



HAL
open science

Multilingual Media Consumption by the Chinese People in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Francesco Madrisotti, Simeng Wang

► **To cite this version:**

Francesco Madrisotti, Simeng Wang. Multilingual Media Consumption by the Chinese People in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Chinese in France amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. Daily Lives, Racial Struggles and Transnational Citizenship of Migrants and Descendants, 2023, 9789004678606. 10.1163/9789004678606_003 . hal-04312986

HAL Id: hal-04312986

<https://hal.science/hal-04312986>

Submitted on 30 Nov 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Chinese in France amid the Covid-19 Pandemic

*Daily Lives, Racial Struggles and Transnational
Citizenship of Migrants and Descendants*

Edited by

Simeng WANG

Preface by

Jun JING

Postface by

François HÉRAN

With contributions from

Francesco MADRISOTTI, Yong LI, Xiabing CHEN, Ran YAN



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

Preface IX

Jun Jing

Acknowledgments XI

List of Tables and Figures XIV

Notes on Contributors XVII

Introduction: Between Two Worlds: the Chinese Diaspora in France during Covid-19 1

Simeng Wang and Francesco Madrisotti

SECTION 1

Everyday Practices and Daily Lives during the Pandemic

- 1 Multilingual Media Consumption by the Chinese People in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic 41
Francesco Madrisotti and Simeng Wang
- 2 Out of Step: Preventive Measures among People of Chinese Origin in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic 72
Simeng Wang and Francesco Madrisotti
- 3 Stress and Anxiety among the Chinese Population in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic: a Study Examining Societal and Individual Factors 102
Francesco Madrisotti and Simeng Wang
- 4 Between Safety and Health: How the Pandemic Reshaped Food Behaviors among Chinese People in France 132
Simeng Wang, Francesco Madrisotti and Xiabing Chen
- 5 A Community Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic: Collective Actions by Chinese Residents of a Multiethnic Neighborhood in the Northern Suburbs of Paris 151
Yong Li and Simeng Wang

SECTION 2***Focus on Specific Chinese Populations in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic***

- 6 Social Ties of Elderly Migrants during Covid-19: the Chinese in Paris 177
Simeng Wang
- 7 Disruption in Study Abroad during the Pandemic: Chinese Students in France 196
Yong Li, Ran Yan and Simeng Wang
- 8 Survival during the Pandemic and Coping with Risk: an Ethnography of Vulnerable Chinese Migrants Receiving Food Assistance 223
Francesco Madrisotti, Ran Yan and Simeng Wang
- 9 Capitalizing on Opportunities during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Business Transitions among Chinese Entrepreneurs in France 256
Simeng Wang and Xiabing Chen

SECTION 3***Citizenship, Mobilization, and Relationship to the Home and Living Countries during the Covid-19 Pandemic***

- 10 Anti-Asian Racism during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Experiences, Narratives, and Reactions 285
Simeng Wang and Francesco Madrisotti
- 11 Caring for Compatriots during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Professional Practices by Health-Care Workers of Chinese Origin in France 324
Simeng Wang
- 12 Beyond National and Ethnic Boundaries: Transnational Solidarity during the Covid-19 Pandemic from the Case of the Chinese Diaspora in France 347
Simeng Wang and Yong Li

Conclusion 370
Simeng Wang

Postface 373
François Héran

Multilingual Media Consumption by the Chinese People in France during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Francesco Madrisotti and Simeng Wang

Abstract

This chapter examines the differences within the Chinese diaspora in France, in terms of access to and consumption of different media sources (French and Chinese television, French and Chinese press, Western and Chinese social networks, etc.) in the Covid-19 era. In particular, authors focus on two main aspects of media consumption: media exposure in terms of the variety of media sources to which individuals have access and the polarization of media consumption between French and Chinese information sources. Subsequently, authors examine the effect of polarization of media consumption on media exposure. Because the Chinese population in France is very heterogeneous, authors study the divergence in media consumption across different groups defined by their migration trajectory (descendants, nonnaturalized migrants, and naturalized migrants), and the differential impacts of the pandemic on media consumption practices by these three groups in terms of the time spent on obtaining information and satisfaction with information on the pandemic. The descendants tend to have a preference for consuming French sources of information, and first-generation migrants, in particular those with a bachelor's degree or higher, tend to consume a larger variety of media, constantly comparing French and Chinese sources. During the pandemic, they have greatly increased their media consumption and are more satisfied than the descendants with information on Covid-19. Authors also show the link between media consumption and risk perception: migrants whose media consumption tends toward French information are less likely to use protective measures, because the social representations of Covid-19 in France portray it as not very dangerous. By contrast, the descendants, who also consume information from Chinese sources in addition to many different French sources, have a stronger tendency to use protective measures. Furthermore, they feel the need to put the information from French media sources into perspective with news from Chinese media sources.

Keywords

media consumption – multilingual media sources – WeChat – Chinese language – French language – media exposure – polarization – information – satisfaction – Chinese diaspora in France – Covid-19 pandemic – migrants – descendants

1 Introduction

Ever since January 2020, when Covid-19 first emerged in China, its threats to health and social life, and the individual and collective measures to contain it, have dominated the media at the national and global level. The relationship between the media and the pandemic can be approached from multiple perspectives (Price and Harbisher, 2022). The first consists of studying discussion of the pandemic on mainstream media and social networks. Yu et al. (2021) studied 10,132 online comments related to Covid-19 on the TripAdvisor platform from January 1 to February 29, 2020. They show that the rapid and unpredictable spread of the disease drove a dynamic change in communication on social media regarding risk perception and the intensity of communication experienced by those who commented. Wicke and Bolognesi (2020) analyze concepts and discussions on Twitter regarding Covid-19 in March and April 2020 and the use of war-related terminology in framing the discourse on specific topics, such as the treatment of those who fell ill with the disease. Balech et al. (2021) construct a “microhistory” of reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic by French users on Twitter between February and May 2020, finding that masks emerged as a central topic of discourse and controversy in France.

The second perspective concerns the relationship between media consumption and mental health. On the one hand, researchers emphasize the role of crisis-related media exposure in amplifying the public health consequences of Covid-19 (Garfin et al., 2020). Following this approach, scholars examine the relationship between Covid-19-related media and a deterioration in mental health. Schmidt et al. (2021) describe a feedback loop in which consuming crisis-related media and worrying have a reciprocal impact over time, as each feeds the other and might amplify the adverse effects of the crisis and other similar crises on mental and physical health. First et al. (2021) show that Covid-19 coverage in the media (traditional and social) and interpersonal communication have a direct effect on stress and an indirect effect on stress and depression. In a study of over 1,118 Chinese in 30 provinces in mainland China, Liu and Liu (2020) show that four types of media (official media, commercial media, social media, and overseas media) have negative effects on their

audiences to different degrees. Based on a cross-sectional telephone survey conducted in Hong Kong between May and August 2020, Wong et al. (2021) find that, among 3,421 adults age sixty and older, the use of social media to obtain information related to Covid-19 is associated with more symptoms of anxiety and lower social trust in information but has no significant relationship to Covid-safe behavior. Along the same lines, by reversing the relationship and focusing on Chinese college students from March 24 to April 1, 2020, Zhao and Zhou (2021) show that Covid-19 stress is positively related to a tendency toward addictive use of social media. People who experience more Covid-19-related stress are at increased risk of addictive use of social media, which in turn may be fostered by active use and experience.

Moreover, studies have shown that the media coverage of the pandemic, particularly in the first few months, which discussed the disease with a racial lens and reported multiple racist incidents related to Covid-19 that were directed at Asians, may have presented a significant risk to the mental health of people of Asian origin. In fact, many people of Asian origin started to realize that they could be accused of spreading the disease and that, for this reason, they could become stigmatized and targets of racism (Wu et al., 2021). Similarly, using a cross-sectional study of 430 US adults completed in May 2020, Tsai, Phua, Pan, and Yang (2020) investigate the relationship among news consumption, trust, intergroup contact, and prejudicial attitudes toward Asians and Asian Americans in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic. They show that, among other factors, traditional news exposure, and trust in social media were positive predictors of prejudice against Asians and Asian Americans. Tsai et al. also state that the Asian population's experience with racial prejudice during a challenging pandemic might have caused poor psychological outcomes and exacerbated health disparities.

