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## UCL Migration Research Unit Working Papers

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### Disease, Discrimination and Diasporicity

### The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo- Chinese Second-Generation.

Katie Graves



Migration Research Unit





# **Disease, Discrimination and Diasporicity**

**The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation.**

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This research dissertation is submitted for the MSc in Global Migration at University College London.

The overarching aim of this dissertation is to link existing research on xenophobia and citizenship with research on second-generation migrants and their diasporic engagement. This study both examines and takes place within the unusual circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, this research project explores the impact of the pandemic on the diasporic engagements of the Italo-Chinese second-generation.

Italy provides a unique study context due to its predominantly *jus sanguinis* citizenship laws, its complex history of migration, and its distinctive experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, drawn from both an online questionnaire and a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, provides this dissertation with a rich understanding of the way in which second-generation migrants understand, negotiate and challenge issues of citizenship and xenophobia, and how these experiences influence their diasporic engagement. This study concludes that historic events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, that lead to the racialization of a particular diasporic group have a significant impact on the diasporicity of both the individuals that identify themselves as belonging to that group and the diaspora as a whole. However, the reality is that each individual's experiences and relationship with the diaspora are diverse and therefore, although patterns and emerging themes can be identified within the sample studied, they cannot be presumed to represent the experiences of the entire diasporic group.

Although these findings are the result of only a small research project, this dissertation strives to present a distinctive study that contributes to existing literature, plays a part in filling the gaps in research and provides an opening towards further work that takes a more participant-centered approach to the study of diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia.

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## 1. Introduction

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Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, reports emerged of increased prejudice, xenophobia and violence towards people of Asian descent or appearance, and since the spread of the virus to the rest of the world, narratives of these incidents have become somewhat commonplace. The link between diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia is certainly not a new discovery within the field of migration studies, as it is widely acknowledged that strict citizenship regimes and the perpetual racialization of diasporic groups have often led to negative consequences, including experiences of discrimination, social marginalisation, racial stereotyping, scapegoating and hate crimes (Tsuda, 2016:167). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought these issues to the forefront of debates, not only within the academic field, but also within the numerous official, media and individual discourses surrounding the pandemic. Representations produced by these discourses become 'involved in the everyday construction of images of Us and the Others, while fixing and (re-)broadcasting those images to members and non-members of a group' (Georgiou, 2010:30). Social inclusions and exclusions have only been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, as governments have closed their borders, repatriated their citizens and attempted to protect their nations from the perceived 'external' threat of the virus. This 'othering' of the virus, presents it as something 'foreign', causing widespread moral panic, fear and distrust (Muzzatti, 2005:117). Ethnic minorities, and in particular Chinese communities, have become the scapegoats for COVID-19 and targets of xenophobia, as the individual body that is infected (or perceived to be infected) is conceived as posing a threat to the 'popular body' of the nation. It is fundamental to address the impact of racism on real-life situations and therefore, these racist discourses must be contextualised against the backdrop of the wider social relations and political cultures that shape them and allow them to develop (Bulmer and Solomos, 2004:8). This study aims to achieve this by drawing on literature surrounding diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia in order to question and analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diasporic engagement of the Italo-Chinese second-generation.

### **Study Context**

Italy provides an interesting site of investigation due to its complex history of migration, its predominantly *jus sanguinis* citizenship laws and its distinctive experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. This section aims to contextualise the research project and briefly outline some of the key social relations and political cultures that are relevant to this study:

## Migration to Italy

Compared with northern European countries, migration to Italy, which has a long history of being a country of emigration (Marsden, 2014:1239), is a relatively recent phenomenon (Thomassen, 2010:24). Nonetheless, Italy's migration context is particularly complex as it is characterised by a range of migratory dynamics as well as socio-political tensions. The government and public continuously debate issues of border security and citizenship rights and the topic of migration dominates Italian media, often spreading misinformation and stereotyped images of migrants, leading to a rise in xenophobic attitudes (Rossi, 2011:16). Furthermore, the dominating focus on Italy's role in the refugee 'crisis' detracts attention from the fact that many of Italy's migrants have actually been living in the country for the majority, if not the entirety, of their lives (Marinero and Walston, 2010:6). Yet, even those who were born on Italian soil face national policies that limit their rights, pay little regard to their ethnic diversity and ultimately prevent them from being legally recognised as belonging to Italian society.

## Italy's Citizenship Laws

Although it is difficult to estimate an exact number, due to the fact they are categorised according to the nationality of their parents on official records, Rossi (2011:11) claims that around half of Italy's second-generation do not possess Italian citizenship. Acquiring citizenship in Italy is often described as a complicated and bureaucratic procedure (Marsden, 2014). Without delving too much into the process, there are two important elements that will be crucial to keep in mind during this study of the Italo-Chinese second-generation. Firstly, Italian citizenship law does not recognise the children born in Italy to two foreign parents (who are not naturalised) as Italian citizens until they turn eighteen, at which point they (although not reminded of this fact) are given one year to make their citizenship request. Secondly, if they choose to request citizenship, they must demonstrate uninterrupted residence in the country since birth, pay a non-refundable administration fee and then wait for up to two years before a decision is made (Marinero and Walston, 2010; Rossi, 2011). In comparison, a child who was born outside of Italy to one or more Italian parent(s) and who may not speak Italian or have ever visited the country, is eligible to acquire Italian citizenship from birth.

## The Chinese in Italy

The Chinese community represents the third largest migrant population in Italy, with the first settlements dating back to the 1920's (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2016,

2018). Although Chinese migrants initially moved to Italy in order to find their wealth and then return to China, a series of Italian laws guaranteeing regularisation and family reunification were enacted in the 1990's, encouraging many Chinese migrants to stay and set up their own enterprises in Italy. Today, the Chinese community in Italy continues to grow, especially in the more economically advanced areas of the country (Ceccagno, 2003) and at the beginning of 2018, it accounted for 8.3% of the total foreign population. Although they are often perceived as a closed community (Barbu *et al.* 2013) it would appear, at an initial glance, that the Chinese in Italy have experienced a greater level of acceptance in comparison with other migrant groups. The Chinese community is frequently praised for its entrepreneurship, relatively low reliance on the welfare system and its overall ability to fit into the social fabric of the country (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2018). However, studies that have examined the integration of Chinese migrants in Italy have shown that members of the community, including the second-generation, face many obstacles in their quest to construct a life in Italy and are often still faced with discrimination, due to the fact that they do not fit 'the dominant image of immigrants in Italy' (Marsden, 2014:1243).

#### COVID-19 and the Italo-Chinese Community

Italian nationalist political parties often capitalise on the population's concerns surrounding 'increasing' migration in order to rally support for their political campaigns, in return offering the promise of a series of hard-line anti-immigration policies that would not only impact new arrivals but would also leave many second-generation migrants in a precarious situation with regards to their citizenship status. The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception to this hostile rhetoric, as right-wing politicians such as Matteo Salvini have seized the opportunity to attack the government's handling of the situation and have been quick to cite both migration and the Chinese community in Italy as the source of the problem (Trilling, 2020; Crosetti 2020). These messages 'quickly trickle down to society, which is bombarded with stereotypical images' (Rossi, 2011:16), and foster xenophobic attitudes amongst the population, that in some cases have led to violent confrontations. Many Italo-Chinese organisations have distributed flyers in public places and have created posts online, calling on people to act rationally and halt the escalation of xenophobia. A significant number of these posts have come from second-generation migrants, many of whom were born and grew up in Italy, and who as a result, may be feeling stigmatised by their own country.

Although the choice of study context is motivated by my personal ties to Italy and my interest in the dynamics of the country's migration context, this project is distinctive due to the fact that it

links existing research on xenophobia and citizenship with that of second-generation diasporic engagement and does so in the unusual circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore cultivating a research project that is of interest to anyone who wishes to investigate these issues.

### **Aim and Research Questions**

This dissertation places a specific event, the COVID-19 pandemic, at the centre of a research project that aims to tie together existing strands of literature and examine the relationship between issues of citizenship, xenophobia and the diasporic engagement of the second-generation. It does so by exploring the particular case of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diasporic engagement of the Italo-Chinese second-generation.

In order to explore these dynamics, my research will be guided by the following objectives:

- To investigate official and public attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.
- To gain insight into how the Italo-Chinese second-generation understand, navigate and challenge their national identity and citizenship status.
- To explore various discourses surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and question how these discourses have influenced attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.
- To examine reports of xenophobia and violence towards the Italo-Chinese community that relate to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To gain an understanding of the ways in which the Italo-Chinese second-generation has mobilised in order to challenge this reported increase in xenophobia.
- To question the potential future impacts of the shift in attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.

Through an intersectionalist and mixed-methods approach, this study will attempt to answer the following four interrelated research questions:

- How diasporic is the Italo-Chinese second-generation and the individuals that identify themselves as belonging to that group?
- What factors influence these levels of diasporicity?
- Has the COVID-19 pandemic caused a rise or fall in diasporicity and why has it had this effect?

- How do the Italo-Chinese second-generation think that their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic will impact how they understand, navigate and challenge issues of identity and citizenship?

## **Hypothesis**

This study anticipates that the Italo-Chinese second-generation did not have a very high level of diasporicity before the COVID-19 pandemic due to the fact that members of this group appear to be relatively well-integrated within Italian society, especially compared to other migrant groups. However, it predicts that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting rise in xenophobia may have caused individuals to turn to the diaspora for support and to create a network of solidarity, leading to an increase in diasporic engagement.

## **Dissertation Map**

Following this introduction, the next chapter will give an overview of the existing literature that this research project hopes to draw from, situate itself within and contribute to. The review will focus on current debates surrounding three main issues: diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia and will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these debates, whilst identifying the gaps that this study hopes to play a role in filling. The methodological framework of this study will then detail the data collection and analysis methods employed, interrogate the positionality and ethical considerations of the research and reflect on the limitations of the study. Finally, the three empirical chapters will present and discuss the findings of the study. The first chapter will address the ways in which the Italo-Chinese second-generation engage with China and how this influences their diasporicity, the second chapter will explore the relationship between citizenship and feelings of 'in-betweenness' and how these feelings influence diasporicity and the third and final empirical chapter will focus on the relationship between discrimination and diasporicity. Finally, the conclusion will draw together all of the research and provide some suggestions for the potential direction of future research.

## 2. Literature Review

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This review provides a brief survey of existing literature on diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia, all of which this study draws from, is positioned within and hopes to contribute towards. Specific examples relating to the Italian context will be incorporated throughout, in order to provide an overview of the background to the case study and the broader study context. This literature review will identify patterns, themes and gaps in current debates and will ultimately argue that the propensity of existing literature to become entangled in definitional disputes overlooks the importance of examining the individuals and groups that are at the centre of these issues, and may ultimately hinder attempts to critically analyse diasporic engagement. Furthermore, the review highlights examples of well-designed methodological frameworks and cases of convincing and compelling evidence, from which this study is able to draw inspiration.

### 2.1 Diaspora

#### Defining Diaspora

The term 'diaspora' is continually debated and widely contested, yet we cannot overlook the importance of defining what we mean by 'diaspora' before we undertake research among diasporic groups. In the past, the term was used to describe the Jewish experience of exile from their historic homeland and was then broadened in order to include other forcibly dispersed populations such as Armenians and Palestinians (Safran, 1991). However, as a result of the increased movement of people, the term has been stretched to the point that nearly every migrant group could be regarded as a diaspora (Mitchell, 1997:259), creating what Brubaker (2005) dubs the "diaspora" diaspora'- ultimately, the term's loss of significance.

In an attempt to redefine the boundaries of the term, Safran (1991) and Cohen (1996) constructed lists of criteria that a group of people should meet in order to be considered a 'true diaspora', placing particular emphasis on common and shared identities and foregrounding the ideology of a 'homeland' to which the group hopes to eventually return (Safran, 1991). However, even groups that are widely-regarded to be diasporas often do not meet this criteria, as it fails to take into account the heterogeneity that exists not only between but also within diasporic groups. In fact, one of the main weaknesses of existing literature on diaspora is that although there is strong evidence of research that compares different diasporic groups, there are far less studies that investigate the internal differences that can be observed within these groups.

More recent literature has challenged these rigid and simplistic definitions of diaspora and has begun to consider the term more broadly (Ang, 2003). Tsuda (2018:189) suggests that the term 'diaspora' is now extended to the 'voluntary scattering of populations around the world for economic, business, colonial and political reasons'. This approach allows us to view diasporas as communities that no longer rely on fixed connections to places or territory and that are constantly undergoing processes of negotiation and redefinition (Faist, 2010, as cited in Amelina and Barglowski, 2018:31).

