Chinese Student Migration and Integration in the UK: An exploration of links to and engagement with local communities in Nottingham

(A paper submitted for COMPAS and CPI Working Paper)

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented growth in the number of Chinese students in the last decade or so has raised challenging issues about their integration on campus and in the wider community. Many questions arise regarding the impact of Chinese student migration and integration in local communities: To what extents has Chinese student migration in the past reshaped the landscape of diasporic Chinese community in the UK? What progresses have Chinese students made in terms of integration in local communities? And what are key factors or features which may be related or contribute to different statuses of integration among Chinese students? To address above questions, a local community perspective has been posed and tested by combining official data (UK Censuses 2001, 2011, HESA's international student statistics) and our questionnaire survey conducted in Nottingham in the summer of 2013. The results from data analysis shed new light on the importance ofcivic engagement in Chinese student integration. Based upon the survey information, furthermore, four types of integration strategies or statuses are distinguished according to the scope of student social networking whilst relevant background factors, features and impacts are recognised.

Key words: international student migration (ISM), integration, local community perspective, civic engagement, Chinese students, UK

[1] This paper was prepared for and presented to a COMPAS WIP seminar in early February 2014. The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Dr. Biao Xiang and Dr. Hiranthi Jayaweer for their kind invitation, organisation of the seminar and encouragement to complete and submit this paper as a COMPAS Working Paper. It is acknowledged that this paper is based upon a recent completed project, practising global citizenship in Nottingham Chinese community, which was jointly funded by the University of Nottingham and School of Contemporary Chinese Studies, with the participation and support of local councils (Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire County and Broxtowe Borough) and Chinese community representatives from 2011 to 2013. Special thanks are given to Professor Shujie Yao, former head of the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies for his interest and continuous support in the past. I would like to thank to Ms Emma Newcombe and Dr. Tyler Rooker for their kind attention and encouragement to publish this paper.

1. Introduction

Studies of international student migration have mostly paid attention to its contribution to either higher education institutes and local economies in major destination countries (BIS, 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013), or to the potential benefits to students themselves and source countries (Findlay, 2011; Raghuram, 2013). In contrast, less attention has been given to the process and consequences of student integration in local communities which influences their understanding and development of their skills, competences, and confidence for living in a multicultural society. Unlike other types of international migration, furthermore, international student integration is even more complex due to the short duration of stay and the division (visible or invisible) between the university campus and the wider community. As a result, such research as exists treats international student integration as a matter of either intercultural learning within the university campus or the relationship between international and local (or domestic) students (Smith and Khawaja, 2011).

In contrast to such a narrow approach, in this paper I argue that international student migration and integration are two sides of the same coin. International student migration can be viewed as part of the intercultural communication and interaction between sources and host countries, and international student integration in local communities provides a foundation for the development of mutual understanding, respect, effective communication and cooperation between two countries. Furthermore, international student migration and integration cannot be fully understood unless international students are treated as a members of ethnic groups in destination countries, not only because international students provide new impetus for ethnic economies (including ethnic products/services, labour forces as well), but also because they share many common features with local groups in terms of values, attitudes and social behaviour in intercultural communication. By bringing a local community perspective for observing and analysing international student integration, I attempt to shed new light on the debates of diasporic community cohesion and integration.

It is in this context that the instance of Chinese international students in the UK provides a good case study: not merely because Chinese students form a leading group in the global higher education market but also because the UK is one of most popular destinations attracting them. Alongside this, there has been a rapid growth of the Chinese population in the UK in the last decade or so which is coincidental with the unprecedented growth of Chinese students. No less important, is that Chinese students are treated as symbolic of disintegration of international students (e.g. "Chinese Phantom"), which is similar to diaspora Chinese as hidden communities in the UK or other western countries. Many questions arise for this paper: whether or how has Chinese student migration contributed to the growth of Chinese population in the UK? What progress have Chinese students made in terms of integration in local communities and what is the impact on the local Chinese community? What are the factors and barriers against their integration, and what are the theoretic and policy implications?

The above questions will be addressed by a combination of official data analysis and an empirical study in Nottingham, a mid-sized city which is not only leading the internationalisation of higher education but also represents Chinese community in England. Accordingly, this paper is organised into six sections. The next section is a review of relevant literature in order to identify the research gaps. It is followed by a description of the conceptual framework and background to the survey

design and implementation. Section 4 concentrates on the growth of Chinese students and the impact on the growth and uneven distribution of Chinese ethnic population across England, while Sections 5 to 6 will highlight the survey findings in the case of Nottingham. Finally, the paper discusses the findings and offers conclusions.

2. Literature review: different approaches and research gaps

International student migration and integration, which involves many complicated factors and dimensions in both in host countries, can be approached from different angles and schools of thought. For the purpose of this paper, the relevant literature can be roughly divided into four campuses: assimilation, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism.

