten-year residence permit? [...]</p> <p>We, the Chinese, we work hard, but we are disadvantaged. " [42 year old man born in the Wenzhou region]</p> <p>"Useless. They were useless. [...] If they think the caller is Chinese, they are slow. It's just a matter of giving someone else a chance to deal with it first. [20-year old woman born in Zhejiang province, recalling the police responding to her emergency call after she was the victim of a robbery.]</p>

		<p>“The associations that support the Chinese community in Paris right now, have very little funding. For example, once you raise the topic of sex workers, people immediately think of Nigeria, North Africa, Eastern Europe. There are many associations that work with Nigerian sex workers, about five to eight in Paris. But the number of Nigerian sex workers is smaller than the Chinese. Those associations are actually working with far fewer people than we do, but they are always receiving far more resources than we do. No matter which association, as soon as a Chinese group is involved, no matter which group, they send them over to us because, they say, they don't understand Chinese. (31 year old woman born in Beijing, social worker of an association supporting the Chinese community)</p>
Physical aggression	n=2 (4%) All attributed to COVID	<p>“Didn't they suspend the requirement to wear a mask in June this year? Well, since then I have continued to wear a mask on the street, even after June. I was attacked by a middle-aged woman. She looked like a loser, the kind of [French] middle-aged woman who doesn't have a job [...]. She just hit me and tore the mask off my face.” [29 year-old man born in Shanghai]</p>
Microaggression: Participants identify remarks that communicate hostility or superiority towards Chinese because they are scapegoated for COVID, their knowledge of French is poor, or they are inferior	n=15 (30%) 9 attributed to COVID 5 to poor French knowledge 1 to French feeling superior to Chinese	<p>There were people who, when I told them that my French was poor would tell me not to worry, that they would listen. Some people have a good attitude. But as soon as this policewoman heard me speaking French slowly [...] she interrupted me saying to go find someone who spoke French. I was disappointed because I was speaking French. I offered to explain my question more clearly but she insisted it would not do. She was discriminating against me for speaking French slowly. So I got angry but she continued to ignore me. But she had a point. Like my husband used to say, “If you can't speak French well, why did you come to France?” I cannot argue with that.” [64 year old woman, born Zhejiang province, married to a French man].</p> <p>“I've experienced drunk people on the street when the epidemic started and they would shout at me ‘Chinese virus.’” [20-year old woman from Heilongjiang]</p> <p>[In the beginning of the COVID epidemic after China had brought the Wuhan outbreak under control] “I was walking down the street and someone came up to me and my kids and shouted: you don't have COVID now in China, you're bringing the mess to the rest of the world. They just came over and shouted at me.” [32 year-old woman born in Jiangsu province]</p> <p>“The French are also arrogant, they think they have their way of doing things, in fact I think that even</p>