### Digital Diasporas

Digital diasporas constitute a growing area of research that provide the perfect context in which to examine the increasing 'deterritorialization' of diasporas. 'Discussion forums, social networks, instant communication software, and so on, are the communication tools that contribute to a continuous renewal of cultural and political landmarks of the diaspora's imaginary' (Cohen and Fischer, 2018:242). These virtual spaces give voice to minorities that may not feel heard in the public sphere and allow new possibilities for the expression of diasporic consciousness (Kissau and Hunger, 2010). That said, most existing studies (Bernal, 2005; Mazzucchelli, 2012) on digital diasporas tend to focus on the use of the internet by dispersed populations or those who have faced forced migration, continuing to conform to the boundaries of the outdated criteria created by Safran and Cohen. Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of research that examines the use of the internet by the second-generation. That said, one example that proves particularly useful for the purposes of this study is Marsden's (2014) research on the use of online diasporic networks by the Italo-Chinese second-generation. In this study Marsden focuses on the members of an Italo-Chinese, second-generation, online organisation called 'Associna' and the way in which individuals use the online network in order to make professional connections and enhance their ability to find success outside of Chinese entrepreneurship, discovering that it is also frequently used as a place to assert the second-generation's integration into Italian society and to express indignation at the discrimination and xenophobia faced by the Chinese community in Italy.

The current literature on digital diasporas adopts a very optimistic approach to how the internet and online diasporic networks have formed a safe space that allows both individuals and groups to voice their opinions and express their identities in ways that they may not feel comfortable doing offline. In contrast, this study strives to take a more critical approach and also consider what happens when these online spaces come under threat, investigating how 'fake news',

stereotypes and misrepresentations of the COVID-19 pandemic and its relation to the Chinese community in Italy were spread online, subsequently questioning how the community experienced and responded to this threat.

One final point to make about digital diasporas, is the importance of studying the actors 'behind the screens' of these new forms of diasporic practices. It would be easy to make assumptions about the diasporic group we wish to study based on what we see online but we should always keep in mind the fact that individuals can possess multiple belongings and that their levels of diasporic engagement online may not necessarily reflect those offline.

### 'Diasporicity'

In order to understand diaspora practices, it is useful to employ the term 'diasporicity', which refers to 'the extent to which dispersed ethnic groups are transnationally engaged with each other and with the ethnic homeland' (Tsuda, 2018). This definition avoids exclusionary debates surrounding the term 'diaspora', that depend on definitions adopted by the individual researcher, and instead regards all migrant populations to be diasporic to some extent, placing the research focus on the level of diasporicity and the various conditions that influence it.

This study will employ the term 'diasporicity' in order to avoid getting caught up in definitional disputes and instead focus on the following questions: How diasporic is the Italo-Chinese second-generation and the individuals that identify themselves as belonging to that group? What factors influence these levels of diasporicity? What kind of events and developments trigger a rise or fall in diasporicity? (Sökefeld, 2006). Furthermore, this project recognises the fundamental need to take an intersectional approach to research, as 'practices of 'doing diaspora' are linked to hierarchies of gender, ethnicity/race, class and other socially constructed axes of difference, which cannot be known a priori but must be studied empirically as social attributions' (Amelina and Barglowski, 2018:32).

## **2.2. Citizenship**

'Is the diasporic consciousness of a migrant community more likely to develop in countries whose citizenship criteria are based on *jus sanguinis*?' (Safran, 1991:96). This is a question that has received relatively little attention in existing literature, as similarly to the literature on diaspora, current debates on citizenship often revolve around defining what citizenship 'is', favouring the study of the concept of citizenship rather than the study of citizens themselves

(Isin and Nyers, 2014; Yarwood, 2014). This research project will aim to fill this gap by studying the case of a country with a predominantly *jus sanguinis* regime. Furthermore, rather than adopting a strict definition of 'citizenship', it will explore how the Italo-Chinese second-generation understand, negotiate and challenge both their own, and the state's conceptions of citizenship; recognising the need to investigate how 'ordinary' people make sense of citizenship (Birkvad 2009, Kabeer,2005).

### Traditional vs Postmodern Citizenship

It could be argued that the literature on citizenship is one step ahead of real-life citizenship regimes, as recent studies have moved away from more traditional ideas that regard citizenship as being a legal status that is granted by the state in return for an individual's loyalty to that state, towards more postmodern views that recognise diversity and difference and realise that citizenship is not a static concept but changes over time (Yarwood, 2014). Furthermore, the idea that citizenship denotes a loyalty to one singular nation-state is becoming increasingly challenged, as this approach ignores the fact that many people possess multiple citizenships and therefore bear multiple loyalties (Werbner, 2002:126). Despite the fact that many countries, especially in Europe, have accepted this change in the relationship between the individual and the state and have embraced more encompassing citizenship regimes that allow for *jus soli* (birthright citizenship); other countries, and Italy in particular, have been slower to accept this change and still depend on a predominantly *jus sanguinis* regime. Italy's imagination of the nation is one of a 'political community that is both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson, 2006:6) and periods of strong support for Italian nationalism have led to an anti-immigrant sentiment that portrays migrants and their offspring as a threat to the integrity of the nation. As a result, many diasporic communities have united both individually and with other groups in a commitment to bring about change to the citizenship regime of the country (Werbner, 2012).

### Performative Citizenship

Citizenship is often discussed in terms of rights and duties but in order to understand the complexities of citizenship, there is a need to unbound it from its legal status and ideas about loyalty to the nation-state and instead explore the way in which citizenship 'involves practices of making citizens- social, political, cultural and symbolic' (Isin, 2009:384). Diasporic groups that mobilise in order to demand recognition embody the concept of 'performative citizenship' (Isin, 2017) as they contest traditional conceptions of the term and call for the construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes. For example in Italy, the organisation 'Italiani senza Cittadinanza' (Italians without Citizenship) attempts to raise awareness of the 'invisible children' of migrants

who were born or grew up in Italy but have been unable to acquire citizenship due to the stringent requirements of the Italian citizenship regime, usually due to the fact that they are missing a small piece of documentation that proves their uninterrupted residence in Italy since birth. This organisation coordinates events and protests that call for the introduction of *jus soli* law that would finally allow them to be recognised as citizens within their homeland. Although it can be argued that diasporas present a challenge to the organisation of the nation-state, Sokëfeld (2006) reinforces the importance of treating this hypothesis as an empirical question, rather than as an assumption, as there are many factors that influence an individual's decision to acquire citizenship, such as feelings of national identity and belonging, future aspirations and diasporic engagement.

### Inclusion and Exclusion

Citizenship inherently implies both inclusion and exclusion (Castles and Davidson, 2000) and has always influenced and been influenced by discriminatory discourses (Joppke, 2010). This can clearly be observed in countries where citizenship can only be passed to offspring by the male parent or in countries that have strict requirements regarding naturalisation. Furthermore, obtaining citizenship is only one aspect of becoming a citizen, as we must consider access to citizenship, not only in terms of legal status but also in terms of participation in cultural and social life (Marinero and Walston, 2010:7). Although many countries are embracing new forms of citizenship and appear to be loosening their strict regimes, this on its own will not overcome the discriminatory discourses and deep-rooted exclusions that determine who is viewed as a citizen and who is not. Despite attempts to renegotiate modes of inclusion and exclusion inherent to citizenship (Schwartz and Schwenken, 2020:418) and to consider citizenship as not being defined by legal status, we must remember that the nation-state remains the provider of de-jure citizenship and therefore we cannot dismiss its significance (Yarwood, 2014).

### **2.3. Xenophobia**

“Racialization” refers to the process through which specific cultural meanings are attached to perceived phenotypical differences’ (Tsuda, 2016:23). Existing literature recognises the relationship between citizenship and racialization, demonstrating that the denial of full social citizenship, as a result of racialization, can also lead to a denial of certain fundamental social rights such as freedom from racial and ethnic discrimination (Castles and Davidson, 2000:105). This means that even naturalised citizens continue to be treated as 'outsiders', even though

they legally belong to the society (Yarwood, 2014). This process of racialization does not stop with the first-generation but continues to impact the lives of the second-generation, as their appearance does not match that of the ethnic majority. As a result, their cultural assimilation is disregarded and their racial 'otherness' is highlighted (Tsuda, 2016:23). Due to the fact that diasporas (and in particular the second-generation) can exist beyond the fixed boundaries of the nation-state, they are often considered as uncontained and uncontainable minorities, leading them to become the target of racialized and xenophobic nationalist imaginings (Werbner, 2012:121). There is strong evidence of how racialization in the long run can lead to social and political mobilisation by minorities (Castles and Davidson, 2000). However, in current research there is a lack of understanding of how diaspora consciousness can be a concomitant of feelings of otherness, alienation or a lack of hospitality on the part of the host society (Safran, 1991:96). This research project draws particular inspiration from the work of Tsuda (2012, 2016) on Japanese Americans. Noting that there is a strong national ideology that equates being American with being 'white', Tsuda explores how the denial of full social citizenship due to racial profiling causes second-generation Japanese-Americans to be treated as 'outsiders' and how this affects their diasporicity.

Furthermore, Tsuda's work always employs an intersectionalist lens in order to take into account the many and diverse factors that influence diasporicity. Interestingly, the study concludes that racialization and experience of discrimination can actually increase interest in ethnic roots and heritage (Tsuda, 2016). Very few studies on xenophobia choose to take a particular event in history that has sparked a rise in xenophobia and examine how that event has affected the diasporicity of a particular group. Those that do tend to do so in retrospect, which undoubtedly influences the outcome of the study, as diasporicity is constantly in flux. In contrast, this research project studies the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diasporic engagement of the Italo-Chinese second-generation while it is still ongoing. That is not to say that it puts the research at an advantage but perhaps it will allow for future research that is able to compare how diasporicity changed during the course of the pandemic. Brocket's (2018) study of Palestinian Americans proves very interesting as it investigates how 9/11 continues to impact the diaspora, revealing that a large number of those studied reported not being fully American in the eyes of others due to being raised in the post 9/11 era, which was characterised by racist imaginaries. This raises the question of whether the Italo-Chinese community will have similar experiences in the future as a result of their racialization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, existing literature tends to be trapped in definitional debates, which leads the actors at the heart of the issues to be overlooked. Furthermore, there is a need to apply a more intersectionalist lens when studying diaspora, in order to avoid making assumptions and generalisations and instead explore the many dynamics that influence both individual and group diasporicity. Finally, there is a lack of literature that ties the three concepts together. This literature review is only able to touch upon the wealth of literature on diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia but this study hopes to draw inspiration from some of the compelling literature mentioned above and also start to fill some of the identified gaps.

### 3. Methodology

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The aim of this study is to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diasporic engagement of the Italo-Chinese second-generation. In order to achieve this aim, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, which allowed for the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. This section will outline the methods of data collection and analysis employed and will also discuss the positionality, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

#### 3.1. Data Collection Methods

This research project primarily draws on two sets of data collected between June and August 2020. The first set of data was collected using an online questionnaire and the second set of data is the result of a series of semi-structured interviews. This approach of employing multiple methods and data sources supports the notion that 'triangulation' leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the research question (Valentine, 1997:112), as data can be compared, contrasted and interrogated through different lenses. Engagement with previous academic literature provided a firm foundation upon which to construct this research project, as it contributed to both the choice of methods and the subsequent analysis and interpretation of data. Furthermore, throughout the research process many informal conversations took place with Italians, British friends living in Italy during the pandemic and members of the British-Chinese second-generation, which although not formally included and discussed in the analysis, provided a wealth of perspectives and encouraged a more informed and critical analysis of both the academic literature and the collected data. Moreover, the initial dissertation proposal (see Appendix 7) states the intention to carry out a discourse analysis that would have compared and contrasted media and official representations of the pandemic (in relation to the Italo-Chinese community) with social media posts from the Italo-Chinese second-generation that included the hashtags '#iononsonounvirus' (I am not a virus) and '#abbracciauncinese' (hug a Chinese). However, it became clear early on in the research process that the use of these hashtags had perhaps been overestimated, at least among the participants of this particular study, and that although social media has played a significant and consequential role during the pandemic, the dynamics between these different actors and representations are more diverse and complex than originally thought. Nonetheless, this study continues to recognise that official, media and individual discourses of the pandemic form 'made meanings, or representations that structure

the way people behave in their daily lives' (Rose, 2007:2) and therefore, although no longer foregrounded in the research, these discourses have not been overlooked but instead continue to inform the study.

