

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

## Research Project

Produced as part of PACE295 - Professional and Community Engagement



By Emilie Gallagher, Stephan Hofmann, Hazel Honey, Wayne Joe, Alvin Li, Tim Marshall and Kate Whiting

### **Executive Summary:**

The focus of this report is to identify the contributing factors which either encourage or inhibit young and skilled Chinese students immigrating to the rural areas of the Canterbury region of New Zealand. The overarching aim of this report is to compile recommendations of actions which may help the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to attract and retain young and skilled Chinese students.

The aim of this project was to determine Chinese students' knowledge of New Zealand, their future plans after finishing university and whether they would consider moving to New Zealand to live and work for an extended period of time. Our research concludes with the idea that the students we interviewed (who are mostly in a 'bubble' of attending a world-class, first-tier Chinese university) are often unaware of New Zealand beyond simple ideas like tourism and meat/ milk producers. More importantly, these Chinese students are statistically unwilling to move to New Zealand and even less so to rural New Zealand to live

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and work beyond their studies, for perceived reasons that fall into four main categories, in no particular order:

- Patriotic reasons of wanting to stay in China to help their country
- Family reasons and needing to look after and stay with their family, who would not move with them
- Cultural differences, language, and visa barriers
- Lack of research facilities in the country and good jobs in rural areas

In order to overcome some of the reasons that students mentioned would hold them back from moving overseas to live and work, the recommendations outlined in this report are to:

- Ensure earlier exposure to New Zealand through high school or undergraduate university programs or exchanges in order to increase likelihood of staying in New Zealand after completion
- Establishing an online marketing campaign using tools like WeChat and Baidu, which are the primary platforms that have the most ‘eyeballs’ of the target student demographic
- Focus on lower tier university students who are less incentivized to work in China
- Educate/advertise the benefits of smaller developed New Zealand towns and focus on changing perceptions and educating Chinese on the good conditions of smaller towns and rural areas of Canterbury, New Zealand as part of marketing campaigns
- Consider lobbying government to change the immigration policy to accommodate for the families of young migrants, as long as those migrants then stay in New Zealand for the long-term

## **Introduction**

The 2015 UN report highlights that older persons require supportive policies and public services to combat poverty, which is primarily funded by young, tax-paying workers. However, many developed countries are exhibiting trends of aging populations, meaning that there are more individuals requiring social support than those who contribute tax money to the needed support. This leads to labour gaps in society, which can be solved by balancing population demographics with incoming migrants (United Nations, 2015). Immigrants who are considered to be skilled (previously trained in an area before migrating), foreign students (who are studying abroad) or investment immigrants (who migrate and invest or create a business in a country) have high levels of professional skills, capital, and human resources. This has the potential to contribute to the social and economic development of the area they migrate to (Miao and Wang, 2017). However, it is also important to ensure that these migrants are coming in with the skills which target labour deficient areas, or unemployment levels may increase. It is possible to target specific stakeholders by

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tailoring immigration policy and programmes, as outlined in the UN immigration report (United Nations, 2015). For example, in 2013, Canadian immigration teamed with firms focused on venture capital to issue out Start-up visas, aiming to persuade entrepreneurs to set up and invest in their country. The US and Japan also have similar policies which make access easier and therefore more appealing for like-minded individuals (United Nations, 2015). However, such policies are only successful when derived from a fundamental understanding of the stakeholder's values.

### **New Zealand Skills Shortage:**

Currently, New Zealand has a strong market for international Chinese tourists, with around 400,000 visiting in the past year (Tourism New Zealand, 2016). There has been a recent market shift toward an increase in Free Independent Travellers, with 56% of Chinese visitors fitting this profile (Tourism New Zealand, 2016). They are characterised by their relatively young age, higher than average level of education, willingness to explore rural areas and an interest in learning about local culture. These travellers reflect many characteristics of the attractive demographic for migrants, making them an excellent stakeholder target for migration. Therefore, an emphasis should be placed on understanding what these young and educated Chinese regard as important when considering options for work and life. This report aims to shed some light on the wants and needs of young and skilled Chinese, so that New Zealand and Canterbury's immigration policy impacts can be maximised.