		those we consider them warm and friendly, we always feel like there is a barrier, right? Some may even hurt our self-esteem with their arrogance..." [47 year old man, born in the Wenzhou region]
Racist attitudes: Participants believe they are the victim of harmful racist stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices related to Chinese eating practices, COVID, etc.	n=11 (22%) Includes stereotypes such as: "All Chinese eating dog meat/cat meat/bat soup", "All Chinese are copycats, i.e. they manufacture poor-quality prêt-à-porter items that imitate European fashion". "Chinese are not good at sports because they are too small". "Chinese are hardworking." "Chinese are submissive"; "Chinese are the frequent victims of robberies because they carry cash and/or because their French is too poor to report a crime."	"Some French people tell me that Chinese people like to eat dog meat, or some people tell me that Chinese people like to copy others' ideas." [33 year old woman born in Guangdong province]  "They say that Chinese people are "copieuses", that things made by Chinese are copied from Europeans. They say stuff made in Europe can last a lifetime, but that things made by Chinese last only 10 years." [31 year old woman born in Jiangxi province]  "But my boss, my current boss, I feel that she is... I can't say she's discriminating, but she nurtures stereotypes. She thinks that Asians are very hard-working, very resistant to pressure, that's all.... She is a very typical, traditional, middle-aged French woman with a big mouth, that's all." [29-year old man born in Shanghai]  "Chinese here say that people know we carry a lot of cash, carry designer bags. It may also be that they are bullying you because you don't speak French, you can't report a crime." [64-year old woman born in Zhejiang]  "The other day, some police officers saw dogs in a cage in a Chinese restaurant. Because they think Chinese people eat dog meat, they immediately assumed the dogs were there for that reason. But according to Chinese habits, when a dog is off the leash, it should be kept in a cage, but the French think that Chinese abuse dogs, so they don't think of another explanation. For them, if they see dogs in a cage [in a Chinese restaurant] that means they are there to be eaten." [30-year old man born in Wenzhou]
Vicarious online	n=1 (2%)	"I've also seen video clips during the COVID pandemic of Chinese people queuing at supermarkets and being yelled at by old ladies and stuff like that [20-year old woman born in Heilongjiang]
Vicarious in-person discriminatory behaviors and microaggressions	n=5 (10%)	"I went to the bakery to buy bread, just in front of me was a Chinese student who had just moved to France, she did not know what type of bread to buy, it took her a while to say it in French and she ended up buying one single baguette. The cashier was obviously upset because there were a lot of people lined up behind her, and then there was an old French man behind her who was about 50 or 60 years old and said directly: 'Why don't you speak French in France?'. He was very contemptuous." [39-year old man born in Beijing]

The comments highlight a distinction of the type of racist actions and attitudes experienced directly or vicariously by Chinese immigrants in the Paris region, and the domain and reasons specific to any particular experience. 12 percent of participants' comments pertained to witnessing discrimination in the social and political contexts, informed by specific narratives in the French media pitting the Chinese communist regime against Western democracies discourse on individual freedoms, initially in regard to the Chinese government's failure to prevent the early outbreak in China and later in regard to the authoritarian approach of the Chinese government to contain the spread (Attané et al. 2021). Direct microaggressions (30 percent) and perceptions of stereotypes, prejudices, misconceptions (22 percent) dominated participants' comments, followed by experiences of direct discrimination (18 percent). The majority of microaggressions consisted of experiences on public transportation and scapegoating for the COVID-19 epidemic, as well as verbal abuses experienced in interactions in public administration offices (e.g. post-office, police station), in shops or on the street because of participants' low French proficiency. Excerpts of stereotypes include misconceptions about Chinese cultural and food habits and racial stereotypes. Instances of direct discrimination were, for the most part identified with reference to Arab and Black immigrant communities in Paris whom participants felt are given better treatment than Chinese immigrants. Most coded comments referred to direct interpersonal discrimination experiences. Vicarious discrimination was less commonly reported. 12 percent of the comments referred to vicarious experiences of discrimination (including online): hearing or witnessing COVID-related discrimination, Chinese targeted for robberies, and verbal attacks due to low French proficiency. According to participants of in-depth interviews, all acts and attitudes of discrimination and racism were perpetrated by non-Chinese/non-*Huaren*.

Overall, the domains, reasons and perpetrators described in in-depth interviews are consistent with the rankings in Table 3, but offer a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of the types of racist behaviors and attitudes and the contexts in which Chinese immigrants in the Paris region experience them.

### ***Results of Ordered Logit Models of the Frequency of Racist Experiences***

Table 5 presents results of ordered logit models of the frequency of racism. Model 1 (all respondents) is the baseline model. This model is in line with H1. Controlling for broad sociodemographic and social integration

variables, which in the literature have been found to predict frequency of racist experiences, and for the share of close and acquaintance ties with co-ethnics, of the three subgroups, Wenzhou Chinese report the lowest frequency of racist experiences although the coefficients of Wenzhou Chinese and Other Chinese are not statistically significant ( $p=0.12$ ). International Students perceive racism significantly more frequently than Wenzhou Chinese ( $p=0.086$ ).

Table 5: Coefficients (\*\* $p<0.001$ ; \* $p<0.01$ ; \* $p<0.05$ ;  $\wedge p<0.10$ ) and standard errors from ordered logistic regressions predicting frequency of racist experiences.