Assimilation refers to a process of a group of immigrants learning, adapting to, and adopting a new culture without keeping their own tradition or culture. Despite variation in terms of duration, route and strategies, the outcomes of successful assimilation are the same in the end: there is no difference between new and original groups in host countries in terms of various indicators such as income, career and political influences (Berry, 1997). Applied to the case of international students, integration can be seen as a process of "cultural adjustment" in which international students bear the responsibility to persist, overcome their discomfort, and integrate into the host society (Lee and Rice, 2007). The outcome of integration can be measured by 'cultural fit' in which international students are expected to conform to the normative values, attitudes and behaviours of the host countries (Ward and Chang, 1997; Ward *et al* 2004).

In contradiction to one way assimilation, multiculturalism emphasises the nature of two-way learning and adaptation between the new immigrants and the main groups in the host society. Applied to international student groups, Bochner (1972) suggests an intercultural learning which rather than adopting the new culture instead leads to a learning of the characteristics of the culture which allows the group to operate effectively. Along similar lines, an acculturation perspective has been developed to refer to a dual process of cultural and psychological change as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members in the larger society (Berry, 1997; 2005). In particular, Berry (1997) distinguishes four strategies of immigrants: assimilation (accepting another culture without keeping their own culture), separation (holding original culture and avoiding interaction with others), integration (maintaining original culture and at the same time daily interactions with other groups), and marginalisation (losing own culture with little interest or poor connection with others). Appling this framework, many scholars have attempted to reveal or diagnose the barriers and constraints to integration experienced by international students, and, in particular Chinese students, at universities abroad (Kashima and Loh, 2006; Tian and Lowe, 2012; Su, 2013; Wang *et al,* 2012; Bag and Montgomery, 2013; NG *et al,* 2013).

Limited to intercultural communication within university campus may be constraint from our understanding on the complexity and multidimensional nature of international student integration. In this regard, transnationalism literature could broad our understanding in terms of networking, capital accumulation and transformation. Perre Bourdieu (1986) for instance identifies different types of capital (cultural, social and economic) and conversions between them, which provides a useful framework to understand the function of social network in cultural learning and communication among international students. For transnationalism, according to Alvaro Lima (2010), integration "represents overlapping relationships. Immigrants become part of the receiving country

and its institutions, and institutions transform them, while simultaneously maintaining and strengthening their ties to their countries of origin".

Bringing together intercultural learning and transnational networking, the experience of international student migration and integration may offer a unique opportunity for international students to develop a cosmopolitan view of themselves, their ethnic group, their nation-state and the international community (Olson and Peacock, 2012). With an emphasis on "global connectedness" and "global solutions" to some common challenges such as poverty, climate change, human rights, and global citizenship, education is recommended for "adding value both to the student experience and to the employability of graduates" leaving Higher Education institutions (Reid and Spencer-Oatey, 2013, 126-127). However, there is no consensus on the definition and utilisation of global citizenship (Marshall, 2009; Caruana, 2012), to which three approaches can be distinguished: a) a neo-liberal approach which focuses on the ability of individuals in privileged positions to travel across national borders for global economic participation; b) a radical approach concerning the causes and structures of global inequality as well as the choices and actions of global citizens at local, national and international levels; and, c) a transformationalist perspective which emphasises the complexity of local, national and international relationships, and encourages engagement with others based upon common humanity (Jorgenson and Shultze 2012).

More than inter-cultural learning, for instance, Montgomery (2013) draws attention to "multiliteracy" for the future of curricula in a globalised world, which involves breaking down boundaries between university and community. Such an approach calls for a change in the relationship between an institution and the community, 'from making the community "come to you", to going out to the community' (Kress, 2000; Montgomery *et al,* 2011).

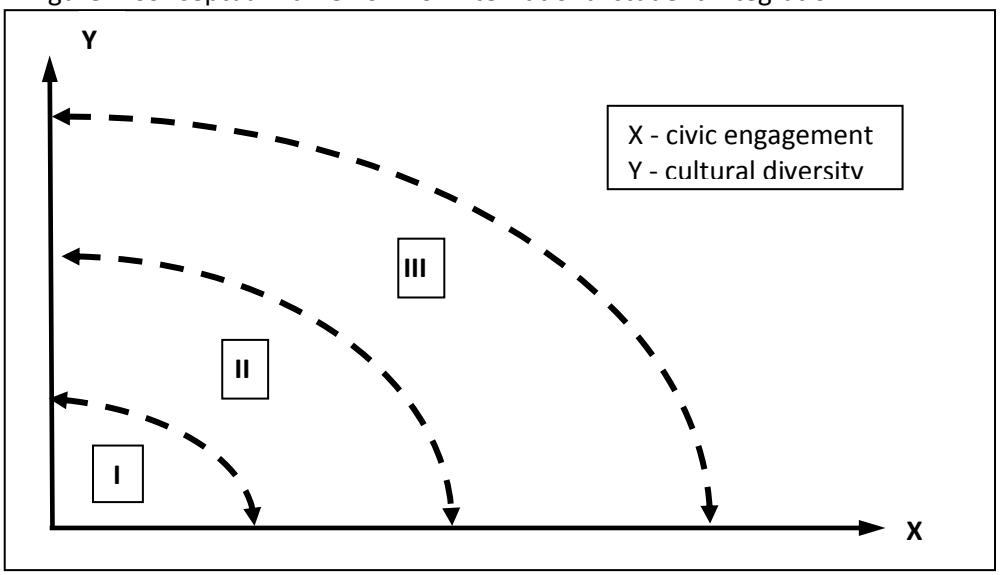
The brief presentation above shows the complexity and multidimensional nature of international student migration and integration. In relation to the education and development of "global citizenship" among international and local students, what's missing from the debate is about the role of local communities in hosting and facilitating international student integration. The aim of this paper is to fill the gap: a civic engagement element will be proposed for research design and empirical data analysis, leading to the development and application of a local community perspective.