## **Questionnaire**

The online questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was primarily employed as a means to recruit participants following a low response rate from initial recruitment attempts. Reflection upon this lack of initial response led to the concern that perhaps some people did not feel comfortable discussing these sensitive topics in an online interview or did not feel ready to discuss their personal experiences due to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing and Italy had only just emerged from a three month lockdown when this research took place.

Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, all research had to be carried out remotely which prevented the ability to build rapport with participants prior to the interview. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed not only for the purpose of recruiting interview participants but also with the aim of establishing trust between the researcher and the respondent. In order to do so, the questionnaire began by asking for general details, including age, gender and education and discussing broader topics, such as linguistic and national identity, before gradually progressing towards more sensitive topics such as xenophobia (Kitchin and Tate, 2000:49).

Potential respondents were identified by consulting the member lists of Italo-Chinese second-generation groups and organisations on social media (Associna, Unione Giovani Italiani, Polimi Chinese Association). Although attempts were made to contact the directors of these organisations, in the hope of making contacts that could act as 'gatekeepers', most organisations were closed due to the COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, recruitment took the form of individually messaging the members of these organisations and then relying on 'snowball sampling' in order to find more participants. This method of recruitment proved successful, resulting in 56 responses, which allowed the questionnaire to evolve from a recruitment method to a significant source of data. Of the 56 respondents, 35 were female and 21 were male. The age of participants ranged from 18-38 but the majority of respondents fell into the age bracket of 20-25. Furthermore, a large proportion (33) were students, of whom, most also worked part-time in hospitality roles. 40 respondents were born in Italy, 15 were born in China and 1 in Holland. The most common place of residence was Milan (24) with most other respondents also residing in the North of Italy. The questionnaire remained open until it was considered to have reached 'saturation'.

Questionnaires are often criticised for their rigidity and their propensity to force respondents to choose between fixed categories that have been constructed by the researcher, which may not necessarily reflect the sentiments of the respondent (Valentine, 1997:110). Furthermore, researchers run the risk of formulating questions that only reflect the specific issues being studied and that are most likely to produce answers that conform to the hypothesis under investigation (Becker, 1998:33; Bradburn and Sudman, 2004:31). In order to mitigate these shortcomings, questions on diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia, which relate specifically to this research project, were accompanied by other broader questions, such as those concerning language, which ultimately proved to be a crucial element of the research. Furthermore, many questions also included an ‘other’ option in order that respondents could create new categories, rather than choose a ‘best fit’. The questionnaire also made room for finding unexpected results, as data that contradicted the hypothesis in question, rather than being ignored, was carefully reflected upon and used to inform and develop the research project (Parsons and Knight, 2015:118). For example, the decision not to include a discourse analysis mentioned in the above section was a direct result of the questionnaire, which revealed that only a small minority (13 respondents) had actually used the hashtags during the pandemic. However, this study also recognises that in most cases, questionnaires alone do not provide enough detail for the researcher to make any convincing conclusions and therefore this research project also relies on data collected through semi-structured interviews.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

In order to gain a deeper insight into both individual and group experiences of diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia, 9 semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who identified themselves as belonging to the Italo-Chinese second-generation. Table 1 gives more details of the interview participants, of whom, all but two were recruited through the online questionnaire. The remaining two respondents were recruited through ‘snowball sampling’, as each participant was asked at the end of the interview if they knew anyone who might be interested in taking part in the study.

**Table 1: Details of Individuals Interviewed**

Name	Date of Interview	Mode	Age	Country of Birth	Place of Residence	Profession
Marco	06/07/20	Videocall	26	Italy	Milan	Student

(m)						
Martina (f)	09/07/20	Videocall	22	Italy (lived in China for 5 years during childhood)	Pescara	Student and Waitress
Saverio (m)	12/07/20	Email	22	Italy	Milan	Student
Irene (f)	19/07/20	Instant Messenger	22	Italy	Milan	Student
Michele (m)	21/07/20	Videocall	24	Italy (spent several months in China during childhood)	Milan	Student
Lucia (f)	25/07/20	Email	21	Italy	Milan	Student
Carlotta (f)	28/07/20	Videocall	29	Italy	Milan	Teacher
Paolo (m)	02/08/20	Videocall	20	Italy	Empoli	Student
Giulio (m)	04/08/20	Videocall	20	Italy	Monza	Student

Unlike the questionnaire, the interview participants are more balanced in terms of gender. However, regarding other aspects, such as age, occupation and place of residence there is very little variation and this must be kept in mind when drawing conclusions from the data produced during these interviews.

All of the interviews were conducted in Italian and on average lasted around 45 minutes. Each interview was recorded where permission was given, and then later transcribed and translated into English. A pre-prepared interview schedule (see Appendix 4) was used in order to guide the interview but a flexible, semi-structured approach allowed respondents' to describe their experiences in their own words, enriching the research with their personal narratives (Valentine, 1997:111). The interviews enhanced the data collected from the questionnaire, as responses were discussed in more detail, allowing issues to be explored more thoroughly.

### 3.2. Positionality

When conducting research, it is fundamental to be aware of social identities such as gender, ethnicity and class and how these identities could influence the research process and outcomes. This research project raises what Hayfield and Huxley (2014) describe as the 'insider/outsider' concept in qualitative research, as my positionality as a white, British, middle-class woman means that I do not share the same cultural, linguistic or ethnic background as the research participants. This may have contributed to the relatively low response rate of people willing to take part in interviews and may have also caused respondents to be more reserved when discussing their personal experiences. However, when asked what their motivation was for taking part in the study, many respondents described their pleasure in hearing that the distinctive experiences of the Italo-Chinese community during the COVID-19 pandemic had not gone unnoticed, and were not only being recognised and questioned within Italy, but also by researchers elsewhere.

As Becker (1998:32) states, 'our observations are shaped by our concepts- we see what we have ideas about'. Whilst endeavoring not to allow my experiences of living in Italy and my own opinions and ideas about the country's complex migration context to influence the research, I frequently caught myself making assumptions about how my respondents would feel or the kind of answers that I expected to receive, based on my own very limited knowledge. Furthermore, the very event that sparked my interest in this research project- witnessing a unpleasant confrontation between an Italian supermarket employee and an Chinese family in Milan during the first weeks of the outbreak in Italy- initially caused me to presuppose that all members of the Italo-Chinese community would have suffered similar encounters. However, by immersing myself in existing literature and studies on diaspora and xenophobia, I was constantly reminded of the importance of recognising the heterogeneity of diasporic experiences. Furthermore, 'meanings can only be shared through our common access to language' (Hall, 1997:1) and therefore the fact that Italian is not my first language also affects my positionality. Although I made every effort to minimise the 'lack of semantic equivalence across languages' (Behling and Law, 2000:4) by having my translations checked by a native Italian speaker, my level of linguistic competence could have potentially influenced both the way that I formed questions and the way in which I interpreted responses.

### **3.3. Ethical Considerations**

The ethical concerns surrounding this project were identified from the outset and continued to be reflected upon both as the research progressed and as the COVID-19 pandemic evolved. This research acknowledges that ‘culture is about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas’ (Hall, 1997:2) and therefore recognises that when discussing sensitive issues such as ethnic identity, citizenship status and xenophobia, and potentially traumatic events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, measures must be taken to mitigate the risk of harm to the participant. In order to ensure an ethical conduct of this study, information and consent forms (see Appendix 1 and 2) were provided to and signed by all interview participants.

Information detailing the study and explaining confidentiality procedures was also placed on the first page of the questionnaire and accompanied by a contact email address in case a respondent wished to raise a concern or discuss the project in more detail. All participants’ names and any information about them have been anonymised and they have each been given a pseudonym in order to guarantee confidentiality. All interview participants were also verbally instructed about the dissertation background and reminded of their right to stop the interview, or withdraw from the research entirely, if they felt uncomfortable at any point. Furthermore, all participants were given the opportunity to see the interview questions in advance and remove any questions that they did not wish to discuss. The option to conduct the interview via email or instant messenger was also made available in order to allow participants that did not feel comfortable discussing their experiences in a ‘face-to-face’ interview to continue to take part in the study.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The empirical chapters that follow are the result of the analysis and interpretation of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data. The data sets collected from the questionnaire and interviews were coded and analysed using a predominantly qualitative approach in order to reflect the diversity of individual experiences of diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia but also to identify and examine emerging patterns and recurring themes. There is no definitive process for analysing qualitative material (Parsons and Knight, 2015:118), so I developed a system that I considered to work well for me and that matched my capabilities. The results of the questionnaire were continuously added to a spreadsheet so that the inputting of large amounts of data did not become overwhelming. Colour-coding allowed patterns to be identified quickly and to be compared and contrasted to those emerging from the interview transcripts. Recognising the need for an intersectionalist approach to the study of diaspora,

once the questionnaire was closed, the data was then rearranged according to categories such as gender, occupation, country of birth and place of residence, leading to the emergence of further patterns.

During each interview I took notes, recorded the interview, listened to it several times and then transcribed and translated it into English as soon as possible. Once written, the transcripts were collated into one document in order to highlight the common ideas that arose. These ideas were then assembled into themes and then again into broader themes which form the empirical chapters. Several other areas of interest emerged during the analysis stage, but due to the time constraints of this research project, they were not explored further. Nonetheless they all contributed to the overall interpretation of the data and remain potential ideas for future research.

### **3.5. Limitations**

In addition to those already identified in the sections above, the main limitation of this research is, of course, that it cannot claim to represent the experiences and views of the entire Italo-Chinese second-generation. It is important to avoid constructing or imagining a complete story of the phenomenon based on the data resulting from a small research project such as this one, which was constrained by time, small-scale sampling and COVID-19 restrictions (Becker, 1998:24). Firstly, as most of the participants were identified as a result of their membership of a particular Italo-Chinese group or organisation, it could be argued that their level of engagement with the diaspora was already quite high and that they therefore present a biased sample. Secondly, although unintentionally, the data produced by this research paints more of a regional picture than a national one, as the vast majority of respondents reside in the north of Italy.

Finally, it is important to note that the issues investigated in this study are not static and that diasporas are an ongoing process rather than a state of being, therefore the same results are unlikely to be replicated, especially given the constantly developing situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as Becker (1998:26) states, 'the nearer we get to the conditions in which meanings are attributed to objects and events, the more accurate our descriptions of those meanings will be'. Therefore the results of this study hope to contribute to existing research, filling some of the gaps, whilst also raising questions and stimulating ideas for future investigation.

“落叶归根- Fallen leaves always return to their roots”- [Ethnic Ties and Diasporicity](#)

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The idea of diaspora being inextricably intertwined to roots has resulted in a tendency to homogenise diaspora communities. Although this study rejects the idea of migrants' *natural* rootedness and belonging to countries of origin (Sökefeld, 2006:280), it recognises the importance of exploring how connections are created and maintained through transnational practices and how various factors cause diasporicity to 'wax and wane' (Clifford, 1994:306). When considering an individual or group's engagement with the country of origin, it is 'imperative not to privilege ethnicity and nation over other types of boundaries, such as gender, class and sexuality' (Amelina and Barglowski, 2018:32) and therefore this empirical chapter strives to interpret the findings through an intersectionalist lens that takes into account various boundaries such as generation, language and gender.

Generational Diasporicity

56 of a total 58 respondents were born to two Chinese parents. The parents of the interviewees had all moved to Italy for the same reasons: to seek better employment opportunities and economic conditions. Although the Chinese community today is considered to be economically integrated in Italian society, they are still not fully socially integrated and are often conceived to be a closed community (Marsden, 2014:1242). The participants attributed this lack of social integration to the fact that Italians and Chinese have very different mentalities, especially with regards to work and family.

**“Italian parents are more affectionate and have more time for their children because they work in offices. Instead I grew up with the image of my parents working constantly, 365 days a year” (Carlotta).**

The integration of the children of migrants is both an individual and family process (Tatarella, 2010:158). Many of the interviewees described the ways in which their parents encouraged them to embrace their 'Chineseness', by sending them to Chinese school on the weekend, teaching them the language (or even the parents' dialect in some cases) and sending them to China for some months to stay with relatives and discover their roots. Family played a crucial role in feelings of connectedness to China amongst the participants, with 34 respondents stating that they felt linked to China because they have relatives that live there. Furthermore, Chinese children are often considered to be precious economic resources (Ceccagno, 2007:645) and many of those interviewed had worked from a young age within their parent's businesses, causing them to lead very different lives to their other Italian friends and to adopt a more 'Chinese mentality' towards work and leisure (Irene, Carlotta).