### **Chinese Skills Shortage:**

China is being faced with a unique issue; millions of qualified job seekers, almost as many millions of jobs, and an increasing skill shortage. This sounds more confusing than it is. University graduates are getting jobs in their sectors, but there are not enough studying international management or strategy, and some niche software engineering areas. Young people coming out of universities are not struggling to find employment in their sectors. However, the Chinese universities are not keeping up with the shortages being announced by employment agencies. The managing director of Morgan McKinley (a large multinational employment agency) recently raised awareness that even in China, for emerging technologies such as connected vehicles and autonomous driver assistance, European or American professionals are usually hired and brought to China.

JP Morgan Chase commissioned a study on this in 2016, partnering with Fudan and Tsinghua universities. Their findings were intriguing. The shortages spanned mostly management and computing skills as China still has a vast unskilled population. The report stated “service industries dealing with IT, software,

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accounting, finance, marketing, and customer management” were the main shortages, and there were indications that a shortage of skills in international management and strategic planning would arise soon.

Intriguingly, their first policy recommendation from the report was to give more autonomy to Chinese universities. While Xi Jinping is one of the more revolutionary presidents when it comes to opening up Chinese free markets, it will be interesting to see if this advice is heeded and universities are given greater freedom in research and course offerings.

Additionally, the gap in skills between the cities and rural areas is significant; most skilled workers are attracted to cities. The JP Morgan report made upskilling rural citizens their 2nd highest recommendation, which indicates simply how divided the regions are from the cities in terms of skill matchings.

## **Methodology**

The research was conducted by seven University of Canterbury students who attended Peking University over the course of five weeks, during November and December of 2017. The findings came from two sources: face-to-face interviews with students at various locations on the Peking University campus, and an online survey distributed via the Chinese social media platform, WeChat. The report will be sectioned into two parts; an interview section, and a survey section. The interview aims to provide more detailed individual profiles of students and their views, whereas the survey aims to collect a larger number of anonymous samples to help determine trends and a wider consensus.

### **Interview:**

Thirty students were interviewed. Of these students, 12 were female and 18 male.

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A set group of predetermined questions were established prior to student interactions, however, these were often adapted as needed to match the English ability of the interviewee and their previous responses. These questions included:

- What degree are you studying?
- What do you plan to do once you have completed this degree?
- Have you considered going overseas to have a holiday / study / work / immigrate?  
Why or why not?
- Do you prefer the city or the countryside?
- (How would you encourage Chinese people to immigrate to New Zealand?)

### **Survey:**

The survey consisted of 16 short and long answer questions regarding focus areas of the project and was established to reach a larger audience than face-to-face interviews. It was distributed primarily to students of Peking University, as well as other student contacts acquired throughout the course of the trip. Students were also encouraged to forward the survey onto friends. The questions were provided in both English and Chinese to avoid potential language barriers and allowed for responses in either language. Some questions were targeted specifically toward students that had either previously visited Canterbury or New Zealand. The survey questions were worded carefully to avoid response bias and ensure that the data is accurate and reliable.

Link to the survey: <https://4screens.net/e/5a14102b6dffaa0100a977f2>

## **Results**

### **Interviews**

Thirty students were interviewed as part of this research assignment. Most of those interviewed were Peking University students, with a small amount from other universities (South China Normal or Guangdong University of Technology). The gender ratio split was 12 females and 18 males. The students studied a range of subjects including STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medicine) and liberal arts subjects such as literature, philosophy and psychology.

Many of those interviewed came from outside of Beijing to study. 17 of those interviewed were undergraduate students, compared to 13 postgraduate students. Many undergraduate students also stated

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their intentions of completing postgraduate study or research. This reflects the sentiment that arose of postgraduate research facilities at overseas institutions among those interviewed.