Emerging research also examines how media coverage of disease (in particular, Covid-19) and media consumption might influence people's health behavior and their compliance with preventive measures. In a study carried out in the United States, Nazione, Perrault, and Pace (2021) analyze the relationship between mediated and interpersonal information consumption, risk perception, perceptions of general efficacy, and preventive behaviors specific to Covid-19.¹ Nazione et al. show that the time spent consuming news, social media, and health website information is not related to risk perception, whereas perceived risk and perceived general efficacy are positively associated with preventive behavior.

1 Efficacy is defined as the belief that someone can perform the suggested behavior to combat the risk and as the belief that the suggested behavior will effectively combat the risk.

Focusing on the opportunities for health education using digital media, Liu (2020) tests the links between four types of digital media consumption (social media, mobile social networking apps, online news media, and social livestreaming services) and preventive behavior against infection with Covid-19. Liu states that digital media consumption is related to preventive behavior through stress. Based on an online survey with 511 respondents, Liu finds that, by seeking Covid-19 information through these four types of digital media, people are encouraged to engage in preventive behavior either directly or indirectly. Notably, doing so on mobile social networking apps, social livestreaming services, and online news media is directly related to preventive behavior whereas using social media might elicit intense anxiety and, in turn, increase preventive behaviors.

Using data from a representative sample of people in the US, Jiang et al. (2020) analyze the relationship between attention to news media and social-distancing behavior and three potential mediators in this relationship: (1) perceived effectiveness of social distancing, (2) perceived susceptibility to Covid-19 infection, and (3) perceived negative consequences of infection. Jiang et al. find that attention to news media is positively related to social-distancing behavior during this period and is mediated by the perceived effectiveness of social distancing. Conversely, media trust negatively moderates the impact of news attention on the perceived effectiveness of social distancing, with a more pronounced effect on those who have lower trust in media. Overall, the study finds that, when they emphasize safety measures, news media have an important role in promoting social-distancing behavior. In a study focused on Lebanon, Melki et al. (2021) show that increased exposure to media conveying Covid-19 news is positively related to people's compliance with preventive measures and that perceived knowledge and fear mediate this relationship.

In sum, these studies on media consumption during the Covid-19 pandemic illustrate a wide range of approaches. They show that the treatment of Covid-19 in official media and social media varies greatly over time and across socio-political contexts. Moreover, these studies suggest that media consumption during Covid-19 might affect individual mental well-being, fuel the feeling of racial stigma, influence the adoption of protective behaviors and practices, and support the successful implementation of national and international policies to control the spread of the virus. We note that these studies examine official media and social media as mediators and vectors of information. But they examine the impact of the media regardless of the nature and content of the information mediated through that vector, paying little attention to the messages and representations being mediated. We believe that the impact of media and social media on individual and collective experiences is strongly

related to the content of messages and the type of representations disseminated through different kinds of media and social media. Indeed, different groups in the same national context could have access to very different representations of social reality and historical conditions in relation to their media consumption practices.

In this chapter, we examine media consumption by the Chinese population in France. In particular, we analyze the differences in media consumption among different groups of Chinese in France based on their migratory status—that is, whether they are migrants or descendants of migrants and subgroups therein. We show that different subgroups of the Chinese diaspora in France might have access to different representations of the Covid-19 pandemic, based on their consumption of different media. Furthermore, these differential representations of the disease influence their experiences and their behaviors.

Our analysis builds on the fact that, as mentioned in the introduction to this book, from January to September 2020, the French and Chinese media described the pandemic and the institutional and individual measures needed to counter it in very different ways. Moreover, the institutional reactions at both the political and medical levels in the two social contexts were profoundly different. Since January 2020, the Chinese media had described the coronavirus as extremely dangerous and supported the implementation of strict control measures. Although these measures strongly limit individual freedom, they were necessary to limit the spread of the virus. In parallel with collective measures to limit viral spread, the Chinese government and media quickly and strongly encouraged the population to take individual measures, such as self-isolation and wearing masks. In France, between January and September 2020, in a context characterized by a relative lack of knowledge of the virus and the absence of a scientific consensus on its characteristics and severity, the media featured a variety of voices, expressing conflicting opinions and positions on both the severity of the disease and the need for collective measures to contain it. We believe that the experience and perceptions of individuals about the pandemic and, consequently, the protective practices adopted to avoid infection are affected by whether access to media narratives circulating in China, France, or China *and* France are singular or plural as well as by the ability to navigate between the Chinese and French media contexts, individual migration trajectories, and sociodemographic factors (age, gender, education, etc.).

We examine two main aspects of media consumption: on the one hand, we study media exposure in terms of the variety of media sources to which individuals have access; on the other hand, we study the polarization of media consumption between French and Chinese information sources. Subsequently,

we examine how media exposure affects the polarization of media consumption. Because the Chinese population in France is heterogeneous, we explore divergence in media consumption among different groups, defined by their migration trajectory. More specifically, we are interested in the differences in the media consumption practices across descendants of Chinese migrants, nonnaturalized migrants, and naturalized French migrants. We then study the differential impacts of the pandemic on media consumption practices among these three groups in terms of time spent on seeking information on the pandemic and satisfaction with that information. Finally, we show that because of their differential media consumption, different groups in the Chinese diaspora in France have access to different and contradictory representations of the disease and of the measures needed to counter it, leading to differential attitudes regarding the risk of infection, differential behaviors, and differential experiences.

The originality of our contribution is its interest in media consumption practices and the relationship between those practices and the pandemic by a specific population. Indeed, media consumption practices by the Chinese population in France has been little studied. Moreover, this work is novel because of it studies media consumption practices based on groups defined by their migratory trajectory and in relation to social changes caused by the pandemic. Moreover, we show that, the Chinese people living in France, though residing in the same spatial territory, have access to different narratives and representation of the Covid-19 pandemic through differential media consumption, which deeply affects their experiences and attitudes toward the virus and the measures needed to deal with it.

2 Variables

2.1 *Dependent Variables*

2.1.1 Media Consumption

In our questionnaire, we asked respondents about their sources of information. Respondents could choose from several options among the following: French tv, Chinese tv, French radio, Chinese radio, French newspapers, Chinese newspapers, Western social networks (Facebook, Twitter ...), and Chinese social networks (WeChat, Weibo ...). We also asked our respondents which protective practices they adopted during the health crisis. Respondents could choose from among several options: Wearing a protective mask, Going out less, Not working, Not going to school/Not letting their child go to school, Not using public transportation.

The variable *Exposure to media consumption* is measured using an additive index that ranges from 0 to 8 by combining the responses to one item: Which media do you use the most to obtain information? French TV (no = 0, yes = 1), Chinese TV (no = 0, yes = 1), French radio (no = 0, yes = 1), Chinese radio (no = 0, yes = 1), French newspapers (no = 0, yes = 1), Chinese newspapers (no = 0, yes = 1), Western social networks (no = 0, yes = 1), Chinese social networks (no = 0, yes = 1).

The variable *Polarization of media consumption* is measured using an index that ranges from -4 (completely Chinese) to 4 (completely French), created by combining the responses to the question: Which media do you use the most to obtain information? French TV (yes = +1, no = 0), Chinese TV (yes = -1, no = 0), French radio (yes = +1, no = 0), Chinese radio (yes = -1, no = 0), French newspapers (yes = +1, no = 0), Chinese newspapers (yes = -1, no = 0), Western social networks (Facebook, Twitter ...) (yes = +1, no = 0), Chinese social networks (WeChat, Weibo ...) (yes = -1, no = 0).

2.1.2 Evolution in the Time Spent on Information

We asked our respondents the following question: Has the time spent obtaining information since Covid-19: “decreased,” “stayed the same,” or “increased”?

2.1.3 Satisfaction with COVID-19 Information

We asked our respondents the following question: Are you satisfied with the information about Covid-19 to which you have access? Respondents could answer on a four-point Likert scale (1 = not at all satisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = satisfied).

2.2 *Independent Variables*

2.2.1 Migratory Status

In order to understand the impact of the migratory trajectories on the experiences and behaviors of our respondents, we constructed a variable that we call “migratory status.” *Migratory status* is a hybrid variable built by a cross section of two variables: place of birth and nationality. We thereby obtain three groups: nonnaturalized migrants, naturalized migrants, and descendants.

Media exposure and polarization of media consumption are independent variables for explaining time spent on learning about Covid-19 through media and social media and satisfaction with information on the pandemic.

