



BRILL



brill.com/jco

School Success and Failure: Changes Seen in Children of Chinese Descent in Paris

学校适应与不适应：巴黎华裔子女的变化

Sumiko Yamamoto

山本須美子

Abstract

This research examines the difficulties faced by children of recent migrants from mainland China to France in Paris schools, and explains the underlying factors. It is based on fieldwork in Paris schools from 2005 to 2013. Other long-established Chinese communities in France consist mainly of Indo-Chinese refugees of Chinese descent. Their children were born in France and have adjusted to French schools; in contrast, some children of new Chinese immigrants (mainly from Wenzhou) do not attend school regularly and often drop out. My findings show that formation of the folk theory of success that values school education — which explains school success among Indo-Chinese refugee children — is hampered by institutional constraints resulting from parents' status as illegal immigrants, and unstable parent-child relationships due to the family's immigration arrangements. This paper reveals the limitations of conventional explanations for Chinese immigrants' school success and failure based on cultural values.

Keywords

School success and failure – Illegal immigrants – Folk theory of success – Wenzhou – France

关键词

学校适应与不适应 – 非法 – 民间适应理论 – 温州 – 法国

Introduction

Although Chinese immigrants in Europe have been studied much less often than those in Southeast Asia, North America, and the Pacific region, they began attracting research attention in the 1990s, as a result of the European influx of new immigrants from mainland China that followed the country's economic reforms in the 1980s (Benton 1998: vii). However, the studies that have been conducted rarely focus on educational issues.¹

The purpose of this research is to clarify the difficulties faced by children of recent migrants from mainland China in Paris schools, and to explain the underlying factors. I conducted fieldwork between 2005 and 2013 in Paris schools within the residential areas of new Chinese immigrants. This included almost all schools in Paris where the problems triggered by children of new Chinese immigrants are conspicuous. Previous studies of Chinese immigrants in France included examinations of the following: historical changes in Chinese communities (see, e.g., Live [1998]), the labor market (Mung 2005), circumstances of northeastern Chinese now living in Paris (Marc 2002), circumstances of Wenzhou immigrants now living in Paris (Beraha 2012b), and the immigration patterns and living conditions of new Chinese immigrant children now living in Paris (Cattelain [ed.] 2002). To date, however, no study has focused on the difficulties that have resulted from the recent influx of Chinese immigrant children from mainland China into French schools.

As of 2014, France and the United Kingdom (UK) have the largest Chinese populations in the European Union (EU).² From the late 1980s to 2013, I have been doing research on the education of Chinese immigrants not only in France but also in the UK and the Netherlands. Before the recent influx of new immigrants from China, the Chinese community in France comprised mainly Indo-Chinese refugees of Chinese descent, who accounted for about 60 per cent of the total Indo-Chinese refugee population — whose numbers peaked

-
- 1 The few studies that have focused on the education of Chinese immigrants in Europe include F. Pieke's study (1991), which discussed the polarized academic performance of Chinese children in the Netherlands, who are considered a successful model; L. Archer and B. Francis' study (2007), which discussed why Chinese students in the UK perform well in school from the perspective of educational sociology; and P. Nyiri's study (2014) of the strategy for educating Chinese children who entered Hungary after the 1990s.
 - 2 It is said that the population of Chinese in France has reached about 600,000 (Beraha 2012a: 11). The Chinese population in the UK is 433,150, according to the 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics 2011).

in 1975 — and who worked in a variety of occupations, such as restaurants serving Chinese food, retail, and factories (Live 1998). These refugees and immigrants lived in close proximity to one another, primarily in the 13th arrondissement of Paris, but also throughout suburban Paris. The second generation of these immigrants and refugees was born and raised in France. I conducted interviews in English and French with 24 second-generation Chinese youth (aged 14-28) in Paris between 2005 and 2013, inquiring about their life histories, including educational experiences, the career-choice process, relationships with parents, and so on. Six informants were high school students, eight were university students, seven had already graduated from university, and three had completed postgraduate school. Parents of 19 of the 24 informants were Indo-Chinese refugees of Chinese descent and those of the five others came from either Zhejiang Province or Hong Kong.

