



To cite this article: Peres-Neto, L., Huertas Bailén, A., & Masdeu Torruella, I. (2026). The reception of xenophobic hate speech by the Chinese community during the COVID-19 pandemic: the case of Barcelona metropolitan area. *Anuario Electrónico de Estudios en Comunicación Social "Disertaciones"*, 19(2). <https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/disertaciones/a.16087>

THE RECEPTION OF XENOPHOBIC HATE SPEECH BY THE CHINESE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: THE CASE OF BARCELONA METROPOLITAN AREA

La recepción del discurso de odio xenófobo por parte de la comunidad china durante la pandemia del COVID-19: el caso del área metropolitana de Barcelona

A recepção do discurso de ódio xenófobo pela comunidade chinesa durante a pandemia de covid-19: o caso da região metropolitana de Barcelona

Luiz Peres-Neto, *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)*

luiz.peres@uab.cat

Amparo Huertas Bailén, *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)*

amparo.huertas@uab.cat

Irene Masdeu Torruella, *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)*

irene.masdeu@uab.cat

Received: December 10, 2025

Accepted: June 08, 2026

Date of prepublication: July 31, 2026



ABSTRACT

This article discusses the reception of xenophobic hate speech during the COVID-19 pandemic by Chinese people settled in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. As a qualitative study, our interest lies in understanding how the Chinese community perceived and reacted to hate speech generated by the association of China and the virus that started the pandemic. Twenty-three ethnographic in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with first-generation migrants and descendants in 2022, from May to November. Participants detected the appearance of hate and xenophobic expressions, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. However, habituated to racism, they did not perceive a worsening of the situation. On social media, the youngest users, identified as the main users, tended to react by abandoning digital activities. This study did not allow us to identify resistance movements or counterarguments to hate speech. Instead, racism was a normalized phenomenon to which their lives were already strongly conditioned.

Keywords: Hate speech; audience reception; Chinese migration; xenophobia; COVID-19.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la recepción del discurso de odio xenófobo durante la pandemia del COVID-19 por parte de la población china asentada en el área metropolitana de Barcelona. Como estudio cualitativo, nuestro interés radica en comprender cómo la comunidad china percibió y reaccionó ante el discurso de odio generado por la asociación entre China y el virus que originó la pandemia. Se realizaron 23 entrevistas etnográficas semiestructuradas en profundidad con migrantes de primera generación y descendientes entre mayo y noviembre de 2022. Los participantes detectaron la aparición de expresiones de odio y xenofobia, especialmente al inicio de la pandemia. Sin embargo, habituados al racismo, no percibieron un empeoramiento de la situación. En redes sociales, los usuarios más jóvenes, identificados como los principales usuarios, tendieron a reaccionar abandonando sus actividades digitales. Este estudio no permitió identificar movimientos de resistencia ni contraargumentos al discurso de odio. En cambio, el racismo se presentó como un fenómeno normalizado al que ya estaban sus vidas fuertemente condicionadas.

Palabras clave: discurso de odio; recepción del público; migración china; xenofobia; COVID-19.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a recepção do discurso de ódio xenófobo durante a pandemia de covid-19 pela comunidade chinesa residente na região metropolitana de Barcelona. Como estudo qualitativo, busca compreender como essa comunidade percebeu e reagiu ao discurso de ódio gerado pela associação entre a China e o vírus que desencadeou a pandemia. Entre maio a novembro de 2022, foram realizadas 23 entrevistas etnográficas semiestructuradas em profundidade com migrantes de primeira geração e seus descendentes. Os participantes identificaram o surgimento de expressões de ódio e xenofobia, especialmente no início da pandemia. No entanto, por já estarem habituados



ao racismo, não perceberam um agravamento da situação. Nas redes sociais, os usuários mais jovens, identificados como os principais usuários dessas plataformas, tenderam a reagir por meio do afastamento ou abandono de suas atividades digitais. Este estudo não identificou movimentos de resistência nem estratégias sistemáticas de contestação ao discurso de ódio. Ao contrário, o racismo apareceu como um fenômeno normalizado, ao qual as trajetórias de vida dos participantes já estavam fortemente condicionadas.

Palavras-chave: discurso de ódio; recepção do público; migração chinesa; xenofobia; COVID-19.

Introduction

The scientific literature in the field of communication and related areas contains a vast array of studies on hate speech, particularly on digital platforms, and its social impact. Notably, two key epistemic lines of inquiry have emerged. On the one hand, there are works focused on the regulatory challenges associated with this phenomenon (Bárd & Bayer, 2020; Herz & Molnar, 2012; Kohl, 2022). On the other, there are studies examining the production, circulation, and potentially harmful effects of hate speech directed at minority groups, such as migrants, LGBTQ+, or other minoritized groups (Arcila-Calderón *et al.*, 2022; Martín Herrera, 2014; Noguera-Vivo & Pérez-Escolar, 2022; Obermaier *et al.*, 2021). Both perspectives highlight the central role of digital platforms in disseminating hate speech.

There are diverging regulatory perspectives on what constitutes hate speech. It is closely linked to the boundaries of freedom of expression. For example, in the United States, hate speech comes from the First Amendment and its assumption that no law could restrict free expression. However, there is a certain consensus in the academic field on its definition. Hate speech is generally understood to encompass messages that inflict harm on individuals or groups belonging to minorities within society, in accordance with the principles outlined by Waldron (2012).

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic not only created a global health crisis but also fuelled numerous disinformation campaigns that portray Asian communities as being responsible for the outbreak (Guan *et al.*, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2021). However, these campaigns should not be regarded as the surfacing of a new form of racism but rather the amplification of pre-existing social conflicts rooted in Western racism against Asian people (Nghiem & Morstatter, 2021). Moreover, right-wing political parties in Europe extensively exploited the connection between the Asian diaspora and the coronavirus (Manson, 2020). In the United States, the former president, Donald Trump, repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as the ‘Chinese virus’ (@realDonaldTrump, 2020, March 18). Kim *et al.* (2021) elucidate how Donald Trump’s digital activities played a crucial role in consolidating the association between the COVID-19 virus and China, thereby fuelling anti-Asian hate speech on a global scale. Studies such as Fan *et al.* (2020) delve into the significant influence of social media networks in stigmatising the Chinese population during the pandemic.



