CMS WORKING PAPER 2022/1

Manlin Cai & Yue Qian

Digital Enclaves: Partner Preferences and Platform Choices among Chinese Immigrant Online Daters in Vancouver

May 2022

The Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), a UBC Research Excellence Cluster, was established as a university-level centre in the Faculty of Arts in 2020 as one of the strategic initiatives of the University of British Columbia (UBC). The Centre's mandate is to provide an interdisciplinary home for migration and mobility research at UBC and promote cutting-edge research, graduate training, and community and policy outreach on issues of migration. Within UBC, the Centre is supported by UBC's Excellence Funds, the Faculty of Arts (Dean's Office), the Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies, and the Peter A. Allard School of Law.

Abstract

In light of the growing racialized immigrant population in Canada and advances in dating technologies, this study examines Chinese immigrants' partner preferences and partner selection processes through the lens of online dating. We draw on in-depth interviews with 31 Chinese immigrants who have used online dating services in Metro Vancouver to search for different-sex partners. Chinese immigrant online daters show strong preferences for dating Chinese. They emphasize permanent residency status and similarity in age at arrival when evaluating potential partners. Given their preferences, Chinese immigrants strategically choose the dating platforms they primarily use. Men exhibit higher selectivity in their preferences and choices of platforms. Notably, platforms catering to Chinese users create "digital enclaves" where Chinese immigrant daters congregate. The findings illuminate the intersection of race, gender, immigrant status, and age at arrival in shaping divergent experiences of partner selection and immigrant integration in the digital era.

KEYWORDS: integration, Chinese, gender, immigration, partner selection, online dating

Authors

Manlin Cai is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests center around family, gender, and immigration in China and Canada.
manlin19@student.ubc.ca

Yue Qian is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on social demography, family, and gender in East Asian and North American contexts. Specifically, she has been studying how gender intersects with family and population processes, such as assortative mating, divisions of labor, and migration, to shape individual well-being and societal inequality.
yue.qian@ubc.ca

Table of Contents

Introduction[1]

In immigrant-receiving countries like Canada, intermarriage is a key indicator of immigrant integration.[2] Increasing levels of intimate relationships formed across racial/ethnic and nativity lines signal the weakening and blurring of social boundaries between population groups.[3] A large body of intermarriage research has found that immigrants tend to marry other co-ethnic immigrants instead of intermarrying, although variation exists by race/ethnicity, gender, age at arrival, and socioeconomic status.[4]

While prior research has examined immigrants' marital patterns, little is known about their partner preferences. For example, Lichter and colleagues argue that differences in intermarriage rates across immigrant groups stem from four "predisposing conditions": race/ethnicity, national origin, economic incorporation, and preferences.[5] While they explicitly measure the first three conditions, they assume that the unexplained variation net of observed characteristics reflects preferences. Theoretically, preferences are a crucial basis for partner

[2] Richard D. Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 17-66; Milton Myron Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (Oxford University Press, 1964), 115-31; Matthijs Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 395-421.
[3] Zhenchao Qian and Daniel T. Lichter, "Social Boundaries and Marital Assimilation: Interpreting Trends in Racial and Ethnic Intermarriage," *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 1 (2007): 68-94.
[4] Kate H. Choi and Marta Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing of Migration," *International Migration Review 52*, no. 3 (2018): 929-62; Sharon M. Lee and Monica Boyd, "Marrying Out: Comparing the Marital and Social Integration of Asians in the Us and Canada," *Social Science Research* 37, no. 1 (2008): 311-29; Daniel T.Lichter, Zhenchao Qian, and Dmitry Tumin, "Whom Do Immigrants Marry? Emerging Patterns of Intermarriage and Integration in the United States," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 662, no. 1 (2015): 57-78; Zhenchao Qian, Jennifer E. Glick, and Christie D. Batson, "Crossing Boundaries: Nativity, Ethnicity, and Mate Selection," *Demography* 49, no. 2 (2012): 651-75; Zhenchao Qian and Daniel T. Lichter, "Measuring Marital Assimilation: Intermarriage among Natives and Immigrants," *Social Science Research* 30, no. 2 (2001): 289-312; Zhenchao Qian and Yue Qian, "Generation, Education, and Intermarriage of Asian Americans," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 14 (2020): 2880-95.
[5] Lichter, Qian, and Tumin, "Whom Do Immigrants Marry," 57-78.

choices,[6] but immigrants' preferences for potential partners are more often assumed than empirically interrogated. To fill this gap, we investigate what immigrants value in potential partners and why they value certain attributes.

This study examines immigrants' partner preferences and selection processes in Canada through the lens of online dating. Single people increasingly search for romantic partners online.[7] In Canada, revenue from online dating services reached 126 million dollars in 2020,[8] and the number of online daters is forecasted to increase from 2.2 million in 2020 to 3.0 million in 2024.[9] Looking for partners online may be especially appealing to immigrants because international relocation makes it challenging for them to extend their social circles in the host society.[10]

We draw on interviews with 31 Chinese immigrants in Metro Vancouver (hereafter Vancouver). Vancouver is one of Canada's most popular immigrant-receiving metropolises, with Chinese immigrants representing the largest foreign-born group.[11] Our participants, including 17 women and 14 men, used online dating services in Vancouver to search for different-sex partners. We pay particular attention to online daters' preferences. On many dating sites/apps, users are asked to state their criteria for partners. Thus, in online dating settings, partner preferences often are explicitly expressed and less constrained by local marriage markets.[12] We also investigate how Chinese immigrants' partner preferences influence their choices of online

---

[6] Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy," 395-421; Christine R. Schwartz, "Trends and Variation in Assortative Mating: Causes and Consequences," *Annual Review of Sociology* 39 (2013): 451-70; Jessica Vasquez-Tokos, *Marriage Vows and Racial Choices* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2017),1-33.

[7] Michael J. Rosenfeld, Reuben J. Thomas, and Sonia Hausen, "Disintermediating Your Friends: How Online Dating in the United States Displaces Other Ways of Meeting," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 36 (2019): 17753-58.

[8] Samuel Kanda, "Canada industry (MAICS) report 81299ACA dating services in Canada," IBISWorld, last modified October 28, 2021, https://www.ibisworld.com/canada/market-research-reports/dating-services-industry/.

[9] Christoph Blumtritt, "Forecast of the Number of Online Users for Dating Services in Canada Until 2024," Statista, last modified January 22, 2022, https://www.statista.com/forecasts/676568/eservices-dating-services-online-user-by-segment-in-canada/.

[10] Yue Qian, "Disruption or Reproduction? Nativity, Gender and Online Dating in Canada," *Internet Research* (2021).

[11] Statistics Canada, "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results From the 2016 Census, " last modified October 25, 2017, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm?indid=14428-1&indgeo=0; Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census, Vancouver, British Columbia," last modifed April 23, 2022, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=933&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=vancouver&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1

[12] Belinda Robnett and Cynthia Feliciano, "Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion by Internet Daters," *Social Forces* 89, no. 3 (2011): 807-28.

dating platforms and explore variation in their preferences and platform choices. Overall, this study will provide an in-depth understanding of how immigrants take diverse paths in partner selection and illuminate the crucial implications of relationship formation in the digital era for ethnoracial relations and immigrant integration in Canada.

Theories of Assimilation and Intermarriage

Scholars have long used the notion of assimilation to theorize the ways in which immigrants and their descendants adapt to the host country.[13] The classical assimilation theory predicts a unidirectional and irreversible outcome for all immigrants, which is linear assimilation into the mainstream host culture (i.e., the middle-class white culture in the U.S.).[14] Gordon views intermarriage with native-born whites as the ultimate indicator of assimilation.[15] This theory— while illuminating the experiences of European white immigrants to the U.S. during the twentieth century—insufficiently captures the adaptation trajectories of contemporary racialized immigrants to a predominantly white host society.[16]

Extending the classical assimilation theory, the segmented assimilation theory proposed by Portes and Zhou underscores the divergent trajectories and outcomes of immigrant assimilation in contemporary U.S. society.[17] This theory focuses on the new second generation who are children of post-1965 immigrants from racially and economically diverse backgrounds. Assimilation is segmented in that the new second-generation can experience upward or downward assimilation into different economic segments of American society. Importantly, this theory emphasizes the contextual effects of co-ethnic communities. When co-ethnics congregate to live and work in geographically bounded areas of the host society, ethnic enclaves occur and further create strong social networks.[18] Such enclaves (e.g., Chinatowns) can facilitate the

---

[13] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream 17-66*; Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life 115-31*; Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 74-96.
[14] Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life 115-131*.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream 17-66*; Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation," 74-96; Min Zhou and Roberto G. Gonzales, "Divergent Destinies: Children of Immigrants Growing up in the United States," *Annual Review of Sociology* 45 (2019): 383-99.
[17] Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation," 74-96.
[18] Kenneth L. Wilson and Alejandro Portes, "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 2 (1980): 295-319.

upward mobility of their members while persevering the ethnic culture.[19] The segmented assimilation theory focuses on the potential positive effects of ethnic enclaves on economic incorporation, but some research suggests that such enclaves may limit intergroup contact, reduce intermarriage, and thus hinder marital assimilation for racial minorities.[20]

As another reformulation of the classical assimilation theory, the new assimilation theory developed by Alba and Nee offers an inclusive framework to account for the diverse paths to assimilation in multiple domains among all immigrant generations.[21] The processes of assimilation are shaped by forces operating at varying levels, such as individuals' self-interests and agency, social networks in ethnic communities, labor market structures, and immigration and settlement policies. Assimilation therefore takes different forms "both within and across ethnic groups."[22] Despite acknowledging intermarriage as a key indicator of assimilation, this theory recognizes America's recent celebration of multiculturalism and hence does not view intermarriage with native-born whites as the culmination of assimilation.