I found that these second-generation Chinese youth have performed relatively well at school, rarely having to repeat grades or feeling the need to drop out of school. They are typically inconspicuous and well-adjusted to school norms, and do not cause trouble. In fact, many of them have become highly educated. To these cases I apply the “folk theory of success,” a theory proposed by J.U. Ogbu (1991), which seeks to explain school success and failure by understanding how school education in mainstream society is regarded by Chinese immigrants as the second generation’s ladder to success. The results, based on my fieldwork, show that both parents and children bore out the expectations of this theoretical approach (Yamamoto 2014: 187-218).

Those who migrated to France during the 1990s were from mainland China. Consequently, many of these immigrants — including international students³ — are from northeastern China and from Zhejiang Province (mainly Wenzhou and Qingtian).⁴ New immigrants all used the services of an immigration broker; however, while some of the northeastern Chinese immigrants were from urban areas and highly educated, those from Zhejiang were mostly uneducated, illegal immigrants, from rural areas.

The children of mainland Chinese immigrants that settled in France after the 1990s entered local schools in the residential areas of new Chinese immigrants in Paris, and their failure to cope with this environment became evident.

3 International Chinese students come not only to study but also to work. Some bring their families with them.

4 Zhejiang people, who rapidly increased in number in France after the 1990s, and during the 1980s in the Netherlands, had started coming to both countries early in the twentieth century to peddle ties, silk socks, necklaces, etc. These migrations peaked in the late 1920s.

This study defines the school failures of children of new Chinese immigrants as situations in which their absenteeism, drop-out rates, lack of motivation for studying, and earning of bad grades makes them conspicuous in schools that contain a high percentage of such children. In this paper, I examine the school failures of children from mainland China as observed in Paris schools and compare them with the school success of French-born children of Indo-Chinese refugees, who came to France before the 1980s. I then explain what factors support children's school success and what factors lead to school failure.

Influx of New Immigrants and Changes in the Chinese Community

Half of the Chinese immigrants in France are from Southeast Asia and the other half are from mainland China. They total about 600,000, including illegal immigrants. Approximately 70 per cent of the mainland Chinese are from Zhejiang, mainly from the city of Wenzhou (Beraha 2012a: 11-12). Before the influx of new immigrants from mainland China, the Chinese community in France consisted mainly of Indo-Chinese refugees of Chinese descent — who still account for approximately 60 per cent of all Indo-Chinese refugees (about 145,000) accepted by France (Live 1998).

The number of immigrants from mainland China increased after the 1990s. Based on fieldwork conducted in Wenzhou in 1996, Li (1999) concluded that the reason chain migration to Europe has continued — although immigration is restricted in Europe — is that Wenzhou has an “immigration culture.” This attitude led to the common perception that “you can become rich if you immigrate to Europe” (Li 1999). As of the end of 1994, 248,000 Wenzhou people and their descendants had immigrated to 65 countries. Among them, 165,000 had immigrated to Europe, and 95 per cent of those had immigrated to France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain (Li 1999, 183).

These immigrants live close together in Paris and its suburbs, with 70 per cent residing in the northeastern part of Paris and 30 per cent in Parisian suburbs (Yun and Poisson 2005, 62). Currently, there are three Chinese communities in Paris: Quartier Chinois (Chinatown) in the 13th arrondissement, established in the 1970s, when Indo-Chinese refugees moved in; Arts et Métiers in the 3rd arrondissement, where leather goods and jewelry shops are clustered and immigrants from Wenzhou had preferred to reside before World War II; and the Belleville District, which straddles the 10th, 11th, 19th, and 20th arrondissements. Belleville — the residential community of new

immigrants from mainland China — and is referred to as “new Chinatown.”⁵ Many of the Wenzhou people in the Belleville district are illegal immigrants absorbed as part of the labor force by small family businesses in the sewing, leather goods retailing and catering sectors. Chinese associations were established as well, to provide mutual aid services to new immigrants in the Arts et Métiers and Belleville Districts after the 1990s (Béja and Wang 1999);⁶ however, they rarely communicate with the pre-existing Chinese associations.⁷