The global health crisis created a sociopolitical environment conducive to the proliferation of racist and xenophobic hate speech (Huertas Baillén & Peres-Neto, 2023; S. Wang *et al.*, 2020). During the initial months of the pandemic, prominent mainstream media outlets in Spain, such as *El Mundo*, *El País* and *El Periódico de Cataluña*, employed terminology associated with hate speech towards the Chinese diaspora, releasing phrases such as ‘Chinese virus’, ‘the virus from China’ or ‘China’s coronavirus’. They even went as far as suggesting that contact with individuals coming from China could potentially lead to contagion. Notable newspaper headlines included ‘The new Chinese virus is spread between humans’ (*El País*, 2020, January 20); ‘Suspected case of Chinese coronavirus ruled out in Catalonia’ (*El Mundo*, 2020, January 28); ‘What is coronavirus from China: symptoms, contagion and recommendations’ (*El Mundo*, 2020, January 29).

Numerous studies have identified the presence and surge of hate speech targeting the Chinese or Asian community on social media platforms since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Breazu & David Machin, 2022; Fan *et al.*, 2020; Oliveira & Joana Azevedo, 2022; Vergani *et al.*, 2022; Wen *et al.*, 2022). By employing machine learning techniques, Shah *et al.* (2022) and Toliyat *et al.* (2022) investigated the identification and proliferation of anti-Asian hate speech on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter). These two works are particularly noteworthy because, while both studies aimed to develop tools for predicting or quantifying the phenomenon, they coincided in observing a significant rise in the prevalence of hate speech towards Asians because of the pandemic. Additionally, Uyheng *et al.* (2022) found that the dissemination of racist hate speech in the United States differed when carried out by robots versus humans. Initially, between March and July 2020, individual accounts exhibited the highest activity, with the role of robots increasing thereafter. Importantly for the present study, the findings revealed that while human-operated accounts focused their content on the Asian and Chinese diaspora, automated accounts (bots) primarily targeted political actors, thereby exacerbating digital interactivity polarisation. Consequently, the relationship between hate speech expansion and political communication is beyond dispute.

Despite the considerable body of research on the proliferation of anti-Asian or Sinophobic hate speech, the issue of racism in everyday life (Horton, 2020) and the experiences of the Chinese diaspora during the pandemic (Guo *et al.*, 2020), we did not identify studies investigating the audience reception of hate speech among Asian or Chinese communities during COVID-19. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2020) analysed how, during the earlier months of the pandemic in France, members of the Chinese and Asian diaspora developed resistance and activism against racism. In Portugal, França *et al.* (2024) examined how international Chinese students dealt with microaggressions during the pandemic. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that studies on the audience reception of hate speech in general are lacking.

Audience reception studies encompass a range of methodologies and aims. Essentially, they analyse how audiences receive media content and ascribe meaning to it (Bonilla Vélez, 2011; Orozco Gómez, 1996; Quintas-Froufe & González-Neira, 2021). In Latin American tradition, reception studies are conceded as a distinct field of knowledge, while in Anglo-Saxon and Spanish contexts, they fall within the purview of audience studies (McQuail, 2012).

This article aims to discuss the reception processes among people of the Chinese diaspora, including migrants and their descendants residing in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, in response to xenophobic hate speech disseminated through both traditional media and social networks during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering their everyday lives. The findings stem from a research project funded by the International Catalan Institute for Peace. According to data from the municipal registry of inhabitants, the Chinese diaspora ranks third among population



groups in the Barcelona metropolitan area (Idescat, 2023). However, it is important to note that this data includes only first-generation migrants, thereby excluding a significant portion of the Chinese diaspora, comprising individuals born in Catalonia and their descendants. It is also necessary to consider that China prohibits its citizens from possessing a second nationality (Liu & van Dongen, 2016). Spain also accepts simultaneous citizenship with a limited set of countries with agreements, most of which are due to post-colonial relations. At the time of the study, Idescat reported that there were 1,260,619 foreign-born individuals registered in Catalonia, with 5 percent holding Chinese nationality (65,048).

Although there are some records of Chinese peddlers in Spain in the early twentieth century (Beltran, 2003), the Chinese migration in Spain, as well as in other southern European countries, started to be demographically relevant from the beginning of the 1980s, when international migration emerged as an important way to achieve social mobility and economic development in the post-Mao China (Chu, 2010). Most Chinese migrants came from rural areas with a strong migration culture and transnational mobility in Zhejiang province, especially from the so-called *qiaoxiang* of Qingtian (Beltran, 2003; Masdeu Torruella, 2020). Chain migration, family reunion, and the implementation of family businesses are the main characteristics of the Qingtian's migration to Spain. Since the 1980s, Chinese people have adapted to market demand and developed various types of family businesses primarily oriented toward the catering, import-export, and garment sectors (Beltran & Sáiz, 2013). Most of the migrants' descendants interviewed in this research—as explained later—have been socialized within the context of these family businesses.

Though migration from Qingtian rural areas is still predominant, in the last decade, the composition of Chinese migration in Spain and Europe in general has become increasingly diverse, reflecting changes in mobility patterns due to the rise of China on the global economic stage, which have brought about the growing presence of students and highly skilled professionals coming from urban areas (Be Gaspar & Ampudia de Haro, 2020; Leung, 2025). The growing heterogeneity of the population of Chinese origin in Spain, in terms of social class, generation of migration, and age, is also contributing to a greater diversity in transnational links with the country of origin (Masdeu Torruella, 2020; Masdeu Torruella & Wang, 2024), language skills as well as social and cultural capital (Wang, 2023; Beltrán & Saiz, 2025)) and perception of racism (Wang *et al.*, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2020).

Objectives

Hall's proposal (1999) was considered when defining the objectives. We refer to its classification of the types of audience reception that can occur (acceptance, negotiation, and rejection). However, this had to be adapted, considering the complexity of the reception in this study, which revolves around messages intended to attack the target receiver.