Alba and Nee underscore the substantial variation in intermarriage across groups and the critical implications of intermarriage for social boundaries.[23] High levels of racial/ethnic intermarriage indicate diminished status distinctions and group boundaries between people of different races/ethnicities.[24] With an increase in immigrants, if native-born people retreat from marrying someone of a different race/ethnicity but increasingly marry foreign-born co-ethnics, it suggests that distinctions drawn along nativity lines are weakened but ethnoracial boundaries remain rigid.[25]

---

[19] Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation," 74-96; Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Temple University Press, 2010), 91-118; Min Zhou and John R. Logan, "Returns on Human Capital in Ethic Enclaves: New York City's Chinatown," *American Sociological Review* (1989): 809-20.

[20] Kate H. Choi and Marta Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints and Mate-Selection Behavior: Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Intermarriage," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79, no. 2 (2017): 301-17; Zhenchao Qian, Daniel T. Lichter, and Dmitry Tumin, "Divergent Pathways to Assimilation? Local Marriage Markets and Intermarriage among U.S. Hispanics," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80, no. 1 (2018): 271-88.

[21] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream 17-66.*

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Qian and Lichter, "Social Boundaries," 68-94.

[25] Qian and Lichter, "Social Boundaries," 68-94.

Heterogeneity in Partner Selection among Immigrants

Treating intermarriage as a barometer of boundary-crossing, research on Asians[26] in North America indicates that ethnoracial and nativity boundaries remain difficult to cross: Racial/ethnic endogamy is common and has increased with the large influx of immigrants from Asia; foreign-born immigrants are more likely to marry foreign-born than native-born co-ethnics.[27] Boundary-crossing in union formation is influenced by marriage market conditions. Larger group size and higher ethnic concentration expand the pool of co-ethnic partners, thereby impeding intermarriage across racial/ethnic boundaries.[28]

Gender also prominently shapes boundary-crossing in relationship formation for Asians.[29] In the U.S., about 70 percent of Asian adults are immigrants.[30] Existing research, while not specifically distinguishing immigrants from U.S.-born Asians, reveals that a lower percentage of Asian men than Asian women marry a different-race partner.[31] Asian men's lower intermarriage rate is due, in part, to their unfavourable position in the U.S. dating market.[32] For instance, in online dating, Asian men are far more likely than Asian women to be excluded as potential partners by non-Asians.[33] Scholars posit that Asian men's lower desirability as romantic partners is rooted in racial stereotypes that portray Asian men as unmasculine.[34]

---

[26] Asians refer to individuals who report having Asian origins.

[27] Lee and Boyd, "Marrying Out," 311-29; Lichter, Qian, and Tumin, "Whom Do Immigrants Marry," 57-78; Pyong Gap Min and Chigon Kim, "Patterns of Intermarriages and Cross-Generational in-Marriages among Native-Born Asian Americans," *International Migration Review* 43, no. 3 (2009): 447-70; Zhenchao Qian, Sampson Lee Blair, and Stacey D. Ruf, "Asian American Interracial and Interethnic Marriages: Differences by Education and Nativity," *International Migration Review* 35, no. 2 (2001): 557-86; Qian and Lichter, "Measuring Marital Assimilation," 289-312; Qian and Lichter, "Social Boundaries," 68-94; Qian and Qian, "Generation, Education, and Intermarriage of Asian Americans," 2880-95.

[28] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 17-66; Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Feng Hou et al., "Cross-Country Variation in Interracial Marriage: A USA–Canada Comparison of Metropolitan Areas," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 9 (2015): 1591-609; Qian, Lichter, and Tumin, "Divergent Pathways," 271-88.

[29] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62; Jennifer Lee, "From Undesirable to Marriageable: Hyper-Selectivity and the Racial Mobility of Asian Americans," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 662, no. 1 (2015): 79-93; Lee and Boyd, "Marrying Out," 311-29.

[30] Abby Budiman and Neil G. Ruiz, "Asian Americans Are the Fastest-Growing Racial or Ethnic Group in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, last modified April 9, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/09/asian-americans-are-the-fastest-growing-racial-or-ethnic-group-in-the-u-s/.

[31] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Grace Kao, Kelly Stamper Balistreri, and Kara Joyner, "Asian American Men in Romantic Dating Markets," *Contexts* 17, no. 4 (2018): 48-53; Lee, "From Undesirable to Marriageable," 79-93.

[32] Kao, Balistreri, and Joyner, "Asian American Men," 48-53.

[33] Robnett and Feliciano, "Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion," 807-28.

[34] Kao, Balistreri, and Joyner, "Asian American Men," 48-53; Lee, "From Undesirable to Marriageable," 79-93.

Although the existing literature on intermarriage largely treats immigrants as one generation (i.e., first-generation immigrants), immigrants arrive in the host country at different life stages and their age at arrival has implications for marital behaviours.[35] According to the classical and new assimilation theories, younger age at arrival is linked to earlier socialization in the receiving society, including host language acquisition and exposure to societal norms, and thus predicting a higher likelihood of intermarriage.[36] Corroborating this argument, research generally finds that child immigrants are more likely than those arriving at later ages to marry outside their racial/ethnic or nativity groups.[37] However, the relationship between age at arrival and intermarriage is not necessarily linear. According to the life course paradigm, immigrants arriving during adolescence have the lowest intermarriage rate because their identity formation and social networks are disrupted by international moves during a particularly sensitive developmental stage.[38] Choi and Tienda indeed find that, among Asians (especially Asian women), adolescent immigrants are less likely than both child and adult immigrants to intermarry with whites.[39] Given the conceptual importance of age at arrival in marital assimilation, our qualitative study complements prior quantitative studies by examining what age at arrival means to immigrants in their search for romantic partners.

Partner Selection in the Digital Era

People in search of a romantic partner are increasingly using online dating services, and meeting online is now one of the most popular ways couples met.[40] Against this backdrop, our study focuses on the online dating setting. The marriage-focused literature (as reviewed above) provides relevant guidance on conceptualizing dating preferences and choices. Dating offers "a staging ground" for marriage, and in both types of relationships, individuals use similar sets of criteria to evaluate potential partners.[41] Likewise, research on dating can inform the

---

[35] Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62.
[36] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 17-66; Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, 115-31.
[37] Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62; Lee and Boyd, "Marrying Out," 311-29; Qian, Glick, and Batson, "Crossing Boundaries," 651-75.
[38] Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Rosenfeld, Thomas, and Hausen, "Disintermediating Your Friends," 17753-58.
[41] Debra L. Blackwell and Daniel T. Lichter, "Homogamy among Dating, Cohabiting, and Married Couples," *The Sociological Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2004): 719-37.

understanding of marriage formation. As marriage generally involves more commitment, social boundaries are less likely to be crossed in marital than dating relationships.[42] Thus, a finding that immigrants show strong preferences for dating co-ethnic immigrants would suggest low chances of boundary-crossing in marriage.

Although it is well-documented that couples who met offline tend to form endogamous relationships,[43] less well established is whether online dating disrupts or perpetuates existing patterns. On the one hand, online dating may facilitate boundary-crossing in relationship formation. By allowing users to meet potential partners outside of school, workplace, and existing social networks (e.g., family or friend introduction), online dating alleviates third-party control and lessens constraints on meeting opportunities that arise from offline segregation.[44] On the other hand, online dating may reinforce social boundaries and promote endogamous relationships. It is not uncommon that dating platforms target specific users (e.g., sexual minorities, elderly daters, or racial minorities), which creates niche dating markets.[45] In addition, dating sites/apps often rely on similarity-based algorithms to match users sharing common characteristics.[46] With the filtering function available on many dating platforms, users can also search for potential partners who meet their pre-existing preferences.[47]

Considering the two possibilities above, it remains an open question how racialized immigrants experience social boundaries in virtual dating markets. Online dating may diversify the pool of potential partners for immigrants or reproduce ethnic enclaves in cyberspace. By examining the preferences and search strategies adopted by immigrant online daters, our research

---

[42] Blackwell and Lichter, "Homogamy," 719-37; Kara Joyner and Grace Kao, "Interracial Relationships and the Transition to Adulthood," *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 4 (2005): 563-81.

[43] Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy," 395-421; Schwartz, "Trends and Variation," 451-70.

[44] Gina Potarca, "Does the Internet Affect Assortative Mating? Evidence from the Us and Germany," *Social Science Research* 61 (2017): 278-97; Michael J. Rosenfeld and Reuben J. Thomas, "Searching for a Mate: The Rise of the Internet as a Social Intermediary," *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 4 (2012): 523-47; Reuben J. Thomas, "Online Exogamy Reconsidered: Estimating the Internet's Effects on Racial, Educational, Religious, Political and Age Assortative Mating," *Social Forces* 98, no. 3 (2020): 1257-86.