The Association for Language and Cultural Support, established in the Belleville District of Paris in 1993, has been handling about 90 per cent of Chinese immigrants’ asylum applications since March 1998, at the request of the government. Based on the interview I conducted with the president of that association in March 2013, about 5,000 people, mainly from Wenzhou, had registered annually between 1999 and 2005, but that number had declined by 70 per cent, to about 1,500, by 2007. The annual number of new Chinese immigrants gradually recovered, to about 2,020 in 2012. The number of new Chinese immigrants who have lived in France for more than 10 years began increasing after the 2010s, and those who moved out of the Chinese community to a middle-class neighborhood in Paris and sustain a stable job, after obtaining an official residence permit (which takes about 10 years), are becoming conspicuous. In addition, according to the president, the number of middle-aged women from northeastern China providing domestic labor or working as prostitutes has been increasing over the past few years. These women have been moving beyond city boundaries. Moreover, Japanese restaurant businesses run by Chinese immigrants have experienced a boom in recent years, serving to illustrate how rapidly circumstances are changing.

5 There has also been a row of clothing shops run by Wenzhou people in the Sedaine-Popincourt District in the 11th arrondissement, located in the southern part of the Belleville District, since 1997 (Yun and Poisson 2005: 64)

6 The Association Pierre Ducerf was established in the Arts et Métiers district in 1993. The Association for Language and Cultural Support and the Association Huiji were established in the Belleville District in 1996 and 2003. Association Huiji closed in 2010.

7 For example, the Association des Chinois Resident en France, located in the 3rd arrondissement (established by and serving mostly Wenzhou people that came to France before 1980), does not communicate at all with the Association Pierre Ducerf, whose members are new immigrants from Wenzhou, although they are located only a few minutes away from each other by foot.

Influx of New Chinese Immigrant Children to Schools in Paris

In 2000, the total number of secondary education newcomers⁸ registered at the CASNAV⁹ in the Académie de Paris was about 1,000. This number had declined to 805 by 2008 (CASNAV de Paris 2009: 8), but increased again to 1,531 in 2011 (CASNAV de Paris 2012). The percentage of Chinese children that are secondary-education level newcomers in the Académie de Paris was 18 per cent in 2003, 17 per cent in 2004, and 22 per cent in 2005. It peaked in 2006 and 2007 at 32 per cent and gradually declined to 28 per cent in 2008, 19.6 per cent in 2009 (CASNAV de Paris 2009: 9), and 13 per cent in 2011 (CASNAV de Paris 2012). Although there are no statistics showing the trend for primary-education levels, the total number of newcomers in 2011 was 2,212; of 681 newcomers at the primary education level, about 100, or 15 per cent, were Chinese children (CASNAV de Paris 2012).

During the 1990s, some Chinese children aged between 13 and 17 were sent to France ahead of their parents, to plan their parents' eventual immigration. Between 500 and 600 children were sent ahead of their parents during this decade, but as the immigration brokers who perpetrated these arrangements were arrested, this practice is no longer followed.¹⁰ Since then, in most cases, the parents immigrate to France first and the children join them up to 10 years later, when the family's life in France has stabilized somewhat (Cattelain [ed.] 2002).

When conducting my research from 2005 to 2009, Wenzhou-born children were conspicuous in the introductory and admission classes¹¹ for newcomers.

8 In French schools, a "newcomer" refers to a child that is subject to compulsory education and came to France fewer than two years earlier from an area where French is not spoken. As of 2008, there were 34,970 newcomers in France — 17,280 elementary school newcomers and 17,627 junior-high school newcomers — approximately 85 per cent of whom are receiving some type of learning support. This accounts for 3.7 per cent of all students. The figure has trended at around this level for the last 10 years (Sonoyama 2009: 236).

9 CASNAV, which stands for Centre Académique pour la Scolarisation des Nouveaux Arrivants et des Enfants du Voyage, is a center in the Académie de Paris for newcomers and travelers. It provides school attendance support for newcomers.