3. Local community perspective: conceptual framework and empirical studies in Nottingham

The research gap identified in the previous section calls for a combination of two approaches - acculturation and civic engagement - in order to account for the roles of local communities in international student development and integration. Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual framework in which local communities become a key element for observing student social life and integration. Two dimensions can be recognised for students to develop their social networking: ethnic diversity and civic engagement. Furthermore, the two dimensions are not totally unrelated but are interconnected with each other. Differentiated from the four acculturation strategies in the acculturation approach, three statuses of integration can be distinguished. Zone I is similar to separation or segregation in the acculturation approach but with a slightly different meaning: this group of students is not only homogenous in terms of friendship but also in lack of social contact beyond the university campus. At the other end, students in the Zone III group are not only forge friendship across the boundaries of local, national and international students, but are also very

actively engaged with local authorities, civil society organisations and other community groups. Intermediate between the two groups, students groups in Zone II are actively involved in cross-cultural communication but there is limited scale and scope in terms of friendship or networking.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework for international student integration



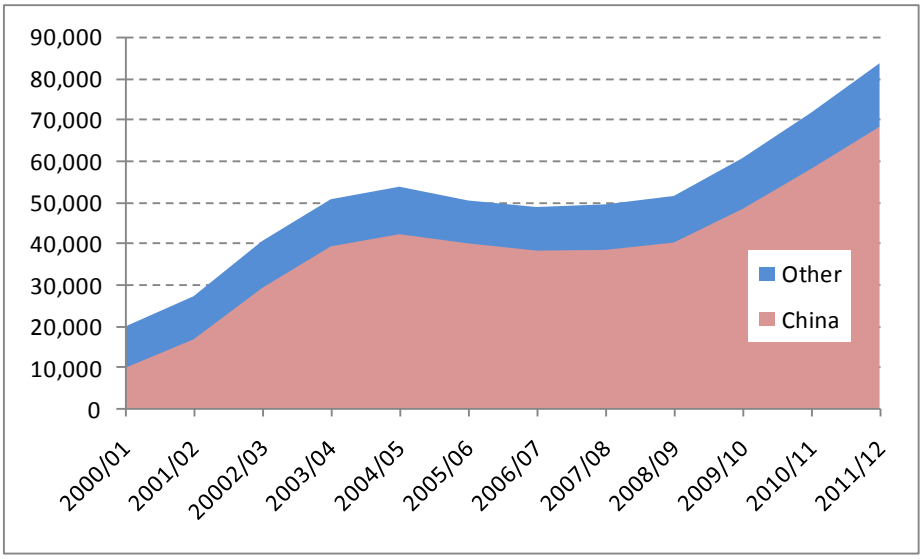
The framework above would not have been developed and applied in the survey without a pilot project running in Nottingham since 2011. With a theme of practising global citizenship in Chinese communities, more than 200 Chinese and non-Chinese students were mobilised to participate in a training and outreach programme. Local councils, civil society organisations and local Chinese community representatives made a joint effort with a group of voluntary student leaders, university departments for student services, international student support and community partnerships. In addition to convenient lectures and workshops, participating students were asked to prepare, develop and deliver their group project proposals with the aim of addressing the specific needs of the local Chinese community and to fully use the resource and support of stakeholders. The pilot project not only created a new platform for local Chinese community development and university engagement, but also gained updated information about the latest development, resources, needs and challenges facing the Chinese community of Nottingham. In the summer of 2013, with the participation and support of all stakeholders, a survey was designed and conducted for the Nottingham Chinese community, within which Chinese students were an important part (Wu, 2013).

With an emphasis on the interface with local Chinese residents, the focus of student questionnaire was on the links, activities, needs and perceptions of the local Chinese community. In addition, the pilot project involved a number of voluntary student participation and a consultation process was employed for both voluntary students and local Chinese residents to draft and test the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire was finalised, multiple channels were used to disseminate the survey (Wu, 2013).