	M1 - All Respondents	M2 Wenzhou	M2 Other Chinese	M2 Int'l Students	M3 Wenzhou
(Ref. Wenzhou Chinese)					
Other Chinese	1.066 (0.681)				
International Students	0.945 $\wedge$ (0.548)				
<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>					
Age 40 or less (=1)	1.378** (0.435)	2.019* (0.857)	0.318 (0.885)	1.525** (0.555)	2.535* (1.073)
Female	0.405 (0.339)	-0.859 (0.805)	1.621 $\wedge$ (0.888)	0.021 (0.358)	-0.713 (0.854)
(Ref: Current int'l student)					
Former Int'l student				-0.399 (0.386)	
<i>Acculturation</i>					
Precairous admin status(=1)	0.047 (0.441)	1.535 (0.972)	-0.597 (1.001)	-0.037 (0.389)	2.750* (1.112)
Speaks French well or v well(=1)	-0.307 (0.398)	1.474* (0.701)	-0.344 (0.167)	-0.680 (0.426)	1.781* (0.894)
<i>Social ties</i>					
More than half of close ties are Chinese (=1)	-0.293 (0.484)	-2.109* (0.829)	-0.256 (0.680)	-0.211 (0.559)	-1.420 (1.033)
More than half of weak ties are Chinese (=1)	0.105 (0.348)	3.239** (1.130)	-1.513* (0.670)	-0.217 (0.397)	4.192* (1.668)
Speaks Wenzhou vernacular at work (=1)					-3.027* (1.251)
Observations	491	80	70	341	78

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Cut points of the ordered logit models available upon request.

In this model, age is the main significant predictor of perceptions of racism, with younger Chinese immigrants reporting higher frequency of racist experiences than their older peers. French language proficiency, legal administrative status and social ties do not significantly predict perceptions of racism. In the ChIPRe sample, age is highly and negatively correlated with year of arrival (correlation coefficient = - 0.74). The correlation between age and education is also strongly negative. 87 percent of those age 40 or younger have more than high school education compared with only 32 percent in the older age group. Thus younger age is correlated with shorter tenure in France and higher educational attainment. This only partially confirms evidence revealed in the literature for other national origin groups that education and length of residence in the host country predict immigrants' increased reports of discrimination (Schaeffer and Kas 2023). Among Chinese immigrants in Paris, it is the younger, more educated and with shorter duration in France who perceive racism more often, an effect that may be dominated by the relatively large fraction of International Students in the sample. Although the coefficients of the social ties predictors are not significant, the signs of the coefficients are in the expected direction (H2): Chinese with the majority of their close ties to other Chinese are protected against racism while those with the majority of their weak (acquaintance) ties to other Chinese experience racism more frequently.

Tables 1 and 2 showed patterned differences in sociodemographic, integration and social ties characteristics that may differentially shape their perceptions of racism. Thus, in Model 2 we stratified the analyses by immigrant group. To compare groups, results of models that fully interact immigrant subgroup with the independent variables are included in Supplemental Table S1 and discussed in the text when significant differences are observed between subgroups.

Age is a significant predictor of perceptions of racism among Wenzhou Chinese and International Students. For members of both groups, being 40 or younger is associated with increased frequency of racist experience, with this association not significantly different between the two groups (interaction term -0.199,  $p=0.83$  in Table S1). The model fitted to International Students also includes a control for student status (whether current or former international student). Being a former student decreases the frequency of racist experiences although the coefficient is not statistically significant ( $p=0.30$ ). Being a woman is significantly associated with an increased frequency of racist experiences only among members of the Other Chinese