**“When I was younger, all of my friends would go out to bars and clubs on the weekend but I would have to sacrifice my time and freedom to help my parents. I used to get really angry with them but now I'm grateful because it taught me the value of hard work” (Irene).**

However, the results of this study show that we cannot always assume that the second-generation's interest in their origins is always the result of traditions and culture being passed down by the first generation, as 'cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories, but, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation' (Hall, 1990:225). Many of the respondents claimed that their parents did not force them to embrace their 'Chineseness', instead allowing them to choose which elements of the Italian and Chinese cultures they wished to adopt (Martina, Marco). Furthermore, Michele stated the fundamental role of the second-generation individual in the development of their diasporicity:

**“I think it depends a lot on the child. If the child doesn't want to know, then no matter how hard the parents try to push them, they still won't change. But if you, as a child, want to know your history, your culture- it's a different story and you soon discover and come to value your roots” (Michele).**

Furthermore, diasporic engagement is intra-generational as well as inter-generational (Benton and Gomez, 2014:1159) and so even if children were born in the same country and are raised by the same parents, their levels of diasporicity will not be the same. Lucia testified to this fact as she explained the differences between her and her sister. Lucia considers herself to be Chinese, has mainly Chinese friends and would like to move to China to work after graduating. Her older sister on the other hand considers herself to be Italian, only has a handful of Chinese friends and is soon to be married to an Italian man.

### Diaspora Organisations

Because assimilation and ethnic difference are often posed as being oppositional, it is assumed that there is a weakening of diasporicity over generations. However, the wealth of groups and organisations created for and run by the Italo-Chinese second-generation demonstrates that this is not the case. Of the respondents, 74% were members of an Italo-Chinese organisation and 22% were members of an organisation specifically intended for the second-generation. It is interesting to note that far more women, 74%, than men, 43%, were members of these organisations. This challenges the widespread conception that men are more involved in public diaspora networks than women but perhaps upholds the notion that regards women as embodying and reproducing cultural traditions (Tsuda, 2016:8). Furthermore, when asked if the COVID-19 pandemic had led individuals to feel more or less tied to the Italo-Chinese community, a much larger proportion of women than men reported that they felt more tied to the community- 57% compared to 9%. It could be suggested that this is a result of the increased membership of women to diasporic networks, as many of the female participants stated that they had turned to the other members of these networks for support during this time:

**“Constantly hearing people calling me ‘Coronavirus’ made me realise that despite the fact that I feel Italian, I am only a virus spreader in the eyes of other Italians. I spoke with other members of the Bocconi Chinese Association and we all had similar stories to tell, so could give each other support” (Martina).**

## Language

Language plays a key role in understanding how diasporic an individual or a group is (Mleczko, 2010: 30) and can reveal a lot about the way in which individuals understand and navigate their identity. For example, the title of this empirical chapter was a response to the question: What words or phrases come to mind when you think about citizenship? The fact that the respondent chose to write a Chinese proverb, despite the fact that she was born in Italy, suggests that she feels a strong connection to China. When asked about their ties to China, 65% stated that they felt connected to China due to the fact that they spoke the language. Of the respondents, 82% used Italian most in their day to day lives but 74% used Chinese or a Chinese dialect at home. However, the majority of respondents watched tv, read the news and read books in Italian rather than Chinese, highlighting that cultural consumption, although not studied in-depth in this project, is also an interesting issue to investigate in order to measure the level of diasporicity of the second-generation.

“Too Chinese to be Italian, too Italian to be Chinese”- ‘In-Betweenness’ and Diasporicity

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Overall, very little attention has been given in academic literature to who acquires citizenship among the second-generation and the conditions in which they acquire it (Labussi re and Vink, 2020). Although the majority of the respondents (37 out of an overall 58 from both sets of data) had already obtained Italian citizenship, many of them found themselves in the ‘grey and ambiguous zone between full exclusion and full belonging’ (Torres and Wicks-Absun, 2014, as cited in Waerniers and Hustinx, 2020:58), as they continued to confront racialization as a result of their appearance. Kallio and Mitchell (2016:260) state the importance of acknowledging that specific moments of transformation, such as childhood and youth, periods of mobility and episodes of societal crisis are particularly influential in processes of citizen and citizenship formation. This empirical chapter aims to shed light not only on the motivations behind the citizenship acquisition of the Italo-Chinese second-generation but also the way in which their understandings and negotiations of citizenship change over space and time.

### Home and Belonging

‘Home- both in its real shape as a place, as well as its symbolic imaginary form- provides the initial and emotional parameters for identity’ (Georgiou, 2010:23). It is therefore important to consider individuals’ concepts of where they feel ‘at home’ or where they feel like they ‘belong’ in order to gain a better understanding of how they understand and negotiate their identity. In Marsden’s (2014) research on the Italo-Chinese second-generation, it was recorded that nearly 40% of the group studied were uncertain about their belonging to Italy. In contrast, 78% of the participants in this study stated that they felt ‘at home’ in Italy. It may be assumed that those who reported not feeling ‘at home’ in Italy were those born in China, but that is not the case. Of the 15 participants born in China, only 3 claimed that they did not feel that they belonged in Italy.

Although this study did not allow for a nationwide comparison due to the fact that the vast majority of respondents resided in the north of Italy, it is interesting to note that in Milan, which was the most common city of residence, all but 3 of the respondents felt ‘at home’. This is perhaps due to the fact that Milan is much more multicultural than other Italian cities and also has one of the oldest and largest Chinese communities in Italy. Another interesting point to make is that in the questionnaire, 8 people replied with the word ‘belonging’ when asked what citizenship meant to them.

### Relief or Regret?

Other words that participants chose to describe citizenship were: rights, territory, uselessness and bureaucracy. This suggests that opinions surrounding the value of Italian citizenship are very divided. Of the total participants, 64% had acquired citizenship, 15% had not, 12% were in the process and 9% had no interest in acquiring it. The vast majority of those who had Italian citizenship had acquired it at the age of 18 and when asked why they had chosen to acquire it,

they stated reasons such as less travel restrictions and employment benefits. The requirement to wait until the age of 18 was met with differing sentiments:

**“I think that it’s right to wait until you’re 18. Then you know your own mind and can decide whether acquiring Italian citizenship is right for you and your plans for the future” (Martina).**

**“Why is it that you have up until the age of 18 to decide if you feel Italian or not? But after that the application process becomes more difficult. What’s the reason behind it? Why can’t I have more time to decide? I was born and raised in Italy. That hasn’t changed” (Questionnaire Participant).**

Opinions surrounding the difficulty in acquiring Italian citizenship and the fairness of the Italian regime were also extremely divided. 48% of participants thought that it was difficult to acquire and 45% stated that they thought that the rules were not fair, declaring that ‘having Italian roots seems to be more important than being Italian’ (Questionnaire Participant). However, it became clear that many also believed that the Chinese regime was not fair either, lamenting the fact that the country does not allow dual-citizenship. The idea that ‘diaspora challenges national identities, but it often finds itself trapped in them’ (Georgiou, 2010:26) became evident when talking to Lucia. She described how the racialization that she had faced during the COVID-19 pandemic had led her to regret acquiring Italian citizenship, as she now no longer feels like she is welcome within her own country and would like to move to China. However, she believes that she is ‘too Chinese to be considered Italian and too Italian to be considered Chinese’, leaving her in the difficult position of not feeling ‘at home’ in either country. Lucia provides an unmistakable example of how ‘the ‘fit’ between a particular national identity and the state does not always necessarily correspond with the realities of the world (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007:490). Finally, it is important to note that among those who had acquired citizenship, 40% expressed that they were still not considered to be Italian by other Italians, demonstrating that obtaining legal citizenship does not equate to full social citizenship and acceptance as a rightful member of the society.

### Negotiating ‘in-betweenness’

‘Citizenship represents just one of the multiple forces at work in the construction of the sense of belonging’ (Colombo *et al.*, 2011:344) and it is fundamental to examine how individuals view themselves regardless of their citizenship status. Benton and Gomez (2014:1159) allege that later generations within the Chinese diaspora reclaim their ‘Chineseness’ and are secure in their national identities, but this study challenges that claim, as only 16 respondents stated that they felt more Chinese than Italian. Similarly to Marsden’s (2014) study on the Italo-Chinese second-generation, in which only 21% of participants said that they felt Italian, this study records that only 17% of respondents considered themselves to be Italian, even though the majority were born in Italy. Around half (55%) claimed that they felt like ‘Italiani col trattino’ (Tatarella, 2010:161), or ‘hyphenated-Italians’, as they claimed both identities. These participants situate themselves in what Bhabha (1996) refers to as the ‘third space’, where their identity is constantly in flux and is renegotiated according to different times, places and spaces.

Although the second-generation may be able to negotiate their 'in-betweenness' and claim this 'third space', the racial dimension of their citizenship is harder to negotiate, since visible racial characteristics cannot be easily changed and therefore they continue to be racialized and targeted with xenophobia.

### Global Citizens

There is often the idea that becoming a citizen means that you become a member of a specific bounded territory. However, in an increasingly globalised world, the notion of territorially-bound citizenship is rapidly becoming less relevant (Adamson and Demetriou, 2007). When discussing citizenship with Michele, he presented an alternative method for negotiating his 'in-betweenness'- that of considering himself as a 'global citizen':

**“And so you compensate and you become something bigger, bigger than what you are. Feeling a citizen of the world rather than one single country is something special in my opinion. Firstly because you manage to fill this “emptiness” that you have from not feeling totally anything, and secondly because you find a type of ‘fulfillment’. Then, wherever you go, you feel like you kind of belong” (Michele).**

Although Michele was the only one to define himself as a 'global citizen', many of the participants expressed their desire to leave Italy and move elsewhere, demonstrating that their ideas of belonging are not fixed to one particular place. Furthermore, a large proportion of interviewees, when asked about their plans for the future, conveyed their concerns about finding employment in Italy in the current COVID-19 climate, not only due to the gloomy economy but also due to the fact that even before the pandemic they felt like they had work harder than Italians in order to achieve the same level of success (Marsden, 2014:1246) and now they fear that increased xenophobia may also hinder their prospects in Italy.

“There will always be the black sheep of the population”- [Discrimination and Diasporicity](#)

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Attitudes towards migrants and their children in Italy are polarised into ‘for’ and ‘against’ positions (Thomassen, 2010:24) and ‘being subject to particularly aggressive prejudice and resultant discrimination, which goes beyond mere disregard or indifference, is a very common experience amongst the Chinese in Italy’ (Raffaetà *et al.*, 2016:427). This final chapter will examine how experiences of discrimination, both before and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have influenced the diasporicity of the Italo-Chinese second-generation. Brah (1993:25) states that: ‘the question of when and where these borders are imagined and instituted, or how they may shift, change, weaken or dissolve is critical’ and therefore this chapter begins by investigating childhood experiences, before progressing towards the COVID-19 pandemic and the way in which the Italo-Chinese second-generation perceived and responded to increased xenophobia. Finally, it will look to the future and question the potential long term implications of this xenophobia.

### Pre-Pandemic

When asked about what it was like to grow up in Italy, nearly all respondents could recall an experience of being racialized at a young age. Most spoke of the fact that their ‘occhi a mandorla’ (almond eyes) set them apart from other Italian children, demonstrating that even at a young age these individuals were acutely aware of how their appearance affected the way in which they were perceived by other Italians.

**“I became aware that I was ‘different’ at nursery school when my classmates would call me ‘little Chinese girl’ or ‘little Japanese girl’ and make slanted-eye gestures, rather than calling me by my name” (Lucia).**

Many of the participants seemed to accept that these incidents were nothing more than jokes by children that ‘didn’t know any better’ and it appeared that due to experiencing xenophobia from such a young age they had either become desensitised to it or had been forced to accept its existence.

**“When you’re the minority there’s always that phenomenon of prejudice, the majority confronts the minority, and as we were the minority, we were somewhat targeted. But then, as you grow up (..) one, you get used to it and two, you start to accept it as a virtue rather than a flaw” (Michele).**

**“In Italy we are so socially and culturally behind in terms of how we treat foreign people. Politicians use the term “immigration” as a means to justify discrimination” (Giulio).**

Participants were extremely divided on whether Italians had a positive (48%) or negative (52%) attitude towards the Chinese community in Italy, with only 49% stating that Italians have a more positive attitude towards the second-generation. However, a startling 81% of respondents declared that xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community was common before the COVID-19 pandemic. This xenophobia was associated with stereotypes that viewed Chinese migrants as illegal workers, tax evaders and a threat to the Italian economy (Martina).