[45] Pepper Schwartz and Nicholas Velotta, "Online Dating: Changing Intimacy One Swipe at a Time?," in *Families and Technology* (Springer, 2018), 57-88.

[46] Eli J. Finkel et al., "Online Dating: A Critical Analysis from the Perspective of Psychological Science," *Psychological Science in the Public interest* 13, no. 1 (2012): 3-66.

[47] Celeste Vaughan Curington, Jennifer Hickes Lundquist, and Ken-Hou Lin, *The Dating Divide: Race and Desire in the Era of Online Romance* (University of California Press, 2021), 45-68; Siqi Xiao and Yue Qian, "Mate Selection among Online Daters in Shanghai: Why Does Education Matter?," *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 6, no. 4 (2020): 521-46.

contributes to the broader discussions about the implications of new technologies for boundary-crossing in relationship formation.

The Vancouver and Canadian Context

Guided by the theories and research reviewed above, the current Canadian study on Chinese immigrants explores the intertwined and heterogeneous processes of partner selection and integration in the digital era. In this section, we outline three immigration-related features of Canadian society that are relevant to situating our study: the multiculturalism policy, the status distinction drawn by immigrant status, and the concentration of Chinese people in Vancouver.

Canada is a major immigrant-receiving country, with immigrants representing over 20 percent of its population in 2016.[48] The large and growing influx of immigrants from non-European countries has increased ethnocultural diversity in Canada.[49] More than just celebrating cultural diversity, Canada's multiculturalism policy dates back to 1971, working to achieve ethnic equality through promoting cultural heritage maintenance and intercultural contact.[50] Building on the new assimilation theory that acknowledges the impact of contemporary multiculturalism on marital assimilation,[51] we examine how immigrants in Canada, where multiculturalism is buttressed by a federal policy, experience ethnocultural distinctions and boundary-crossing in relationship formation.

Temporary residents are a distinct group in Canada. Based on immigrant status, Statistics Canada classifies individuals into non-immigrants, immigrants, and temporary residents.[52] Non-immigrants refer to citizens by birth, most of whom were born in Canada; immigrants are foreign-born persons who are or have been permanent residents of Canada; temporary residents include persons holding work, study, or temporary resident permits as well as refugee claimants. Although Statistics Canada's definition of "immigrants" excludes foreign-born persons holding

---

[48] Statistics Canada, "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results From the 2016 Census," last modified October 25, 2017, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm?indid=14428-1&indgeo=0

[49] Ibid.

[50] John W. Berry, "Research on Multiculturalism in Canada," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6 (2013): 663-75.

[51] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 17-66.

[52] Statistics Canada, "Immigrant Status of Person," last modified January 21, 2022, https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=103339

temporary visas, we will follow the scholarly convention and use "immigrants" to refer to all foreign-born persons who are not citizens by birth.[53]

In 2016, only 1.5 percent of Canada's total population were temporary residents whereas 21.9 percent were immigrants who were permanent residents or naturalized citizens.[54] In addition to their small share, temporary residents who are excluded from the immigrant population by Statistics Canada's definition are often ignored in reports about immigrants in Canada. Given that temporary residents are numerical minorities and also treated as a distinct group by government agencies, they may be evaluated differently from permanent residents and naturalized citizens in Canada's dating and marriage markets. It is worth noting that immigrant status can be correlated with age at arrival. Immigrants arriving at younger ages are less likely than adult immigrants to still hold temporary visas by the time they reach the prime marriage age. Thus, adult immigrants in search of romantic partners may face additional disadvantages due to their lack of citizenship (or permanent residency) status and associated rights.[55] We will explore how immigrant status and age at arrival shape social boundaries in relationship formation among Chinese immigrants in Vancouver.

In Canada, and especially in Vancouver, the relative size of the Chinese population is large. Nearly 1.8 million individuals in Canada identify as being of Chinese ethnic origin, the largest non-white origin category.[56] The share of people of Chinese origin is particularly notable in Vancouver because it has long been a popular destination for Chinese immigrants.[57] More than 20 percent of Vancouver residents identify as being of Chinese origin, accounting for 28 percent of all self-identified Chinese in Canada, although Vancouver is home to only 7 percent of

---

[53] Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62; Lichter, Qian, and Tumin, "Whom Do Immigrants Marry," 57-78; Qian and Lichter, "Social Boundaries," 68-94.

[54] Statistics Canada, "Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census," last modified April 18, 2019. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-can-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GK=CAN&GC=01&TOPIC=7.

[55] Frank D. Bean and Gillian Stevens, *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2003), 172-98.

[56] Statistics Canada, "Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census," last modified April 18, 2019. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-can-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GK=CAN&GC=01&TOPIC=7.

[57] Li Yu, "An Empirical Study of Recent Mainland Chinese Migration to Vancouver," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 19, no. 2 (2008): 180-96.

Canada's population.[58] Thus, Vancouver is an important site for the examination of the experiences and integration trajectories of Chinese immigrants.

Methods

Data and Sample

We draw on 31 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Chinese immigrants in Vancouver. Our participants were born in Greater China (Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan; see Table 1 for details). They had used online dating platforms in Vancouver to look for a different-sex partner. The interviews were conducted by the second author and a research assistant from September 2018 to April 2019. This study received ethics approval from the authors' institution.

We recruited participants through a variety of online and offline venues. We posted recruitment flyers on social media and online forums (such as Reddit), and widely distributed physical copies on information bulletins of community centres, coffee shops, and gyms across Vancouver. In addition, the recruitment information was shared on local Chinese-language news media and classified websites catering to Chinese people in Vancouver. We also recruited participants through personal connections and snowball sampling. In order to maximize the diversity of users we did not post flyers on any particular online dating platforms. We also avoided distributing the flyers on college or university campuses because we intended to interview people who had passed through emerging adulthood years (18–25 years).[59]

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of our participants (17 women and 14 men) at the time of interview. The mean age was 33 years for women and 32 years for men. Most participants were born in Mainland China (25) and had never been married (24). All participants had at least a bachelor's degree with one exception (a high school diploma through the Adult Basic Education program). For immigrant status, all participants were Canadian

---

[58] Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census, Vancouver, British Columbia," last modifed April 23, 2022, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=933&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=vancouver&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1

[59] J. J. Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood. A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties," *The American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (2000): 469-80.

permanent residents or naturalized citizens except for two men holding work or study permits (one of whom was applying for permanent residency). Twelve participants came to Canada before age 18, and the others arrived during adulthood. Our sample is younger and more educated than Chinese immigrant adults in Vancouver (authors' calculation of the 2016 Census Public Use Microdata File), corresponding to the age and educational differences between online daters and the general population in Canada.[60] The share of temporary residents in our immigrant sample (6.5 percent) is close to the national average (6.3 percent),[61] and the average among Chinese immigrant adults in Vancouver (6.8 percent; authors' calculation).

TABLE 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the 31 Participants, by Gender

Sociodemographic characteristics	Women (*N*=17)	Men (*N*=14)
Age		
20–24	0	2
25–29	8	4
30–34	4	5
35–39	3	0
40 or older	2	3
Mean	33.1	32.4
Median	31.0	30.5
Place of birth		
Mainland China	12	13
Hong Kong	2	0
Taiwan	3	1
Marital status		
Never married (single)	10	8
Never married (in a relationship)	4	2
Married	2	1
Divorced	1	3
Education level		
High school	0	1
Bachelor's degree	11	5
Master's degree	6	7
Doctoral degree	0	1
Immigrant status		

---

[60] Qian, "Disruption or Reproduction."
[61] Statistics Canada, "Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census," last modified April 18, 2019. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-can-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GK=CAN&GC=01&TOPIC=7.

Permanent resident	7	6
Naturalized citizen	10	6
Temporary resident	0	2
Age of arrival		
Before 18	6	6
18 or older	11	8

Eighteen participants were looking for a serious relationship through online dating, whereas only four were searching for casual relationships. The other nine were open to different types of relationships (e.g., long-term, short-term, or friends), although two of them explicitly excluded hookups. This characteristic of our sample echoes previous studies conducted in Canada and China which show that for most users, finding a serious relationship, instead of a casual one, is the primary purpose of using online dating services.[62] Research suggests that different-sex couples who met online indeed transition to marriage faster than those who met in other ways.[63] Overall, our findings regarding Chinese immigrant online daters' preferences and platform choices are more relevant to understanding the formation of serious relationships (especially marriage) in the digital era.

All the interviews were conducted face to face and audio-recorded with participant consent. We conducted interviews in the language preferred by the participants. Five interviews were conducted in English, and twenty-six in Mandarin (with selected quotes translated into English for this paper). Interviews lasted from one to three hours (mean = 111 minutes). During the interviews, we asked participants about their sociodemographic characteristics, motivations for using online dating services, partner preferences, online dating experiences (e.g., the platforms they chose, reasons for their choice, experiences with each platform, online interactions, offline meetings), their past relationships, and expectations for marriage and family. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy.