Objective (1). Identification: Trace the identifying elements of hate speech from the point of view of the Chinese diaspora included in the sample. The purpose of this objective is to identify which discourses in circulation during the pandemic were associated with the notion of hate speech by the Chinese diaspora. We seek to verify to what extent COVID-19 marked an exceptional period and its impact on social media networks according to the people sampled.



Objective (2). Understanding: Analyse how people of Chinese diaspora, included in the sample, understand these messages and, above all, how the social polarisation generated has affected their daily lives. Social and cultural factors are involved in the processes of communicative reception. So, it is necessary to know firsthand the direct experience of the group studied.

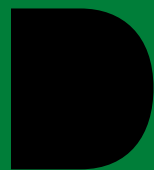
Objective (3). Reaction: Know the communicative performance of the Chinese diaspora included in the sample in response to hate speech. Check if their reaction is passive or active, whether it is individual or collective in nature, whether it takes place mostly in digital spaces or in physical space (public or private), if there is an interest in searching for content/information that helps dismantle hate speech and open the way to depolarisation, and if there are known campaigns in defense of the Chinese diaspora.

Methodology

To research the reception processes of hate speech among the Chinese diaspora and considering the objectives (identification, understanding, and reaction), we considered that the best methodological option is a qualitative approach and, more specifically, the use of ethnographic in-depth semi-structured interviews. We agree with Olaz (2012, p. 27) when he points out that the ‘researcher uses the interview not so much as a way to access knowledge on behaviours and individual traits of people, but as a way to access knowledge of a social phenomenon.’ The interview is nothing more than a dialogic process, a conversation ‘in which the dialogue is built’ between the parties; the speaker and the receiver (Arfuch, 1995, p. 31), which means, for us, interviews were an essential approach to understanding and studying racist experiences from the Chinese diaspora population’s point of view. As Bourdieu (1999) argues, the interview, when used as part of social science research, is a conversation in which the interviewee and interviewer are interested parties in the process of constructing empirical material; that is, they have interests and subjectivities that should not be belittled or hidden but, on the contrary, included and revealed as part of the construction of the investigation.

In our fieldwork (conducted between May and November 2022), it was essential to ensure that the conversation remained as fluid as possible. Addressing racism with people who suffer from it requires an approach that builds trust between researchers and participants, as is well-known in anthropology. In our study, participants could choose the interview language that was most comfortable for them: Spanish, Catalan, or Standard Chinese. For this reason, all interviews were conducted by Irene Masdeu (coauthor), who is fluent in all three languages. Likewise, to interfere as little as possible with the participant’s routines, the research team moved to the space indicated or suggested by the participant. Most of the interviews took place in semi-public spaces with sufficient privacy, such as bars, restaurants, cafes, or the participants’ workplaces, and lasted about one hour.

The snowball sampling technique was used to select the interviewees, and the sampling was closed once saturation was reached. In total, 23 interviews were carried out. Two groups were established by age: participants aged 25 to 35 years and those aged 36 to 52 years. Eleven interviews were conducted with each group. One interviewee declined to disclose her age. The sample comprised 17 women and 6 men. This imbalance occurred due to the difficulty of accessing the male group, who often delegated participation to their wives or partners, citing a lack of time. Due to their migratory characteristics, three groups were identified: first-generation migrants (12), migrant descendants (6), and university students (5).



First-generation migrants included people who had migrated to Spain since the 1980s from rural and migrant areas in the provinces of Zhejiang (Qingtian and Wenzhou) and Fujian, as well as younger migrants who arrived in the past ten years from urban areas. Descendants of migrants included both those born in Spain and those who migrated with their parents or reunited with them in Spain during childhood. Finally, university students included younger people who came mainly from urban areas and were pursuing a PhD.

Out of the 23 interviews, nine were conducted entirely in Chinese, seven in Spanish, four in Catalan, and three in both Chinese and Spanish. All interviews were transcribed, and for the analysis, it was ensured that they were available in Catalan, the common language of the research team. Additionally, notes taken during interviews were also considered in the analysis. The content analysis was conducted manually using a grounded theory approach.

Before each interview, the purpose of the study was explained to all participants, and their consent to audio recording was obtained. They were informed that they were not obliged to answer all the questions and that they could interrupt the meeting at any time, although this did not happen. All their rights and guarantees regarding the protection of the anonymity of their personal data were also explained. Given the study's topic, the guarantee of anonymity was especially important. The research team followed the ethical protocols and recommendations set out in the 'European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – ALLEA'.

Table 1 shows a summary of the 23 profiles that made up the sample. In some cases, when more than one professional activity was listed, we included only the one the participant identified as the main one. We cannot provide information on the year of arrival or age for Interviewee 16 because the interviewee did not share this information with the research team.

Table 1. Sample Profile

Interview Code	Gender	Age	Diaspora Relationship	Year of arrival	Professional Activity	Language Interview
Interview 1	Male	40	Descendant	1982	Businessman	Spanish
Interview 2	Fem	25	Descendant	Not applicable	Content manager	Spanish
Interview 3	Fem	40	Migrant	2019	Businessman	Chinese
Interview 4	Fem	31	Descendant	Not applicable	University Professor	Catalan
Interview 5	Fem	52	Migrant	1987	Restaurant owner	Chinese
Interview 6	Fem	33	Migrant	2011	Businessman	Spanish
Interview 7	Male	25	Descendant	Not applicable	Master student	Catalan
Interview 8	Fem	51	Migrant	1982	Language teacher	Chinese/ Spanish
Interview 9	Fem	31	Migrant-Student	2015	PhD student	Spanish
Interview 10	Fem	26	Migrant-Student	2017	PhD student	Spanish
Interview 11	Fem	26	Migrant-Student	2018	PhD student	Chinese
Interview 12	Fem	26	Migrant-Student	2017	PhD student	Spanish