### COVID-19

An overwhelming 95% of participants agreed that xenophobia had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 59% stating that they had personally experienced a xenophobic attack. Women were exceedingly more likely to have personally experienced xenophobia- 71% compared to 42% of men. This rise in xenophobia was linked to fake news, stereotyping and the way in which the government and media represented the pandemic and the Italo-Chinese community. 'The internet is an efficient, easy-access tool for diaspora storytelling and sharing, enabling members to make sense of their experiences and feelings in the encounter between cultures and identities' (Brinkerhoff, 2012:50). Although it might have been expected that the Italo-Chinese community would have attempted to combat the spread of xenophobic messages online by taking to social media in order to dispel the misrepresentations, only 53% of the participants used social media to express their feelings about the COVID-19 pandemic or express solidarity with the Italo-Chinese community. Instead many individuals or groups expressed their solidarity by sourcing masks for the community or raising funds for the local hospitals. This reflects the study of Chan (2010) which investigates the use of the internet by Chinese Singaporeans during the SARS epidemic, concluding that they preferred to mobilise offline rather than using the internet. Despite the fact that we might expect the advancement of technology over the last decade to have caused a change in results, it appears that although the internet creates a space where diasporas can express themselves, organise and come together, it is perhaps still not the place where extensive change can be made.

### Future Impact

**“There will always be the black sheep in the population. There’s nothing you can do to change ignorant people’s opinions” (Carlotta).**

Although 76% of respondents claimed that the government hasn't done enough to combat the rise in xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community and 52% believe that it will have a negative impact on the relationship between Italy and the Italo-Chinese community, the question of what could have been done was met with silence or a shrug by the majority of the interviewees. It appears that until the deep-rooted discriminatory discourses that surround the topic of migration in Italy are dispersed and the government accepts that 'people do not have singular, unitary identities, but instead have multiple, potentially contradictory identities' (Bulmer and Solomos,2004:39), racialization and xenophobia will continue to impact diasporic groups in Italy, including the members of the second-generation.

## Conclusion

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This dissertation has built on and linked existing work on citizenship, xenophobia and second-generation diasporic engagement through the examination of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diasporic engagement of the Italo-Chinese second-generation. This study concludes that historic events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, that lead to the racialization of a particular diasporic group have a significant impact on the diasporicity of both the individuals that identify themselves as belonging to that group and the diaspora as a whole. However, the impact of these kinds of events must be examined in relation to the myriad of social identities and influences that construct and affect individual diasporicities, in order to capture the multiple identities, multiple belongings and multiple boundaries that together make a diaspora.

Narratives of members of the Italo-Chinese second-generation and the results of an online questionnaire formed the basis of the empirical chapters that tie together existing literature on citizenship, xenophobia and second-generation diasporic engagement. These chapters strive to provide answers to the research questions posed at the start of the study. The first chapter explored how the Italo-Chinese second-generation create and maintain connections through transnational practices and how these practices affect both individual and group diasporicity. The second chapter focused on the relationship between citizenship and feelings of 'in-betweenness', as understandings and negotiations of citizenship change over space and time. The final chapter investigated the ways in which experiences of discrimination, both before and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have been perceived and challenged by the Italo-Chinese second-generation.

'None of our 'substances' are pure anything. They are all historically contingent, geographically influenced combinations of a variety of processes, no two of the combinations alike' (Becker, 1998:89). These findings are the result of only a small research project that tells the stories of a limited number of individuals and therefore there is still a lot of work to be done in order to understand the dynamics that influence second-generation diasporic engagement. However this dissertation hopes to present a distinctive study that contributes to existing literature, plays a part in filling the gaps in research and provides an opening towards further work that takes a more participant-centered approach to the study of diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia.

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### SCHEDE INFORMATIVA

**Titolo della ricerca:** Discrimination and Diasporicity: The Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation (Working Title).

**Studente Ricercatore:**

Katie Graves     katie.graves.14@ucl.ac.uk

**Relatore della tesi:**

Dr Ben Page     b.page@ucl.ac.uk

**Vorrei invitarLa a prendere parte alla presente ricerca che viene condotta nell'ambito del Master in Global Migration tenuto presso la UCL (University College London), i cui risultati verranno riprodotti in un elaborato che costituirà la tesi finale del Master.**

**Qual è l'obiettivo di questa ricerca?**

Lo scopo di questa ricerca è quello di indagare in merito a comprendere gli impatti socio-culturali dell'emergenza epidemiologica da COVID-19 sulla comunità italo-cinese e soprattutto sulla cosiddetta 'seconda-generazione'. In particolare, sono interessata al modo in cui gli individui e la comunità hanno percepito e risposto alla crescente xenofobia, che è stata riportata da diversi membri della comunità. L'obiettivo della presente ricerca è di esplorare i seguenti argomenti: identità nazionale, cittadinanza, xenofobia e razzismo, COVID-19, solidarietà.

**In considerazione della natura sensibile di alcuni dei argomenti, il partecipante ha l'opportunità di visualizzare in anticipo le domande che verranno poste, e di escludere quelle a cui non vorrebbe discutere.**

**Perché sono stato(a) scelto(a) per questa ricerca?**

È stato(a) scelto(a) per questa ricerca perché ha dichiarato di sentirsi parte della comunità italo-cinese, ha più di 18 anni ed è nato(a) in Italia o si è trasferito(a) in Italia in giovane età. Questa ricerca coinvolgerà circa 12 partecipanti.

**Sono obbligato(a) a partecipare?**

No. La scelta di partecipare è Sua. In ogni caso avrà la possibilità di ritirarsi dalla ricerca in qualsiasi momento fino ad ottobre 2020, senza specificarne il motivo. Se si ritira il suo consenso, contrassegnerà i suoi dati verranno cancellati e non potranno essere utilizzati.

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### **Dettagli sulla partecipazione**

La discussione durerà circa 30-45 minuti. Vorrei scoprire la Sua esperienza personale di crescere in Italia e la Sua opinione sull'impatto dell'emergenza epidemiologica da COVID-19 sulla comunità italo-cinese.

Sarà una discussione informale. Con il suo consenso registrerò la discussione, utilizzando un registratore vocale (la sua immagine **non sarà registrata**). Tuttavia, se lei preferisce non essere registrato(a), prenderò solo gli appunti. Sarà anche possibile condurre la discussione via email o tramite chat.

Non Le sarà richiesto(a) di divulgare informazioni personali o informazioni che La rendano identificabile, a meno che Lei non scelga di farlo.

### **Come saranno utilizzati le registrazioni o le email?**

La registrazione della discussione sarà utilizzata solo per la mia tesi. Trascriverò la registrazione, però tutti i dati raccolti saranno riposti in file protetti da password e resi anonimi durante le analisi. Le email non verranno inoltrate.

### **Quali sono gli eventuali rischi di questa ricerca?**

Non ci sono eventuali rischi identificati con la partecipazione a questa ricerca. Se si sente a disagio in qualsiasi momento, ci interromperemo la discussione.

### **La mia partecipazione sarà riservata?**

La Sua partecipazione a questa discussione sarà riservata e tutti i dati saranno resi anonimi.

### **Cosa succede ai risultati?**

I risultati contribuiranno alla redazione della mia tesi di Master, che verrà presentata alla UCL per la valutazione. Una copia cartacea potrebbe essere archiviata dal dipartimento per uso interno. Alcune tesi vengono pubblicate online come documenti di lavoro della Migration Research Unit. Potrebbero anche contribuire ad un articolo pubblicato su una rivista accademica. In ogni caso, non sarà mai possibile identificarLa da qualsiasi informazione venga pubblicata.

### **Cosa succede ai miei dati personali?**

Una volta conseguita la laurea, tutti i Suoi dati (registrazioni, trascrizioni, email...) saranno distrutti.

Per ulteriori informazioni o per presentare un reclamo su questa ricerca, si prega di contattare il mio relatore della tesi (vedi sopra).

### **Grazie per aver letto questa scheda informativa e per la Sua partecipazione a questa ricerca!**

#### **Nota informativa sulla protezione dei dati**

Il titolare del trattamento per questo progetto sarà UCL (University College London). Saranno adottate tutte le misure necessarie a rendere completamente anonimi i Suoi dati. L'ufficio di Data Protection presso la UCL sovrintende alle attività che richiedono il trattamento dei dati personali. Per problemi relativi al modo in cui i dati personali verranno trattati, si prega di contattare l'ufficio al seguente indirizzo email: [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). In aggiunta, qualora insoddisfatti, si prega di contattare l'Ufficio del Commissario per le Informazioni (*Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)*). I contatti e i dettagli dei diritti dell'interessato sono disponibili sul sito web: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

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### INFORMATION SHEET

**Research Title:** Discrimination and Diasporicity: The Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation (Working Title).

**Research Student:**

Katie Graves     katie.graves.14@ucl.ac.uk

**Dissertation Supervisor:**

Dr Ben Page     b.page@ucl.ac.uk

---

**I would like to invite you to take part in this research project, which will form part of my Masters degree in Global Migration at UCL (University College London).**

**What is the aim of this research?**

The aim of this research is to understand the socio-cultural impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Italo-Chinese community and, more specifically, among the so-called 'second-generation'. I am particularly interested in investigating the way in which individuals have perceived and responded to the increase in xenophobia that has been reported by various members of the community. The aim of this research is to explore the following topics: national identity, citizenship, xenophobia and racism, COVID-19 and solidarity.

**Due to the sensitive nature of some of the topics listed above, the participant can request to see the questions that will be asked in advance of the interview and can choose to exclude any questions that they do not wish to discuss.**

**Why have I been selected for this research?**

You have been selected for this research because:

- You have expressed that you feel part of the Italo-Chinese community.
- You were born in Italy or moved there at a young age.
- You are over 18 years of age.

This study will involve around 12 participants.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. The decision to take part in this study is completely your own. You can withdraw at any time before October 2020 without giving a reason. If you withdraw your data will be deleted and will not be used.

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## **Participation Details**

I will conduct an online interview with you that will last between 45-60 minutes. During this discussion I hope to learn more about your personal experience of growing up in Italy and your opinion surrounding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Italo-Chinese community. It will be an informal chat. With your consent, I would like to record the interview using a voice recorder (the video will not be recorded). However, if you would prefer not to be recorded, I can take notes instead. If you do not feel comfortable discussing your experiences in a 'face-to-face' format, we can also conduct the interview through an exchange of emails or through instant messenger.

You will not be required to disclose any personal information or information that could make you identifiable unless you choose to do so.

### **How will the recording or emails be used?**

The recording will be used solely for the purpose of my dissertation. I will transcribe the recording but recordings, notes and typed transcriptions will be held securely, on password-protected computers, and anonymised for analysis. Emails will not be forwarded to anyone else.

### **What are the possible risks of taking part?**

There are no identifiable risks associated with participation. Should you identify any risks or feel uncomfortable at any point we will stop the interview.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation will be confidential and all data will be anonymised. It will not be possible to identify you in the resulting dissertation.

### **What will happen to the results?**

The results will contribute to my Masters dissertation, submitted to UCL for marking. A paper copy may be stored by the department for internal use. Some dissertations are published online as Migration Research Unit Working Papers. They could contribute to an article submitted to an academic journal. It will not be possible to identify you from anything published.

### **What will happen to my data?**

Once my degree has been awarded, all your data (recordings, transcriptions and emails) will be destroyed.

If you would like further information or wish to make a complaint about this study you can contact my supervisor on the email address provided above.

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study!**

## **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The data controller for this project will be UCL (University College London). All efforts will be made to anonymise your data completely. The UCL Data Protection Office oversees UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and if you are concerned about how your personal data are being processed you can contact them at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

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### MODULO DI CONSENSO

(Si prega di compilare e firmare questo modulo dopo aver letto la scheda informativa)

#### **Discrimination and Diasporicity: The Impact of the Covid-19 Outbreak on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation.**

#### **Obiettivo**

Grazie per aver accettato di partecipare alla presente ricerca, che esplora gli impatti socio-culturali dell'emergenza epidemiologica da COVID-19 sulla comunità italo-cinese. Questa ricerca viene condotta da Katie Graves, studentessa del Master in Global Migration presso la UCL (University College London). I risultati della ricerca verranno utilizzati per scrivere la tesi finale del Master.

#### **Consenso**

Firmando il presente documento, il partecipante dichiara che:

- ha più di 18 anni.
- ha deciso di partecipare volontariamente a questa ricerca (una discussione individuale).
- ha letto e capito le informazioni fornite nella scheda informativa.
- acconsente alla registrazione della discussione.
- acconsente all'utilizzo della discussione ai fini della mia tesi.

Firmando il presente documento, il ricercatore dichiara che:

- tutti i dati verranno resi anonimi.
- tutti i dati raccolti verranno trattati in conformità con la legge sulla protezione dei dati.