2.3 *Control Variables*

Age, gender, profession, and education (university-level education versus primary/secondary) are included in this study as control variables.

First, we analyze whether and how the migratory status, gender, and age of our respondents influence media exposure and the polarization of media consumption. Second, we look at how media exposure affects the polarization of media consumption. Third, we examine whether and how migratory status, gender, and age affect the time spent learning about the Covid-19 pandemic and the satisfaction with information about the Covid-19 pandemic obtained through the media and social media.

3 Media Consumption, Media Satisfaction, and Time Spent Seeking Information

3.1 *Media Exposure and Polarization of Media Consumption*

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 present the results of a regression analysis in which we examine the effect of migratory status, sex, age and education on (1) media exposure, described as the variety of media sources to which respondents have access on a daily basis, and (2) the polarization in media consumption.

Model 1 explains only 6.2 percent ($R^2 = 0.062$) of the variance in media exposure. Two of the four variables included make a significant contribution. Age seems to strongly decrease media exposure (Beta = -0.01 , 95% confidence interval [CI] = $[-0.02, -0.00]$): younger respondents use more media sources

TABLE 1.1 Regression analysis on media exposure

	Beta	95% CI	p-value
Migratory Status			
Descendants	–	–	
Nonnaturalized migrants	0.28	-0.01, 0.58	0.061
Naturalized migrants	0.42	-0.08, 0.92	0.10
Age	-0.01	-0.02, 0.00	0.033
Sex			
Women	–	–	
Man	0.20	-0.08, 0.48	0.2
Education			
High school or less	–	–	
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.52	0.22, 0.81	<0.001
R-squared: 0.06244			

TABLE 1.2 Regression analysis on the polarization of media consumption

	Beta	95% CI	p-value
Migratory Status			
Descendants	-	-	
Nonnaturalized migrants	-1.41	-1.66, -1.16	<0.001
Naturalized migrants	-0.75	-1.17, -0.32	0.007
Age	-0.02	-0.03, 0.01	<0.001
Sex			
Women	-	-	
Man	-0.18	-0.44, 0.07	0.2
Education			
High school or less	-	-	
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.62	0.36, 0.89	<0.001
R-squared: 0.035			

than their elders. However, the level of education seems to strongly increase media exposure (Beta = +0.52, 95% CI = [0.22, 0.81]): respondents with a bachelor's or master's degree use more media sources to obtain information than people with a high-school degree or less. Migrants, whether naturalized or not, seem to consume more sources of information than descendants do, and the effect is marginally significant.

In Table 1.2, model 2 examines the polarization of media consumption due to media exposure, migratory status, sex, age, and education. Descendants' media consumption tends toward French media (the overall intercept is 1.01, 95% CI = [0.61, 1.42]). But "nonnaturalized migrants" and "naturalized migrants" are negatively correlated to polarization toward French media (respectively, Beta = -1.41, 95% CI, [-1.66, -1.16] for nonnaturalized migrants and Beta -0.75, 95% CI = [-1.17, -0.32] for naturalized migrants) and, more important, their estimated coefficients are nearly zero. Therefore, migrants in general seem to have more hybrid consumption, with more access to both Chinese and Western media sources.

Age is also negatively correlated to polarization toward French media. By contrast, education is positively correlated to polarization toward French media: media consumption by respondents with a bachelor's or master's degree tend more toward French media than that of respondents with a high-school education or less. After media exposure is added as a predictor, the

variance explained by the model is 41.5 percent ($R^2 = 0.415$). Media exposure has a strong and significantly positive effect on polarization toward French media: when respondents tap a larger variety of media sources, they add French sources more frequently than Chinese sources.

3.1.1 Media Exposure and Media Polarization among Descendants

In general, younger and most educated people engage with more media sources, especially French media sources. The increase in the variety of media sources mainly results from adding French media sources, which leads to polarization in media consumption toward French sources. A large difference emerges between descendants and migrants: descendants consume mainly or almost exclusively French media sources, but migrants have more hybrid consumption, engaging with both Chinese and French media.

Our ethnographic interviews and observations enable us to explain these trends. For one thing, descendants often have low proficiency in the Chinese language, therefore, they prefer (or consume exclusively) French media. Charles, a twenty-three-year-old law student, describes his media consumption as follows:

Q: From which media would you say you usually get your information?

Charles: In general, through social networks, which are on the front lines, so to speak, but they are not always the best for reliability. So, let's say that I prefer to read *Le Monde* or *Le Parisien* and science magazines, for example, *Science et Vie*, or magazines on history or physics.

Q: And when you talk about social networks, which ones did you have in mind?

Charles: Mostly Twitter and Instagram. But it's not really to get information; I just learn about a topic, ... For example, during the lockdown, there were two, three postings about Asians who experienced inappropriate behavior, ... I don't read about it on social networks; I just learn that it's something that exists. ...

Q: Do you read Chinese, for example?

Charles: No, speaking Chinese is already a problem, but reading is even more of a problem.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, JUNE 2020

For descendants, access to Chinese media sources and information is often mediated by their parents or other family members who speak Chinese. These descendants can learn about information posted on WeChat through their

parents who use this social network or by overhearing Chinese television programs that their parents are watching.² This is true of Monica, a twenty-three-year-old student born in France to Chinese parents from Cambodia who went to France in the 1980s:

Q: And do you check Chinese sources?

Monica: Well, I don't really check Chinese sources. But I watch a bit of Chinese TV with my parents, such as [the Chinese cable channel] Phoenix TV. They watch a lot of [the cable channel] Mandarin TV, too, which shows some news. ... It's really their main source of news. They only watch Asian news—so, CCTV [Chinese Cable TV] and Cantonese channels. ...

Q: And they don't go to French sources for information?

Monica: Well, a bit less, as they don't speak French very well; they understand it a bit, but they still prefer to get their information from Chinese sources.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, OCTOBER 8, 2020

Among the descendants, Chinese social networks are used very little for information, for two main reasons. First, some descendants express distrust of information from China and Chinese platforms, which they consider highly susceptible to “fake news.” Second, they criticize their parents' use of Chinese social networks, which they deem very superficial and uncritical. However, some descendants use Chinese social networks (especially WeChat) to keep in touch with friends or relatives who live elsewhere. For instance, Charles said:

Charles: For her [my mother], first-hand information is Chinese social networks, and her social network is WeChat. ... It is perhaps a little more susceptible to fake news. ... For example: the day before the lockdown [in France], they were broadcasting photos of war tanks in France, and she believed it [was actually happening]. I have the feeling that it came from WeChat. ... She tells me about it, typically at mealtime, and I try to ask

2 WeChat was launched in 2012 and rapidly became the most preferred Chinese social media platform. WeChat fundamentally changed the ways in which Chinese migrants use personal messaging and group communication, produce and distribute news, and access information. To understand the role of WeChat in the daily life of Chinese people, see Sun and Yu (2022); for a French study of WeChat use among Chinese, see Wang (2022).

her where she gets it from, and there is a good chance that it is from very unreliable sources.

Q: So you're quite skeptical of the information that is spread on WeChat?

Charles: Yeah, I am. ... On the other hand, on Twitter and Instagram, there is more often real news, but when it's fake news, it's the same thing I see on WeChat.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, JUNE 7, 2020

3.1.2 Media Exposure and Media Polarization among Migrants

Our quantitative data indicate that when our respondents consume more media sources, they are more often French sources. In addition, the data show that the level of education strongly affects media exposure: the more educated our respondents are, the wider the variety of media sources they consume. Among migrants, the level of education also has an impact on the polarization in media consumption. Migrants with a bachelor's or master's degree consume more media sources than those with a high-school degree or less; they also consume more French media sources. For each type of media, migrants consume a variety of sources that convey different political positions and points of view. Qiaoling, a twenty-five-year-old migrant who is a graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Studies [Institut d'Etudes Politiques, called Sciences Po], describes her media consumption as follows:

In particular, I consume French sources, usually newspapers, radio, and, of course, mobile applications. In particular, I consult the mobile version of a newspaper [*Le Monde*]. For Chinese news, I use social networks, especially WeChat and Weibo. ... I think social networks certainly are less reliable than traditional media, such as newspapers or radio. ... During the pandemic, I mostly watched France Info. [...] I don't read the Chinese press, but I read the French press to get information about the pandemic. ... I always learn about Chinese news via Weibo or WeChat; I just read what is tweeted.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CHINESE, JUNE 5, 2020

Qiaoling consumes Chinese news in a rather detached and passive way, especially through Chinese social networks. Moreover, she believes that social networks are less reliable than the traditional media. However, she accesses many French media sources, which she actively uses to find information that might interest her, in particular on the health crisis.