4. Evidence for links between Chinese students and local Chinese communities

The links between and contribution of Chinese students to local Chinese communities in the UK can be analysed and compared by looking at the growth and distribution of both the Chinese student population and the diasporic Chinese population. This section attempts to present the results of statistical analysis based upon a combination of two official datasets, the UK Census (2001 and 2011) and the data gathered by the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). According to HESA information, Figure 2 provides an overall picture of the internationalisation of higher education in the UK and the changing position of Chinese students since 2000. Defining Chinese students as a sum of students from mainland China (denoted in red) and from Hong Kong and Singapore (denoted in blue, Figure 2 shows a rapid growth of Chinese students from less than 20,000 in 2000/01 to over 80,000 in 2011/12. The share of mainland Chinese students to the total increased from about a half to over 80% during the same period. This indicates that mainland Chinese students were the major driving force for the rapid growth of Chinese students in the UK over the last decade or so.

Figure 2 Growth of Chinese students by region of origin



Notes: This figure is created by the author based upon information provided by Higher Education Statistics Agency. The number of students represents full-time equivalent students. "China" here denotes students from mainland China whilst "Other" indicates Chinese students from Hong Kong and Singapore. .

Based upon the same information source, Table 1 provides a more detailed picture about the contribution of Chinese students - particularly students from mainland China - to the growth of international students in the UK's HE sector. The table shows that from 2000/01 to 2011/12, the number of mainland Chinese students increased by a multiple of 6.9, much higher than the growth rates of international and all UK students, 2.0 and 1.3 times respectively. In addition, the overall share of international students in the UK HE system grew significantly from 12.4% to 19.0% in the last 12 years: the share of Chinese students to total international students increased from 5.5% to 18.8% using the narrower definition of mainland Chinese or from 11% to 23% using the broader definition of Chinese students. It is worth noting that in this context, students from Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand are excluded, whilst ethnic Chinese may form a significant proportion of their number.

Table 1 Internationalisation of higher education and position of Chinese students in the UK

Year	All	International	China	Chinese	Share (%)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(2)/(1)	(3)/(2)	(2)/(4)
2000/01	1,454,949	180,563	9,899	19,908	12.4	5.5	11.0
2011/12	1,923,274	364,699	68,385	83,771	19.0	18.8	23.0
Growth	1.32	2.02	6.91	4.21	--	--	--

Source: Table created by author based upon the information provided by Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). Figures in cells are numbers of full-time equivalent students.

Focusing on the relationship between Chinese students and local Chinese population growth, Table 2 shows an uneven distribution of HE resources in England which influences the distribution and growth of Chinese population. Among 326 local authority areas (Districts or Boroughs), over three quarters (77%) of local authorities do not have a university, 15% have one university only, 5% have two universities, while only 2% have three or more universities. The representation of Chinese students in local authority areas increases from less than 529 in single university towns or districts, 1724 in areas with two universities, to 2342 in areas with three or more universities. In relation to the size of Chinese student populations, unsurprisingly, the mean population size of Chinese are about 4000 and 2000 in two and single university areas respectively; compared to areas without a university these mean population sizes are respectively more than 6 times and 3 times larger. Furthermore, Table 2 confirms the significant impact of university resources on the growth of the Chinese population, which is almost double or three times higher than those areas with no university. Taking into account the few Chinese students participating in the UK census survey, Table 2 provides an estimation of the proportion of Chinese students to local Chinese population which varies from 21% in single university boroughs to about 30% in two university boroughs.

Table 2 Distribution and growth of Chinese residents and students by university resources (2011)

Number of University	Number of districts	%	Students (2011)	Residents (2011)	Resident growth (2001-2011, %)	Students in total (2011, %)
0	252	77.3	--	636	52.7	--
1	50	15.3	529	1,968	93.2	21.2
2	17	5.2	1724	4,101	147.4	29.6
>=3	7	2.1	2342	6,336	87.2	27.0
Total/Average	326	100	966	1,164	65.1	--

Source: This table is created by the author based upon a combination of UK Census and HESA data.

5. Background to the Nottingham Chinese community and profiles of sample students

Moving to the case of Chinese student migration and integration in Nottingham, the latest UK Census indicates that by 2011 there were 8930 Chinese living in the Nottingham area, of which two thirds lived in the City of Nottingham. The proportion of Chinese in the population of wider Nottingham was 0.82%. The equivalent proportion in the City of Nottingham was 1.96%. Furthermore, compared with 2001, the size of the Chinese population has more than doubled (2.4 times) in the Nottingham area and more than tripled in the City of Nottingham, indicating a rapid growth in the last decade. The growth of the Chinese population in Nottingham, in particular, has been driven by the rapid growth of Chinese new immigrants to the City of Nottingham, resulting in an increasingly centralised Chinese population from 46% in 2001 to 67% in 2011.

To some extent, the distribution and growth of the Chinese population in Nottingham over the last decade may be representative of many Chinese communities in England. For instance, Nottingham's contribution of Chinese to England's Chinese population was 2.35% in 2011, higher than the 2.05% which Nottingham contributed in terms of its total population to England as a whole. Put another way, the proportion of Chinese in the total population is 0.82% in Nottingham, higher than the national average of 0.72%. The big difference is the growth rate of the Chinese population in Nottingham which, at 140%, is almost double the national average of 72%. This indicates that Nottingham has one of the fastest growing Chinese communities across England.