10 The study by Cattelain ([ed.] 2002) revealed that the children who came to France by land, crossing through various countries using immigration mediators, had to undergo painful experiences such as being forced to change their names to those on fake passports or being raped.

11 In addition to the basic class, newcomers are registered for a special admissions class to help them adjust to school in France, and to learn the French language. Newcomers at the primary-education level are enrolled in the introductory class (CLIN), or the tutor class

However, during my field visit in 2013, these children no longer attended the introductory and admission classes, and French-born Wenzhou children were enrolled directly into the regular classes. This change was a result of the drastic decline in the number of immigrants from Wenzhou after 2007, caused by crackdowns on illegal immigration practices under former President Nicolas Sarkozy. In addition, in the 2010s, there have been more cases in which a child in his or her mid to late teens arrives legally in France as an international student, ahead of his or her parents, and is later joined by the family.

School Failure Among Children of New Chinese Immigrants in Paris

The following paragraphs describe the results obtained from my visits between 2005 to 2013 to an elementary school and a high school in the 13th arrondissement, to two elementary schools and three junior high schools in the Belleville District, and to the vocational high school in the 11th arrondissement. These schools have the highest percentage of Chinese students in Paris. The schools in which I conducted fieldwork include almost all schools in Paris where the problems triggered by children of new Chinese immigrants were most conspicuous. These children were mainly from Wenzhou, but in schools in the 13th arrondissement there were also some from northeastern China. During my visits, I interviewed principals, education coordinators, classroom teachers, Chinese-language teachers, intensive French-class teachers, admission-class teachers, and CPES (Conseillers Principales d'Éducation),¹² and conducted participant observation during classes. This examination also includes the results of my interviews with the president of a center that supports the educational activities of children of new Chinese immigrants and a sociologist who specializes in truancy.

My first observation was that the new Chinese immigrant children at the elementary school and the high school I visited in the 13th arrondissement — where the residential community of Indo-Chinese refugees is located — included children from both Wenzhou and northeastern China. Although the term “Chinese student” is not used in French schools, and both Indo-Chinese refugee children and mainland Chinese immigrant children are referred to as

(CRI), while those at the secondary-education level are enrolled in the admissions class (CLA). They can enroll in the basic class at any time during the school year, depending on their French competency (Sonoyama 2009: 235).

¹² A CPE (Conseiller Principal d'Éducation) is a staff member specializing in student guidance. In general, one CPE is stationed in each secondary education institution in France.

“Asian students,” teaching staff at the elementary school and high school in the 13th arrondissement regard the two groups very differently.

According to the principal of the elementary school in which Asian students account for 60 per cent of the student body, children born in France to Indo-Chinese parents rarely cause problems. Their parents respect the school, attend Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, and are very committed to encouraging their children to earn good grades. However, the children of new immigrants from Wenzhou and northeastern China, whose numbers have increased rapidly since around 2000, are very problematic. Some have never received basic compulsory education, worn shoes, or used scissors. Furthermore, their parents, who come from rural areas and have a lower social status than the Indo-Chinese refugee parents, are not enthusiastic about getting their children educated, since they cannot speak French and are unable to communicate with the school.

Second, in the Belleville District, where most Wenzhou people live, almost all new Chinese immigrant children are from Wenzhou, and they account for approximately 20 to 30 per cent of the student body in the three junior high schools I visited. From the late 1990s to late 2000, most students in the admission classes at the three junior high schools were Wenzhou children; these children spoke to each other in Chinese and did not interact with non-Wenzhou children. These Wenzhou children were not fluent in French, even after having attended the admission class for up to two years and having then transferred to the regular classes. Most Wenzhou children got bad grades, particularly in French and history, and almost half of them were unable to enter higher education. The other half, however, were able to enter higher education, compensating for bad grades in French and history by doing well in math and science.