Feng, a migrant, executive, graduate of Sciences Po in Paris, describes her consumption as follows:

In France, I get my information from newspapers and a little less from television, because I haven't bought a television yet. I also consult Chinese sources such as WeChat and Weibo. But there are also niche sites such as Chinese forums, for example, Rabbit, Zhihu, Hupao. ... In France I read *France Soir*, sometimes, *Le Parisien*; when I was learning French, I read *Le Monde*, and two days ago, I started reading *Le Canard enchaîné*. ... I think that different media have different political perspectives. I try not to take a position, because it is difficult to say whether it is right or wrong or whether it is good or bad.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CHINESE, JANUARY 31, 2021

Like Qiaoling, Feng has access to general information through WeChat. However, she then seeks more specific information using specialized Chinese online sources, especially in forums. In addition, she uses both general and specialized French sources: she watches French television and has access to several newspapers. Two aspects of Feng and Qiaoling's media consumption seem interesting. First, they have language skills and cultural capital that enable them to navigate between various sources in different languages, to multiply the sources that they can access and to grasp the different positions expressed by various media actors. In the French context, marked by the number of and accessibility to both national and international media sources, we note the abundance and variety of the French sources consumed. In addition, Qiaoling and Feng adopt a critical stance toward information from both China and France: this stance consists, first, of not "taking a position" and maintaining a "certain distance" from the information and, then, comparing the different sources with one another and synthesizing the information themselves. A majority of those holding a bachelor's degree or more hold these skills and attitudes.

For example, these attitudes are evident in Li's statements. Born in China, she went to France in 2009 to study psychology and now works as a psychologist and is married to a French man. For her, the context of the health crisis has two effects: first, it reinforces the tendency to access many French sources (not Chinese sources) of information in order to understand what is happening "around her" (she consumes Chinese sources, especially WeChat, in a passive and marginal way); second, the context of the pandemic drove her to adopt a critical and comparative stance, which consists of accessing several different sources but maintaining a certain distance from them:

Li: I just read some independent French newspapers, which are probably a bit more specialized—for example, *Mediapart*. ... Then, during the pandemic, the TV news channel became a habit in our

house: we watch TF1 at 8 o'clock every day, we didn't even have this habit before. ... So, we watch the 8 o'clock news to start with, and then, for example, at 7:40, we have the news on Arte channel and then we switch to channel TF1, and after the news we turn off the TV. And then sometimes I listen to the news on Radio 2. ... It's just about knowing what's going on around us ... , and what is new in France. It's related to the pandemic, to see how far has it spread and what are the conditions at hospitals ... We tend to look at the official media, and then we filter out information that we think shouldn't be accepted.

Q: Do you look at Chinese media or Chinese channels?

Li: I look at some of the Chinese articles that appear in WeChat, but I don't look for that information specifically. I go to English news sources, instead.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CHINESE, JANUARY 21, 2021

Li mainly uses French sources: several television channels, newspapers, and radio. Moreover, when she searches for more specific or specialized information, it is in French sources. She indicates that she has a much more marginal and passive consumption of Chinese sources. This consumption, which is very heterogeneous and very "French," can be explained by her cultural capital and her proficiency in the French language but also by her deep roots in French society: she studied in France, married a French person, started a family in France, and is integrated into the French labor market. She is, therefore, interested in understanding "what is going on around us," how the pandemic is evolving in France, in her town, and the conditions at French hospitals, therefore, she inevitably favors French sources.

Highly educated migrants (people with a bachelor's degree or more) thus obtain information from both Chinese and French sources. Chinese sources consist of Chinese social networks (WeChat and Weibo) for more general and passive information and online sites (Rabbit, etc.) for more specific information. In addition, they consume a variety of French media sources (newspapers, radio, television, social networks), for both general and more specialized information. This can be explained in three ways. First, several French sources are accessible; second, highly educated migrants have a generally positive view of French information (see Chapter 2); and, third, migrants feel a sense of local anchoring, as they have established a foothold in French society, where they study, work, and start families.

Migrants who do not speak French and have less education can access a more limited range of information sources. Because they do not understand

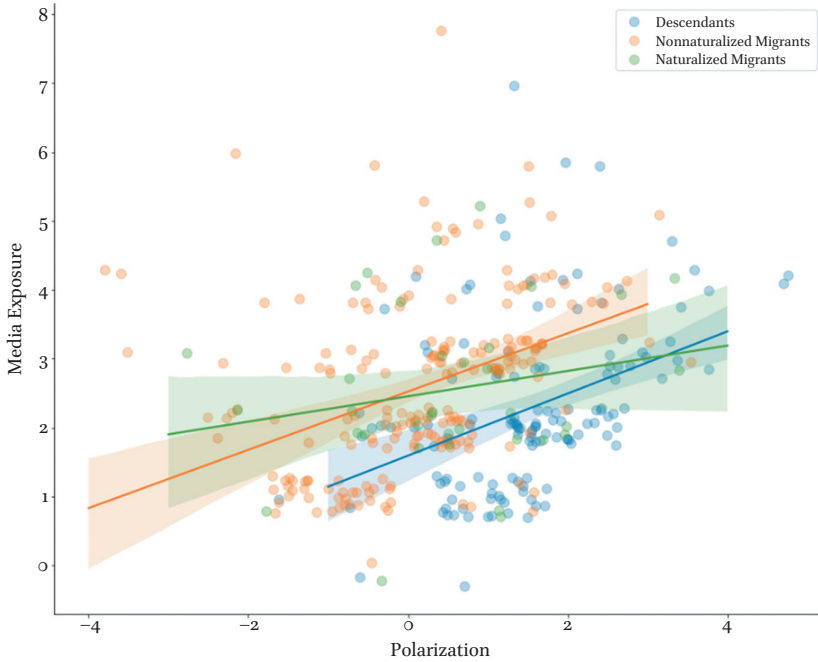


FIGURE 1.1 Scatterplot showing the relation between the polarization of media consumption (x axis) and the variety of media consumption across three groups defined by their migratory status (Descendants, Nonnaturalized Migrants, Naturalized Migrants)

French, they obtain their information mostly from Chinese or Chinese-speaking sources. Chinese social networks, especially WeChat, are their main sources of information. On WeChat, they receive information through official accounts, but also through exchanges in peer groups composed of friends, colleagues (former or current), and relatives living in China or elsewhere: the original source of the information that circulates within these groups is rarely indicated. This consumption of Chinese sources is accompanied by the consumption of Chinese television channels in France (Phoenix tv, Mandarin tv, CCTV). Among migrants who do not speak French and have less education, the situation for elderly Chinese is relevant. As illustrated in Chapter 6, elderly Chinese mainly obtain information from WeChat, a social network in which the only news that circulates is (re)published in Chinese and shared through groups of friends, relatives, and other users. The majority of these elderly Chinese have a television at home. However, they do not watch Chinese-language TV channels with the specific goal of being informed. On the contrary, it is just one of their everyday sociability practices. Elderly Chinese have very little

concern about the reliability or the quality of the information they receive from Chinese media and social media because they have been immersed for years in a monolingual media environment, governed either by the Chinese state (Chinese channels aimed at a foreign audience) or its spokespersons or collaborators overseas (Chinese-speaking channels created outside China).

The scatterplot above examines the relation between the polarization of media consumption (x axis) and the variety of media consumption across three groups defined by their migratory status. The polarization of media consumption ranges from -4 (a media consumption polarized towards Chinese media) and 4 (a media consumption polarized towards the French media). The scatterplot shows that when the variety of the media consumption increases, it increases by adding mainly French media sources. This indicates that the consumption of various French sources is the primary cause of the multiplicity of media sources. To be more specific, the descendants who use a range of media only use French-language sources. One Chinese source (mostly Chinese social networks) and numerous French sources are consumed by migrants who are proficient in French and who use a variety of sources. Finally, migrants who lack French proficiency restrict their media consumption to a single source, typically Chinese social networks.