---

[62] Qian, "Disruption or Reproduction"; Xiao and Qian, "Mate Selection," 521-46; Robert J. Brym and Rhonda L. Lenton, "Love online: A report on digital dating in Canada, " published February 6, 2001, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237605184_Love_Online_A_Report_on_Digital_Dating_in_Canada/.
[63] Michael J. Rosenfeld, "Marriage, Choice, and Couplehood in the Age of the Internet," *Sociological Science* 4 (2017): 490-510.

Results

Preferences for Race and Ethnicity

Our participants showed a strong preference for co-ethnic dating (i.e., dating Chinese) regardless of gender. When asked about their preferences for race and ethnicity, seven women (41 percent) mentioned that they preferred to date Chinese men, among whom five only looked for Chinese men in online dating. Preferences for dating co-ethnics were even more prevalent among men: Eight male participants (57 percent) preferred to date Chinese women, with seven of them limiting their online dating pool to Chinese women.

A few other participants expanded their pool of preferred partners by including both Chinese and non-Chinese Asians. Two women expressed a preference for dating Asian men, but one of them referred to East Asians when probed by the interviewer (as Duanli put it, "people from the Asian cultures that I more or less understand, like Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, Korea…and Japan."). Two men preferred East Asian women.

A minority of the participants expressed preferences rather than only Chinese or only Asians. Of the thirty-one participants, only three men and four women were open to dating all ethnicities. Moreover, although none of our participants singled out any group of non-Asian visible minorities as preferred dating candidates, some explicitly mentioned their preferences for dating whites, suggesting that among non-Asians, whites were considered the most desirable partners. Specifically, one woman accepted both Asians and whites. Three other women were more interested in dating white men, although one of them had not yet had such an experience. As for men, none of them expressed a preference for dating white women only. One man reported that he accepted both Asians and whites as potential partners but that most people he had dated were Asians. Notably, this man and a woman preferring whites explicitly said "no blacks" when describing their preferences. Our participants' exclusion of blacks from their dating pool corroborates previous intermarriage research documenting a pattern of black exceptionalism, that is, boundaries involving blacks are more rigid than those involving non-blacks.[64]

---

[64] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Jennifer Lee and Frank D. Bean, *The Diversity Paradox: Immigration and the Color Line in Twenty-First Century America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010), 172-98.

In sum, our participants all had clear answers when asked about their ethnoracial preferences for potential partners. These well-thought-out preferences arose likely for two reasons. Because race/ethnicity is a primary category for organizing social relations,[65] our participants had developed their preferences before they started looking for partners online. They may also have been primed to think more about race/ethnicity as some dating platforms allowed users to filter potential partners by race/ethnicity without social sanctions.[66] Overall, among the Chinese immigrant online daters we interviewed in Vancouver, we found strong evidence for preferences for co-ethnic dating and little for interracial or interethnic dating. This finding highlights the prevalence of racial/ethnic preferences and the saliency of ethnoracial boundaries in online dating (as also documented in other research).[67]

Preferences for Immigrant Status

In addition to preferring co-ethnic dating, our participants emphasized potential partners' immigrant status. Many participants considered holding Canadian permanent residency as a basic criterion, or threshold, for acceptable partners. Most of these participants would not consider temporary residents when searching for partners online. Ligang (male, 27) said, "permanent residents are after all superior to temporary residents, that is, having more to offer." Once the threshold of permanent residency was reached, our participants showed no preference between dating permanent residents and dating naturalized citizens. In fact, the participants rarely brought up citizenship when talking about their partner preferences in online dating.

Permanent residency was taken for granted by our participants and considered very common and a must-have. According to the 2016 census, temporary residents accounted for only 6 percent of all foreign-born persons in Canada.[68] Our participants' observations regarding the online dating pool corresponded to the census data. As Gaoyun (female, 27) recalled, almost 90

---

[65] Cecilia L. Ridgeway, "Framed before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations," *Gender & Society* 23, no. 2 (2009): 145-60.

[66] Curington, Lundquist, and Lin, *The Dating Divide*, 45-68.

[67] Robnett and Feliciano, "Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion," 807-28; Glenn T Tsunokai, Allison R. McGrath, and Jillian K. Kavanagh, "Online Dating Preferences of Asian Americans," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 31, no. 6 (2014): 796-814.

[68] Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census, Vancouver, British Columbia," last modifed April 23, 2022, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=933&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=vancouver&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1

percent of the people, whose dating profiles she came across on the dating app 2RedBeans, mentioned that they had permanent residency. Similarly, when asked whether immigrant status mattered for him, Sam (male, 25) responded (in English): "Ah, it's not something I've had to consider yet. So, I think everybody I've talked to (in online dating) is either permanent resident or Canadian citizen." Some participants believed that it was not difficult to obtain permanent residency. As Gaoyun put it, "you would have it as long as you stayed in Canada after graduation." In addition, as pointed out by Bingxian (female, 27) who had obtained permanent residency herself, if someone was unable to obtain it with personal efforts, that person's ability must fall short of her standards. Thus, permanent residency was often viewed by our participants as a basic level of status attainment for immigrants and therefore a minimal requirement for potential partners.

While some people arrived in Canada as permanent residents, others arrived with temporary visas and obtained permanent residency later. Jiajing (female, 31) was an example of the latter group, whose story illuminated how temporary residents were disadvantaged in the online dating market. She came to Canada with a study permit in 2011 and then got a work permit through the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). The LCP allows foreign nationals to work in Canada as live-in caregivers and apply for permanent residency after certain requirements are fulfilled. While applying for permanent residency, Jiajing was looking for a Chinese partner on Jiayuan.com (a popular dating site based in China that offers services to Chinese people worldwide; also known as China's Match.com). Looking back, she thought that "still being in the process of immigration worked to my disadvantage," and that she would be "more popular in the dating market" if she "had a formal job that wasn't just for immigration purposes." She felt that some Chinese men whom she met online discriminated against her status, including her job ("living-in caregiver, especially in the eyes of Chinese people, is the same as nanny.") and her route to immigration through this job. In Jiajing's case, employment and immigrant status were tied together. Being a temporary resident and holding a devalued job created double disadvantages for Jiajing when she was evaluated as a potential partner by men.

As online daters both evaluate other candidates and are evaluated by others, the preference for Canadian permanent residency and citizenship is also manifested in how people present themselves in their search for romantic partners. Some participants strategically presented their immigrant status on their dating profiles because they viewed having permanent

residency or citizenship as an advantage that would increase their desirability. For example, Ruyuan (female, 29) used a dating platform on WeChat (the most popular social media app in China). According to Ruyuan, this platform had users (mostly Chinese users) in China, Canada, and Australia. She chose to post a photo of herself with a Canadian flag in the background because she wanted to "stand out" by hinting at her Canadian citizenship status in her profile. Other participants adopted a more direct approach: They specified on their profiles that they held Canadian permanent residency or citizenship, although few dating platforms required such information.

Preferences for Age at Arrival

In addition to the minimum requirement of immigrant status, most of our participants expressed strong preferences for dating someone who had come to Canada at a life stage similar to themselves. They commonly classified people of Chinese ethnicity into three groups: Canadian-born Chinese (CBC), immigrants who arrived before or during early teens, and immigrants who came during adulthood (e.g., those who first came to Canada as international postsecondary students). Below, we refer to immigrants who came to Canada before 18 as 1.5 generation and those who arrived at 18 or older as adult immigrants.

Although the age at arrival and immigrant status are conceptually related (as discussed in the literature review), our participants rarely linked the two factors together. Instead, when the participants were asked why they evaluated potential partners based on age at arrival, they often associated it with cultural exposure. As shown by prior studies, many 1.5 generation immigrants feel "in-between", that is, they identify with both home and host cultures.[69] In our study, 1.5 generation Chinese immigrants also felt in-between, and they preferred someone compatible in this regard, most often someone who belonged to the same group (1.5 generation). For example, Ruyuan (female, 29) moved to Canada with her mother at 15, and she told the interviewer that she would be attracted to a man who both preserved some Chinese values and enjoyed western lifestyles, ideally with a western educational background. Ruyuan added: "For someone who

---

[69] Allen Bartley and Paul Spoonley, "Intergenerational Transnationalism: 1.5 Generation Asian Migrants in New Zealand 1," *International Migration* 46, no. 4 (2008): 63-84; Naomi Tyrrell et al., "Belonging in Brexit Britain: Central and Eastern European 1.5 Generation Young People's Experiences," *Population, Space and Place* 25, no. 1 (2019): e2205.

grew up entirely in China, it's harder for me to accept him because we're different in the ways of thinking and life."

With the same logic, our participants who came to Canada at age 18 or older preferred dating Chinese immigrants who arrived at a similar age. For example, Bingxian (female, 27) first moved to Canada for undergraduate studies when she was 19. In 2018, she went on a date with a Chinese man, but she felt "no chemistry." When asked about his background, she brought up his age at arrival and education without being probed:

> Interviewer: "Is he an immigrant as well?"
>
> Bingxian: "He came at 29 and didn't receive any education here."
>
> Interviewer: "Is it important to have received education here?"
>
> Bingxian: "Quite important. He was 29 (when he came). I came at 19 when my worldviews hadn't been fully developed, so I may be a little more westernized. At 29, people's worldviews have been sculpted and can hardly be changed if they come to Canada at this age. That's why I think receiving education here matters."