I interviewed M.E. Hedibel, an expert studying the problem of truancy in junior and senior high schools from a sociological viewpoint. She said that the problem of truancy is becoming conspicuous among children who came to France from China in recent years, and teaching staff are at loss as to how to deal with it because other Asian students have not previously caused so many problems. Based on her own study, Hedibel points out that Wenzhou children are missing school because many are exhausted from having to work in a restaurant or sewing shop for economic reasons (Hedibel 2009).

A junior high school CPE said during my interview that there are two types of non-attendance: the kind caused by having to work for economic reasons, as pointed out by Hedibel (2009), and the kind caused by the students' recent tendency to spend time in Internet cafés and similar places during school hours. Skipping school to “hang out” is associated with a loss of motivation to

study, as noted by the CPE of this junior high school, who also explained that an underlying factor is the family's immigration arrangement, in which the parents immigrate to France first and the child only joins the parents after having been raised by his or her grandparents in China. Not being able to accept the decision that they have to come to France because of their parents, the children are unwilling to study or to make an effort to adapt to life in France, which leads to frequent non-attendance at school.

In addition, even though Wenzhou children in the elementary school I visited — where they have accounted for around 15 per cent of all students since the school was founded in 2003 — were all born in France, their French-language skills are poor. After it was determined that the children were not fluent because the parents did not speak French, the parents held a forum called La Papothèque,¹³ led by an ethno-psychiatrist from China, where they discussed ways of improving communication between the parents and the school.

Cultures en Partage,¹⁴ an association established in Paris in 1999 as a center for educational activities to support children of new Chinese immigrants, cooperated with elementary and junior high schools in the Belleville District¹⁵ and worked to solve problems that arose in connection with Wenzhou children, at the school's request. According to the president of this association, families from Wenzhou often have two children, one was raised by grandparents in China and later joined the parents in France and another born in France. In the last few years, an increasing number of children, particularly

13 La Papothèque, from the French word *papoter* (meaning “to chat”), is a conversation forum for parents, held for each ethnic group at the discretion of the principal. In 2009 and 2013, I interviewed an ethno-psychiatrist from China who leads La Papothèque at the elementary school in the Belleville District. According to these interviews, the participating parents were all from Wenzhou, and the number of participants had declined from about 25 in 2009 to half that in 2013. The conversation at La Papothèque is led by the parents, and subjects that have been discussed in the past include differences in perception related to play, issues that arise at the beginning of a new semester, cultural differences in educational methods used, difficulties arising from poor French-language skills among the children, and issues regarding the parents' dignity.

14 Cultures en Partage has supported between 150 and 180 children — mainly elementary students — since its inception; however, it was closed in 2010 because it was no longer able to obtain government aid due to the global economic crisis.

15 The Association for Language and Cultural Support and the Association Pierre Ducerf also cooperate with schools in Paris by sending in Chinese interpreters, operating French supplementary schools, and providing learning support.

French-born Chinese children aged between five and seven, are joining a support network for children with difficulties. This network is called RASED.¹⁶ In these cases, the biggest problem is that the children do not participate in classroom discussions. French teachers think it is important for children to speak up; when children do not speak, teachers view their behavior as a problem. In one case, teachers observed a first-grade Wenzhou child who did not speak up and who they thought had a problem; however, there was no problem, because the student spoke well when asked direct questions. The association president also observed that there is often a sense of distance between children and their parents, because the children were brought to France several years after their parents immigrated. Unstable lifestyles resulting from illegal immigration practices have also had negative psychological effects on the children. The president said that some children lose their motivation to study due to a lack of communication with their parents, and because they begin questioning why they themselves are in France.

Third, the vocational high school in the Sedaine Popincourt neighborhood in the 11th arrondissement — where a row of clothing outlets has been owned by Wenzhou immigrants since the late 1990s — is the high school with the highest percentage of Chinese students in Paris. Wenzhou immigrants who lived close to the school and worked in the garment industry tried to get their children to be allowed to take clothing courses at this high school so they would be able to help out in their family businesses. This is why Wenzhou students have accounted for 10 to 15 per cent of the student body since the late 1990s.