3.2 *Time Spent on Information and Satisfaction with Covid-19 Information*

In this section, we examine the differential impacts of the pandemic on media consumption practices by the Chinese population in France in terms of time spent on staying informed and satisfaction with information about the pandemic.

Figure 1.2 illustrates respondents' answers to questions about the level of satisfaction with information about Covid-19 (left) and evolution in the time spent on obtaining information about the Covid-19 pandemic (right). Overall, the patterns concerning satisfaction with information are quite similar across the three groups: the majority of respondents indicated that they are "Somewhat satisfied": 51 percent of the descendants, 45.7 percent of the naturalized migrants, and 58.8 percent of the nonnaturalized migrants. Divergence emerges in the extreme answers: descendants seem to be more dissatisfied (10.2%) than migrants, both naturalized (2.8%) and nonnaturalized (3.3%). In contrast, migrants are more likely to be satisfied with the information (naturalized migrants, 22.8%, and nonnaturalized migrants, 15.3%) than descendants (10.2%). With respect to evolution in the time spent on obtaining information, the majority of respondents in all three groups say that they increased the time spent on obtaining information. However, two different patterns can be

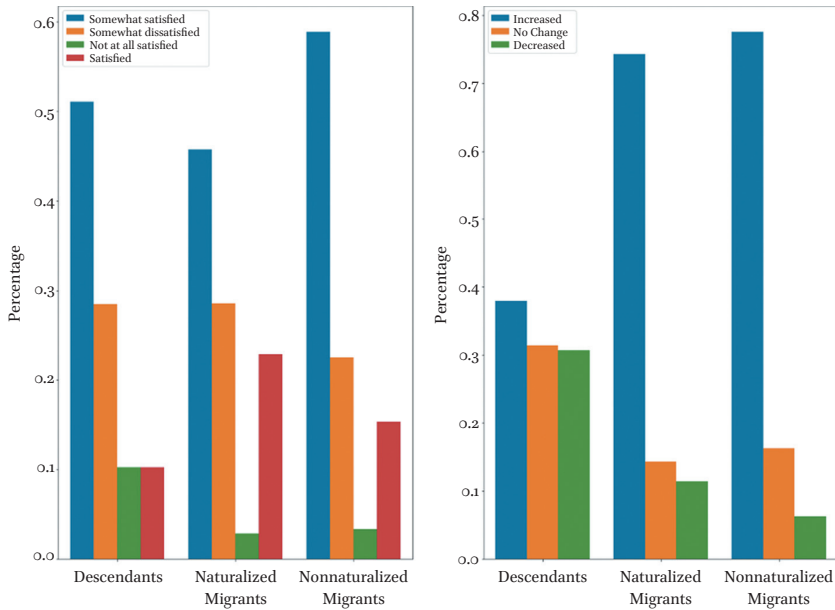


FIGURE 1.2 Bar plots showing the level of satisfaction with Covid-19 information (left) and the evolution of the time spent on information about the Covid-19 pandemic (right) among the respondents of the questionnaire

distinguished. On the one hand, migrants have largely increased the time spent on obtaining information (74.2% of the naturalized migrants and 77.7% of the nonnaturalized migrants), and only a small share claim that they have not changed their time spent on obtaining information (14.2% of the naturalized migrants and 16.2% of the nonnaturalized migrants) or have decreased it (11.4% and 6.2%, respectively). But, among the descendants, a more nuanced pattern emerges: although a small majority claims to have increased the time spent on obtaining information, a large share (31.3%) says that the time spent on obtaining information remained the same, and 30.6 percent claims that it declined.

In order to gain more insights, we performed a logistic regression analysis in which we examine the effect of migratory status, sex, age and education, media exposure, polarization of media consumption on (1) evolution in the time spent on obtaining information during the pandemic and (2) satisfaction with information about Covid-19 during this period. Figures 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 illustrate the results of an ordinal logistic regression representing the relative risks—that is, the ratio of the probability of choosing one outcome category over the probability of choosing the baseline category.

Model 1 shows that migrants, both naturalized and nonnaturalized, were more likely than descendants to increase the time spent on obtaining

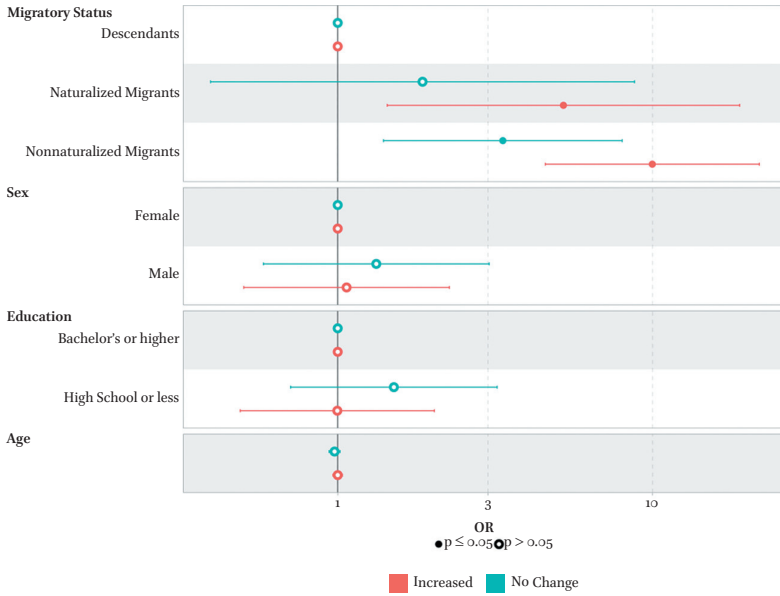


FIGURE 1.3 The effect of migratory status, sex, education, age, media exposure, and polarization of media consumption on the evolution of time spent on information about the Covid-19 pandemic

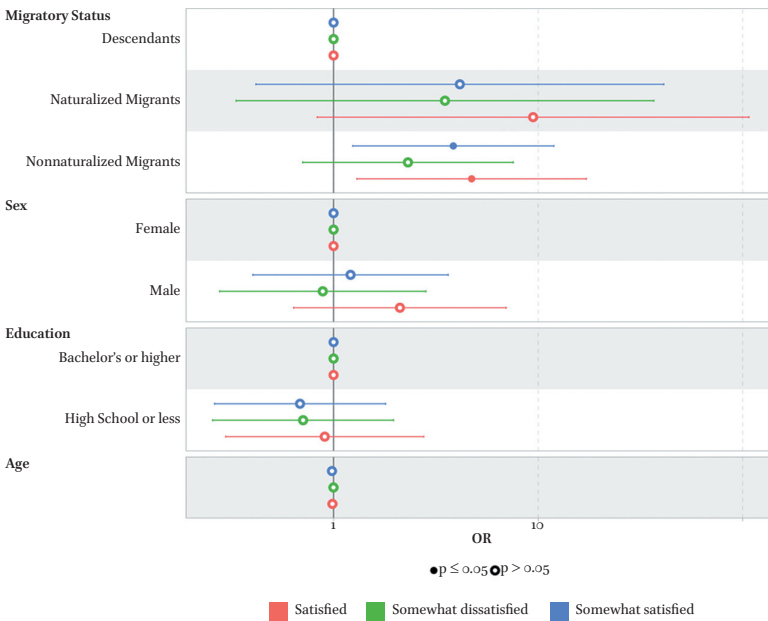


FIGURE 1.4 The effect of migratory status, sex, education, and age on the level of satisfaction with the information about the Covid-19 pandemic