In common with many locations in England, the rapid growth of the Chinese population in Nottingham cannot be separated from the internationalisation of higher education over the last decade. The two universities - the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University - have played a leading role in not only attracting and recruiting Chinese students but also developing and enhancing business links with China, including the establishment of an overseas campus in Ningbo, China, by the University of Nottingham. The number of Chinese students in the two universities, according to HESA, has increased eight-fold since 2001 to reach 2819 in 2011.

Table 3 summarises the major features of the respondents to the survey on Chinese students in Nottingham. Out of the 240 respondents, over three quarters come from mainland China whilst the rest (one quarter) are of Chinese ethnicity but from such countries as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia. The mean age of the students is 22.9 years old, with most (73%) between 18 and 23 years old (the remainder are 34 years old or higher. In terms of gender about 60% of the respondents are female. With respect to the distribution of respondents in subject areas, sciences and engineering (plus medicine) account for about 65% whilst humanities and social sciences (including business and management sciences) contribute the remaining 35%. In addition, a pyramid shape can be found from the distribution of sample students according to the degree level of their course: 57.8% were at undergraduate level, 27.6% at postgraduate level and 12.9% were engaged in a PhD. Regarding the experience of immigration, the mean residency duration were 2.1 and 1.6 years in the UK and Nottingham respectively, and over a half (53% and 62% respectively) have been resident for less than or equal to one year. In terms of the location of student accommodation, one half of respondents share a private house with other students outside of the university campus, slightly more than those who live in university student accommodation (46%). There was no evidence of a difference between mainland and other Chinese in terms of their location.

Table 3 Profiles of sample students (N=240)

Category	Description	Mean
Ethnicity	Students from mainland China	76.7%
	From "others" (e.g. HK, Taiwan, Singapore)	23.3%
Age	Age of students (years old)	22.9
Sex	Male	38.6%
	Female	61.4%
Major	Sciences and engineering	64.7%
	Humanities and social sciences	35.3%
Degree	PhD	12.9%
	Postgraduate	27.6%
	Undergraduate	57.8%
Immigration	Length of residency in the UK (years)	2.08
	Length of residency In Nottingham (years)	1.57
Accommodation	University student accommodation	46.0%
	Off-campus Student rented accommodation	49.4%

6. Student social networking and group division

Social networking - as a key variable reflecting both the foundation and status of Chinese student integration - was measured via a question about friendships within or outside of university campus. For the purpose of the questionnaire, the term “friends” is defined as those who frequently meet or regularly call each other. Where the respondent answered “yes”, they were also asked to identify one or all types of relationship indicated in Table 4. Looking in more detail at university campuses, Table 4 confirms that the dominant pattern of social networking is that of friendship within the same identity group, for example between mainland Chinese, which accounts for three quarters of the respondents: double or triple than contacts with other groups on campus. Nonetheless, over one third of respondents have good relationships with other international students and around one quarter of them have friends in other groups of Chinese with different identity or with local students. This seems to indicate an effort made by some of Chinese students in terms of cultural diversity.

Table 4 Distribution of friendship or social contact by location and ethnic group (N=240)

Category	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4
Within campus	Chinese: same identity	Chinese: diff. identity	International	Local
	75.0%	26.3%	35.0%	24.6%
Local community	Relatives	Chinese: same identity	Chinese: diff. identity	Non-Chinese
	11.7%	39.2%	16.7%	24.6%

Moving on to social connections with the wider communities outside of university campus, Table 4 shows that about 40% of respondents claim friendship with local Chinese residents with the same identity, followed by one quarter whose friends are non-Chinese. In addition, one in six (16.7%) have friends in different Chinese group while more than 10% of respondents have either relatives (or kinship) or parents' friends in Nottingham. The results seem to confirm that instead of unconnected or segregated status, a large number of Chinese students involve or engage with local communities via different channels; further, the roles of different channels or social contact vary in the social life of Chinese students.

Given the diversity of social contacts or friendship in terms of type, location and function, further analysis is needed to develop a statistical pattern which might provide a means to reveal the relationship between cultural diversity and civic engagement in Chinese student integration. For this purpose, the distribution of the sample students is closely examined and organized in terms of the type of social networking (network 1 referring to within campus, network 2 to beyond campus), the scale of crossing groups (from 0 to 4), and meaning for students' social life. Based upon the raw data from Table 4, Table 5 shows that slightly more than 10% of respondents do not have a friend or contact in network 1, whilst 38% don't have a friend or contact in network 2. Friendship within the same Chinese identity group dominates, accounting for about a half of samples in network 1, and about 40% in network 2. Respondents whose social networking crosses two or more cultural group boundaries account for the remaining 40% in network 1 and 20% in network 2. Overall, Table 5 provides a general picture of the extents of cultural diversity of student communication and networking both from the perspective of university and the wider community.