The importance of age at arrival in a potential partner was also evident among other adult immigrants who came to Canada even later in life. When selecting a partner, our participants who arrived in their 20s or 30s valued Chinese language skills and similar cultural backgrounds because they believed that these qualities would facilitate partner interactions. For example, Mingqi (male, 47) who came to Canada at 29 preferred someone who was able to speak Chinese very fluently so that they could precisely convey their feelings and fully understand each other in their daily communications. Even for CBC women who could speak Chinese, their fluency usually did not meet his standard. Liuzhao (male, 32) highlighted the importance of growing-up environments and cultural upbringings, "which were manifested in small details but would have a great impact on future life." He came to Canada at 23 and preferred someone from a similar background, or bluntly speaking, a Chinese immigrant woman who grew up in China. The comparability in age at arrival meant that they would have similar cultural backgrounds and shared interests, such as "the same cartoons we watched in childhood."

The importance of similar cultural upbringings was not limited to men's narratives. Similar to Liuzhao, Fanghua (female, 34) also gave the example of cartoons and childhood

experiences when explaining why she did not want to date CBC or white men. She perceived lacking common interests and shared cultural knowledge as barriers to dating across nativity and racial lines. As she put it, "the person I'm supposed to be closest to, but I would feel that I couldn't resonate with him. I'm very worried about this feeling."

The examples discussed above indicate that age at arrival, which one can know through a very simple question, was often used by our participants as a proxy for cultural background. Immigrants' age at arrival in the host country influences the exposure to environments during their formative years (such as educational institutions and pop culture), which in turn shapes their values, worldviews, lifestyles, and manners. To judge these cultural traits, our participants commonly used "how westernized someone was" as a criterion. They usually considered CBC as individuals most assimilated into western cultures. As for 1.5 generation and adult immigrants, the earlier they arrived, the more culturally assimilated they were perceived to be. Therefore, online daters screened potential partners based on their age at arrival, attempting to find someone with whom they could share cultural similarity, communicate meaningfully, and get along well.

Gendered Divergences

In addition to the above themes, notable gender differences emerged from our data. Overall, men were stricter regarding their criteria for potential partners. First, compared with women, men attached greater importance to permanent residency status owing to their fear of marriage fraud. Second, more men than women firmly excluded CBC from their dating pool for the consideration of cultural matching. Third, men's stricter requirements were related to their unfavourable position in the Canadian dating market. Next, we elaborate on these three findings.

Men's Fear of Marriage Fraud

Although many participants required permanent residency in evaluating potential partners, men paid more attention to this requirement than women did. Some men only accepted permanent residents or naturalized citizens as potential partners because they worried about marriage fraud. A metaphor was mentioned by several participants: immigrant men with Canadian permanent residency or citizenship served as a "porter of immigration" (bān yùn gōng in Mandarin) for women who married them just to obtain permanent residency. Because men

were afraid that women may take advantage of them, they did not want to date a woman who was searching for merely an immigration ticket to Canada instead of a sincere, serious relationship.

Men's worries about marriage fraud were further exacerbated in the online dating context which was perceived as a less reliable space filled with strangers. For example, Weimin (male, 31) commented on a Taiwanese woman whom he met through Tinder that "her motive was impure" because she intended to marry a Canadian for the purpose of immigration. Although he got along well with this woman he treated her as a friend rather than a potential romantic partner for fear of marriage fraud. To explain his point he shared a story: He knew a woman from Thailand who immigrated through marriage and took away her husband's savings and properties. Weimin then emphasized that "I'm afraid of exactly this kind of thing." Zhaibo (male, 57) also perceived high risks of marriage fraud. He was divorced and started using online dating services in his 50s. On Jiayuan.com (known as China's Match.com), Zhaibo came across many women much younger than him, and some were still in Mainland China. At the initial phase of online messaging, he asked these women questions such as "why do you choose me given our huge age gap." He told the interviewer: "just through several questions, I can tell that some women came to me just for permanent residency or money, for impure motives."

Female participants, by contrast, seldom worried about being victims of marriage fraud, although some expressed understanding of men's concerns about this issue. As Kaiwen (female, 48) said:

> "Men normally have requirements for women's immigrant status. I think men are very afraid of being a porter of immigration. A man will lose face if a woman uses him as a porter of immigration, such that she marries him and later dumps him."

Moreover, some women indicated a willingness to relax the criterion of permanent residency if they were sure that a potential partner "sincerely liked me," "gave me a sense of security," or "made me see a future together." For example, in Qingya's (female, 29) and Mengchen's (female, 27) opinions, they did not mind sponsoring their partner to become a permanent resident of Canada as long as it was a sincere long-term relationship.

This gendered fear of marriage fraud may originate from the deep-seated norm and practice of female hypergamy, that is, women marrying men who have higher status than

themselves. In China, it is still much more common for women than for men to marry up in status or to achieve upward social mobility through marriage.[70] Chinese immigrant men may have internalized the idea of female hypergamy. As a result, they were worried that their permanent residency status may be abused for calculative purposes by women who had not yet achieved this status which led to their heightened fear of and caution against being victims of marriage fraud in the context of immigration and online dating.

Gendered Attitudes toward Dating CBC

Although both women and men expressed preferences for dating Chinese immigrants who were similar to themselves in terms of age at arrival, they showed a differential willingness to date CBC. Women, regardless of whether they were 1.5 generation or adult immigrants, were often flexible about dating CBC men, but among men five out of the six 1.5 generation and most of the adult immigrants were strongly unwilling to date CBC women. For instance, Yuhan (male, 29), who came to Canada at 13, preferred adult immigrants and women who arrived at a similar age over CBC women. He said that he would resonate with the former two groups because, like him, they also learned English as a second language and experienced the gradual processes of overcoming language barriers and cultural shocks.

Mengchen (female, 27), who came to Canada at 18 was, however, more open to dating CBC and had a CBC boyfriend at the time of our interview. When describing her preferences for potential partners, Mengchen did not set strict criteria for ethnicity or immigration-related characteristics but rather left them open. Nevertheless, she did mention her unwillingness to date men who had just come to Canada from China:

> Mengchen: "I tend to choose someone who isn't the most traditional kind of Chinese men because I think we may be different in lifestyles and ways of thinking."
> Interviewer: "Like someone who came to Canada very recently from China?"
> Mengchen: "Probably not dating those men. They just came, so much of their thinking is rooted in Chinese norms…I'm a Chinese immigrant, but I think I'm in the middle (of Chinese and Canadian cultures). My life is influenced by western cultures a lot."

---

[70] Yue Qian and Zhenchao Qian, "The Gender Divide in Urban China: Singlehood and Assortative Mating by Age and Education," *Demographic Research* 31 (2014): 1337-64.

Similarly, Xiaoqian (female, 28) came to Canada at 19, and she preferred a Chinese immigrant with at least some western educational background. She also liked CBC because she thought that they "combined tradition and modernity." In her eyes, CBC were partly influenced by traditional Chinese cultures (including language, history, etc.); at the same time, they had an open mindset regarding money, family, and divisions of household labor.

The examples above indicate that, compared with their male counterparts, our female participants were more accepting of western cultures and thus more open to dating CBC or immigrants who came to Canada early in life. Many men explained that they could not get along well with CBC women due to "cultural differences," "communication barriers," or "a lack of common language." Moreover, stereotypical opinions on CBC emerged in our interviews with men but not with women. For instance, although Mike (21, male) came to Canada at 2 years old and spoke English as his preferred language in the interview, he did not "really feel very connected to…a CBC who can't even speak any Mandarin and who is pretty much a white person in a Chinese person's body." He also perceived CBC to be "white-washed":

> "I do think the 1.5 generation are closer to where I am. Once we're born here, we're pretty white-washed. They buy into white hegemonic ideals, under the influence of white supremacy. You can look at them and tell they're already white-washed."

Other descriptions of CBC from men included "selfish," "not family-oriented," "have no connection to their heritage," or "try so hard to be white."

Asian Men's Unfavourable Position in the Canadian Dating Market

The stereotypes our male participants held about CBC indicate that, in immigrant men's opinion, CBC aligned more with whites. Thus, Chinese immigrant men usually grouped CBC and whites together when evaluating dating candidates. We found that men's greater unwillingness to date CBC and whites was related to their perceptions of how they were evaluated in the western dating market. Three men explicitly mentioned that CBC women strongly preferred to "date white guys" but not to date Chinese or Asians. Four men noticed that, on dating platforms, they got much fewer matches with CBC and especially white women. For example, Jinhan (male, 24) was open to dating all ethnicities, but he observed that about 70–80

percent of women who liked him back on Tinder were East Asians. Yuhan (male, 29), who preferred immigrant women over CBC at the time of our interview, had dated a white woman before and he distinctly remembered her commenting: "You are the first Asian man that caught my eye!" To him, this comment was more like scorn than praise. Yuhan also stated that western media shaped a "bad reputation" of Asian men, portraying them as "emasculatory," "nerdy," and "unattractive."

