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KEY FINDINGS

## *Corridor Report on the UK: the case of Chinese and Indian migrants*

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With 7.8 million migrants living in the country in 2013, the UK has among the largest foreign-born populations in the EU, smaller than Germany's but larger than that of France.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the UK's migrant population has diversified greatly over the past decade. Within this context Indian and Chinese migrants – respectively the 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> most populous migrant groups in 2011 – are worth comparing. While Indian migration flows became significant after World War II, with India becoming part of the British Commonwealth after its independence, the significant migration flows from the People's Republic of China (PRC) are relatively recent. Differences also appear once we look at the policies in these countries of origin. While the Chinese state still controls its borders, determining both who gets in and who gets out, the Indian emigration policy is much more liberal.

1. Source: Eurostat.

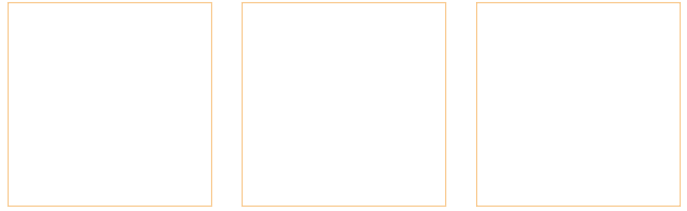




Migrants from the PRC and India to the UK have certain commonalities. In the UK, earlier migration waves from these two origin countries were characterised by the lower-class backgrounds of the migrants. In contrast, new migrants are increasingly highly-skilled.<sup>2</sup> At origin, the current policies of India and the PRC also share common threads: they both see migration as being beneficial to the country, whether migrants return or maintain ties while remaining abroad. Neither country recognizes dual citizenship, yet both the PRC and India give special status to people of Chinese and Indian ancestry, respectively. One major difference regarding their diaspora policies is that the PRC has a greater number of connections with recent Chinese organisations abroad following the current state definition of “Chineseness”. In this paper, we thus compare Chinese and Indian migrants’ integration in the UK, and the ways in which it is affected by destination and origin policies.

Synthetic indexes were constructed for three dimensions of integration: access to citizenship, education, and labour market integration. These dimensions are amongst the most researched (Jacobs 2013; Nebiler 2013; Vink 2013) and allow one to see origin and destination effects. Depending on the integration indicator under consideration, one might conclude that one group has better integration than the other.

2. We focus here on 1st generation migrants from the PRC and India. Past research, however, frequently used self-declared ethnicity, thus including 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations, the “twice migrants” from Africa (migrants of India to former British colonies in Africa and their descendants), migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan and Chinese ethnic minorities from South East Asia.



*Table 1: INTERACT indexes of integration for the UK*

Country of birth	Labour Market		Education		Access to citizenship
	Index	Gap index	Index	Gap index	Index
China	0.11	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.16
India	1.00	0.77	0.61	0.59	0.44

Source: Di Bartolomeo, Kalantaryan and Bonfanti (2015).

## Citizenship

Access to UK nationality as an indicator paints a pessimistic picture of the integration of Chinese and Indian migrants living in the UK. Indian migrants have better access to citizenship than Chinese migrants. However, the Indian share of British citizens is not particularly high either. Migrants born in India more frequently hold British citizenship (35%) than migrants from the PRC (22%). This phenomenon can still be observed if we look at recent acquisition of citizenship. The average number of citizenships granted from 2004 to 2008 was 2,778 for migrants from China (including Hong Kong) and 13,828 for migrants from India.

## Education

Chinese migrants are especially well off considering their education levels. The gap between Indian and Chinese migrants can be explained by introducing the share of students among the inactive population as an indicator of educational integration. Indeed, former migration flows and current family migration are prevalent among Indian migrants, and therefore only 12.9% of inactive Indian migrants are studying, compared to 83.4% of inactive Chinese migrants and 21.9% of inactive natives. However, if we look at the share of tertiary-educated, both Indian and Chinese migrants outperform the natives. Thus educational



performance seems to be driven by migrants' selectivity effects.