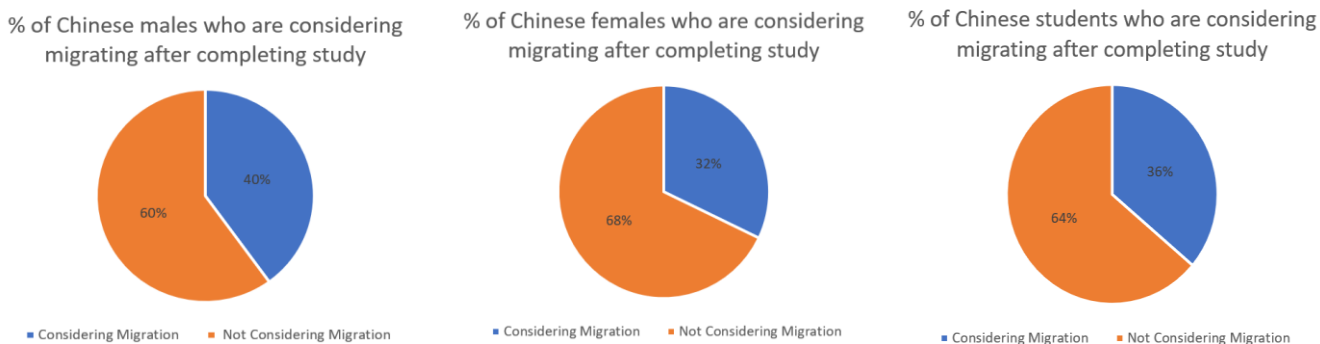
There were 12 respondents who stated intentions of migrating overseas, for further study or work. A further seven stated intentions of not migrating out of China. An explanation for this intention to not migrate was often because of the family culture in China which often requires youth to look after their parents as they get older. The other 12 respondents who stated possible migration intentions hinted that opportunities in overseas migration areas are what would lead them to migration.

Possible migration countries that arose in conversation included Australia (with 5 respondents stating as their preferred destination) and the United States (also 5 respondents). This is in addition to a smaller group of people stating desired destinations such as Japan and Scandinavian countries. No person interviewed stated New Zealand as a preferred overseas destination.

## Survey

The majority of the 56 survey respondents were aged between the ages of 18-21 and were undergraduate students, with a Male to Female ratio of 30:28. The following figures depict the findings of the results.

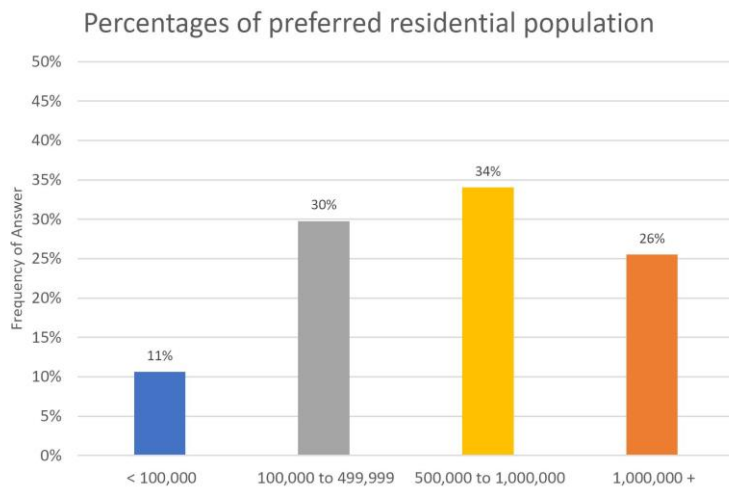
### 1. *Are you considering moving overseas to work, once you have finished your degree?*



A higher percentage of males were open to the idea of immigrating after completing their studies (40% as opposed to 32%), however, it is evident from the integrated graph that most individuals (64%) are not considering immigration as an option. This could be because a disproportionately large amount of respondents were of first-tier universities, which is further elaborated on in the interview section.