subgroup and this association is significantly different from that observed among Wenzhou Chinese (interaction term 2.493,  $p < 0.05$ , Table S1). Higher French language proficiency is significantly associated with an increase in the frequency of racism among Wenzhou Chinese, but surprisingly not among International Students. This association is significantly different between Wenzhou Chinese and International Students (interaction term -2.097,  $p < 0.01$ , Table S1), but not between Wenzhou Chinese and Other Chinese (interaction term -1.711,  $p = 0.183$ , Table S1). These findings are consistent with our expectations in H1A that Wenzhou immigrants who are younger and who have better French language proficiency are more sensitive to racist cues or lead lives that expose them to opportunities to face racism. This is particularly relevant in the French sociopolitical context, which privileges French knowledge as a marker of social integration. Not surprisingly, French language proficiency can be perceived by Chinese immigrants as a barrier to social integration and a marker of perceived racism (Table 3, in depth-interviews), especially among Wenzhou Chinese whose tenure in France is the longest. Our results also highlight the particular fragility of female members of the Other Chinese subgroup who arrived in France at older ages, have low French language proficiency, precarious legal status and vulnerable socioeconomic status. According to the occupation information collected in ChIPRe (not shown), the majority of “Other Chinese” work as salespersons, waiters, cooks and help-cooks in the wholesale and retail shops, restaurants and other businesses owned by Wenzhou Chinese, with a smaller number working in massage parlors, nail salons, or in the service of Wenzhou Chinese families, as nannies, housekeepers and elderly caregivers.

The evidence in support of H2 is weak but the results are clearly in line with H2A. Having close ties that are predominantly Chinese has a protective effect on perceptions of racism in each of the three subgroups but the coefficient is statistically significant only for Wenzhou Chinese ( $p < 0.05$ ). The negative association between predominantly Chinese close ties and perceptions of racism for Wenzhou Chinese is significantly different from that observed among International Students (interaction term 1.516,  $p = 0.09$ , Table S1) but not from that of Other Chinese. Importantly, for Wenzhou Chinese, having weak (acquaintance) ties that are predominantly Chinese is associated with significantly higher frequency of racism, while the effect of having predominantly Chinese weak ties is only weakly protective for members of the Other Chinese and International Students

subgroups.<sup>9</sup> The positive effect of Chinese weak ties on frequency of racism among Wenzhou Chinese is also significantly different from the effects observed in the two other subgroups (Interaction terms: International Students -3.011,  $p < 0.01$  and Other Chinese -4.262,  $p < 0.001$ , Table S1). However, there is no evidence of the presumed mechanism mediating the relationship between broad social integration indicators and perceptions of racism. While the social ties variables predict change in the frequency of reports of racism, when added as controls to the model, they do not reduce the association between broad indicators of integration and perceptions of racism (models without the social ties variables are not shown).

Although Wenzhou and Other Chinese are similar along several dimensions that were found to reduce perceptions of racism (older age, low French language proficiency, close ties that are predominantly Chinese), the association between predominantly Chinese acquaintance ties and increases in perception of racism observed among Wenzhou Chinese but not among Other Chinese suggests a unique Wenzhou ethnic enclave effect, where weak, bridging ties of Wenzhou Chinese may channel information to enclave members about racist attitudes and behaviors in mainstream society. To assess whether it is the linguistic repertoire of Wenzhou Chinese that seals the insularity and protection offered by co-ethnic networks of Wenzhou Chinese, in Model 3 we limit the analyses to Wenzhou Chinese and add a control for the fraction who are in a bonding network, defined by speaking Wenzhou vernacular at work (from Table 2 about 70 percent of Wenzhou Chinese speak Wenzhou vernacular at home and 40 percent at work). Being member of a bonding network significantly predicts a reduction in the frequency of racist experiences and wipes out the protective effect of close Chinese ties, but uncover the positive effect of precarious administrative status on perceptions of racism. Consistent with H3, these results suggest the protective effect of insular, close co-ethnic linguistic ties of Wenzhou immigrants enclosed in an ethnic enclave, but highlights the vulnerability of perhaps more recent arrivals with precarious legal status who may experience more racist encounters in interactions with public administration officials. The acquaintance ties coefficient remains positive and significant, suggesting that information on racism may reach

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<sup>9</sup> A whopping 97.4 percent of members of Other Chinese report that more than 50% of their acquaintance ties are Chinese discredits the validity of the negative and significant coefficient for this group since cell size is too unbalanced for a meaningful interpretation of this categorical predictor of racism.