The principal noted that, in addition to Wenzhou children being isolated because they are not fluent in French, the children's biggest problem is leaving school before graduating. About half of the Wenzhou students drop out after the first year of the two-year program. Many do so in order to work in sewing shops run by other Wenzhou people, after spending one year acquiring the necessary skills. This happens because the parents are economically distressed, owe a debt to the immigration broker, and want their child to start earning money as soon as possible. Though school officials contact the parents when a student misses school, they rarely hear back from them, since Wenzhou parents do not understand French. Consequently, the student ends up dropping out.

16 RASED stands for Réseaux d'Aide Scolaire aux Enfants Difficultés.

Main Factors that Prevent Immigrants' Descendants from Conforming to the "Folk Theory of Success"

Chinese children in Western countries are regarded as successful role models in terms of their adjustment to school and their gaining of relatively good grades. Many previous studies (e.g., Chao 1996; Sue and Okazaki 1990) have discussed the reasons for Chinese Americans' successful adjustment to school. Siu (1994), who summarized these studies, points out that these school successes are most often attributed to Confucianism; that is, children's school successes are rooted in cultural values and background. Their tightknit, hierarchical family structure encourages children to study hard at school and at home. Furthermore, the children succeed in school because the parent-child relationship at home overlaps with the teacher-student relationship at school, and teachers respect the values taught at home (Siu 1994: 23).

The importance placed on schooling by Confucian thinking, however, cannot explain the fact that there are new Chinese immigrant children in France that do not adjust well to school, as shown above, even though they share the same cultural values. Consequently, there is a need to identify the factors that account for the success of French-born children of Indo-Chinese refugees in French schools, and the factors leading to the school failure that has become evident among children of new Chinese immigrants.

The first factor of interest is the parents' legal status, since the socio-economic status of parents affects the educational attainment of immigrant children.¹⁷ The socio-economic status of both Indo-Chinese refugees and new Chinese immigrants is low; however, in the case of Indo-Chinese refugees, their institutional status was stable, because they were legally accepted refugees. On the other hand, many of the new Chinese immigrants are illegal. Many illegal immigrants are not able to obtain a stable job, and for this reason they send their children to work and force them to drop out of school, rather than aiming for them to secure a stable job in French society by completing their formal education. As a result, parents of new Chinese immigrants fail to bear out the folk theory of success in the same way as those of Indo-Chinese refugees.

In addition, the home environment of illegal immigrants tends to be unstable, because there is the possibility of deportation. One teacher I interviewed at the junior high school mentioned that two students' parents in her intensive French classes had been found to be illegal and were to be deported within 48 hours. She immediately consulted a lawyer, and this helped to avoid the deportation. In such circumstances, parents are not in a position to pay

¹⁷ There are many studies, including Portes and MacLeod (1996).

attention to their children's education, and this has led to the problem of children missing school because they are unable to build the motivation they need to become rooted in the new country.

The second factor of interest is the immigration arrangements for the children of new Chinese immigrants. As indicated by the association president and the junior high school CPE, when parents immigrate first and wait several years before bringing children over the children not only feel they have moved because of their parents, and lose the motivation to study in the new country, but also begin to feel a sense of psychological distance from their parents because of the long period of separation.

Based on my interviews with 24 children of Chinese immigrants, I concluded that the folk theory of success was born out by parents and children who shared the following four viewpoints. First, the parents were dissatisfied with their situation in mainstream society and wanted something different for their children. Second, the children did not want the same occupations as their parents, and valued school education as a means of obtaining a job of their own choice in mainstream society. Third, the parents' day-to-day social relationships were limited to Chinese people, and, since their children's excellent academic performance was praised by the Chinese community, the school grades of their own children became a source of pride. Fourth, they engaged in a parent-child relationship in which children embrace their parents' values.

Though the academic levels of Indo-Chinese refugees are generally higher than those of new Chinese immigrants, the former often are unable to get a job commensurate with their academic background in France. While both Indo-Chinese refugees and new Chinese immigrants feel dissatisfied with their socio-economic status in French society, Indo-Chinese refugees hope that their children will be able to achieve the kind of success that they could not, and therefore bear out the folk theory, which predicts that they will value school education as a means by which their children can be successful. Second-generation youth of Indo-Chinese refugees of Chinese descent that I interviewed expressed feelings of affection for their parents. As such, they were able to accept their parents' expectations.