Sono consapevole del fatto che sono libero(a) di ritirarmi dalla ricerca in qualsiasi momento, che non sarà possibile identificarmi per mezzo delle informazioni incluse nella tesi e che la ricerca seguirà le linee guida fornite nella scheda informativa.

Nome del partecipante

Data

Firma

Nome del ricercatore studente

Data

Firma

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### CONSENT FORM

(Please complete and sign the consent form below after having read the Information Sheet)

#### **Discrimination and Diasporicity: The impact of the Covid-19 Outbreak on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation.**

##### **Aim of Study**

---

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study, which aims to explore the socio-cultural impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Italo-Chinese community. The study will be conducted by Katie Graves, a student undertaking the MSc Global Migration programme at UCL (University College London). The results of the study will be used in order to complete the Masters dissertation.

##### **Consent**

---

By signing this form, the participant confirms that they:

- Are above 18 years of age.
- Have decided to voluntarily participate in the study (online interview).
- Have read the information provided in the Information Sheet.
- Consent to the audio recording of the interview.
- Consent to the use of results for the purpose of the Masters dissertation.

By signing this form, the student researcher confirms that:

- All personal data will be anonymised.
- All data will be treated in compliance with Data Protection laws.

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, that it will not be possible to identify me from any information provided in the dissertation, and that the study will follow the guidelines in the information sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Research Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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INFORMAZIONI GENERALI:	
<b>1. Sesso</b> Maschio	<b>6. Se non è nato(a) in Italia, per quanti anni ha vissuto in Italia?</b>
<b>2. Età</b> 26	<b>7. I suoi genitori sono:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tutti e due cinesi. <input type="checkbox"/> Uno è italiano. <input type="checkbox"/> Uno non è cinese né italiano.
<b>3. Occupazione</b> Studente Universitario	<b>8. Livello di istruzione</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diploma di scuola superiore. <input type="checkbox"/> Laurea triennale. <input type="checkbox"/> Laurea magistrale. <input type="checkbox"/> Dottorato. <input type="checkbox"/> Altro.
<b>4. Città</b> Milano	<b>9. Quale lingua si usa di più nella vita quotidiana?</b> Italiano
<b>5. Luogo di nascita</b> Italia	<b>10. Quale lingua si usa di più a casa?</b> Cinese

IDENTITA`	
<b>1. Con riferimento alla Sua nazionalità, quale delle seguenti affermazioni è più vera?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mi sento più italiano(a) che cinese. <input type="checkbox"/> Mi sento più cinese che italiano(a). <input type="checkbox"/> Mi sento tanto italiano(a) quanto cinese.	<b>4. In quale lingua Lei legge le notizie o guarda la tv di solito?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Italiano. <input type="checkbox"/> Cinese. <input type="checkbox"/> Altro.

<p><b>2. L'Italia è dove si sente a casa?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>	<p><b>5. Si sente legato(a) alla Cina? Se sì, in che modo? (si può sceglierne più di uno):</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perché ho dei parenti che vivono in Cina.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perché vorrei vivere in Cina nel futuro.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Perché mi tengo aggiornato(a) con le vicende di attualità in Cina.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Perché parlo cinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Perché guardo i film o le serie tv o leggo i libri cinesi.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Perché vado spesso in Cina.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Perché la cultura cinese (festeggiamenti, tradizioni etc.) è una parte importante della mia vita.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Altro.</p>
<p><b>3. Quante volte ha visitato la Cina negli ultimi 5 anni?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-3 volte</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Più di 3 volte</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ogni anno</p>	
<p>CITTADINANZA</p>	
<p><b>1. Quali parole o frasi si vengono in mente quando Lei pensa alla cittadinanza?</b></p> <p>Integrazione</p>	<p><b>3. È difficile ottenere la cittadinanza italiana secondo Lei?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Altro.</p>

<p><b>2. Ha ottenuto la cittadinanza italiana?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non ancora, ma sono in procinto.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, non mi interessa.</p> <p><b>2.1. Se ha risposto di sì- A quale età l'ha ottenuta?</b></p> <p>18</p> <p><b>2.2. Se ha la cittadinanza- In generale gli altri italiani La considerano italiano(a) secondo Lei?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Altro.</p>	<p><b>4. Le leggi sulla cittadinanza italiana sono giuste secondo Lei?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><b>4.1. Perché?</b></p> <p>Dipende molto dalla casistica. Sicuramente il requisito di residenza è una cosa stringente anche se penso si dovrebbe verificare in qualche modo l'integrazione culturale e di lingua delle persone. Infine è assurdo aspettare fino a 4 anni dalla richiesta.</p>
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XENOFOBIA	
<p><b>1. Secondo Lei, in generale gli altri italiani hanno un atteggiamento positivo o negativo nei confronti della comunità cinese in Italia?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positivo.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Negativo.</p>	<p><b>4. Secondo Lei, la xenofobia verso la comunità italo-cinese è aumentata come risultato dell'epidemia COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>

<p><b>2. Questo atteggiamento cambia in base della generazione?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hanno un atteggiamento più positivo verso la 'seconda-generazione' cinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hanno un atteggiamento più negativo verso la 'seconda-generazione' cinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non cambia.</p>	<p><b>5. Ha vissuto personalmente la xenofobia come risultato dell'epidemia da COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><b>5.1. Se si sente a Suo agio, potrebbe spiegarlo in modo più dettagliato? (Opzionale)</b></p> <p>Specialmente nei mesi prima della chiusura tra gennaio e febbraio sconosciuti hanno cominciato a prendermi di mira con battute a cui ogni tanto ho risposto, ogni tanto ho ignorato, ormai non faccio più caso e non me la prendo più, ma non per tutte le persone è così, ci sono persone più fragili e sensibili.</p>
<p><b>3. La xenofobia verso la comunità italo-cinese era comune prima dell'epidemia da COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>	<p><b>6. Il governo italiano ha cercato di eliminare la xenofobia legata alla epidemia da COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p>

<p>SOLIDARIETA`</p>	
<p><b>1. Lei è un membro attivo di qualche organizzazione italo-cinese (per esempio Associna, IBC, UGIC)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sì, sono un membro di una organizzazione italo-cinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì, sono un membro di una organizzazione italo-cinese che è specificamente destinata alla seconda-generazione.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, non sono un membro di una organizzazione italo-cinese.</p>	<p><b>4. Si sente più legato(a) alla comunità cinese come risultato dell'epidemia da COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì, mi sento più legato(a).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, mi sento meno legato(a).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mi sento come prima.</p>

**2. Durante l'epidemia da COVID-19, ha utilizzato i social media per esprimere la Sua solidarietà con la comunità italo-cinese?**

Sì.

No.

No, ma ho espresso la mia solidarietà in un altro modo.

**3. Ha mai usato gli hashtag #iononsonounvirus o #abbracciauncinese per esprimere la Sua solidarietà?**

Sì.

No.

**5. Secondo Lei, la xenofobia che la comunità cinese ha affrontato durante l'epidemia danneggerà le relazioni fra l'Italia e la comunità italo-cinese?**

Sì.

No.

**5.1. Se ha risposto di sì- in che modo?**

**Sarebbe disposto(a) a discutere in modo più dettagliato le Sue esperienze in una breve video-discussione tramite Skype o Zoom (sarebbe anche possibile via chat o email)?**

Sì.

No.

**Se Lei ha risposto di sì, si prega di lasciare il Suo indirizzo email qui sotto.**

**Grazie per la Sua partecipazione!**

GENERAL DETAILS	
1. Sex Male	6. If you weren't born in Italy, how many years have you lived there for?
2. Age 26	7. Your parents are: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both Chinese. <input type="checkbox"/> One is Italian. <input type="checkbox"/> One is neither Chinese nor Italian.
3. Occupation University Student	8. Education Level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma. <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Degree. <input type="checkbox"/> Masters Degree. <input type="checkbox"/> PhD. <input type="checkbox"/> Other.
4. City Milan	9. What language do you use the most in your daily life? Italian
5. Place of Birth Italy	10. What language do you use most at home? Chinese

IDENTITY	
1. Which of these sentences most represents how you feel about your nationality? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I feel more Italian than Chinese. <input type="checkbox"/> I feel more Chinese than Italian. <input type="checkbox"/> I feel as Italian as Chinese.	4. In what language do you watch TV/read the news/read books? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Italian. <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese. <input type="checkbox"/> Other.

<p><b>2. Do you feel at home in Italy?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>	<p><b>5. Do you feel attached to China? If so, in what way? (you can choose more than one)</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Because I have relatives that live in China.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Because I would like to live in China in the future.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because I keep up to date with news and current affairs in China.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because I speak Chinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because I watch Chinese films or TV series or read books in Chinese.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Because I often visit China.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Because Chinese culture (festivals, traditions etc.) is an important part of my life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p>
<p><b>3. How many times have you visited China in the last 5 years?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 times.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Every year.</p>	
<p>CITIZENSHIP</p>	
<p><b>1. What words or phrases come to mind when you think about the term 'citizenship'?</b></p> <p>Integration</p>	<p><b>3. Is it difficult to acquire Italian citizenship in your opinion?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p>

<p><b>2. Do you have Italian citizenship?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet but I am in the process. .</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, it doesn't interest me. .</p> <p><b>2.1. If yes- at what age did you acquire it?</b> 18</p> <p><b>2.2. If you have citizenship- do you think that other Italians consider you to be Italian?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Altro.</p>	<p><b>4. Are Italian citizenship laws fair in your opinion?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><b>4.1. Why?</b> It depends a lot on documentation. The residence requirement is very strict, even if I do think that there should be a way to prove a person's cultural and linguistic integration. Lastly, it's absurd to wait up to 4 years after applying.</p>
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XENOPHOBIA	
<p><b>1. Do you think that Italians have a generally positive or negative attitude towards the Chinese community in Italy?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Negative.</p>	<p><b>4. In your opinion, will the increased xenophobia that the Italo-Chinese community has experienced as a result of COVID-19 have long term effects?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>

<p><b>2. Does this attitude change depending on the generation of Italo-Chinese?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> They have a more positive attitude towards the 'second-generation'.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> They have a more negative attitude towards the 'second-generation'.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It doesn't change.</p>	<p><b>5. Have you personally experienced xenophobia as a result of COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><b>5.1. If you feel comfortable to do so, could you explain your experience in more detail (Optional)</b></p> <p>Especially in the months before the lockdown, between January and February, strangers started to target me with jokes. Sometimes I responded, other times I ignored it. Now I no longer pay attention and don't take it to heart, but there are a lot of people who can't do this because they are more fragile and sensitive than me.</p>
<p><b>3. Was xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community common before COVID-19?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p>	<p><b>6. Has the government tried to combat xenophobia caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p>

SOLIDARITY

<p><b>1. Are you an active member of an Italo-Chinese organisation (for example Associna, IBC, UGIC)?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am a member of an Italo-Chinese organisation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, i am a member of an Italo-Chinese organisation that specifically involves the second-generation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, I am not a member of an Italo-Chinese organisation.</p>	<p><b>4. Do you feel more attached to the Italo-Chinese community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I feel more attached.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, I feel less attached.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I feel the same as before.</p>
<p><b>2. Have you used social media during the COVID-19 pandemic to express your solidarity with the Italo-Chinese community?</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, but I expressed my solidarity in another way.</p>	<p><b>5. Do you think that the xenophobia that the Italo-Chinese community has experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will damage the relationship between Italy and the Italo-Chinese community?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p>
<p><b>3. Have you used the hashtags #iononsonounvirus or #abbracciauncinese to demonstrate your solidarity with the Italo-Chinese community?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No.</p>	<p><b>5.1. If yes, in what way(s)?</b></p>



**Would you be willing to take part in a brief video conversation on Skype or Zoom in order to discuss your experiences and opinions in more detail? (also possible via instant messenger or email)**

Yes.

No.

**If so, please leave your email address below.**

**Thank you for your time and for taking part in this study!**

Appendix 4

[Interview Schedule \(Italian\)](#)

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## **DOMANDE DI INTERVISTA**

**(Sulla base delle risposte fornite in relazione al precedente questionario, potrebbero essere poste ulteriori domande)**

- **Contesto della ricerca.**
- **Conferma del consenso prestato in relazione alla registrazione e avvertimento che il colloquio può essere interrotto in qualsiasi momento se il partecipante si sente a disagio.**
- **Informazioni generali (luogo di nascita, età, occupazione, città etc.).**

**IDENTITA`/CRESCERE IN ITALIA:**

- Dove sei cresciuto(a)? Come descriveresti la comunità lì?
- Perché i tuoi genitori hanno deciso di trasferirsi in Italia? Quando si sono trasferiti?
- Com'è stato crescere come un Italo-Cinese? Quando eri bambino(a), ti sei mai sentito(a) diverso(a) rispetto dagli altri tuoi amici italiani?
- I tuoi genitori ti hanno incoraggiato a mantenere o creare legami con la Cina?
- Hai trascorso del tempo in Cina durante l'infanzia?