members of an ethnic enclave through connections that bridge to outside circles and are mobilized to learn about issues in the wider French society.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

We describe the heterogeneity of the Chinese immigrant population in France and investigate how immigrants' diverse patterns of social integration predict perceptions of racism, using quantitative survey data and in-depth interviews collected during the COVID-19 outbreak which activated anti-Chinese and anti-Asian xenophobia and racism, complicating theories of the integration and assimilation of Asian immigrants (Lee and Sheng 2024). Our data enable a classification of Chinese immigrants at the intersection of migration histories, socio-demographic profiles, broad social integration indicators, and attributes of their social ties, which characterize distinct patterns of social interaction with co-ethnics and with the wider French society. Our classification highlights three distinct groups of Chinese immigrants in France: an established ethnic enclave of Wenzhou Chinese, an immigrant underclass whose members arrived in France after the dismantling of the Chinese centrally-planned economy, and successive cohorts of international students, many of whom have gained professional employment in France or intend to stay after graduation from French institutions of higher education.

We find that patterned differences in sociodemographic, education, acculturation and social connections differentially drive subjective perceptions of racism in the three subgroups. Wenzhou Chinese live in the segregated social and work environments of an ethnic enclave, whose insularity is sealed by linguistic networks composed by family and close friends, and which protects its members from the direct experience of racism. Indirect exposure to anti-Asian racism by members of the Wenzhou enclave is likely to occur through interactions with their weak ties who move in different circles and channel information about the wider society or that are activated when relevant information is needed. Membership in the Wenzhou ethnic enclave is likely to hinder integration, as suggested by this group's low level of education and low French language proficiency despite their long tenure in France, and potentially limits awareness of Chinese immigrants' minoritized status. Only the younger members of the Wenzhou Chinese community, some of whom were schooled in France,

appear to be in tune with racist cues and report more frequent experiences of racism. The younger generation of Wenzhou immigrants is more aware of discrimination and racism, and engages in instances of collective action to fight them (Le Bail and Chuang 2020; Wang and Madrisotti 2023b). More research is needed to examine whether and how awareness of racism among the younger, better-educated first- and second-generation Wenzhou immigrants in France might experience a process of racialized integration similar to that characterizing the experiences of Asian immigrants in the U.S. (Lee and Kye 2016).

The second subgroup, Other Chinese, display a particular gender-specific fragility, which is indicative of higher perceptions of racism. Probably due to their late and, for most, undocumented status in France (Attané et al. 2023), to an absence of pre-existing ties in the host country and to low French language proficiency, members of this group engage in an exploitative labor market characterized by low-wage service jobs in restaurants and other businesses owned by Wenzhou Chinese, provision of dependent care to Wenzhou families and participation in the sex work industry (Gao, Lévy and Poisson 2006; Lévy 2015). These activities may increase instances of victimization by racist, discriminatory attitudes and behaviors by the French police and public administration or through Chinese-on-Chinese discrimination, as evinced in Table 3 from the responses of some members of this group who singled out fellow Chinese as the second most important perpetrators of racism. However, despite their marginalized position, their experiences of racism may create conditions to engage in collective action and political engagement in the host society (Chuang and Le Bail 2020). Despite similarity in some of the conventional indicators of social integration (namely low educational level and low French language proficiency) between Wenzhou and Other Chinese, patterned descriptions of the social environments of these two groups, enrich our understanding of the role of ethnic enclaves in protecting members of the first subgroup from racism and highlight the specific vulnerability to racism of members of the second group who are not protected by an ethnic enclave. The unique role of the ethnic enclave environment for Wenzhou Chinese would have gone unnoticed had we described the Chinese immigrant population as a single national origin group.