An interesting point to note is the gender imbalances that are shared between China and Canterbury. Canterbury at its most recent survey (Greater Christchurch Dashboard) showed there were 6000 more males

in the 20-29 age demographic than females. China has a ratio of 1.15 males to females in the 15-24 age bracket (no comparable data for 20-29). Despite this, our data sample was almost perfectly split between male and female - thus, not a perfect representation of Chinese students. Additionally, more males responded as “likely to migrate” after completing studies than females - 40% of males considered migrating after studying, whereas only 32% of females did. This may mean that efforts to bring educated Chinese to Canterbury could result in a gender imbalance of migrants and the general population.



**2. If you answered "Yes" to Question 5, how big is your ideal living city?**

From this figure, we can infer that smaller settlements of less than 100,000 people appear to be less appealing to Chinese students, with only 11% indicating a preference. This makes sense, as China has 160 cities with a population greater than 1 million. Therefore, a town with a population of under 100,000 is potentially perceived as isolated.

Roughly 90% of respondents indicated population sizes of between 100,000-1,000,000+, with each of the 3 categories

having a relatively even split. This may provide some opportunity for New Zealand’s cities outside of the Auckland region. If Canterbury wishes to encourage Chinese migrants to settle in smaller townships such as Ashburton, emphasis may need to be placed on the portrayal and perception of such areas.

**3. If you answered "Yes" to Question 5, where in the world would you prefer to move to?**

Of the 35 respondents who answered this question, the mode choice was America (8 people), followed by Britain (5 people), and then Australia (4 people). 3 people indicated an interest in New Zealand. Interestingly, none of these individuals had visited New Zealand, but one of the individuals knew someone who had. However, the majority of answers covered 15 different locations, including (but not limited to) Switzerland, Singapore, Japan, Canada, and some provinces within China. Of the 35 responses, 25 indicated an interest in a country which identifies English as an official language. This is positive, as it may give New Zealand a language advantage over other countries as a migration destination. Marketing that places an emphasis on migration may help to increase the number of people who consider it as an option.

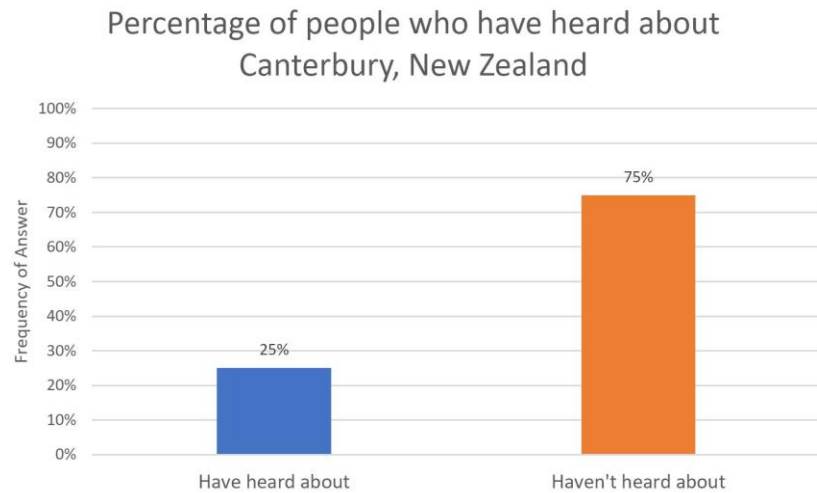


**4. Have you ever visited New Zealand, or know someone who has visited New Zealand?**



The results from this question are more promising than the visual analytic would suggest. Nearly 33% of the survey sample either had visited New Zealand or was within 1 degree of separation from someone who had visited New Zealand. However, this will be skewed as our perception was that many survey recipients were at a low-medium conversational level of English and less than 8% of China's population

speak English (Wei, Jatong, 2012). This does show that New Zealand tourism isn't niche or unusual and that perhaps user-generated content is an area to be explored in future promotions of Canterbury in China.