Table 5 Distribution and implication of social networking by type and scale

Scale	Contact within campus (Network1)			Contact beyond campus (Network2)		
	N	%	Implication	N	%	Implication
0	27	11.3	No friend	91	37.9	No contact
1	117	48.8	Intra- group	98	40.8	Limited
2	43	17.9	Inter-group	36	15.0	Wide
3	29	12.1	Cross-group	9	3.8	Wide
4	24	10.0	Cross-group	6	2.5	Wide
Total	240	100	---	240	100	--

A key question arises about the relationship between the two types of networking. By bringing the two dimensions together, Table 6 shows the variety of integration statuses which can be illustrated as cells of cross-section table between network 1 and network 2.

Table 6 Distribution of sample students between network 1 and network 2

Network1 \ Network 2	No contact	Limited	Wide	N
Within group	43.8%	45.1%	11.1%	144
Inter-group	44.2%	30.2%	25.6%	43
Cross-group	17.0%	37.7%	45.3%	53
All	37.9%	40.8%	21.3%	240

Notices: This table is based upon a restructure and simplification of Table 5.

Further, based upon the information in Table 6, four types of integration status can be distinguished:

- Type 1: *separation* can be applied to those whose friendship or social interaction is limited to the small group, with little contact with any other people on campus or the wider community. Students in such a group account for just over one quarter (26.3%) of the respondents in this survey.
- Type 2: *multi-culture* refers to those who are open-minded to establishing and developing cross-cultural communication and interaction with students in other culture groups, but there is little contact or interest in engaging with the wider community beyond campus. Such a group forms a share of 11.7% of the respondent students.
- Type 3: *engagement* refers to those who are interested in and developed good relationships with people in the local Chinese or wider community for various purposes (e.g. working experience, civic engagement). One third (33.8%) of respondents fall into this category, making them the largest group in the survey.
- Type 4: *Integration* is a combination of Types 2 and 3 as members of this group not only have good relationships with students with other cultural backgrounds on campus but also actively engaged with Chinese or non-Chinese groups in the wider community. Making up 28.3% of respondents, they form the second largest group in the survey.

A conclusion can be drawn from the above classification: engagement with local communities is very important for the social life of Chinese students as over 60% of surveyed students (Type 3 and Type 4) involved wider community in various extents. In contrast, the small size of the multi-cultural group (11.7%), appears to suggest that cross-cultural learning and adaptation are not limited to classroom or campus, but also include civic engagement.

7. Factors and features of student group division

Having provided a differentiation of the strategies and statuses of integration amongst the students surveyed, this section aims to identify a number of factors relating to the formation or distribution of different groups. For this purpose, a series of statistical tests were undertaken and the results are summarised as Table 7.

Our survey shows that factors of students' age, gender, major and degree is irrelevant to the division of groups. As shown in Table 7, the most salient factor behind student division is perhaps their region of origin - mainland Chinese or other Chinese (from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan). Whilst these two groups share a similar level of (around one third of samples) engagement with local communities, there is a significant difference between the two cohorts in terms of their distribution between the two types of integration. For instance, 30% of students from mainland China are in the category of segregation, more than double the percentage of their counterparts from the "other" Chinese group. By contrast, the latter is better represented in the integration category, accounting for over 40% of group members and 15% higher than their mainland counterparts.

As expected, integration status may be related to immigration experience and length of residency in the destination country. In this regard, our survey shows that students' duration of stay in the UK is an important factor influencing their engagement with the wider community and their integration. For instance, about three quarters of students who have lived in the UK for more than one year are in the categories of Type 3 and Type 4, compared with just over a half for first year students. Furthermore, nearly a half (47.3%) of students who have lived in the UK for three years or more are in the Type 4 category, much higher than other groups (29% and 20%). Table 6 also suggests that the length of stay in the UK is not the only factor determining segregation or integration. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain why about a half of students resident for one year or less in the UK are in Type 3 and Type 4. In addition, no significant difference is found regarding the influence of the length of residency in Nottingham on the student division.

Much of the literature attributes the poor level of integration of Chinese students to student accommodation - which brings co-habiting Chinese students few opportunities to communicate with other people. Our survey does not seem to support such claim: no significance is found between student group division and their living style (university student accommodation or rented house) or their neighbourhood with Chinese students. In other words, the integration status of Chinese students does not depend upon whether they live with Chinese students together. Our survey shows, however, that Chinese students living with international or local (English) students could significantly benefit in terms of declining segregation and enhancing integration.

We assumed that gaining work experience is an important motivating factor for students to participate in and engage in the wider community. Such an assumption can be partly proved by the empirical evidence. Our survey shows that only 35% of the student respondents had experience of either paid or voluntary work (of that group, 40% were paid and 60% were voluntary). Work experience, furthermore, is closely related to their attitudes and strategies in community engagement and integration: this can be seen from the fact that 83% of those with work experience are in Type 3 and Type 4, compared with only 66% of their counterparts without working experience. It is worth emphasising that working experience is one of many channels for students to contact and access to the wider community.