However, in the case of new Chinese immigrants, even if parents want their child to succeed, because of a long separation they lack a stable parent-child relationship in which the child can embrace the parents' values. This is one of the reasons why children fail to bear out the folk theory of success.

In addition, even if Indo-Chinese refugees and new Chinese immigrants live in the same neighborhood in Paris, these two communities do not socially overlap. Wenzhou people live in close proximity to other Wenzhou people, speak Wenzhounese in everyday life, and do not seek to connect with

other people. This pattern of behavior is designed to conceal the immigrants' illegal status. As a result, new Chinese immigrants cannot share resources and information about children's education in the same way as Indo-Chinese refugees.

The third factor to consider is the lack of French-language skills. The French-born children of Indo-Chinese refugees have been studying French ever since kindergarten, even though they speak Chinese at home, so the lack of French-language skills was almost never a problem. Conversely, the children of new Chinese immigrants have difficulty in overcoming the language barrier and acquiring French-language skills, even after transitioning from the admission class to the regular class, because they did not start their education in a French school. Their lack of French-language skills prevents them from attaining good grades and advancing to higher educational institutions. However, some do get good grades in math and science, which compensates for their lack of fluency in French, and they are thus able to advance to university. Since the 2010s, the number of French-born Wenzhou children has increased, and although the lack of French-language skills is a problem in elementary schools, it has not been a major problem in junior high schools. As the number of French-born children increases, the lack of French-language skills will cease to be a main cause of school failure.

As described above, school failure among the children of new Chinese immigrants can be attributed to two primary factors: (1) institutional constraints and unstable home environments as a consequence of the parents' status as illegal immigrants; and (2) unstable parent-child relationships resulting from the family's method of immigration, which stand in the way of the formation of attitudes of the sort predicted by the folk theory of success. Although poor French-language skills were once a factor in school failure, they are no longer a main factor.

Studies of the children of illegal immigrants' school success and failure are rare (Gibson 1997, 434); however, Zhou et al. conducted a study on educational attainment among children of Mexican, Chinese, and Vietnamese descent living in Los Angeles, and argued that the children of immigrants will only be able to climb the social ladder once their parents attain a stable legal status (Zhou et al. 2008: 57).

Rather than comparing different minority groups, the present study compares people of Chinese descent that share the same cultural background but immigrated at different times. Results show that the family's immigration arrangements and the parents' status as illegal immigrants become the main factor in preventing the formation of attitudes of the sort proposed by Obgu's folk theory of success (1991), and in influencing the children's school

failure. This paper's significance is that it shows not only the limitations of conventional explanations for Chinese immigrants' school success and failure based on cultural values but also that diversity within an ethnic group is created as immigration situations change over time.