The third group, International Students, report the most frequent experiences of racism. As a reflection of their participation in French higher education institutions and professional domains, they also have the largest

share of members who report some fraction of their close and acquaintance ties with non-Chinese, even though close and acquaintance ties are not significant predictors of perceived racism for this group. The only significant predictor of increased perceptions of racism is being 40 or younger. This may indicate expectations of fair treatment or an emergent racialization among recent cohorts. On the other hand, earlier cohorts may be reluctant to report racism, the recognition of which is vexing their achieved structural position in French society. This is consistent with Wang and Madrisotti (2023b)'s in-depth interviews with a small sample of Chinese current and former international students during the COVID pandemic. They found that earlier cohorts of international students turned professionals wished to distance themselves from the Chinese regime, justified anti-Chinese hostility and minimized the gravity of racist encounters, contradicting expectations of the immigrants' integration paradox positing longer tenure and higher professionalization in the host country as predictors of higher perceptions of racism.

Our data and approach have several advantages. The first pertains to the classification of meaningful subgroups within a population group that has been often presumed homogeneous in the literature. Second, they reveal an underexplored aspect of the social integration of immigrants: their everyday social environments portrayed by their social interactions with co-ethnics and members of the wider French society. We found no evidence, however, of immigrants' social ties acting as a potential mechanism that mediates the association between social integration indicators and perceptions of racism. Rather, we were able to capture distinct aspects of the subjective experience of racism that are not attributable to the conventional predictors of racist perceptions alone. The compositions of close and weak ties by nativity are themselves dimensions of the social integration of Chinese immigrants. This could not be clearer than for the case of Wenzhou Chinese, who are protected from experiences of racism when embedded in webs of co-ethnic close bonding networks, but who report more frequent perceptions of racism when they have predominantly Chinese weak ties. Third, our data highlight the heterogeneity of immigrants' social integration experiences and potential future trajectories, not all of them consistent with evidence of the immigrant integration paradox. Today's Chinese immigrant community in France has relatively recent roots dating back to the early 1990s, with successive cohorts of Chinese arrivals distinguishing themselves with respect to the political economy of their regions of origin, migrant traditions,

aspirations, social capital and support networks. These factors may explain the observed variation in the discrepancy between social integration indicators and perceptions of racism across the three immigrant subgroups and are worth further investigation.

To conclude, we have identified diverse patterns of social integration in the Chinese immigrant population of the Paris region, adding nuance to evidence of the discrepancy between social integration indicators and discrimination and racism with data that capture new unexplored signifiers of social integration and provide mixed evidence of an integration paradox in a heterogeneous immigrant population. Future studies, using these or similar data, might examine how the social networks of Chinese immigrants in France are relevant for the understanding of other important integration processes (e.g. economic mobility).

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Table S1: Coefficients (\*\*p < 0.001; \*p<0.01; ^p<0.05; ^p<0.10) and standard errors from ordered logistic regressions predicting frequency of racist experiences (Model 2 with interactions).

Wenzhou Chinese (default)	
International Students	3.413* (1.586)
Other Chinese	4.356* (1.890)
Age older than 40 (default)	
Age 40 or less	1.807* (0.756)
Int'l Students x Age 40 or less	-0.199 (0.951)
Other Chinese x Age 40 or less	-1.489 (1.155)
Male (default)	
Female	-0.875 (0.716)
Int'l Students x Female	0.919 (0.809)
Other Chinese x Female	2.493* (1.172)
Precarious admin status = No (default)	
Precarious admin status = Yes	1.446^ (0.796)
Int'l Students x Precarious admin status	-1.356 (0.884)
Other Chinese x Precarious admin status	-2.038 (1.259)
Speaks French well or v well = No (default)	
Speaks French well or v well = Yes	1.362* (0.612)
Int'l Students x Speaks French well or v well	-2.097** (0.766)
Other Chinese x Speaks French well or v well	-1.711 (1.282)
Half or fewer close ties Chinese (default)	
More than half close ties Chinese	-1.792** (0.637)
Int'l Students x More than half close ties Chinese	1.516^ (0.884)
Other Chinese x More than half close ties Chinese	1.517 (0.928)
Half or fewer weak ties Chinese (default)	
More than half weak ties Chinese	2.868** (0.879)
Int'l students x More than half weak ties Chinese	-3.011** (0.970)
Other Chinese x More than half weak ties Chinese	-4.262*** (1.077)
Observations	491

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Cut points of the ordered logit models available upon request.