The feelings and experiences of our male participants correspond to previous research findings that Asian men live "at the bottom of the dating totem pole".[71] Chinese immigrant men's stricter exclusion of CBC and whites as acceptable partners is a common strategy for coping with stigma, that is, people who are stigmatized withdrawing "from social contacts that they perceive as potentially rejecting."[72] Nevertheless, Chinese immigrant men's withdrawal and self-elimination from a broader dating pool may reinforce their marginalized position and unfavourable prospects in the Canadian dating market.

How Preferences Shaped Choices of Online Dating Platforms

Clearly, our participants held preferences for partners' race/ethnicity, immigrant status, and age at arrival. Our interviews further reveal that preferences mattered for choices of online dating platforms. Table 2 lists all the dating platforms ever used by our participants and it includes descriptions, taken largely from official webpages of the platforms, to shed light on their main features. Our participants used over 17 different dating sites/apps, including those founded in western countries (such as Canada and the U.S.) and in China. Despite the wide variety of dating platforms, most participants (74 percent) solely or primarily used only one platform. Of the 31 participants, 10 used just one platform, and 13 people experimented with multiple platforms but ended up using one main site/app. As shown below, our participants purposefully selected the platform they solely or primarily used to maximize the chances of fulfilling their preferences.

Participants who preferred whites or were open to dating all races and ethnicities mainly used what we call "western mainstream dating platforms" (e.g., Tinder, Plenty of Fish). Every

---

[71] Kao, Balistreri, and Joyner, "Asian American Men," 48-53.
[72] Bruce G. Link et al., "A Modified Labeling Theory Approach to Mental Disorders: An Empirical Assessment," *American Sociological Review* (1989): 400-23.

participant in this group used Tinder, except two women who used eharmony and Match.com around 2010–2013, prior to Tinder's popularity. Of the three women who preferred dating whites, two solely used these western mainstream dating platforms without ever trying any of the Chinese-oriented platforms that we will discuss shortly (the exception was a woman who preferred but had not dated whites). As Michelle (female, 26), who preferred dating whites, pointed out (in English), "there are just more white guys on Tinder, I think."

Participants who preferred East Asians favoured Coffee Meets Bagel, a dating app founded by three Korean immigrants in the U.S., because these participants noticed that a large number of East Asian users were on this app. For example, Sam (male, 25) found out that Coffee Meets Bagel, but not Bumble, provided an option of filtering for East Asians, which exactly satisfied his ethnic preference for potential partners. He also commented (in English) that Coffee Meets Bagel "will push people of your own ethnicity to you more often."

Participants who were searching for a partner of Chinese ethnicity in Canada solely or primarily used what we call "Chinese-oriented dating platforms." A variety of such platforms were available, and the majority of these participants tried more than one. First, 2RedBeans, claimed to be "the leading online dating site for the Chinese with overseas background," was used by 7 of the 15 participants who preferred to date Chinese. Second, several participants who preferred Chinese partners used dating platforms based in China yet with active users worldwide, such as Jiayuan.com (known as China's Match.com) and Tantan (known as Tinder of China). Third, some participants looked for partners through dating sections on classified websites that specifically served Chinese people in Vancouver (e.g., VanPeople, Vansky). These websites are known as "Chinese Craigslist" and their webpages are in Chinese as opposed to English. Last, Chinese social media, especially WeChat, were also popular venues for locating co-ethnic dating candidates. Some participants belonged to WeChat groups consisting of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver who were looking for partners. Others used public accounts on WeChat that provided matchmaking services, similar to dating sections on classified websites. Still others enlisted the help of a local matchmaker who used WeChat to connect interested daters.

Notwithstanding, we further identified different patterns if subdividing participants based on their preferences for age at arrival. For those who were more willing to date 1.5 generation Chinese immigrants, they valued the duality of western and Chinese cultures in potential

partners. Therefore, they explored both western mainstream dating platforms and Chinese-oriented ones, although they often ended up primarily using the latter.

Participants who preferred dating adult immigrants, however, showed higher selectivity: They usually avoided western mainstream dating platforms or quickly stopped using them if they had ever tried. As Kaiwen (female, 48) observed, there were "very few Chinese" on Tinder. She added: "If any, those are the Chinese people who can't speak Chinese; those speaking Chinese don't use Tinder to look for partners."

A case in point is Liuzhao (male, 32), whom we mentioned earlier. He came to Canada at 23 and preferred Chinese women who also arrived during adulthood. He almost solely used 2RedBeans. Below, he explained the main reason he deleted Tinder after one or two days of trial:

> It was all westerners who were on Tinder, or more westerners were on it. Also, I don't like most of them. In fact, even if there were women I like, I don't think I would go meet them offline. After all, this is an app that I don't know much about, and women on it are also the type that I have never got to know.

Liuzhao had "never got to know" western women, likely due to limited contact opportunities offline, especially considering that he arrived in Canada during adulthood. He was in turn discouraged from using Tinder by his perceived social distance with western women. This feeling was compounded by his Tinder trial. When asked if he had swiped right (meaning liking someone) on Tinder, Liuzhao said yes, but—in his unsolicited words—he "had never been swiped right…so there was no match." Thus, his preference for dating Chinese adult immigrants interacted with his experience of social exclusion on Tinder to shape his platform choices.

This feeling of not knowing westerners enough also contributed to some women's hesitation in using western mainstream dating platforms. Jiajing (female, 31) used Jiayuan.com in 2012 to look for a Chinese partner. She explained why she did not consider western dating sites:

> "I know a western website. There are more white people on it. I don't feel confident about evaluating white people on dating sites. It's not easy to know their background, so I don't feel safe enough... If I encounter white men in my life (offline), I may consider them, but I won't if it's on the Internet. In particular, I won't use the dating sites that specifically cater to white users."

The examples above suggest that the online dating context exacerbated the distrust our participants felt toward out-group members. Thus, those who were looking for Chinese adult immigrants typically resorted to platforms where immigrant Chinese daters congregated.
In addition to the differences by age at arrival, participants' choices of online dating platforms differed by gender. Recall that men held stricter criteria for potential partners' race/ethnicity, immigrant status, and age at arrival than women did. Resultantly, men were also more selective in choosing dating platforms than women. A much higher percentage of men than women avoided western mainstream dating platforms altogether (50 percent vs. 29 percent). The percentage reached 75 percent among the eight men who preferred people of Chinese ethnicity as potential partners, compared to 38 percent of women who had a preference for co-ethnic dating.

Online Dating Platforms Create Digital Enclaves

As shown above, our Chinese immigrant participants had a strong preference for co-ethnic dating and accordingly, they mainly used Chinese-oriented dating platforms. Below, we apply the classic notion of ethnic enclaves featured in the segmented assimilation theory to the online setting. We show that Chinese-oriented dating platforms function as "digital enclaves," which resemble ethnic enclaves in physical spaces for Chinese immigrants in Vancouver.

Chinese-oriented dating platforms created "Chinatowns" in cyberspace where a great number of Chinese daters congregated, providing virtual niche markets for Chinese immigrants who were searching for co-ethnic partners. For example, more than half of the participants who preferred dating Chinese and used 2RedBeans explicitly reported "more Chinese users" as an important reason for favouring this platform. The easy access to many Chinese daters was important to many participants because they reported difficulty making friends in daily life in Vancouver, let alone finding a partner who met their criteria.

Furthermore, like in Chinatowns where Chinese language and ways of living are largely preserved, users on Chinese-oriented dating platforms could communicate in Chinese and maintain many Chinese elements in their dating practices while in Canada. Chinese language skills were described as the foundation of smooth interactions with people on these platforms. For instance, Mike (male, 21), who came to Canada at age 2 and whose Chinese was "really bad," recounted his unfruitful experience on Tantan:

> Mike: "I send Mandarin at first, after two or three exchanges, I say 'Can we speak English?'".
>
> Interviewer: "Did they speak English?"
>
> Mike: "Most times they just stop talking to me."

Although Mike felt that there was "so much potential there to meet somebody," the insufficiency of Chinese language skills became a barrier to entry into the digital enclave.

In addition to language usage, personal dating ads or profiles (also written in Chinese) mostly addressed the mating criteria emphasized in Chinese culture. If matched on the platforms, many daters then switched to Chinese instant messaging services (e.g., WeChat or QQ) for further communication. For instance, Kaiwen (female, 48) described how she used the dating section of a Vancouver-based classified website that served local Chinese people:

> Kaiwen: "It has personal dating ads. People post how old I am; what immigrant status I hold now, which is quite important here because people view Canadian permanent residency and citizenship as a bonus; I have a formal job; I have a car; I own property; etc. Just like the criteria that are usually emphasized in matchmaking events in China."
>
> Interviewer: "Then if you are interested in someone, how do you make contact?"
>
> Kaiwen: "People leave their QQ ID, which is a Chinese communication channel, or their burner account for WeChat to protect privacy."

Chinese-oriented platforms hence created digital enclaves for Chinese immigrants to search for partners of similar ethnic, immigrant, and cultural/language backgrounds.