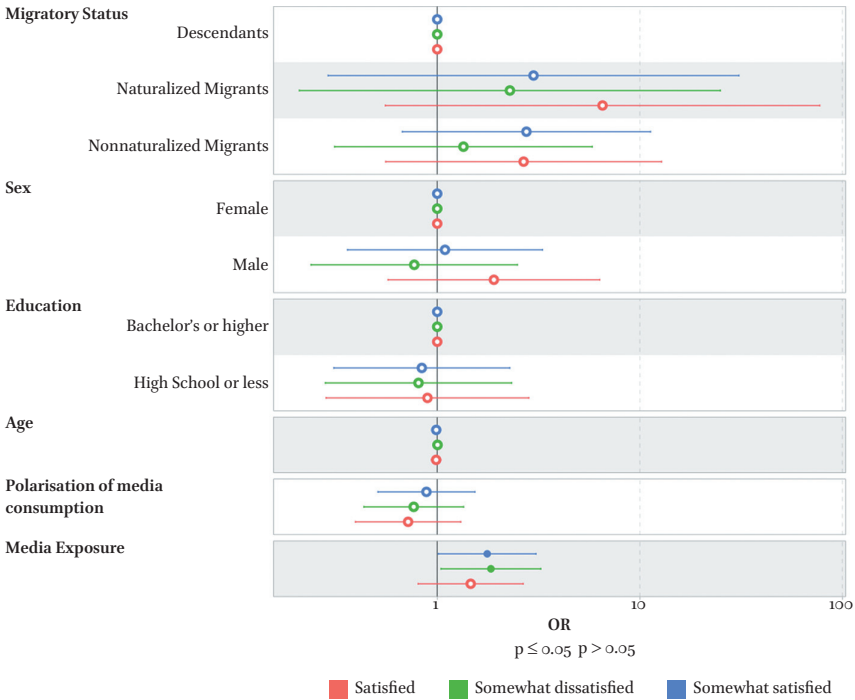


FIGURE 1.5 The effect of migratory status, sex, education, age, media exposure, and polarization of media consumption on the level of satisfaction with the information about the Covid-19 pandemic

information: that is, the relative risk ratio for switching from “decreased” to “increased” is 4.62 for naturalized migrants vs. descendants and 7.99 for non-naturalized migrants vs. descendants. Age, sex, education, polarization of media consumption, and media exposure have no significant effect on evolution in the time spent on obtaining information.

Model 2 shows that, when controlling for sex, education, and age, migrants, especially nonnaturalized migrants, were more likely than descendants to say they were “satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” rather than “dissatisfied.” That is, the relative risk ratios for switching from “not at all satisfied” to “somewhat satisfied” and “satisfied” are, respectively, 3.84 and 4.73 for nonnaturalized migrants vs. descendants and 4.14 and 9.44 for naturalized migrants vs. descendants. These trends are confirmed after polarization in media consumption and media exposure are added to the model. Moreover, media exposure appears to have a positive impact on an increase in the level of satisfaction. The relative risk ratio for a one-percentage-point increase in media exposure is 1.84 for being “somewhat dissatisfied” vs. “not at all satisfied” and 1.76 for being

“somewhat satisfied” vs. “not at all satisfied.” The statistical analysis suggests that migrants are more satisfied than descendants with information about the Covid-19 and that the fact that they have access to multiple sources of information contributes to an increase in their level of satisfaction with information.

The ethnographic interviews provide some possible explanations of these trends. Migrants, especially highly educated migrants, feel the need to learn about the evolution in the pandemic in both China and France. This was particularly true during the first months of the pandemic, between January and May 2020. This need was often triggered by a feeling that the disease was very serious. In addition, they were greatly concerned about the physical and psychological well-being of relatives, friends, and loved ones in China and, as the pandemic spread to France, their own well-being. In January, China became the epicenter of the pandemic and the focus of international media attention. In this context, in January 2020, migrants, especially highly educated migrants, needed to learn about evolution in the pandemic in China using both Chinese and French sources.

Based on their statements, at least three factors drove migrants to seek more information. First, during the first weeks of January 2020, information was “hazy,” incomplete, and contradictory. Second, the Chinese government, Chinese media, and relatives in China described the disease as extremely dangerous and advocate very strict protective measures at the collective and individual level: this created concern over the physical and psychological well-being of relatives, friends, and loved ones in China. Third, the migrants perceived significant discrepancies between the statements about the danger of the disease and its evolution by Chinese and French authorities and the measures taken by the Chinese and French authorities to counter it. Thus, the lack of accuracy in information, the feeling of danger and concern about the well-being of relatives, and the perceived discrepancies between the respective postures by the Chinese and French authorities drove migrants to seek more information, to widen their media sources (French, Chinese, and other), and to compare them. This led to an increase in the amount of time spent on obtaining information. Bing, a thirty-year-old doctoral student in sociology, describes this period:

In fact, the information at the first stage [of the pandemic] was very vague; so, I mostly looked at official websites. ... Afterward, I mainly followed the Chinese health strategies, saying that “you have to put on masks” and “if it’s not necessary, don’t go out.” I completely accepted that and practiced it in France. I looked at both French and Chinese

newspapers and I took an average look, not a neutral one, by which I mean that when I look at positive news on the Chinese websites, I say to myself, “maybe [the situation is] not that positive, but when I look at the French critics of China and the discussions, notably, I look at *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, I say to myself, maybe [conditions are] not that bad. The two sources of information are both a bit too extreme. ... At that time, in January 2020, I was reading a lot of Chinese news to try to understand what this virus is; at that time, the French were demonstrating and going on strike; when I found out about the demonstrations, I was very worried because it’s like being in a restaurant, with proximity, shouting, and common gestures that would help spread the virus. And to find out about the [current] situation, I watch the local news, for example, FranceInfo or France 24, BFMTV, ... and also *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro*. ... I also get some distance and look at the news from mainland China from Taiwanese news to compare [them] because generally they say the opposite, so I will look for the differences. And it’s important to analyze. I think it’s the Taiwanese press that has used the term “Wuhan virus” most in the world.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, JANUARY 2021

Bing’s experience leads us to consider a fourth factor that contributes to the increase in time that migrants spent on obtaining information. This factor is strongly related to the second phase of the pandemic outbreak. In February, Covid-19 began to spread in Europe, particularly in France. At that time, in addition to concern about the health of relatives in China, migrants were also concerned about their own health: they started to look for information about what was going on around them in France, in particular, the French government’s management of the health crisis and preventing the virus from spreading.

In their search for information, migrants, especially well-educated migrants, tap a wide range of information sources. They believe that, in France, they can easily find the information that they are looking for. They can read a variety of newspapers or specialized magazines in different languages, watch French or foreign television channels, listen to the radio or podcasts, search online using the main search engines. Thus they have the impression that they can easily access information, compare various sources, sort out relevant information, and summarize it themselves. This is particularly true when they search for information about the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic. The high level of satisfaction with information that migrants express

is related not only to the quality of the information per se but to the potential to access and compare several sources. Jianhe, a thirty-three-year-old nonnaturalized migrant and PhD student in sociology, describes the accessibility to information as follows:

Well, it's not difficult to find [the right information]. ... I use two [mobile] apps a lot—for *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. And [I receive] a lot of messages [that I read] every day. If I want to get more information, or more targeted information, I just open Google and do a direct search, and I can get the information I need.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CHINESE, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

In short, migrants who lack proficiency in French and those with little cultural capital cannot navigate the various media sources in different languages, this does not mean that they do not screen the media sources that they access. Mr. He, a retired employee in the catering sector, said:

Some information is too upsetting and hard to take. For example, a girl in Italy decided to commit suicide in front of her mother. This type of story makes me sad for a long time, so I avoid it; in other words, I choose which information I want to access.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CANTONESE, JULY 2020

A sixty-five-year-old interviewee, Ms. Zhang, who had retired from a job at a national firm in China and had traveled to France for a family visit but was stranded there because of Covid-19, does not speak French or English. During her stay in France (in 2020), almost the only way she could become informed was through WeChat.

There is no TV at my daughter's house. Of course, we exchange information on Covid-19 with her that is in different languages and from different sources. But on my own, I can only obtain information through WeChat. I found some differences in the way that Covid-19 conditions are reported by different news sources: on the one hand, by Chinese media sources located in China and, on the other hand, by Chinese-language media outlets run by Chinese people in France. The first one conveys the Chinese government's ideas, and the second one translates the French government's plans into Chinese and disseminates the Chinese news from China. At the beginning of the pandemic [January and February 2020]

I only followed Chinese media based in China on the pandemic conditions. But it made me too stressed, and I couldn't fall asleep at night. Later, my daughter told me about this second type of Chinese media, based in France. The information about the pandemic is presented a little less dramatically, and when I read it, I feel less stressed.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN CHINESE, OCTOBER 2020

Ms. Zhang's description highlights the nuances in the media posture by different sources of news even in Chinese. Based on the geographic source of media, the national context in which the media is embedded affects how the content is produced and how the Covid-19 pandemic is depicted. And all these elements undoubtedly influence the representation of the pandemic described and internalized by individuals (see below, section 4).

The descendants' stance seems to be more ambivalent. Indeed, 30 percent of the descendants said they had reduced the time spent on obtaining information. Moreover, although the majority of descendants responded that they are "rather satisfied" or "satisfied" with the information on Covid-19, they are less satisfied than migrants, and 10 percent said they are "not at all satisfied."