## Labour Market

In contrast with the education index, in which Chinese migrants outperform migrants from India, Indian migrants are better integrated into the labour market than Chinese. This is due to the fact that Chinese migrants have a higher unemployment rate and are also mainly students. However, due to the policy targeting highly skilled migrants, Chinese and Indian migrants occupy high-ranking positions once they are hired: 52.7 % of Indian-born and 46.4 % of Chinese-born migrants occupy an ISCO 1-3 position,<sup>3</sup> compared to 42.8 % of British-born individuals.

## Explanatory factors

Policy frameworks and their evolution – both at destination and origin – impact Indian and Chinese migrants' opportunities to leave their country of origin, stay in the UK, and return back home. Current Indian migrants are coming to the UK for the purpose of family reunion, as highly skilled professionals or as students. The first two categories are mid- and long-term migration, whereas students have more opportunities to migrate back to India or elsewhere. At present Chinese migrants are mainly students and the majority do not stay in the UK. Up until the end of the 1990s, according to PRC state policies, they were supposed to return to China upon graduation. They are now encouraged to participate in the human development of the country from abroad, and to return to the PRC whenever they choose (Xiang 2003).

If we look at the gap between Chinese and Indian migrants regarding their access to citizenship, these findings cannot be explained by different policies at origin. Neither country allows dual citizenship. One explanation might be that India once belonged to the British Empire, and before the UK's 1981 Nationality Act people born in India were British subjects. This connection also led to important migration flows from India to the UK long before migration from the PRC became significant.<sup>4</sup> The year of arrival alone may explain Chinese migrants' low access to citizenship; one condition of naturalization is a minimum 5-year residence in the UK. Fifty-one percent of Chinese migrants and 21% of Indian migrants arrived between 2006 and 2011. This is the main reason why Indian migrants naturalize much more than Chinese. In addition, the PRC used to encourage its migrants to integrate into their country of destination and take its citizenship. However, since the 1990s, in parallel with the opening of its borders, the PRC redefined "Chineseness" to include its migrants and their descendants in order to help them keep their ties with China (Nyíri 2001); this could explain their current lower naturalization rate.

In parallel with destination and origin policies' effects on migration flows, one major explanatory factor of Chinese and Indian migrants' integration is thus their year of arrival and their length of stay in the UK. If we look at housing types, for instance, the year of arrival is essential data. The same applies when we look at migrants' language skills. Although Indian migrants speak better English than Chinese migrants (regardless of their year of arrival), language difficulties may be an explanatory factor for the integration profile of previous waves of migration. The English skills of new migrants are much better than they once were. English is taught in Indian schools as one of the official languages of the Indian State.

3. For a detailed presentation of the ISCO classifications, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>, accessed on 06 October 2014.

4. Previous 'Chinese' migration flows were actually from Hong Kong, not the PRC.



In the PRC, English is taught both in high school and, since 1977, in Chinese universities (Liu and Du 2014). In parallel, since 2010, student migrants have needed to prove that they have good English skills (close to the GCSE level) at destination (Cerna 2014, p. 17). These language skills may explain why Indian and Chinese students not only graduate from British universities but reach top-rank positions once they are employed.

Thus, origin and destination policies have both direct and indirect effects on Indian and Chinese migrants' integration in the UK. In addition to their push and pull power over who comes and who stays, they influence migrant organisations in the UK differently. Indeed, from the 1970s on, the multi-cultural British policy towards ethnic minorities supported integration and interaction at the community rather than individual level. Civil society organisations are consequently major actors of migrant integration, according to the British state. The Chinese community seems much more connected to the Chinese state than the Indian community does to its state. This might explain why the Chinese migrants who arrived in the UK after 1981 feel *more* Chinese than their predecessors. Older Chinese migrants, who arrived in the UK when the Chinese State still considered them traitors to the country, were pushed by the state to assimilate rather than return or maintain transnational ties.

## Conclusion

The positions of Chinese and Indian migrants in British society seem to be the consequence of the combination of the origin and destination countries' policies. These policies not only affected who came to the UK and who stayed there in the past, but also affect who comes and leaves currently. At present, the countries of origin and destination are in a competition for talent. In a context of stricter immigration policies, the countries of origin, especially China, are thus relatively more attractive to migrants. Destination and origin policies can thus affect migrants' opportunity structures differently over time and have a direct and indirect effect on their integration on the long run.



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## INTERACT

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