References

- Archer, Louise, and Becky Francis. 2007. *Understanding Minority Ethnic Achievement: Race, Gender, Class and 'Success'*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Benton, Gregor. 1998. "Preface." In *The Chinese in Europe*, eds., Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke, pp. vii-viii. London: Macmillan Press.
- Béja, Jean-Phillippe, and Chunguang Wang. 1999. "Migrations Chinoises, Un Village du Zhejiang à Paris?" *Hommes & Migrations* 1220: 61-72.
- Beraha, Richard. 2012a. "Préambule." In *La Chine à Paris: Enquête au Cœur d'un Monde Méconnu*, ed., Richard Beraha, pp. 11-16. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- . 2012b. "Sortir de l'Ombre." In *La Chine à Paris: Enquête au Cœur d'un Monde Méconnu*, ed., Richard Beraha, pp. 53-167. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- CASNAV de Paris. 2009. *Rapport d'Activité 2008-2009*.
- . 2012. *Bilan de l'Année 2011-2012*. Paris: Académie Paris.
- Cattelain, Chloé, ed. 2002. *Les Modalités d'Entrée des Ressortissants Chinois en France*. Paris: Direction de la Population et des Migrations, Ministère des Affaires Sociales, du Travail et de la Solidarité.
- Chao, Ruth K. 1996. "Chinese and European American Mothers' Beliefs about the Role of Parenting in Children's School Success." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 27 (4): 403-423.
- Gibson, Margaret A. 1997. "Complicating the Immigrant/Involuntary Minority Typology." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 28 (3): 431-454.
- Hedibel, Marysee Esterle. 2009. *Recherche Action Autour de la Lutte contre l'Absentéisme et le Décrochage Scolaire et pour le Renforcement de l'Assiduité des Élèves, Collèges, Lycées Généraux et Professionnels*. Paris: Académie Paris.
- Li, Minghuan. 1999. "To Get Rich Quickly in Europe: Reflections on Migration Motivation in Wenzhou." In *Internal and International Migration: Chinese Perspectives*, eds., Frank N. Pieke and Hein Mallee, pp. 181-198. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Live, Yu-Sion. 1998. "The Chinese Community in France: Immigration, Economic Activity, Cultural Organization and Representations." In *The Chinese in Europe*, eds., Benton, Gregor and Frank N. Pieke, pp. 96-124. London: Macmillan Press.
- Marc, Paul. 2002. "The Dongbei: The New Chinese Immigration in Paris." In *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*, eds., Pál Nyíri and Igor Saveliev, pp. 120-126. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Mung, Emmanuel Ma. 2005. "Chinese Immigration and (Ethnic) Labour Market in France." In *Asian Migrants and European Labour Markets: Patterns and Processes of Immigrant Labour Market Insertion in Europe*, eds., Ernest Spaan, Felicitas Hilmann, and Ton van Naerssen, pp. 42-55. New York: Routledge.
- Nyiri, Pál. 2014. "Training for Transnationalism: Chinese Children in Hungary." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37 (7): 1253-1263.
- Office for National Statistics. March 2011. "Ethnic group, Local Authorities in the United Kingdom (Table KS201UK)." Census 2011. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?pageSize=50&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&newquery=KS201UK>.
- Ogbu, John U. 1991. "Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities in Comparative Perspective". In *Minority Status and Schooling: A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities*, eds., Margaret A. Gibson and John U. Ogbu, pp. 3-33. New York: Garland.
- Pieke, Frank N. 1991. "Chinese Educational Achievement and 'Folk Theory of Success'." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 22 (2): 162-180.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Dag MacLeod. 1996. "Educational Progress of Children of Immigrants: The Role of Class, Ethnicity, and School Context." *Sociology of Education* 69 (49): 255-275.
- Siu, Sau-Fong. 1994. "Taking No Chances: Profile of a Chinese-American Family's Support for School Success." *Equity and Choice* 10 (2): 23-32.
- Sonoyama, Daisuke. 2009. 'フランスの移民の学業達成から何を学ぶか (What can we Learn from Academic Achievement of Immigrants in France?)'. In *日仏比較—変容する社会と教育 (Japan-France Comparison: Changing Society and Education)*, eds., Daisuke Sonoyama and Jean-François Sabouret, pp. 231-244. Tokyo: Akashisyoten.
- Sue, Stanley, and Sumie Okazaki. 1990. "Asian-American Educational Achievements: A Phenomenon in Search of an Explanation." *American Psychologist* 45 (8): 913-920.
- Yamamoto, Sumiko. 2014. *EUにおける中国系移民の教育エスノグラフィ (Ethnography of Education for Chinese Immigrants in the EU)*. Tokyo: Toshindo.
- Yun, Gao, and Véronique Poisson. 2005. *Le Trafic et l'Exploitation des Immigrants Chinois en France*. Genève: Bureau International du Travail.
- Zhou, Min, Jennifer Lee, Jody A. Vallejo, Rosaura Tafoya-Estrada, and Yang S. Xiong. 2008. "Success Attained, Deterred, and Denied: Divergent Pathways to Social Mobility in Los Angeles's New Second Generation". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 620 (1): 37-61.