Our interviews highlight two factors that explain the dissatisfaction of some descendants. First, the many views and actors in the French media can present contradictory information and create some cacophony. Because of that context, some respondents said that they feel "lost" and "frustrated" and have lost trust in the messages transmitted and those transmitting them. Second, some respondents denounced the ethnic and racist comments about populations of Chinese origin that appeared in some French media, especially during the first phase of the pandemic, when the disease was strongly associated with Asian ethnicity. Camille, a student who is a twenty-three-year-old descendant, explains why she reduced her media consumption:

My media consumption decreased during Covid, because of some of the comments. ... Sometimes, I has nightmares about reading the comments in some publications, and then I start going crazy. ... And even the media coverage was unbearable. It was not informative, ... it made me tired. ... But the way that China was treated by the Western media, in my opinion, is very marked by a certain orientalism, by something that is "otherizing," ... [as if Chinese people form] a "shapeless mass," ... "they are numerous, it's their fault," as if they are people who are not individuals.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, NOVEMBER 4, 2020

4 Access to Different Representations and Narratives on Covid-19

In this section, we show that the differential tendencies in the media consumption of different groups lead to various representations of Covid-19 and the measures needed to deal with it by delivering very different narratives.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the strong polarization in media consumption toward French sources and the partial and indirect access to Chinese information (due to a lack of Chinese-language skills) mediated by parents or family members put the descendants in a position in-between them. On the one hand, information from Chinese media and, on the other hand, information from French media. This intermediary position enables them to take a critical attitude toward the information that they obtain. But, at the same time, it exposes them to contradictory information: the Chinese media deliver strong indications of the severity of the disease and urgent demands for compliance with protective measures, whereas the French media present more flexible attitudes and temporize about the gravity of the disease.

Amanda, a twenty-three-year-old descendant who works as an executive in the insurance industry, describes her state of mind as follows:

Clearly, there are differences in how Covid-19 is presented: in France, we continue to go out, and everyone says, “it’s ok, it’s not very serious; there are no problems for young people; it’s just like the flu,” whereas in China my whole family says, “don’t go out, don’t go out.” [They offered] two conflicting views. ... So, I felt a bit in between the two, and I don’t know whether I should believe Chinese media, because I know how it works in China, and I know that in France, we also underestimate the situation. ... For example, in France, they said that we didn’t need to wear masks and that it wouldn’t make a difference, but in China, they said, “never leave your house without a mask.” ... I regularly view French media, but because I am often in contact with my grandmother [who lives in Cambodia] via WeChat, I often get feedback about Chinese media discourse. And so, based on my reading, I was not really concerned about the disease, however, because of what she said, I was still quite vigilant/aware.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, NOVEMBER 2020

At the beginning of the pandemic, Amanda, like a majority of the descendants interviewed, was not worried about Covid-19; indeed, French media delivered rather reassuring messages. Still, she began to be careful after talking to her

grandmother in Cambodia on WeChat, because she gained access to Chinese information that was constantly conveying messages of danger and the need for vigilance. Amanda is aware of the differences in the political and media narratives about the Covid-19 pandemic between the French and Chinese contexts, and she feels like she is “in between.” She is also aware that these narratives deeply affect the attitudes and behaviors of her relatives and friends in France and China. Although she is suspicious of information from China, she starts to maintain some distance from information from France. This ambivalence between French and Chinese information can create tension and conflict, which are expressed with her family or among friends. These conflicts unfold with her family regarding the concerns and highly protective attitudes (e.g., total elimination of going out before the lockdown by the French government) by parents and the more relaxed attitude about protective measures and greater carefreeness by their children. In the friendship or work context, these conflicts are expressed in terms of vigilance by the descendants and the complete carelessness and lack of protective measures by their French friends or colleagues. Thus the descendants hear different and in some ways contradictory narratives about Covid-19 and the measures needed to address it. Compared to consistent messages on Covid-19 presented by Chinese media, the many contradictory positions aired on French media might produce a sense of confusion.

Awareness of discrepancies in the media narratives between the French and Chinese contexts is also demonstrated by the experience of highly educated migrants. After January 2020, they were quickly struck by the outbreak of the pandemic in China and by the narratives produced and disseminated through Chinese media and social media. Chinese media reported the lockdown of the Hebei region, the mobilization of thousands of doctors and nurses, the construction of new hospitals, and described the virus as extremely dangerous, encouraging the population to take protective measures immediately. Moreover, among the migrants, the Covid-19 outbreak recalled painful experiences with the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) pandemic in 2002 and the strict protective measures (at the individual and collective level) employed to counter it. In addition, in conversing with their families and relatives in China, migrants heard about concern over the virus from their parents and friends. After January, migrants began to worry about the virus and expressed concern about the physical health of their parents and friends in China and the possible spread of the virus in France.

Zhe, a thirty-six-year-old migrant from the Hubei region and a geologist at the University of Nancy, describes his feeling of stress and anxiety between

January and March 2020, when the virus was spreading in China and then globally:

To be honest, it was really scary to see those people [in the Hubei region]; many people in a panic looking for help, ... and watching the news [on Chinese media] about many families that lost loved ones, or an entire family that died, and so on; it is very sad. A more painful private thing: at the time, my grandfather and my cousin were infected, but luckily they survived, ... they were in the hospital for nearly forty days. ... Social networks are a good tool for getting information, ... but there is a problem: a lot of information is not verified and produces panic and false judgments. This is a personal example: at the end of December 2019, I saw in the news that someone had said that SARS returned to Wuhan, and some people were infected. Some doctors, such as Li Wenliang, passed information to their own small circle. ... When I saw this information, I became very afraid because I experienced the first SARS [outbreak]. ... My perception was that this new virus is very, very scary, and, if you get it, you will die. At the time, I saw some reports in Chinese media about someone who suddenly fell to the ground and died; when I saw this report, I became very, very nervous, because many Chinese people live in Nancy. At the time, it was the end of the French [winter] holidays, and many students from Hubei were returning to France.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, JANUARY 2021

Zhe believes that, by describing the virus as extremely dangerous to people's health, Chinese official media and social media played a crucial role in the increase in stress and anxiety by migrants. The narratives and the descriptions spread by Chinese media (both official and social media) drove Zhe to change his behavior and attitudes and to take strict protective measures, such as asking his wife to stop working and isolating themselves at home very early on, starting "about February 29," three weeks before the national lockdown in France.

What I want to say is that Chinese media only spreads fear through terrifying reports, such as the young man who fell to the ground and died. ... I am an example of this myself: at first, I was really afraid even to go out. ... [or] to touch anything because I believed that I would get infected—after all, I have a wife and children at home.

Clearly, Zhe was aware of the different cultural representations of the disease in different countries: the Chinese media view in particular focused on "fear"

of the virus, whereas the approach in European and US media seemed more scientific, focusing on data, and describing the virus in less dangerous terms. These different representations affected the way in which people experienced the pandemic—specifically, the effect of Covid-19 on their personal level of stress and anxiety, as Zhe describes:

I continually followed the data from the United States, France, and Europe, but I slowly realized that if you look carefully at the data, and relevant academic papers, the average global mortality rate is about 0.1 percent, and it may be different for different ages. For example, the mortality rate for people under age fifty might be 0.0 or so, whereas for those over age sixty, the mortality rate is about 3 percent or 4 percent. This is why some people say that Covid-19 is just like the flu. I am not saying this to make people relax their vigilance, but ... what I want to say is that when I have more comprehensive data and papers, I will gradually calm down. Of course, I think it was necessary to take protective measures, but based on Chinese information, this was done blindly and created a lot of pressure on my psyche. ... My in-laws in China have not calmed down yet; for example, they know that [in France] 10,000 to 20,000 people a day are diagnosed [as being infected], so they believe that we are surrounded by the virus. They have been in a very fearful state ever since January 23, when the lockdown in Wuhan started.

Zhe has access to both French and Chinese media (and other international media) and can compare the information from both of them. Based on this comparison, his own representations of the disease changed, from being a deadly disease to one that, while serious, is somewhat less dangerous.

Like Zhe, many educated migrants compared sources from different contexts. This enabled them to look at the information with some mental distance to construct their own views about the disease and its dangers. As mentioned earlier, the ability to access information from multiple national contexts selectively helps them to feel satisfied about the information they obtain but, at the same time, increases the time spent in pursuing this information.