Interview Code	Gender	Age	Diaspora Relationship	Year of arrival	Professional Activity	Language Interview
Interview 13	Male	31	Migrant-Student	2014	PhD student	Spanish
Interview 14	Male	25	Descendant	2010	Master student	Catalan
Interview 15	Fem	40	Migrant	2007	Event organisation	Chinese/ Spanish
Interview 16	Fem	-	Migrant	n.d.	Housewife	Chinese
Interview 17	Fem	29	Descendant	2005	Bank officer	Catalan
Interview 18	Fem	45	Migrant	2007	Merchant	Chinese
Interview 19	Fem	41	Migrant	2005	Merchant	Chinese
Interview 20	Fem	52	Migrant	2001	Merchant	Chinese
Interview 21	Fem	36	Migrant	2004	Bar Owner	Chinese
Interview 22	Male	52	Migrant	1999	Businessman	Chinese/Spanish
Interview 23	Male	30	Migrant	2007	Aesthetic centre owner	Chinese

Source: Authors

The interview included six blocks of questions, five of which were common to all profiles, and one varied depending on the participant's relationship with the Chinese diaspora. The first block included identification questions (name, age, gender, profession, etc.). In the second block, people with first-generation migratory experience were asked about it and its stages (motivations, place of arrival, first impressions, support networks, etc.), while participants born or socialised in Spain, defined as descendants, were asked about their ties, roots and relationship with China in a broad sense (frequency of visits, contact with relatives, language spoken at home, etc.). The third block investigated social media consumption and media diets to understand not only their digital habits and consumption but also how these fit within their broader cultural diets, asking, for example, what Chinese culture represents to them or whether it has helped shape their way of thinking or being. Finally, the last three blocks were more directly related to each of the three objectives outlined. Thus, in the fourth block, we investigated the identification of hate speech in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, questioning if the participant had known any hate speech, if they had faced it, or the Chinese diaspora had, and, among other things, whether they believe that the virus association with China during the pandemic had increased hate speech or racism. In the fifth block, we asked about the decoding of such hate speech and its effects on everyday life (with questions such as: "In your daily life, including social networks, have you experienced any situation in which you were the victim of racist attitudes and expressions during the pandemic?"). The purpose of the sixth block was to explore the participants' possible reactions as communicative agents, whether within the framework of digital social networks or outside them (asking if they believe it was necessary to get involved and contribute to the circulation of information and experiences as a response to racist attitudes and if they believed that social media were a good space to show what the Chinese diaspora is like in Catalonia).



Results

Media Consumption and the Uses of Social Media

The available literature indicates a quantitative increase in hate speech directed at the Chinese and Asian community during the COVID-19 pandemic in traditional media and, especially on social media (Shah *et al.*, 2022; Toliyat *et al.*, 2022; Uyheng *et al.*, 2022; Wen *et al.*, 2022). Although there was still no access to these studies at the time of the fieldwork, we started from this same assumption because the press had already warned of the problem.

Overall, the consumption of traditional Spanish media (press, TV, and radio) was residual among the sample, and we could extend this statement in relation to all Western media. The results indicate that interviewees do not frequently consume local, national, European, or Western media. Most of the participants' cultural consumption focused on media and information or cultural entertainment products of Chinese origin. This is more pronounced among the elderly and first-generation migrants, although it can also occur among youth.

Thus, the social media network with the greatest presence (among all interviewees, regardless of age or migration generation) is WeChat, which, strictly speaking, as Wang *et al.* (2019) explain, is more than a social media network. In addition to including the typical functions of digital interaction (i.e., the possibility of indicating a 'like', sharing, etc.), WeChat allows voice calls and integrates a wide range of features such as reels or stories, mobile payments, e-commerce, access to public services, and has an application programming interface for other applications. Therefore, the use of social media networks outside this digital landscape, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, or TikTok, is also residual, as it is the consumption of Western media. Of the 23 sample members, only six maintained profiles on social media networks such as X (formerly Twitter), and only two reported using it daily. These six users indicated that this consumption is due to the need to contact friends, carry out some type of specific interaction, or even make purchases online

All participants who reported consuming social media networks such as X (formerly Twitter) are under 40 years of age. Two profiles are outlined among them: Spaniards of Chinese origin and university students. The first includes the use of social networks for interacting with friends, for professional reasons, or to make purchases, but also to find out about current events or as a source of entertainment from what they receive through the profiles they follow. None of those interviewed highlighted following any influencer or having very strong preferences. Among students, especially those who plan to return to China, the use is similar for interacting with friends or making purchases, but overall, it is quite moderate and often marked by filters of self-censorship or direct censorship. For example, Interviewee 13 (a PhD student) reported that he was considering writing about what he knew through his networks of friends and family about what was happening in China around COVID-19 but stated that he only 'writes those things for me.' To explain the reason for this decision, he told this story about one banned account:

For example, a friend of mine opened a public account on Twitter to post content. He is very intelligent, but he is also closely monitored at Beijing University. Sometimes, when he posts about sensitive topics, his posts receive 10,000 or 30,000 views, and then—bam! —they disappear [error404]. (Interview 13)

Furthermore, it does not seem to be a specific event. According to the results of interviews with students, the penetration and use of Western social networks are strongly influenced by fear of potential surveillance or control, which may lead to the obligation to return to China. Due to the inability to control the reach of a message on social



media, which we may describe as the fear of viralisation, self-censorship is adopted as a preventive measure. However, it is important to note that this perception was expressed only by this group of participants.

To ensure a correct interpretation of our findings, it is necessary to highlight the following idea. The main reason for choosing the Chinese press and social media among first-generation migrants is language proficiency. Although there is growing daily interaction and communication between Chinese migrants and the local population, including increasing business and friendship ties, it is true that many do not feel confident and have not acquired sufficient language skills to read and write in Spanish or English. So, even if their interaction with local society is important in their daily lives and routines, they use social media and consume new media in Chinese. This is different from younger migrants who came to study, and for migrants' descendants, most of whom are unable to read and write confidently in Chinese and who consume only the Western press and social media.

Identification and Perception of Hate Speech

The analysis of the entire sample indicates that only two participants, both descendants (born and socialized in Catalonia), identified online content that can be undoubtedly classified as hate speech. In both cases, the reaction revolves around either abandoning the social media platform (specifically, Twitter) or looking for some strategy to avoid the anti-Chinese narratives they used to receive.