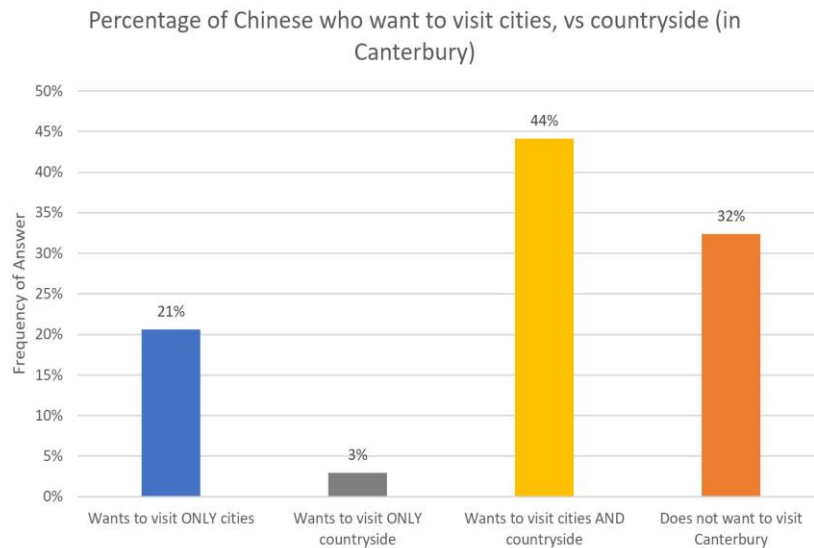
**5. Have you heard of the Canterbury region of New Zealand?**

From this figure, we can infer that the majority (75%) of Chinese students have not heard about the Canterbury region of New Zealand. Of the 25% of students who had heard about Canterbury, all but 1 student had visited the area on a student exchange. The remaining student had heard

about it via a friend who visited the area on an exchange. This shows the value of such exchange programmes for levels of exposure.



**6. If you answered "Yes" to Question 9, would you consider visiting Canterbury, New Zealand for a holiday?**



The responses to this question of those people who have heard about the Canterbury region of New Zealand, a total of 68% indicate an interest in visiting Canterbury for a holiday. 44% of respondents indicated an interest in both rural and urban areas. However, just 3% indicated interest in only visiting the countryside, and 21% want to visit only the city. This is

understandable

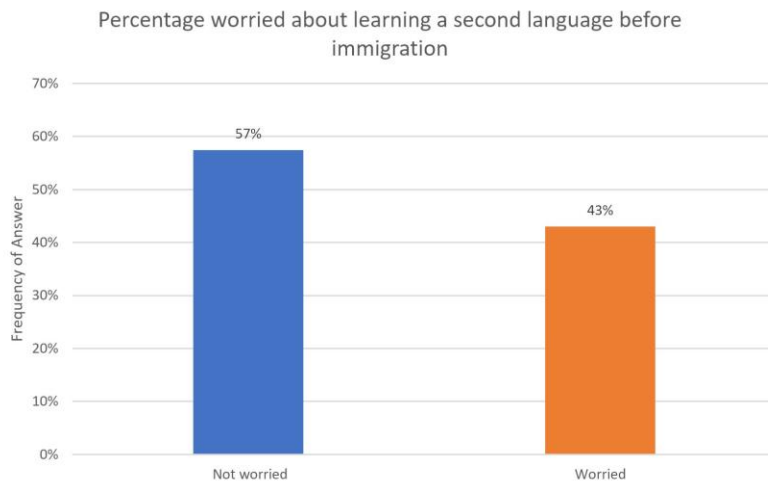
as the perception of rural areas amongst Chinese is generally quite negative – see more on this in the 7<sup>th</sup> recommendation in this report on page 18.