Table 7 Distribution of sample students by integration status and relevant factor (%)

Factor	Item	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	N
Ethnic identity	Mainland Chinese	29.9	12.5	33.2	24.5	184
	Other Chinese	14.3	8.9	35.7	41.5	56
Living in UK	<=1 year	31.7	15.9	31.7	20.0	126
	1-2 years	15.6	8.6	46.6	29.3	58
	>=3 years	22.6	3.6	26.4	47.2	53
Neighbourhood	International students	20.3	11.6	24.6	43.5	69
	Local students	9.7	17.7	25.8	46.8	62
Work experience	No	28.1	16.4	31.5	24.5	146
	Year	13.8	3.8	41.3	41.3	80
All		26.3	11.7	33.8	28.3	240

The different strategies for Chinese student integration can be further verified and illustrated by the differences in their performance in or attitudes towards relevant events in both the Chinese and wider communities. Our previous pilot survey conducted in the Nottingham Chinese community collected students' knowledge, experience, and attitudes towards the Chinese community. The following section highlights the key findings of that work.

In the survey questionnaire, we asked students to suggest whether they know of, and if they play a role in, major Chinese community organisations. Treating Chinese students as an important part of local Chinese community, a broad definition was adopted for Chinese community organisations to include not only traditional Chinese organisations created and maintained by established Chinese groups, mainly Cantonese and other overseas Chinese for decades, but also Chinese student societies and Chinese Studies institutes on the university campus. These latter organisations have increasingly shared the function of providing cultural and social support to the local Chinese community. Table 11 shows that only a small proportion of Chinese students are aware of the traditional Chinese community organisations (NCCA and NCWA) and there is no significant difference is between the differing types of students groups. The limited impact of these traditional community organisations is not limited to Chinese students, but is shared by local Chinese residents according to our parallel questionnaire survey on them (Wu 2013). In contrast to the decline of traditional organisations, we have witnessed an increasing impact of new community organisations such as Chinese students and Chinese Studies institutes which contain a large number of Chinese students and have more resources to support local Chinese community activities. Table 8 shows that about a half of the students were aware of CSSA, a Chinese student society organised by mainland Chinese students, and SCCS (School of Contemporary Chinese Studies), and there is a significant difference between Type 1 and other groups. Leaving aside the students in the Type 1 group, about one third of respondent students know about other Chinese Student Societies (CSSS). Bearing in mind that less than one quarter of the sampled students represents “other” Chinese and only small proportion of them have friends with “other” Chinese groups indicated in Table 4, such results further confirm that there is a lack of communication between mainland Chinese and “other” Chinese students.

Table 8 Do you know following organisations?

Group	NCCA*	NCWA*	CSSA	CSSS	SCCS
Type 1	10.5	7.9	39.9	0	21.1
Type 2	27.3	9.1	54.5	36.4	54.5
Type 3	15.6	13.3	66.7	37.8	46.7
Type 4	17.5	15.8	50.9	33.3	64.9
All	16.7	12.3	53.1	27.2	48.1

Notes: * denotes no significance in statistical test.

The increasing importance of student engagement with the wider community can be verified with their knowledge and participation in relevant organised community events (listed in Table 9). Compared with the low level of awareness among students in Type 1 group, for instance, the other groups have a much higher level for almost all of the listed events. In relation to the local Chinese community, unsurprisingly, students in Type 3 are significantly more aware than their counterparts in Type 4 in terms of participation in related events such as Chinese New Year Gala, Chinese community events, and other local social events (e.g. Olympic Torch, New Year Eve celebration). With respect to the impact of the individual activities listed in Table 9 on awareness and engagement with the local community, three events should be highlighted. Ranked at the top, Chinese New Year Gala, a unique opportunity to bringing Chinese and non-Chinese, students and local residents together, accounts for over two thirds of respondents - including over 40% of students in Type 1. The University of Nottingham Open Day (or May Fest), a platform organised by the university authority for the purpose of promoting and enhancing public participation and local engagement, is known of by over 60% of students in Type 3 and Type 4. Taking into account the decline of traditional Chinese community organisations and a lack of freedom in religious practice in mainland China, religious organisations have played an increasingly important role in attracting, facilitating and integrating Chinese students with local communities. This is particularly true for students in Type 4 and Type 3.

Table 9 Awareness of community events/activities

Event	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Total
Chinese New Year Gala	42.1	77.3	80.0	73.7	68.5
Chinese community event	21.1	55.5	60.0	54.4	46.9
Local church activities	15.8	40.1	57.8	68.4	49.4
UoN Community Open Day	26.3	54.5	62.2	61.4	52.5
Local Cultural Festivals*	18.4	18.2	46.7	38.6	33.3
Local social events	21.1	27.3	60.0	56.1	45.1
Local sport events	21.1	31.8	57.8	56.1	45.1
Local music event	18.4	50.0	46.7	59.6	45.1

Aside from knowledge about the local community, the different strategies for or statuses of student integration can be seen from attitudes to voluntary job opportunities in the local Chinese community. Based upon our pilot project, a range of requests for volunteers - identified by local Chinese residents - was listed in the questionnaire for students to respond to. Table 10 shows, generally, that willingness to take voluntary working opportunities declines from Type 4 to Type 1 for most of the items (except sports coaching to Chinese children) whilst the experience of volunteer work increases from Type 1 to Type 4. Given the decline and dysfunction of traditional Chinese community organisations without new community organisations to replace them, unsurprisingly, the gaps between the need (here willingness) for and actual experience in local community engagement is rather large. This is a negative factor impeding integration. Finally, it would be a simplification and untrue to assume that all students in Type 1 and Type 2 groups are not at all interested in engagement with the wider community. Despite being a significantly lower number than their counterparts, nonetheless a considerably large number of students in both groups expressed their interests in local community affairs. This would seem to suggest: a), a common need for civic engagement, and b), the limitation of group division based upon social networking.