Yes, what about the soup, what about the pangolin, what about I don't know what, I don't know how many things... Then... it escalated, because I had a previously public account and... I closed it and opened a private one [on X, formerly Twitter]. Well, not private, but anonymous, and then I continued a little... Of course, because later came all this news about... 'No, but the Chinese already knew, the Chinese did this' [voice of mystery and conspiracy] that the Chinese government had planned this, and that is why China was already under control and so on. And it was like, let's see! We've gone from saying that the Chinese are sluts who eat all sort of things, to 'the Chinese already knew about this...'. All these things made me feel a little angry and upset, even though I have never suffered any verbal aggression or direct recrimination in person; I have seen a lot of... even 'the Chinese' on social media, such as 'they have masks because the Chinese embassy and consulate surely informed them and gave them masks, and they have them while we don't. It was like, oh my God! (Interview 7).

(...) I found it very exhausting, I think. Yes, I found it very exhausting. Because I didn't want to do it either. Something had already happened to me on Twitter, and I was very angry, and I said, 'This is not for me.' I don't know... maybe I would have said something at that time, but then there were so many haters, so many people, just a lot of negativity. Yes, especially on Twitter; it is very hostile and violent. Well, I think I decided not to do it as an individual, and as a member of the collective [she talks about an anti-racist collective of Asian descendants], we also decided not to, partly as a way of taking care of ourselves. And therefore... well, I stopped following [the networks]. So that's why there were other voices. There were already people speaking out about these things, and well, that was enough. (Interview 4).



Interviewee 7 identified hate speech not only in stories uttered by ordinary people but also by ‘influencers who have more or fewer followers who also said, “it’s just that the Chinese are so-and-so”. Consequently, he indicated that in 2020, he closed his X (formerly Twitter) account because he assumed that ‘it was a very toxic environment.’ Another member of the sample expressed herself along similar lines, adding that the hate speech she found on Twitter was about latent racism that already existed: “What happens is that the coronavirus acts like a magnifying glass, giving people with a racist mentality an excuse or pretext” (Interview 9).

All participants agreed on the following. Rather than identifying an increase in the circulation of anti-Asian or Sinophobic hate speech due to the pandemic, they detected that the pandemic normalized the externalization of latent or previously manifest racist ideas. That is to say, there do not seem to be any problems with identifying hate speech online, but it is also recognized as part of a broader phenomenon that occurs beyond the networks.

Offline Discrimination during COVID-19

All participants indicated having experienced episodes of racism associated with their ethnic conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic in their daily interactions. A woman who arrived in Barcelona a few years ago, for example, explained the following:

We were [relating an episode experienced with a friend] eating on a terrace near her house. Everything was going well when, suddenly, a woman appeared. She had long hair, was well dressed, and blonde... As soon as she arrived, apparently smoking and drinking coffee, and without approaching us, she spoke to us from her table: ‘Excuse me, how is the coronavirus going in China?’ I said to my friend: ‘What a nice lady, right?’ And we replied: ‘No, no, it’s very good. In China, since September, everything has been open and life is normal.’ And do you know what she said back to us? ‘Ah! So you have already passed the virus on to us, right? You are already free, aren’t you?’ (Interview 15)

Interviewee 4, an adult descendant, recounted two instances in which they experienced racism during the pandemic. One occurred when the participant was fined by the police while carrying out tasks for the Anti-Racist Care Network, of which she was a member. Paradoxically, the interviewee was returning from distributing food to homeless people in her car and had a document, an SOS Racism certification, to carry out such an action that allowed her to circulate despite the forced lockdown of the moment. When she was intercepted by a police checkpoint, the authorities did not accept the documentation presented, arguing that it came from a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and not a government institution. In addition, she described her explanations as dubious (‘I saw other people passing by. They showed the same document, and they were allowed to leave, but the police kept me there and gave me a fine’). The second example was experienced when she worked as a teacher in a school:

They would say things like, ‘coronavirus,’ or ‘don’t come near because you’re going to infect me,’ you know? They were fifth- and sixth-graders. Then, there was a moment when I told them, ‘Well, let’s talk.’ I stayed calm because they were children. Most of them understood, but there was one kid who just wouldn’t stop. So, after giving the whole speech and explaining that this was something beyond my control and that I had not been... you know? In the end, he came up to me and said, ‘But do you have the coronavirus or not?’ You know? He asked me the same question again, and I was like ‘Oh my God’... But then, for example,



I wrote a text for school, a letter or something like that. Later, it was published in an educational journal, and I don't know where else. They used this text in high school. Then they would ask questions such as, 'Have you ever experienced something like this?' or 'Does it sound familiar to you?'. (Interview 4).

However, only three of the 23 people interviewed told us about specific experiences they lived through because of hate speech during COVID-19, beyond receiving insults. In addition to the already mentioned fine that Interviewee 4 received, Interviewee 17 explained to us that during the pandemic period, it was especially difficult for a Chinese person to find work, and Interviewee 3 related discriminatory experiences at her children's school, in which, when they had birthday parties, their children were not invited.

Reacting to Hate Speech and Discrimination during COVID-19

Everything explained up to this point is also framed in a context of uncertainty and concern among the participants due to the pandemic itself and its unknown effects. The interviewees who had some contact with the discourses circulating in the Spanish media or on social networks expressed discomfort—a sense of dissonance—stemming from the contradiction between the information they found in Spain and the information they received from China. Some, like Interviewee 1, mention that at the beginning of the pandemic, he considered making informative videos to counter the misinformation he saw circulating in Spain.