The formation of these digital enclaves also reflects the influence of Canada's multiculturalism policy on the maintenance of ethnocultural communities. Some participants mentioned that they did not feel the need to assimilate into the white mainstream culture. Zhilin (female, 33) gave a vivid account of this multiculturalism issue: "Unlike America, there isn't a clear mainstream society in Canada. Every ethnicity has its own circle here. All these circles merge together to become Vancouver. We can find a comfort zone." Although these digital enclaves provided the "comfortable zone" for Chinese immigrants to maintain their cultural heritage and search for co-ethnic partners, the segregation in cyberspace may inhibit

accomplishing another element of Canada's multiculturalism policy—the promotion of intercultural contact.[73]

Discussion

Prior research on marital sorting patterns has identified a strong tendency for individuals to marry within their racial/ethnic group.[74] Adding to the findings on the aggregate patterns, our results show a prominent preference for dating co-ethnics among Chinese immigrants in Vancouver. This preference likely relates to the increased opportunities for intragroup contact in Vancouver because of its large Chinese population. Advancing prior research that links group size to marriage-market conditions,[75] our study suggests that the pool of potential co-ethnic partners may influence union formation not only by creating or limiting meeting opportunities but also through moulding partner preferences. Strong preferences for co-ethnic dating impose barriers to intermarriage and indicate that ethnoracial boundaries remain salient and rigid in Vancouver, one of the most diverse metropolises in Canada.[76]

Drawing on the new and segmented assimilation theories,[77] our study illustrates how immigrant status, age at arrival, and gender shape the divergence in relationship formation and immigrant integration. Recall that most of our participants were searching for serious relationships. Therefore, our results are more pertinent to illuminating the formation of marriage rather than casual relationships. Our participants tended to exclude temporary residents from their pool of potential partners. While U.S. research has found various barriers to relationship formation that undocumented immigrants encounter,[78] our study reveals the unique marginalization of temporary residents in the Canadian context. Our findings suggest that personal preferences for potential partners are deeply influenced by institutionally defined

---

[73] Berry, "Research on Multiculturalism," 663-75.

[74] Kalmijn, "Intermarriage and Homogamy," 395-421; Schwartz, "Trends and Variation," 451-70.

[75] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Hou et al., "Cross-Country Variation," 1591-609; Qian, Lichter, and Tumin, "Divergent Pathways to Assimilation," 271-88.

[76] Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census, Vancouver, British Columbia," last modifed April 23, 2022, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=933&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=vancouver&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1

[77] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*; Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation," 74-96.

[78] Daniela Pila, "'I'm Not Good Enough for Anyone': Legal Status and the Dating Lives of Undocumented Young Adults," *Sociological Forum* 31 no. 1 (2016):138-58.

distinctions. Lacking permanent residency not only limits immigrants' ability to live, work, or study in Canada but also constrains their dating and marriage prospects.

Moreover, our study adds to the limited body of research on the heterogeneity of intermarriage patterns by age at arrival within immigrants.[79] Many participants preferred to date someone who had arrived in Canada at an age similar to themselves. They emphasized the role of age at arrival in shaping values, habits, lifestyles, language capability, and familiarity with specific cultural references, all of which are viewed as crucial indicators of integration in the immigration literature.[80] Our study thus suggests that age at arrival is used by immigrants as a proxy of cultural exposure and influences their likelihood of intergroup dating and intermarriage.

Our findings also reveal that gender intersects with immigrant status and age at arrival in shaping partner preferences, relationship formation, and integration. Compared with women, men were more concerned about marriage fraud and thus more strictly excluded temporary residents as potential partners. Male participants' self-protection arose in part from their internalization of China's female-hypergamy norm (i.e., women marrying up in status).[81] Additionally, compared with women, men more strictly excluded non-Chinese persons from their dating pool and were less open to dating CBC or Chinese immigrants who came to Canada earlier in life. Men's self-exclusion partly resulted from their lived experiences of rejection and discrimination in the Canadian marriage market. Our findings suggest that, despite a greater presence of the Chinese population in Canada, the racialized stereotypes of Asian men as unfavourable partners persist and further affect Chinese immigrant men's relationship behaviours and their prospects of boundary-crossing and marital assimilation.[82]

When linking preferences to behaviours, we find that Chinese immigrants strategically chose online dating platforms to meet potential partners who satisfied their preferences. We show that Chinese-oriented dating platforms create "digital enclaves," which resemble ethnic enclaves in physical spaces for Chinese immigrants. Whereas the segmented assimilation theory and prior research have focused on how ethnic enclaves affect the labor market and economic

---

[79] Choi and Tienda, "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing," 929-62; Lee and Boyd, "Marrying Out," 311-29; Qian, Glick, and Batson, "Crossing Boundaries," 651-75.
[80] Zhou and Gonzales, "Divergent Destinies," 383-99.
[81] Qian and Qian, "The Gender Divide," 1337-64.
[82] Kao, Balistreri, and Joyner, "Asian American Men," 48-53; Lee, "From Undesirable to Marriageable," 79-93.

integration of immigrants,[83] we discuss the implications of digital enclaves for relationship formation and boundary-crossing of immigrants.

The presence of digital enclaves appears to be a double-edged sword for Chinese immigrants. On the one hand, digital enclaves gave these immigrants access to niche markets and more opportunities to actualize their partner preferences. Through using Chinese-oriented dating platforms, Chinese immigrants were exposed to a large local pool of potential co-ethnic partners who tended to also satisfy their other preferences (e.g., age at arrival). On the other hand, digital enclaves and their resulting subdivided markets reproduced discrimination and segregation in cyberspace. Our male participants were in unfavourable positions in virtual dating markets as negative stereotypes of Asian men remained unchallenged. To cope with stigma, they retreated from western mainstream dating platforms but stayed in digital enclaves. Such platform choices could further limit intergroup contact and the chances of interracial or interethnic dating for Chinese immigrants.

The formation of digital enclaves also has implications for ethnoracial relations and group boundaries in a multicultural host society. While digital enclaves allow racialized immigrants to preserve and enhance their cultural heritage, ethnic concentration in cyberspace may reduce intergroup interactions, reinforce social boundaries, and heighten racial/ethnic discrimination.[84] Overall, our findings suggest that the social distance created by various forms of segregation in daily life is projected to the online dating setting. The uncertainty and safety concerns associated with the online environment may further lower online daters' perceived trust toward out-group members and lead them to stay within the "comfort" enclaves. With the rapid pace of digitalization, ethnic online communities are increasingly formed and gaining popularity among racialized immigrants.[85] Thus, addressing the challenges that digital enclaves pose for intergroup contact and racial/ethnic equality will be crucial to the success of multiculturalism in Canada.

---

[83] Portes and Zhou, "The New Second Generation," 74-96; Zhou and Logan, "Returns on Human Capital," 809-20.
[84] Curington, Lundquist, and Lin, *The Dating Divide*; Robnett and Feliciano, "Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion," 807-28.
[85] Leah Williams Veazey, "Migrant Mothers and the Ambivalence of Co-Ethnicity in Online Communities," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2020): 1-17.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our study has several limitations. First, most of our participants had at least a bachelor's degree and worked in managerial or professional jobs. Thus, we cannot explore how education and occupation shape Chinese immigrants' partner preferences and relationship formation, although these are important characteristics that influence intermarriage patterns.[86] Second, our participants were searching for different-sex partners. It remains unknown how Chinese immigrant sexual minorities, who are triply marginalized because of their race, nativity status, and sexual orientation, evaluate potential partners and navigate the Canadian dating market. Third, Vancouver is a unique site to study Chinese immigrants' dating preferences due to its large Chinese community. More studies are needed to examine how digital enclaves affect the dating and marriage of racialized immigrants living in host societies with a small co-ethnic population.

Conclusion

Online dating increasingly replaces in-person ways of meeting potential partners.[87] Situated in Vancouver, this qualitative study investigates Chinese immigrants' preferences and platform choices in online dating. Our participants had a strong preference for dating co-ethnics (i.e., Chinese). Many participants viewed holding Canadian permanent residency as a basic criterion for potential partners. They often preferred dating a Chinese immigrant of a similar age at arrival to themselves and attributed this preference to their desire for achieving compatibility in cultural upbringings with their partners. To approach an ideal pool of potential partners who met their preferences, our participants strategically selected the online dating platforms they primarily used. Gender differences were also salient, with men having more rigid mating criteria and more restrictive choices of dating platforms than women. Importantly, we propose the theoretically innovative concept of "digital enclaves" to advance the understanding of immigrant integration and social boundaries in the technological era. In sum, our research suggests strong

---

[86] Choi and Tienda, "Marriage-Market Constraints," 301-17; Qian and Lichter, "Social Boundaries," 68-94; Qian, Lichter, and Tumin, "Divergent Pathways to Assimilation," 271-88.
[87] Rosenfeld, Thomas, and Hausen, "Disintermediating Your Friends," 17753-58.

preferences for homophily and large intergroup distance among online daters. In many ways, online dating may hinder rather than facilitate boundary-crossing in relationship formation.

Bibliography

Alba, Richard D., and Victor Nee. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Arnett, J. J. "Emerging Adulthood. A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties." *The American Psychologist* 55, no. 5 (2000): 469-80.