**7. If you answered "Yes" to Question 9, what experiences would make you want to come back and live/work in Canterbury?**

15 people (25%) indicated that they had heard about Canterbury and responded to this question. The majority of responses included the keywords ‘beautiful scenery’ and ‘peaceful’. It is interesting to note that 4 of the answers included some topics which had been covered by the UC students during group sessions for the programme. To elaborate, a few of the UC students were interested in entrepreneur related activities and shared with the Chinese students some of their successes in starting their own businesses. The talks also included many scenic pictures and promoted recreation in New Zealand. Three answers alluded to these topics, and one answer specified that the UC communications has sparked their interest. This is to be expected, considering that many of the WeChat contacts collected for survey distributions were derived from students who had attended UC promotional events. This may suggest that engaging in such direct promotions does have an impact to some extent. However, it would have been useful to include a question that could separate the students who had attended promotions from those who hadn't, which was something which had not been anticipated before the data analysis.

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## 8. *Are you worried about learning a foreign language before immigration?*



This graph shows that just over half (57%) of Chinese people are not worried about learning a foreign language before immigrating. The survey was distributed in both Mandarin and English, side by side to avoid miscommunication in translation. It was distributed via WeChat, and all contacts spoke enough English to engage in a conversation with. Just under 80% of participants filled out the survey in

English, despite only one of the 58 participants majoring in English language (and only 4 others majoring in another language). However, because the foreign language was not directly specified as being English, it is hard to tell if the 43% who indicated concern are worried about their English ability, or if they are concerned about moving to a non-English speaking country. This is something that should be further explored, as question 3 indicated higher interests in English speaking countries as opposed to other foreign languages. Therefore, if the ‘foreign language’ was perceived as not being English, both categories could be accounted for. Nonetheless, it is promising that more than half of those surveyed do not perceive a different language to be a problem.

*(Questions 9 and 10 are better discussed in the context of limitation, and are mentioned in the appropriate section)*

## 11. *How do you feel about leaving your family? Would you want them to come with you?*

The general trend indicates that young Chinese migrants would prefer that their family to move with them, and some stated that they would not to come over if this was not an option. This was able to be explored in more detail in the interviews section, but may be important to consider when tailoring policies to attract such workers. If New Zealand wants to attract young talent, they may need to look into the positives and negatives of allowing the older generation to move with them. In the past, bringing one’s family to New Zealand has been allowed for within certain classes of visa, and establishing/promoting this again may be key to encouraging educated Chinese migrants to immigrate to Canterbury.

## **Summary of Interviews**

Several trends were found in the students interviewed: they had a limited knowledge of New Zealand, they wanted to stay in China, and most students would prefer to go to Europe, Australia or the United States if they had to immigrate. Most of the Chinese students interviewed had a limited amount of knowledge of New Zealand. However, they knew that New Zealand was within close proximity to Australia. They also had a "clean green" impression of New Zealand, with some referring to the country's strict food safety standards and scenic landscapes.

Most of the students interviewed were intending to live in China after finishing their studies. There were several reasons contributing towards to this. First of all, the issue of immigration and the differences in lifestyles have been repeatedly stated by respondents as barriers to potential skilled migrants from moving overseas. The limitations imposed on bringing family members to New Zealand conflicts with the fundamental aspects of Chinese culture of keeping a tight family unit. The government and related agencies, in order to attract talented Chinese migrants, need to establish policies to promote this.

Secondly, the Chinese students interviewed have aspirations of contributing back to the society which has given them their opportunities and successes. Of those surveyed, a trend was that they believed receiving an education in China and then moving to New Zealand (or overseas) wouldn't be making an appropriate use of their degree. This is because they think that receiving a degree in China will make it more relevant and specific to China than to New Zealand or elsewhere. To make it easier for people from China to move to New Zealand to work, there is a definite need to change their perception that receiving a university education in China makes them unable to work and achieve abroad.