Well, among ourselves, it was like, 'Hey, what can we do for society to... to tell them what measures they should take and whether they are doing things correctly?' Because here everything was... everything was quite relaxed. And the instructions being given were not very accurate. We saw [Fernando] Simón [Director of the Coordination Centre for Health Alerts and Emergencies of the Ministry of Health and Government Spokesperson during COVID-19], saying that the masks were not necessary and then saying they were necessary... that it is not that contagious, after all, yes, it was contagious. In other words, they did not seem to have a very clear idea, while from our perspective, we wanted to do something else. (...) I did this with a group of Chinese people in Madrid. We made many videos explaining how to use gloves, how to remove them, how to go shopping at the supermarket, how to refuel, how to go out, what to do when returning home, pour alcohol on the soles of your shoes, that is, we made many videos on these topics. Many videos that we published on YouTube as well. (Interview 1)

Following the current events and evolution of COVID-19 in China, the participants indicated that their response was to promote preventive measures before they were discussed in the Spanish media or implemented by the government. Thus, for example, Interviewee 2 reports that:

Well, I don't think everyone here was like 'It's crazy, it's not going to be... I mean, it's not going to be that serious!' You know? 'It's not going to be that serious!' But yes, my parents... my parents closed their restaurant around February or January... I mean, they closed it because, because... because they did. And my brother, and everyone else, my whole family in Spain, started wearing masks and buying lots of things... They started buying food, buying hydroalcoholic gel, masks everywhere, looking for the cheapest masks... everything. (Interview 2)



Just as the parents of Interviewee 2 closed their restaurant even before the legal restrictions (lockdown), other small business owners and merchants indicated that they took similar protective measures. However, to avoid suffering acts of racism, Interviewee 1 said that he used signs that said phrases such as ‘Closed for Holidays,’ omitting the real reasons or indicating in a friendly way the need to use the mask long before that this measure was taken officially in Spain. In his business, he put up a sign that said, ‘I am wearing the mask not for myself, but for you.’ Other examples also indicate preventive reactions related to the information obtained from their Chinese information and interaction networks because, at that time in Europe, the complexity and severity of COVID-19 still did not seem to be perceived. However, the preventive use of face masks also became an ethnic marker for xenophobic discrimination.

I remember one day when I was walking down the street with the mask, and there were two men; now I don’t remember exactly what it represented; they were two men who asked me, ‘Why are you wearing a mask?’. At that moment, I didn’t tell them anything, I was ashamed. (Interview 11)

Go shopping at the supermarket. Yes, before confinement, I wore a mask, and people looked at me strangely, in fact, very strangely. But after confinement, I went to buy in the supermarket, and I no longer noticed this attitude, I no longer noticed this attitude or these strange looks. (Interview 14)

They thought we were crazy! Wear a mask! From the beginning, we were very scared, because we saw what was happening in China, and we started to wear masks to go out. And many people insulted us on the street! They said that [COVID-19] wasn’t that big of a deal, that it was like a cold. Right after, they started to wear masks, too. (Interview 20)

The story of stigmatization stemming from the preventive use of masks adds to the other microaggressions previously explained. However, the people interviewed, especially first-generation and older migrants, naturalized them in the context of the racism to which they are accustomed. This becomes evident when they minimize the number of attacks they suffered and limit them to a few rude people. Only Interviewee 19 showed a more general unease perceived beyond migration: “Because here the people are worse every day, every day they are less friendly.” Only three participants said they felt comfortable in their neighborhood as neighbors or merchants. In all these cases, the people have a long connection to the community in which they live.

The discourses that aim to minimize or justify hate speech and racist attacks are very varied among the participants. Three lines stand out in the interviews. The first is to dilute the problem, stating that racism is everywhere. We identified a second tendency to reduce the importance of the problem by comparing or pointing out that, in other countries, the situation was (or is) even worse. Interviewee 1, for example, indicated that there are cases of racist attacks in the United States and France due to COVID-19. Finally, a third line is one that assumes that within the Chinese community, there may also be racist people. For example: “You would see what would have happened if, instead of marrying a white man, I had married a black man” (Interview 15); “In China, there is also discrimination. People in Beijing look down at others” (Interview 16); and “The Chinese think that the Spanish are very lazy” (Interview 17).

Regarding the reaction to hate speech, racism or verbal attacks, a common trait among the participants was the option of non-reaction. For example, Interviewee 4 stated that in the United States, there was a reaction only because the conflict, as a result of the pandemic, “was harsher and because there were already anti-racist movements



there before all this.” Interviewee 13 stated that hate speech or racism are just manifestations that do not go further, “like a dog that barks a lot but does not bite,” or in Interview 19, when reporting situations of racism experienced by her daughter, the participant explained that when racism or conflict arises, she recommends her daughter to look another way.

At the same time, as previously stated, based on the uses and consumption of social networks, only two participants changed their digital habits based on racist hate speech in the context of COVID-19. Interviewee 4, expressed fatigue with the speeches that he found on Twitter, but a better example to illustrate this topic is the following:

In fact, I closed Twitter in the same year, 2020, because there was a... I saw every tweet and so on, then I said ‘Hey, look, get away, it’s too toxic.’ But in real life, thank God, no (...) I replied to some haters and said... well, I don’t remember exactly... but I commented saying... Well, with the food issue, I didn’t respond because it said, ‘I move on with people like these’. (...) But then they saw my photo and ‘Oh look, such a Chinese guy, what are you going to say?’ [with a voice imitating someone who says nonsense] (...) Yes, because my first Twitter account was public, my name was on it (...) And then I said, look what happened. And I closed that account, and that’s it. (Now) it’s anonymous [laughs]. My name doesn’t come out (...) No, my face doesn’t come out or anything. It just happened because it is very toxic! Now I have it to watch the news. I don’t watch TV since my generation doesn’t watch TV anymore; it’s to get the news. (Interview 7)

Discussion and Conclusions

Considering the important and extensive historical presence of the Chinese diaspora in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, we set out to study how this community perceived and reacted to the hate speech generated due to the expansion of COVID-19, inside and outside of social media. To do so, we interviewed community members. This adds originality to the proposal, as it is uncommon for audience studies to work directly with migrant populations (Huertas Bailén, 2017).

At the beginning of the pandemic, discourses circulating in the legacy and social media networks, as well as some speeches and statements released by international political actors, such as Donald Trump, linked the COVID-19 virus to China. This identification of the origin of the virus with a country led to the Asian population being identified as responsible for the global health crisis. In our work, we confirmed that participants experienced and perceived this hate speech. Nevertheless, as Nghiem and Morstatter (2021) say, hate speech is not a new form of racism but rather the amplification of pre-existing social conflicts rooted in Western racism against Asian people. In the pandemic context, racism appears in new forms, with new nuances (e.g., wearing of the mask, new expressions of insult, among others) that came to add to the usual racism to which the Chinese diaspora were already habituated.

