

Effects of COVID on the Chinese Diaspora in Europe and Africa

2021 International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) Regional Workshop

5 December 2021

Call for Papers

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China in January 2020 and the subsequent spread of the global pandemic once again jettisoned Chinese minorities across the continents of Africa and Europe into the spotlight. This signified a surge of Sinophobia spurred on by Trump's anti-Chinese sentiments with his reference to the "Chinese flu", the "Chinese virus" and "Kung flu". Incidents of COVID hate-crimes proliferated worldwide [<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-worldwide#>] including both Africa and Europe. Under the global umbrella provided by ISSCO, this one-day colloquium aims to foster comparative discussions regarding regional variations in Chinese diaspora and Sinophobia under the heightened crisis wrought by the international pandemic.

Within Europe, since the early 20th century the Chinese have periodically been subjected to stigmatization, stereotyping, racism and discrimination. Over time they became accepted as local people and were integral to the national economies of the respective countries they lived in, at first in special economic niches and later in mainstream occupations. The London East End's Chinatown imaginary of the 1910s, has once again been recalled with the criminalization of their activities associated with mafia behavior, illegal migration and exploitation becoming the scapegoat for social malaise and periodic economic crisis. The pandemic COVID-19 has once more triggered the entrenched stereotypes across Europe in the context of geopolitical change reconstructing China as a competitor and enemy, and the people of Chinese origin living in it, as dangerous. The racist outbreaks in Europe were contested by young Chinese in widespread campaigns on social networks and mainstream media. But, after one and half years, what are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Chinese in Europe?

Within Africa, anti-Chinese sentiments date back to the very earliest encounters between Europeans and Chinese in the mid-seventeenth century on the southern-most shores of the Cape. Some of the very first racially based legislation on the continent emanated from Dutch ordinances promulgated to keep the Chinese in "check" and combat their competition in the Cape settlement. In the subsequent centuries, European colonial occupation of the African continent drew Chinese labourers to the continent to work the mines, build the railways and develop other infrastructure. The sinophobia prevalent in the late nineteenth and twentieth century persisted intermittently to the present century apparent in continued racial fears of Chinese competition, foreignness, and inassimilability. The COVID pandemic of 2020 inflamed these latent hostilities and fueled public blame and recriminations for the origins and spread of the virus. Sinophobic reactions have varied, however, shaped by national histories of Chinese immigration and settlement and international relations to China. This call for papers encourages research and perspectives that will facilitate comparison of heterogeneities among Chinese diasporas through the lens of different responses and interpretations to the COVID pandemic.

Information

- 1) The workshop will be conducted virtually - Zoom Colloquium Link: TBA
- 2) The Workshop will be in English and Chinese.
- 3) Workshop Fees – No Fees. ISSCO membership is preferable, but non-members will also be eligible to submit papers and proposals. ISSCO encourages all participants to become members of ISSCO to support our non-profit academic association. Please pay your ISSCO membership fees or sign up for membership by visiting the [ISSCO website](#).

Important Dates

- Abstract Due: October 15, 2021 (Name, institutional affiliation, paper title, 250 words, in English or Chinese)
- Acceptance Notification: Oct. 30, 2021
- Workshop Dates: December 5, 2021

Contact Persons

For further information and submission of abstract, please contact:

- Prof Joaquin Beltran (joaquin.beltran@uab.cat)
- Prof Karen L Harris (karen.harris@up.ac.za)

Organizers

- International Society for the Study of the Chinese Overseas (ISSCO)
- Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona — Professor Joaquin Beltran (Department of Translation and Interpreting and of East Asian Studies. East Asian Studies and Research Center-CERAO)
- The University of Pretoria — Professor Karen L Harris (Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, University of Pretoria)