Bartley, Allen, and Paul Spoonley. "Intergenerational Transnationalism: 1.5 Generation Asian Migrants in New Zealand." *International Migration* 46, no. 4 (2008): 63-84.

Bean, Frank D., and Gillian Stevens. *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity.* Russell Sage Foundation, 2003.

Berry, John W. "Research on Multiculturalism in Canada." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 37, no. 6 (2013): 663-75.

Blackwell, Debra L., and Daniel T. Lichter. "Homogamy among Dating, Cohabiting, and Married Couples." *The Sociological Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2004): 719-37.

Blumtritt, Christoph. "Forecast of the number of online users for dating services in Canada until 2024." Statista. Last modified January 22, 2022. https://www.statista.com/forecasts/676568/eservices-dating-services-online-user-by-segment-in-canada/.

Brym, Robert J. and Rhonda L. Lenton. "Love online: A report on digital dating in Canada." Published February 6, 2001. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237605184_Love_Online_A_Report_on_Digital_Dating_in_Canada/.

Budiman, Abby and Neil. G. Ruiz. "Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S." Pew Research Center. Last modified April 9, 2021. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/09/asian-americans-are-the-fastest-growing-racial-or-ethnic-group-in-the-u-s/.

Choi, Kate H., and Marta Tienda. "Intermarriage and the Lifecycle Timing of Migration." *International Migration Review* 52, no. 3 (2018): 929-62.
———. "Marriage-Market Constraints and Mate-Selection Behavior: Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Intermarriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79, no. 2 (2017): 301-17.

Curington, Celeste Vaughan, Jennifer Hickes Lundquist, and Ken-Hou Lin. *The Dating Divide: Race and Desire in the Era of Online Romance.* University of California Press, 2021.

Finkel, Eli J., Paul W. Eastwick, Benjamin R. Karney, Harry T. Reis, and Susan Sprecher. "Online Dating: A Critical Analysis from the Perspective of Psychological Science." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 13, no. 1 (2012): 3-66.

Gordon, Milton Myron. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins.* Oxford University Press, 1964.

Hou, Feng, Zheng Wu, Christoph Schimmele, and John Myles. "Cross-Country Variation in Interracial Marriage: A USA–Canada Comparison of Metropolitan Areas." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 9 (2015): 1591-609.

Joyner, Kara, and Grace Kao. "Interracial Relationships and the Transition to Adulthood." *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 4 (2005): 563-81.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. "Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 395-421.

Kanda, Samuel. "Canada industry (MAICS) report 81299ACA dating services in Canada." IBISWorld. Last modified October 28, 2021. https://www.ibisworld.com/canada/market-research-reports/dating-services-industry/

Kao, Grace, Kelly Stamper Balistreri, and Kara Joyner. "Asian American Men in Romantic Dating Markets." *Contexts* 17, no. 4 (2018): 48-53.

Lee, Jennifer. "From Undesirable to Marriageable: Hyper-Selectivity and the Racial Mobility of Asian Americans." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 662, no. 1 (2015): 79-93.

Lee, Jennifer, and Frank D. Bean. *The Diversity Paradox: Immigration and the Color Line in Twenty-First Century America.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010.

Lee, Sharon M., and Monica Boyd. "Marrying Out: Comparing the Marital and Social Integration of Asians in the Us and Canada." *Social Science Research* 37, no. 1 (2008): 311-29.

Lichter, Daniel T., Zhenchao Qian, and Dmitry Tumin. "Whom Do Immigrants Marry? Emerging Patterns of Intermarriage and Integration in the United States." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 662, no. 1 (2015): 57-78.

Link, Bruce G., Francis T. Cullen, Elmer Struening, Patrick E. Shrout, and Bruce P. Dohrenwend. "A Modified Labeling Theory Approach to Mental Disorders: An Empirical Assessment." *American Sociological Review* (1989): 400-23.

Min, Pyong Gap, and Chigon Kim. "Patterns of Intermarriages and Cross-Generational in-Marriages among Native-Born Asian Americans." *International Migration Review* 43, no. 3 (2009): 447-70.

Pila, Daniela. ""I'm Not Good Enough for Anyone": Legal Status and the Dating Lives of Undocumented Young Adults." Sociological Forum 31 no. 1 (2016): 138-58.

Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 74-96.

Potarca, Gina. "Does the Internet Affect Assortative Mating? Evidence from the Us and Germany." *Social Science Research* 61 (2017): 278-97.

Qian, Yue. "Disruption or Reproduction? Nativity, Gender and Online Dating in Canada." *Internet Research* (2021).

Qian, Yue, and Zhenchao Qian. "The Gender Divide in Urban China: Singlehood and Assortative Mating by Age and Education." *Demographic Research* 31 (2014): 1337-64.

Qian, Zhenchao, Sampson Lee Blair, and Stacey D. Ruf. "Asian American Interracial and Interethnic Marriages: Differences by Education and Nativity." *International Migration Review* 35, no. 2 (2001): 557-86.

Qian, Zhenchao, Jennifer E. Glick, and Christie D. Batson. "Crossing Boundaries: Nativity, Ethnicity, and Mate Selection." *Demography* 49, no. 2 (2012): 651-75.

Qian, Zhenchao, and Daniel T. Lichter. "Measuring Marital Assimilation: Intermarriage among Natives and Immigrants." *Social Science Research* 30, no. 2 (2001): 289-312.
———. "Social Boundaries and Marital Assimilation: Interpreting Trends in Racial and Ethnic Intermarriage." *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 1 (2007): 68-94.

Qian, Zhenchao, Daniel T. Lichter, and Dmitry Tumin. "Divergent Pathways to Assimilation? Local Marriage Markets and Intermarriage among U.S. Hispanics." [In English]. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 80, no. 1 (2018): 271-88.

Qian, Zhenchao, and Yue Qian. "Generation, Education, and Intermarriage of Asian Americans." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 14 (2020): 2880-95.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. "Framed before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations." *Gender and Society* 23, no. 2 (2009): 145-60.

Robnett, Belinda, and Cynthia Feliciano. "Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion by Internet Daters." *Social Forces* 89, no. 3 (2011): 807-28.

Rosenfeld, Michael J. "Marriage, Choice, and Couplehood in the Age of the Internet." *Sociological Science* 4 (2017): 490-510.

Rosenfeld, Michael J., and Reuben J. Thomas. "Searching for a Mate: The Rise of the Internet as a Social Intermediary." *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 4 (2012): 523-47.

Rosenfeld, Michael J., Reuben J. Thomas, and Sonia Hausen. "Disintermediating Your Friends: How Online Dating in the United States Displaces Other Ways of Meeting." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 36 (2019): 17753-58.

Schwartz, Christine R. "Trends and Variation in Assortative Mating: Causes and Consequences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39 (2013): 451-70.

Schwartz, Pepper, and Nicholas Velotta. "Online Dating: Changing Intimacy One Swipe at a Time?". In *Families and Technology*, 57-88: Springer, 2018.

Statistics Canada. "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results From the 2016 Census." Last modified October 25, 2017. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm?indid=14428-1&indgeo=0.
———. "Census Profile, 2016 Census, Vancouver, British Columbia." Last modifed April 23, 2022. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=933&Geo2=PR&Code2=59&Data=Count&SearchText=vancouver&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1.
———. "Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census." Last modified April 18, 2019. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-can-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&GK=CAN&GC=01&TOPIC=7.
———. "Immigrant Status of Person." Last modified January 21, 2022. https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=103339

Thomas, Reuben J. "Online Exogamy Reconsidered: Estimating the Internet's Effects on Racial, Educational, Religious, Political and Age Assortative Mating." *Social Forces* 98, no. 3 (2020): 1257-86.

Tsunokai, Glenn T., Allison R. McGrath, and Jillian K. Kavanagh. "Online Dating Preferences of Asian Americans." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 31, no. 6 (2014): 796-814.

Tyrrell, Naomi, Daniela Sime, Claire Kelly, and Christina McMellon. "Belonging in Brexit Britain: Central and Eastern European 1.5 Generation Young People's Experiences." *Population, Space and Place* 25, no. 1 (2019): e2205.

Vasquez-Tokos, Jessica. *Marriage Vows and Racial Choices.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2017.

Williams Veazey, Leah. "Migrant Mothers and the Ambivalence of Co-Ethnicity in Online Communities." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2020): 1-17.

Wilson, Kenneth L., and Alejandro Portes. "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami." *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 2 (1980): 295-319.

Xiao, Siqi, and Yue Qian. "Mate Selection among Online Daters in Shanghai: Why Does Education Matter?". *Chinese Journal of Sociology* 6, no. 4 (2020): 521-46.

Yu, Li. "An Empirical Study of Recent Mainland Chinese Migration to Vancouver." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 19, no. 2 (2008): 180-96.

Zhou, Min. *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave.* Temple University Press, 2010.

Zhou, Min, and Roberto G. Gonzales. "Divergent Destinies: Children of Immigrants Growing up in the United States." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45 (2019): 383-99.

Zhou, Min, and John R. Logan. "Returns on Human Capital in Ethic Enclaves: New York City's Chinatown." *American Sociological Review* (1989): 809-20.