Finally, the quantitative data we collected shows that the media accessed by less-educated migrants was strongly tilted toward Chinese sources for linguistic reasons. This has a strong impact on their attitudes, behaviors, and protective measures. The effect of this differential access to narratives produced in French and Chinese on the behaviors of less-educated migrants is demonstrated in the following account by Amanda, a twenty-three-year-old

descendant and an insurance executive, about her parents' attitudes toward the disease:

Every time my father watches Chinese TV, he gets a bit worried, and then he watches French TV and says to himself, "well, it's not that serious after all." And so he goes out once or twice a day to buy a newspaper and groceries. He wanted to continue to go out, but my mother was really worried because she doesn't understand much French, and she doesn't know what is said on French media. She only has Chinese information, and so she says to my father, "don't go out, don't go out," but my father still wants to go out. ... Later, we became aware that sometimes a lot of fake news circulates in China, so we didn't know whom to believe. Because my father watches [the French cable news channel] BFM and hears what its reporters or French officials have to say, he trusts French information more. My mother, however, gets information from the Chinese media, so she gets the Chinese point of view. She understands much less French than my father, ... she doesn't know what is said in French newspapers, only what is said in the Chinese press and what my family in China says. We talked on the phone with our family in China almost every day, and they told us, "don't go out." They told my mother, "don't go out, stay at home, don't go out, even to go shopping. Go out once a week; go out as little as possible. Afterward, you have to disinfect all the groceries; disinfect yourself well and wear masks."

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED IN FRENCH, NOVEMBER 2020

Amanda describes the influence of media consumption practices on the attitudes of her migrant parents: her mother, who only accesses Chinese information, takes very strict measures, whereas her father, by listening to French news, downplays the severity of the disease as described by the Chinese media and allows himself to engage in more flexible protection measures.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the majority of the elderly people interviewed criticize how the French government is handling the pandemic. Some Chinese nationalist discourses emerge in the WeChat group by older people who are nostalgic for the Maoist period. Obviously, when these elderly people talk to their children and grandchildren, they feel out of step with them, as illustrated by Amanda's comments. These discrepancies are largely fueled by the divergent in their media consumption in terms of the source and language. In Chapter 2, we analyze the discrepancies between different groups of Chinese living in France, and how these discrepancies translate into different attitudes and protective measures, in more detail.

5 Conclusion

Many studies have examined the impact of media consumption on collective and individual behavior across various groups defined by their demographics and their cultural origins during the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers have looked at how different media (official media or social media) influence (or not) the adoption of protective measures at both the individual and collective level, affect individual mental health, fuel the feeling of racial stigma, and support the successful implementation of national and international policies to control the spread of the virus. A majority of these studies focus on the different types of media, but they give less attention to the content being broadcast. Our study examines the effect of multilingual media originating in different national and transnational settings on the behavior of Chinese people living in France by describing their different representations of the Covid-19 disease. Because the Chinese and French representations of the Covid-19 pandemic have been so different, we believe that the differential access to information, which is socially constructed in the two national contexts, heavily affects not only the perception of Covid-19 disease by the Chinese diaspora but also the preventive measures adopted (see Chapter 2).

By analyzing different media consumption practices by the population in France of Chinese origin, we highlight the differences between migrants and descendants in terms of polarization in media consumption and exposure. We find that descendants have highly polarized media consumption with a preference for French information, and that migrants, in particular those with a bachelor's degree or higher, consume a larger variety of media. We also show that highly educated migrants, who consume more media sources, tend to consume more media from French sources and continually compare French and Chinese sources. During the pandemic, they have strongly increased their media consumption and are more satisfied than the descendants with information about Covid-19. Finally, we show that migrants whose media consumption is highly polarized, with a preference for French information, are less likely to take protective measures, because of the France views of the disease that present it as not very dangerous or as dangerous only for vulnerable populations. But descendants who consume Chinese sources in addition to the many French sources have a strong tendency to engage in protective measure. Furthermore, they put the information obtained from French media sources into perspective by comparing it with the information from Chinese media sources.

References

- Balech, S., Benavent, C., Calciu, M., & Monnot, J. (2021). The Covid-19 crisis: An NLP exploration of the French Twitter feed (February–May 2020). In G. Meiselwitz (Ed.), *Social Computing and Social Media: Applications in Marketing, Learning, and Health* (pp. 308–321). Springer International. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77685-5_24.
- First, J. M., Shin, H., Ranjit, Y. S., & Houston, J. B. (2021). Covid-19 stress and depression: Examining social media, traditional media, and interpersonal communication. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 26(2), 101–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2020.1835386>.
- Garfin, D. R., Silver, R. C., & Holman, E. A. (2020). The novel coronavirus (Covid-2019) outbreak: Amplification of public health consequences by media exposure. *Health Psychology*, 39(5), 355–357. <https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0000875>.
- Jiang, H., Nan, J., Lv, Z., & Yang, J. (2020). Psychological impacts of the Covid-19 epidemic on Chinese people: Exposure, post-traumatic stress symptom, and emotion regulation. *Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine*, 13(6), 252. <https://doi.org/10.4103/1995-7645.281614>.
- Liu, C., & Liu, Y. (2020). Media exposure and anxiety during Covid-19: The mediation effect of media vicarious traumatization. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(13), 4720. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134720>.
- Liu, P. L. (2020). COVID-19 information seeking on digital media and preventive behaviors: The mediation role of worry. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 23(10), 677–682. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0250>.
- Melki, J., Tamim, H., Hadid, D., Makki, M., El Amine, J., & Hitti, E. (2021). Mitigating infodemics: The relationship between news exposure and trust and belief in Covid-19 fake news and social media spreading. *PLOS ONE*, 16(6), e0252830. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252830>.
- Nazione, S., Perrault, E., & Pace, K. (2021). Impact of information exposure on perceived risk, efficacy, and preventative behaviors at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States. *Health Communication*, 36(1), 23–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1847446>.
- Price, S., & Harbisher, B. (Eds.), *Power, Media and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Framing Public Discourse*, London and New York: Routledge, 2022, 273 p.
- Schmidt, A., Brose, A., Kramer, A. C., Schmiedek, F., Witthöft, M., & Neubauer, A. B. (2021). Dynamic relations among COVID-19-related media exposure and worries during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Psychology & Health*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2021.1912345>.
- Sun, W., & Yu, H. (Eds.) (2022). *WeChat and the Chinese Diaspora: Digital Transnationalism in the Era of China's Rise*. Routledge.
- Tsai, J.-Y., Phua, J., Pan, S., & Yang, C. (2020). Intergroup contact, COVID-19 news consumption, and the moderating role of digital media trust on prejudice toward Asians

- in the United States: Cross-sectional study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9), e22767. <https://doi.org/10.2196/22767>.
- Wang, S. (2022). WeChat, ethnic grouping and class belonging: The formation of citizen identity among Chinese living in Paris. In W. Sun & H. Yu (Eds.), *WeChat and the Chinese Diaspora: Digital Transnationalism in the Era of China's Rise* (pp. 212–233). Routledge.
- Wicke, P., & Bolognesi, M. M. (2020). Framing COVID-19: How we conceptualize and discuss the pandemic on Twitter. *PLOS ONE*, 15(9), e0240010. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240010>.
- Wong, F. H. C., Liu, T., Leung, D. K. Y., Zhang, A. Y., Au, W. S. H., Kwok, W. W., Shum, A. K. Y., Wong, G. H. Y., & Lum, T. Y.-S. (2021). Consuming information related to Covid-19 on social media among older adults and its association with anxiety, social trust in information, and Covid-safe behaviors: Cross-sectional telephone survey. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 23(2), e26570. <https://doi.org/10.2196/26570>.
- Wu, C., Qian, Y., & Wilkes, R. (2021). Anti-Asian discrimination and the Asian-white mental health gap during Covid-19. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(5), 819–835. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2020.1851739>.
- Yu, M., Li, Z., Yu, Z., He, J., & Zhou, J. (2021). Communication-related health crisis on Social media: A case of Covid-19 outbreak. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(19), 2699–2705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1752632>.
- Zhao, N., & Zhou, G. (2021). Covid-19 stress and addictive social media use (SMU): Mediating role of active use and social media flow. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12, 635546. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.635546>.