**SECONDA-GENERAZIONE:**

- Come descriveresti la tua nazionalità?
- Si dice che la seconda-generazione appartiene a due culture, spesso in conflitto. Sei d'accordo?
- Sei un membro attivo di qualche organizzazione italo-cinese? Se sì, perché hai scelto di iscriverti?

- Secondo te, i membri della seconda-generazione italo-cinese hanno le stesse opportunità dei giovani italiani 'di sangue'?
- Vedi il tuo futuro in Italia o in qualche altro paese?

#### CITTADINANZA:

- Perché hai scelto di ottenere la cittadinanza italiana?
- Ti sei sentito(a) diverso(a) una volta ottenuta la cittadinanza?
- Pensi che sia giusto che non potevi ottenere la cittadinanza fino a quando avevi 18 anni?
- Perché le leggi italiane sulla cittadinanza sono più severe rispetto ad altri paesi europei che seguono la regola dello *ius soli* (cittadino per nascita), secondo te?
- Secondo te, esiste una relazione tra le leggi severe sulla cittadinanza italiana e il modo in cui i migranti vengono visti e trattati?

#### XENOFOBIA:

- Pensi che la comunità cinese sia ben integrata nella società italiana?
- Quali stereotipi esistono sui cinesi in Italia?
- Quasi tutti coloro che hanno compilato il questionario hanno detto che la xenofobia verso la comunità cinese era comune anche prima della pandemia. Perché esiste questa xenofobia secondo te?
- Hai vissuto personalmente la xenofobia prima o durante l'emergenza epidemiologica da COVID-19?

#### COVID-19:

- In che modo i media italiani hanno rappresentato il virus? E il governo?
- Secondo te, l'aumento della xenofobia verso la comunità italo-cinese come risultato della pandemia avrà effetti a lungo termine?
- Cosa avrebbe potuto fare il governo italiano per combattere l'aumento della xenofobia?
- Hai espresso la tua solidarietà con la comunità italo-cinese durante la pandemia? Se sì, in che modo?
- La tua relazione con la comunità italo-cinese è cambiata come risultato dell'emergenza epidemiologica da COVID-19? In che modo? E la tua relazione con l'Italia?

#### ALTRE DOMANDE:

- Vorresti aggiungere altro?
- Perché hai scelto di partecipare a questa ricerca?
- Conosci qualcuno che potrebbe essere interessato a partecipare a questa ricerca?

**Ringraziamento per il tempo e per l'aiuto con la ricerca.**

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**(other questions may be asked depending on individual questionnaire responses)**

- **Explain the study context.**
- **Confirm consent for recording and explain that the interview can be stopped at any point if the respondent feels uncomfortable.**
- **Ask general details (place of birth, age, occupation, city, etc.).**

### **IDENTITY/GROWING UP IN ITALY:**

- Where did you grow up? How would you describe the community there?
- Do you know why your parents decided to move to Italy from China? When did they move?
- What was it like to grow up as an Italo-Chinese? Did you ever feel different to your other Italian friends? What does your friendship group look like now?
- Did your parents encourage you to maintain or create links with China?
- Did you spend any time in China during your childhood?

### **SECOND-GENERATION:**

- How would you describe your nationality?
- It is frequently said that the second-generation belong to two cultures that are often in conflict. Do you agree?
- Are you a member of any Italo-Chinese organisations? If so, what was your motivation for joining?
- Do you think that the Italo-Chinese second-generation has the same opportunities as other Italians?
- Do you see your future in Italy or in another country?

### **CITIZENSHIP:**

- Why did you choose to acquire Italian citizenship?
- Did anything change after you acquired citizenship? Did you feel any different?
- Do you think that it's fair that you couldn't acquire Italian citizenship until you were 18, even though you were born in Italy?
- Why do you think the citizenship laws in Italy are so different to other European countries that allow *jus soli* (citizenship at birth for those born in the territory or state)?
- Do you think that the strict citizenship laws in Italy have an impact on how migrants are viewed and treated?

#### XENOPHOBIA:

- Is the Chinese community well integrated in Italian society in your opinion?
- What stereotypes exist about the Chinese in Italy?
- Nearly everyone who completed the questionnaire stated that xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community was common even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Why does this xenophobia exist in your opinion?
- Have you personally experienced any form of xenophobia either before or during the COVID-19 pandemic?

#### COVID-19:

- How did the Italian media represent the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to the Italo-Chinese community? What about the government?
- Do you think that the increase in xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community as a result of COVID-19 will have any long-term effects?
- What could the government have done to combat the increase in xenophobia towards the Italo-Chinese community?
- Did you express solidarity with the Italo-Chinese community during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how?
- Do you feel like your relationship with the Italo-Chinese community has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, in what way? What about your relationship with Italy?

#### FINAL QUESTIONS:

- Would you like to add anything else?
- Why did you decide to take part in this study?
- Do you know anyone who might be interested in taking part in this study?

**Thank the participant for time and help with study.**

## INTERVISTA CON MICHELE, 21 LUGLIO 2020.

### Legenda

I: Intervistatore | M: Michele

**Grassetto** = enfasi

(?) = non chiaro sulla registrazione

(.) (..) (...) = pausa breve, media e lunga

// = frase interotta

I: Quando eri bambino, ti sei mai sentito diverso dagli altri tuoi amici italiani?

M: Uhm, da bambino credo che un po' tutti come me l'hanno sentito. Essendo la minoranza, c'è sempre quel fenomeno di pregiudizio, per cui, cioè, la maggioranza si confronta con la minoranza, e quindi noi essendo la minoranza, eravamo un po' presi di mira. Però, crescendo, poi (..) uno, ti abitui, due, impari ad accettarlo come un **valore** piuttosto che un difetto.

I: Sì (.) sì, hai ragione. E nel questionario tu hai detto che ti senti più italiano che cinese, ma **non** ti senti a casa in Italia. Potresti elaborare su questo?

M: Mmm, sì, lo so. Per me (..) lo mi sento // Tu hai studiato qui in Italia, giusto?

I: Sì, ho fatto l'Erasmus a Roma.

(Breve discussione della mia esperienza in Italia)

M: Quindi, sai com'è vivere in un altro paese. Io mi sento un po' cosmopolito (...) mi sento diverso quando vivo in diverse parti del mondo. È una sensazione diversa dal solito. Anch'io ho fatto un po' di ricerca sui cinesi in Italia. C'è gente che si sente nessuno dei due (italiano o cinese), c'è gente che si sente cinese, gente che si sente italiana, poi c'è gente che si sente sia cinese che italiana. Però io (.) io più che altro mi sento un po' cittadino del mondo, no? Citizen of the world.

I: Molto interessante. E perché, secondo te?

M: (?) Perché, uhm, crescendo, ho capito che non mi sentivo né troppo italiano, né troppo cinese. I cinesi mi consideravano troppo italiano per essere cinese; gli italiani mi consideravano troppo cinese per essere italiano (...) e quindi c'era una sensazione di "vuoto" tra virgolette. Questo vuoto, poi, sono riuscito a colmarlo, confrontando e incontrando le persone, capendo che in realtà il mondo è grande, non è piccolo, come, solo l'Italia. E quindi nel mondo, diciamo che, ci sono **tante** persone come noi, non solo cinesi ma anche di altre nazionalità, per cui non

si sentono né troppo di una parte, né troppo dell'altra e per compensare per questo vuoto si considerano cittadini del mondo. Immagino a Londra, è pieno di migranti, giusto?

I: Già, Londra è molto cosmopolita. È una delle ragioni per cui mi piace così tanto.

M: Quindi sono sicuro che anche loro si sentono lo stesso. Né troppo londinesi, né troppo (.) non lo so, marocchini, cinesi, nigeriani, whatever.

I: Esatto.

M: E quindi tu compensi (...) diventando, cioè, più grande di quello che sei. Quindi, si sente cittadino del mondo, più che cittadino del singolo paese ed è qualcosa di speciale secondo me. È uno per compensare diciamo questo "vuoto" tra virgolette per cui non riesci a sentire né l'uno né l'altro. Due, perché trovi una forma di 'fulfillment', non so, una forma di, qualcosa che ti riempi, no? E quindi, dovunque vai, ti senti bene.

I: Sì, ti capisco. Molto bello pensare così.

M: Alla fine è tutto una questione di come tu ti vedi, una cosa di percezione (?). Perché se tu ti vedi di male, ti senti male, però se ti vedi bene, anche psicologicamente, inconsciamente, poi ti senti bene.

I: E tu vedi il tuo futuro in Italia o in qualche altro paese?

M: Dato che mi sento un po' "international" tra virgolette, e non avendo radici forti, così forti in Cina, (?) e sono cresciuto qui in Italia, Se dovessi vivere in un altro paese, non avrei troppi problemi. Perché una volta che ho una casa, il cibo e mi sento bene, posso vivere dovunque. Però sì, in Italia, cioè, è un bel posto, un bel paese. Ovviamente le condizioni, diciamo, economiche non sono le migliori e quindi sto pensando di andare al nord, a Londra, o qualsiasi punto al nord dove sicuramente al livello economico sta meglio. Però, al livello locale, come posto dove vivere, Italia è un bel posto. Immagino che anche tu sei venuta qui perché c'erano delle motivazioni, no? Quindi sì, su questi aspetti, tipo il cibo, vacanze, paesaggi (..) l'Italia è bella.

I: (Ride) Sì, esatto! A proposito di lavoro e dell'economia, i membri della seconda-generazione hanno le stesse opportunità dei giovani italiani "di sangue" secondo te?

M: Mmm, la seconda-generazione è molto integrata nel campo di lavoro, nel senso che sono cresciuti qui e quindi sanno come si lavora in Italia, quindi non c'è questa (.) discrepanza. Perché, sai, di solito i migranti, anche quelli "highly-skilled" (..) loro vanno in un altro paese, no? Da adulti e quindi c'è uno shock culturale che invece la seconda-generazione non prova perché sono cresciuti qui e sono già integrati. Il problema principale fra di loro è la società più che il posto di lavoro. Tante società qua sono discriminatorie.

I: Davvero?

M: Già. Però in generale penso che la seconda-generazione abbia un vantaggio. Se tu conosci il cinese, in realtà hai anche più opportunità rispetto ad altri italiani perché oggi tante società hanno legami con la Cina.

I: Non ci ho pensato (...) E pensi che in generale la comunità cinese sia ben integrata nella società italiana, o solo la seconda-generazione?

M: Secondo me, i cinesi sono integrati economicamente. Sai (..) hanno le loro attività, e lavorano. Ci sono poi degli lavori particolari in cui sono più specializzati, tipo bar, parrucchieri, ristorazione e pelletteria. Però a livello sociale, i cinesi sono poco integrati. La maggior parte della prima generazione è povera o comunque ha una bassa educazione, e quindi, non conoscendo neanche l'italiano, oppure neanche l'inglese, non si interagiscono molto, cioè non parlano troppo con gli italiani. C'è una mancanza di integrazione socio-culturale e penso che sia dovuto al fatto che non hanno la competenza linguistica.

**INTERVIEW WITH MICHELE, 21 JULY 2020.**

Transcription Key

I: Interviewer | M: Michele

**Bold** = emphasis

(?) = unclear on recording

(.) (..) (...) = short, medium and long pauses

// = sentence interrupted

I: When you were a child, did you ever feel different to your other Italian friends?

M: Umm, as a child I think that everyone like me experienced it. When you're the minority there's always that phenomenon of prejudice, the majority confronts the minority, and as we were the minority, we were somewhat targeted. But then, as you grow up (..) one, you get used to it and two, you start to accept it as a **virtue** rather than a flaw.

I: Yes (.) yes, you're right. So in the questionnaire you said that you feel more Italian than Chinese but that you **don't** feel at home in Italy. Could you tell me a bit more about why that is?

M: Hmm, yes I know. For me (..) I feel // You lived in Italy, right?

I: Yes, I did my Erasmus in Rome.