Towards future studies in communication, this paper highlights the importance of transnational communication in the lives of the migrant population. In the case of the analysed sample, the level of transnationality in their consumption is conditioned by low proficiency in Spanish and English, which keeps them away from certain local and international media. However, this media isolation decreases over time, as descendants entrench themselves and their identity may come to be formed on the margins of their progenitors’ culture. But, in addition, the racist



content circulating across social media also provokes their alienation from the same when they take the step to operate off Chinese platforms.

Given that the Chinese diaspora tends to flee situations where this type of discourse emerges, it would be logical to think that Western social media networks, where these messages circulate, are not a common space for them. In fact, only two of the 23 interviewees explicitly identified hate speech online, and both decided to abandon the social platform.

From the perspective of global hyperconnectivity, this study also addresses another issue of interest, related to transnational communication. There is no doubt that the catalyst for hate speech against a population defined by its culture and/or geographical area of origin can be found anywhere in the world. The emergence of discourses that politicize facts about the migrant population, polarizing them, and casting the Other as the enemy to be eradicated, has increased with the rise of the far right globally (Manson, 2020). For now, considering the available literature, this work omits the frictions that contact with communicative environments different from the home country can entail, since information from different media ecosystems has no reason to coincide.

The Chinese diaspora in Barcelona detected a dissonance between the news they received from the West and that from China, which could determine their behaviour. In the case of COVID-19, participants noted that in the West, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, the situation was not considered serious, whereas news from China made them aware of the emergency unfolding. Through their digital contacts, they knew about the disease's mortality and the need to adopt safety measures. This privileged knowledge of the situation led many to adopt preventive measures, such as closing restaurants and shops or wearing face masks, before the Spanish Government imposed these strategies. And, paradoxically, this behaviour, which was identified as different (from the 'Other') by the native population, together with the identification of the virus with China, caused situations of racism and daily microaggressions.

Methodological issues must also be part of the final discussion. Our research required overcoming important methodological difficulties, both in its design and the development of empirical work. Our commitment to an ethnographic approach was firm from the first moment. In this case, we had to deal with the difficulties of addressing racism with people who suffer from it. This is not an easy task due to psychological, social, and cultural reasons. Moreover, it was particularly difficult to include men in the sample. At first, it may be thought that the reason for this man's resistance to enrolling in the study was because Irene Masdeu, who conducted the interviews, is a woman. However, we believe this supposition is invalid, as the person in charge of this task has extensive experience studying the Chinese community from an anthropological perspective and has never encountered that difficulty. Maybe it was the topic; maybe it was a coincidence. The truth is that many of the men who were contacted either delegated participation to their partners or declined to participate due to a lack of time.

Finally, this study did not allow us to identify resistance movements or counterarguments against hate speech. Instead, we see that, for the Chinese community based in Barcelona (Spain), racism is such a normalized phenomenon that their lives are already strongly conditioned by it, inside and outside of social media networks. Nevertheless, we must highlight that there is a growing number of young activists and artists descended from Chinese migrant families who are developing projects to denounce racism and discrimination after COVID-19. They have acquired an upward social mobility that enables them to explain the migration and conditions of their parents and denounce the stereotypes and invisible discrimination they have suffered.



References

1. Arcila-Calderón, C., Sánchez-Holgado, P., Quintana-Moreno, C., Amores J.-J., & Blanco-Herrero, D. (2022). Hate speech and social acceptance of migrants in Europe: Analysis of tweets with geolocation. *Comunicar*, 30(71), 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C71-2022-02>
2. Arfuch L (1995) *La Entrevista, Una Invención Dialógica*. Paidós.
3. Bárd, P., & Bayer, J. (2020). *Hate speech and hate crime in the EU and the evaluation of online content regulation approaches*. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. <https://doi.org/10.2861/28047>
4. Beltrán Antolín, J. (2003). *Los ocho inmortales cruzan el mar: chinos en el extremo Occidente*. Edicions Bellaterra.
5. Beltrán Antolín, J., & Sáiz López, A. (2015). A contracorriente. Trabajadores y empresarios chinos en España ante la crisis económica (2007-2013). *Migraciones*, (37), 125-147. <https://doi.org/10.14422/mig.i37.y2015.006>
6. Beltrán Antolín, J., & Sáiz López, A. (2025). *Allá donde llegan las olas. La población china en España*. Los Libros de la Catarata.
7. Bonilla Vélez, J. I. (2011). Re-visitando los estudios de recepción/audiencias en Colombia. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, (16), 75-103. <https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v0i16.1112>
8. Bourdieu, P. (1999). *Contrafuegos. Reflexiones útiles para servir a la resistencia contra la invasión neoliberal*. Anagrama.
9. Breazu, P., & Machin, D. (2022). Racism is not just hate speech: Ethnonationalist victimhood in YouTube comments about the Roma during COVID-19. *Language in Society*, 52(3), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404522000070>
10. Chu, Y. J. (2010). *Cosmologies of credit: Transnational mobility and the politics of destination in China*. Duke University Press.
11. El Mundo. (2020, January 28). Descartado el caso sospechoso del coronavirus chino en Cataluña. <https://www.elmundo.es/salud/2020/01/28/5e3037a921efa0413a8b4661.html>
12. El Mundo. (2020, January 29). ¿Qué es el coronavirus de China? Síntomas, transmisión, recomendaciones. <https://www.elmundo.es/salud/2020/01/27/5e2ec88921efa0a7638b45b4.html>
13. El País. (2020, January 20). El nuevo virus chino se contagia entre humanos. https://elpais.com/sociedad/2020/01/20/actualidad/1579546139_037964.html
14. Fan, L., Yu, H., & Yin, Z. (2020). Stigmatization in social media: Documenting and analyzing hate speech for COVID-19 on Twitter. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 57(1), e313. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pr2.313>
15. França, T., Gaspar, S., & Mathias, D. (2024). "It's not good, but it could be worse": racial microaggressions toward Chinese international students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 18(1), 9-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2022.2098274>
16. Gaspar, S., & Ampudia de Haro, F. (2020). Buying citizenship? Chinese golden visa migrants in Portugal. *International Migration*, 58(3), 58-72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12621>