Table 10 Voluntary experience (Exp.) and willingness (Willing.) to work in local Chinese community

Type of Work	Type 1		Type 2		Type 3		Type 4	
	Willing.	Exp.	Willing.	Exp.	Willing.	Exp.	Willing.	Exp.
English	31.6	21.0	59.1	18.2	71.1	20.0	70.2	24.6
Chinese*	39.5	5.3	50.0	4.5	62.8	13.3	76.7	15.8
Translation	28.1	10.5	59.1	9.1	57.8	8.9	61.4	15.8
Aged people	31.6	7.9	54.5	0	53.3	8.9	63.2	15.8
Art	23.7	10.5	54.5	13.6	60.0	20.0	61.4	8.8
Sport	31.6	10.5	68.2	22.7	57.8	11.1	64.9	14.0
Tutor	28.9	10.5	54.5	18.2	64.4	17.8	70.2	22.8

Notes: * denotes no significance in statistical test.

8. Discussion and conclusions

International student migration and integration cannot be separated but are interwoven into each other. This is a particularly true in the case of Chinese student migration in the first decade of the 21st century, which has happened parallel to a rapid growth of diasporic Chinese population in the UK during the same period. Many questions arise in this paper: Whether the growth of two "parallel groups" - Chinese students and local Chinese residents - are linked to each other, and if so how? How important is it for Chinese students to participate in and engage with the wider community (including the local Chinese community) for their social life in their host country, and what progress have students made in terms of integration? How varied is Chinese student integration and what are the key factors and features which can be recognised? The above questions have been addressed by a combination of official datasets (UK census and HESA) and empirical study in Nottingham. A number of research findings and conclusions can be drawn as follows.

Firstly, the links between international student migration and integration cannot be fully understood unless we take into account the needs and roles of the wider community in facilitating thedevelopment of cross-cultural learning and work experience. This is particularly true for Chinese students from mainland China who commonly lack citizenship education and communication experience outside of school/university campuses. For this purpose, a civic engagement dimension has been introduced this paper: more than 60% of the surveyed students had experience in engagement with the local community to various extents. This seems to suggest the necessity and feasibility of a civic engagement dimension for integration studies.

Secondly, leading international student migration at the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese student migration has provided a new momentum for the growth and transformation of diasporic Chinese community in the UK in the last decade or so. This is particularly true for those towns or boroughs with one or more universities, where Chinese students contribute over 20% or even over 30% of the local Chinese population and where the growth rate of local Chinese residents is double that of locales without a university. Co-ethnic links between students and local Chinese residents are an important channel for Chinese students to develop their local contacts and gain experience of community engagement. In this sense, Chinese student migration can be viewed as a new or potential dynamic for the opening up and integration of diasporic Chinese community.

Thirdly, Chinese student integration can be measured by the scope of their social networking within university campuses or beyond. Based upon our survey information, four types of integration strategies or statuses can be distinguished: separation, multicultural connection in campus, engagement with local Chinese or wider community, and integration by bringing two dimensions together. Compared with only one quarter falling into the category of separation, over 60% of Chinese students have had varied experience of going beyond the university campus with friends or close social contacts/partners with other groups into the wider community. This seems to suggest that Chinese students in our survey have made an effort with significant progress in terms of participation in and engagement with the wider community of Nottingham.

Fourthly, the variety of Chinese students in integration strategies or statuses is related to many factors. One of most salient factors perhaps relates to their region of origin: mainland Chinese students are significantly different from other Chinese students in terms of distribution. Chinese students are thus not a homogenous group: nearly 30% of the mainland Chinese are in the group of separation, double the figure of the latter. Moreover, 40% of non-mainland Chinese have the status of integration, 15% higher than the mainland Chinese. So is the working experience and length of living in the UK, which have positive impact on their integration. Other factors, such as age, gender and accommodation with Chinese students seem irrelevant to their integration status.

Fifthly, beyond the scope and shape of their social networking, Chinese student integration can be recognised by other features such as awareness of and participation in relevant organisations and various community events as well as experience and willingness to make voluntary contributions to local community projects. This seems to suggest that Chinese student integration is not merely dependent upon the effort made by students themselves but also interfaces with other resources, conditions and opportunities both internal and external to campus. In this context, university authorities, local and central governments can play significant roles in promoting and supporting international student integration.

Finally, this paper is based upon a pilot project in Nottingham which was designed and implemented via a multiple participation and bottom-up perspective. More research and robust statistical tests are needed to enlarge the scope of investigation to Chinese students and local communities in other university towns or boroughs.

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