(Brief discussion about time spent in Italy)

M: So you know how it is to live in another country. I would say that I'm a bit cosmopolitan (...) I feel different when I live in different parts of the world. I've also been doing some research on the Chinese in Italy. So, there are people who don't feel either (Italian or Chinese), there are those who feel Chinese, those who feel Italian, and those who feel both Italian and Chinese. But I (.), I feel more of a global citizen, you know? Citizen of the world.

I: That's really interesting. Why do you think that is?

M: (?) Because, well, growing up, I came to understand that I didn't feel totally Italian or totally Chinese. Chinese people considered me to be too Italian to be Chinese and Italians considered me to be too Chinese to be Italian (...) and so there was this sense of "emptiness". But then, later, I managed to fill this emptiness as I met new people, because in reality the world is a big place, it's not only Italy. I discovered there are **so many** people like me, not only Chinese but also other nationalities, who also don't feel more one nationality than the other and to compensate for this hole they start to consider themselves as world citizens. I imagine that London is full of migrants, right?

I: Yeah, London is a very diverse place. It's one of the reasons why I love it so much.

M: So I'm sure that they also feel the same. Not totally a Londoner but also not totally (.), I don't know, Moroccan, Chinese, Nigerian or whatever.

I: Yeah.

M: And so you compensate and you become something bigger, bigger than what you are. Feeling a citizen of the world rather than one single country is something special in my opinion. Firstly because you manage to fill this "emptiness" that you have from not feeling totally anything, and secondly because you find a type of 'fulfillment', something that fills you, you know? Then, wherever you go, you feel like you kind of belong.

I: Yeah I get you, that's a great way of thinking about it.

M: In the end it's all about how you see yourself (..) how you perceive yourself (?). Because if you put yourself down, then you feel bad about it. If you see it as a positive thing then you start to feel better about yourself.

I: So, do you see your future in Italy or somewhere else?

M: Given that I feel somewhat "international", and don't have such strong ties in China, (?) being born and having grown up here in Italy, I think that if I had to live and work abroad I wouldn't have many problems. As long as I have a house, food and I feel good, I can live anywhere. But yeah, of course Italy is a great place, a beautiful country. But obviously the economy isn't the best and so I'm thinking about going North, to London, or somewhere else in the North where the economy is better. But as a place, as a place to live, Italy is a beautiful country. I guess you probably also came here for the same reasons? You know, for things like the food, holidays, landscapes (..) Italy is great.

I: (laughs) Yes, exactly! Speaking of work and the economy, do you think that second-generation Italo-Chinese have the same opportunities as other Italians?

M: Hmm, I think that the second-generation are well integrated in terms of employment because having grown up here in Italy, they know how to work here, so there's not that (.) disparity. You know, usually migrants, even those who are 'highly-skilled' (..) they move abroad as adults and experience a "culture shock" as they learn how to work in that country, but the second-generation doesn't have to go through this because they were born and are already integrated in the culture. I think that the problem is usually the company, more than the place they work. A lot of companies here are discriminatory.

I: Really?

M: Yep. But in general, I think that the second-generation has an advantage. If you know Chinese then you can find more opportunities than other Italians because a lot of Italian companies work with China.

I: I hadn't thought about that (...) Do you think that in general the Chinese community in Italy is well integrated, or is it mostly the second-generation?

M: In my opinion, the Chinese community is economically integrated. You know (...) they have their businesses and they work. Then there are certain areas in which they specialise, like cafes, hairdressers, restaurants and the leather industry. But in terms of social integration, they are not very integrated. The majority of the first generation are poor and not highly educated, and so, they don't know Italian very well or English either and as a result they don't really interact with Italians. There's a lack of socio-cultural integration and I think that it's mainly due to them not being able to speak the language.

## RESEARCH DIARY

Date	Task	Outcome
05/03/20	Review Comments on Proposal	Need to embed the project within a recent academic debate in the field. Find a more concise field that I am hoping to join (e.g. second generation or diaspora use of social media). Need to look a bit more at the ethics to ensure consent and anonymity.

### Questions:

Coronavirus situation- **Do I need to change or adapt my research project?**

### Follow-up:

Conduct more reading around the topic in order to find a more concise debate.

Think about how I may need to adapt the project due to current circumstances and also its effects on participation/ethics.

Date	Task	Outcome
09/04/20	First Meeting with Supervisor	When conducting research I need to look at other elements of identity such as gender, age, education etc. If I am sticking to the same research topic then I will need to be particularly careful as the respondent may have lost someone close to them. Could pre-submit the questions that I will ask. Look at events in the past such as SARS and the Olympics to see how social media was used by the diaspora during those events. Dani Miller's work about Facebook and why we use social media.

### Follow-up:

Delve deeper into literature surrounding diaspora use of social media.

Decide whether to extend scope beyond Italy.

Date	Task	Outcome
29/05/20	Email to Supervisor (Update on Progress and Ask for Advice)	<p>May be useful to modify the proposal in order to adapt it to current circumstances. Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies was really useful as it has a specific section on 'Digital Diasporas'.</p> <p>Communicated struggles about finding the suitable academic debate to join and asked about sample size. Supervisor suggested narrowing literature to debates about citizenship and xenophobia.</p>

**Follow-up:**

Really define the academic debate I'm planning on joining.  
 Modify the proposal in order to concretise ideas.

Date	Task	Outcome
09/06/20	Presentation	<p>Positive feedback about study- seems like an interesting issue to explore. Posed idea of also interviewing Italians in order to investigate their opinions and experiences- would probably be too much and the research would potentially lose focus. Should start to search for participants as soon as possible- don't underestimate how long it will take to interview, transcribe and translate.</p>

**Follow-up:**

Make a post for social media that can be used to recruit participants.  
 Start thinking about what questions I need to ask in order to find answers to my research questions.

Date	Task	Outcome
18/06/20	Call for participants	<p>I have posted on several Italo-Chinese groups on Facebook and have contacted various groups but there has been very little response. Am I looking in the wrong place? Is it the fact that it is a sensitive topic and I need to build rapport before people are willing to share their experiences? Need to find a new method of recruiting participants- perhaps more people would engage with a questionnaire.</p>

## Dissertation Proposal

### Discrimination and Diasporicity: The Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the Diasporic Engagement of the Italo-Chinese Second-Generation (Working Title)

#### Brief Discussion and Identification of Literature

Italy's migration context is particularly complex as it is characterised by a range of migratory dynamics as well as socio-political tensions. The government and public continuously debate issues of border security and citizenship rights and the topic of migration dominates Italian media, often spreading misinformation and stereotyped images of migrants, leading to a rise in xenophobic attitudes (Rossi, p.16). Furthermore, nationalist political parties have capitalised on the population's concern surrounding migration in order to rally support for their political campaigns, in return offering the promise of a series of hard-line anti-immigration policies that would not only impact new arrivals but would also leave many second-generation migrants in a precarious situation with regards to their citizenship status.

This research will draw on the broad definition of diaspora presented by Ang (2003) in order to consider the Chinese diaspora in Italy and its 'varying degrees of diasporicity' (Tsuda, 2018), which fluctuate according to many factors, such as gender, generation, social class and education, as well as the politics and attitudes of both the origin and receiving country. The Chinese community has grown exponentially within Italy, quickly rising to third place in the list of non-EU nationals residing in the country (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2018, p.5). At an initial glance, it would appear that Chinese migrants in Italy have experienced a greater level of acceptance when compared to other migrant groups. Annual reports on migration praise the Chinese community for their entrepreneurship, their relatively low reliance on the welfare system and their overall ability to fit into the social fabric of the country (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2018). In many cities, the Chinatown districts thrive and a number of other Chinese-owned businesses and cultural events are emerging as Italians embrace China's dynamic food, culture and traditions. However, studies that have focused on the integration of Chinese migrants in Italy have shown that members of the community face many obstacles when constructing a life in Italy and are often still faced with discrimination because they do not fit 'the dominant image of immigrants in Italy' (Marsden, 2014, p.1243). Second-generation migrants in particular are impacted by Italy's strict policies on citizenship, which prevent them from being recognised as Italian even if they were born and grew up in the country (Marsden, 2014, p. 1245).

Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, reports emerged of increased prejudice, xenophobia and violence towards people of Asian descent or appearance, and since the spread of the virus to Italy, these incidents have become somewhat commonplace. Right-wing politicians such as Matteo Salvini have seized the opportunity to attack the government's handling of the situation and have been quick to cite migration as the source of the problem. Many Italo-Chinese organisations have distributed flyers in public places and have created posts online, calling on people to act rationally and halt the escalation of xenophobia. The hashtags #nonsonounvirus (I am not a virus) and #abbracciauncinese (Hug a Chinese) have spread across social media in an attempt to challenge the media's portrayal of the situation and combat negative attitudes towards the Chinese community in Italy. A significant number of these posts

have come from second-generation migrants, many of whom were born and grew up in Italy, and who as a result, are feeling stigmatised by their own country. Throughout history there have been many instances of Chinese migrants being blamed for the spread of diseases and many studies have investigated the stigmatising impact that this has had on Chinese communities throughout the world (Keil and Harris Ali, 2011; Gostin et al., 2003; Shah, 2001).

## Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

It is within this context that the **aim** of this research is to explore the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the diasporic engagements of the Italo-Chinese second-generation.

Framed within the greater understanding of current debates on diaspora, citizenship and xenophobia, the **objectives** of this research will be:

- To investigate official and public attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.
- To gain insights into how the Italo-Chinese second-generation understand, navigate and challenge their identity and citizenship status.
- To consider the Italo-Chinese second-generation's efforts to become recognised as Italians within their own right and to change laws regarding citizenship rights in Italy.
- To explore various discourses surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak and migration in Italy and how these discourses have influenced attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.
- To examine reports of xenophobia and violence towards the Italo-Chinese community relating to COVID-19.
- To gain an understanding of the ways in which the Italo-Chinese second-generation has mobilised in order to challenge this xenophobia and violence.
- To question the potential future impacts of the shift in attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following (preliminary) **research questions** will be considered:

- How have official and media discourse portrayed the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy and its relation to migration?
- How have these attitudes impacted individuals within the Italo-Chinese community of Milan, particularly the second-generation?
- How has the diasporic engagement of the second-generation changed during this period?
- In what ways have the second-generation mobilised in order to combat negative and xenophobic attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community?
- How might this shift in attitudes affect the efforts of the Italo-Chinese second-generation to be recognised as Italian and acquire citizenship rights?

## Proposed Methods of Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

The research will take a qualitative, mixed-methods approach. The research will be primarily based on semi-structured interviews with second-generation Italo-Chinese individuals and will be complemented by analysis of the official and media discourse surrounding the spread of Coronavirus to Italy. Potential interview respondents will be approached through both snowballing from existing contacts and through networks such as 'Associna' (An organisation and online network for Italo-Chinese second-generation). The interviews will take a semi-structured format, as this will allow respondents to describe their personal experiences in more detail and raise issues that may not have been considered prior to conducting the interviews. The interviews will be recorded, transcribed and translated into English.

The discourse analysis will investigate official (speeches and publications) and media (newspapers, social media) portrayals of the Coronavirus situation in Italy. The analysis will also examine the use of the #nonsonounvirus and #abbracciauncinese hashtags on social media and their effectiveness in creating solidarity and combating xenophobic attitudes towards the Italo-Chinese community resulting from the Coronavirus. The selection of discourse to analyse will be made according to relevance and time frame. The research may also require some policy analysis in order to understand Italy's laws on migration and second-generation citizenship and how these policies may affect the Italo-Chinese community and individuals.

## Timetable and Logistics of Research Proposed (Modified due to COVID-19)

<b>February-April</b>	Review Literature Meet Supervisor
<b>May-June</b>	Presentation Write Literature Review and Methodology Arrange Contacts and Interview Schedule
<b>July</b>	Undertake Research Begin Analysing Results
<b>July-August</b>	Write up Dissertation, Edit and Proofread
<b>September</b>	Submit Final Dissertation

## Logistics

- All individuals interviewed will be over the age of 18.
- Interviews will primarily be conducted in Italian and will then be translated and reviewed by a native Italian speaker.
- Informed consent and full anonymity will be employed and each respondent will be able to opt out at any time in order to reduce any potential harm.

- An information sheet outlining the study and stating the questions that will be asked will be provided to participants in advance of the interview.

## Potential Outcomes, Value and Rationale for Research

The research hopes to gain an insight into how official and public discourse and incidences of xenophobic attitudes towards a particular migrant group, in this case the Italo-Chinese second-generation, may influence diasporicity. The research will add to the literature that explores how a 'politics of fear' may affect citizenship acquisition and the attitude of the nation towards migrants. It will demonstrate the precariousness of migrants' inclusion within the social fabric of Italy, especially with regards to second-generation migrants.

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