17. Gaspar, S., & Tseng, Y.-C. (2024). The rise and fall of the golden visa: The case of Chinese investors in Greece and Portugal. In M. Thunø, S. Wang, E. Tran Sautede, & Y. Tseng (Eds.), *Handbook of Chinese migration to Europe* (pp. 157-188). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004712140_007
18. Guan, T., Liu, T., & Yuan, R. (2021). Facing disinformation: Five methods to counter conspiracy theories amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *Comunicar*, 29(69), 71-83. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C69-2021-06>
19. Guo, M., Joanpere, M., Pulido, C., & Cuxart, M. P. (2020). Coping of Chinese citizens living in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic: Lessons for personal well-being and social cohesion. *Sustainability*, 12(19), 7949. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12197949>
20. Hall, S. (1999). Encoding and decoding in the television discourse. In S. During (Ed.), *The cultural studies reader* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
21. Herz, M., & Molnar, P. (2012). *The content and context of hate speech: Rethinking regulation and responses*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139042871>
22. Horton, R. (2020). Offline: COVID-19 and the dangers of Sinophobia. *The Lancet*, 396(10245), 154. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31600-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31600-7)
23. Huertas Bailén, A. (2017). El estudio de las minorías como audiencia. El caso de la población migrante. *Anuario Electrónico de Estudios en Comunicación Social "Disertaciones"*, 11(1), 40-55. <https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/disertaciones/a.6276>
24. Huertas Bailén, A. & Peres-Neto, L. (2023). Racismo en redes. El discurso de odio contra la comunidad china durante la pandemia de la covid-19. (2023). *Espejo de Monografías de Comunicación Social*, (19), 161-171. <https://doi.org/10.52495/c12.emcs.19.p105>
25. Kim, J.-Y., & Kesari, A. (2021). Misinformation and hate speech: The case of anti-Asian hate speech during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Online Trust and Safety*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.54501/jots.v1i1.13>
26. Kohl, U. (2022). Platform regulation of hate speech – a transatlantic speech compromise? *Journal of Media Law*, 14(1), 25-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17577632.2022.2082520>
27. Leung, M. W. H. (2025). Chinese academic mobility to Europe: An overview and a plea for a family perspective. In M. Thunø & S. Wang (Eds.), *Handbook of Chinese migration to Europe* (vol. 1, pp. 71-98).
28. Liu, H., & van Dongen, E. (2016). China's diaspora policies as a new mode of transnational governance. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25(102), 805-821. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1184894>
29. Manson, J. H. (2020). Right-wing authoritarianism, left-wing authoritarianism, and pandemic-mitigation authoritarianism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 167, 110251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110251>
30. Martín Herrera, D. (2014). Hate speech y tolerancia religiosa en el sistema helvético de democracia participativa. *Revista de Derecho Político*, (90), 249-284. <https://doi.org/10.5944/rdp.90.2014.13162>
31. Masdeu Torruella, I. (2020). Migrants' Descendants and New Mobilities between China and Spain. *International Migration*, 58(3), 134-147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12619>
32. Masdeu Torruella, I., & Wang, S. (2024). Entrepreneurial and Transnational Socialization among Descendants of Chinese Migrants: A Cross-Country Study on New Transnational Mobilities between Europe and China. In M. Thunø, S. Wang, E. Tran Sautede, & Y. Tseng (Eds.), *Handbook of Chinese Migration to Europe* (pp. 526-554). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004712140_020



33. McQuail, D. (2012). *Audience Analysis*. SAGE.
34. Nghiem, H., & Morstatter, F. (2021). Stop Asian hate!: Refining detection of anti-Asian hate speech during the COVID-19 pandemic. *arXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2112.02265>
35. Noguera-Vivo, J. M., & Pérez-Escolar, M. (2022). *Hate speech and polarization in participatory society*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003109891>
36. Obermaier, M., Schmuck, D., & Saleem, M. (2021). I'll be there for you? Effects of Islamophobic online hate speech and counter speech on Muslim in-group bystanders' intention to intervene. *New Media & Society*, 25(9), 2339-2358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211017527>
37. Olaz, Á. (2012). *La entrevista en profundidad: Justificación metodológica y guía de actuación práctica*. Septem Ediciones.
38. Oliveira, L., & Azevedo, J. (2022). Using social media categorical reactions as a gateway to identify hate speech in COVID-19 news. *SN Computer Science*, 4(1), 14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-022-01421-5>
39. Orozco Gómez, G. (1996) *Televisión y audiencias: Un enfoque cualitativo*. Ediciones de la Torre.
40. Quintas-Froufe, N., & González-Neira, A. (2021). *Los estudios de la audiencia: de la tradición a la innovación*. Gedisa.
41. Shah, S., Yuan, X., & Tyler, Z. (2022). An analysis of COVID-19 related Twitter data for Asian hate speech using machine learning algorithms. *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on AI in Cybersecurity (ICAIC)*. Victoria, USA. <https://doi.org/10.1109/icaic53980.2022.9896967>
42. Toliyat, A., Levitan, S. L., Peng, Z., & Etemadpour, R. (2022). Asian hate speech detection on Twitter during COVID-19. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence*, 5, 932381. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frai.2022.932381>
43. Uyheng, J., Bellutta, D., & Carley, K. M. (2022). Bots amplify and redirect hate speech in online discourse about racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Media + Society*, 8(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221104749>
44. Vergani, M., Arranz, A. M., Scrivens, R., & Orellana, L. (2022). Hate speech in a Telegram conspiracy channel during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Media + Society*, 8(4), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221138758>
45. Walker, S. (1994). *Hate speech: The history of an American controversy*. University of Nebraska Press.
46. Wang, G., Zhang, W., & Zeng, R. (2019). WeChat use intensity and social support: The moderating effect of motivators for WeChat use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 91, 244-251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.10.010>
47. Wang, S., Chen, X., Li, Y., Luu, C., Yan, R., & Madrisotti, F. (2020). "I'm more afraid of racism than of the virus!": Racism awareness and resistance among Chinese migrants and their descendants in France during the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Societies*, 23(S1), S721-S742. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2020.1836384>
48. Wang, S. (2023). Chinese migration to and within Europe: Continuity and renewal in the light of demographic factors and the impact of COVID-19. *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 19, 199-219. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17932548-12341488>