It is evident at the interview completion, that there needs to be a change to the New Zealand advertising methods. This is so that they not only focus on the tourism industry but also on future possibilities and career opportunities. Many of the respondents discussed how tourism is very different to living in a new environment, and how this influences their reluctance to consider working and living in New Zealand. A possibility is that New Zealand's clean and green image is so ingrained in their minds that they are unaware of the possible working and future opportunities New Zealand also holds. Therefore, there needs to be advertisements in addition to tourism that show the abundance of career opportunities.

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A major advantage that the respondents stated of living in the city was of convenience. A finding was that many respondents significantly preferred the city. This could be as they are living in the city themselves and can see the advantages of city living. However, a perception that many Chinese hold of rural areas is that they hold no further opportunities for success.

## **Limitations of Data Collection**

### **Interviews**

The interviews between the University of Canterbury students and the Peking University students were conducted at different times and locations around the campus. The location and time of these interviews could have affected the results. For example, it was easier to find students that are willing to immigrate overseas at a canteen within close proximity to the School of Foreign Languages. However, due to variation in the location and time of the interviews conducted, the effect of any biases within the results were likely to have a negligible impact on the final results.

All interviewed students attended Peking University, a Tier 1 university in China, which presents issues in sample variance. The brief for this project mentions that most Tier 1 university students stay in China as they are almost guaranteed jobs when they graduate, amongst other reasons. This is an accurate statement based on our interviews, where many more respondents said they would *not* go overseas after they graduate. Therefore, it is a fair assumption to make that our interviewed sample does not accurately represent a broad group of Chinese students and therefore must be considered carefully. It is possible to use this data, in conjunction with the survey data, which was collected at less prestigious universities as well, to make judgments around which bracket to advertise to in China.

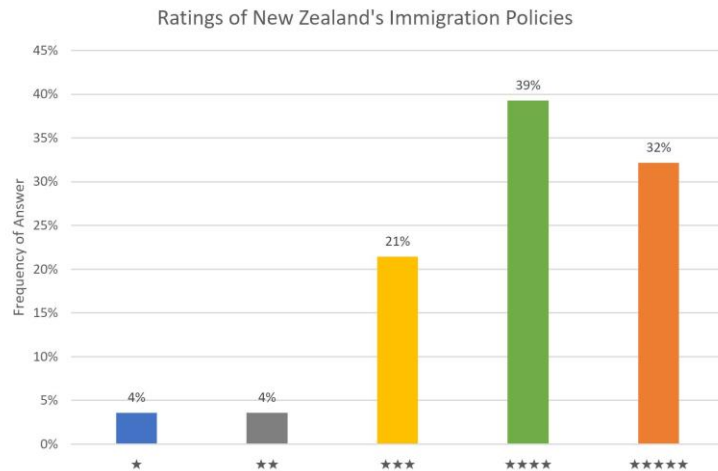
### **Survey**

The survey distributed online for analysis was promoted in Peking, South China Normal, and Guangdong Technology university campuses. While this geographic variation widens our sample, there is a skew to our sampling as all of the respondents were able to speak or write in a low to medium level of conversational English - as in order to distribute the survey, we had to add respondents personally on WeChat.

Additionally, some survey recipients were members of a New Zealand studies class at Peking University, and some others took the survey after an event in Guangzhou at which they met Canterbury students. Both of these factors could potentially add some bias to results around their perceptions of New Zealand, along with predetermination of future plans to travel or work in New Zealand.

Two questions in particular, outlined an issue that may have affected our reporting. Question 14 asked the participants whether they had any knowledge of New Zealand’s immigration policies, to which all but one participant answered “No”. Regardless, Question 15, which asked for a star rating of New Zealand’s

immigration policies, received participation from all those who answered “No” to Question 14.



This question was found to be a distraction from the more useful sections of our data, as the preceding question indicated that almost none of the participants had any knowledge of NZ immigration policies, and yet still answered Question 15 (*How do you rate New Zealand’s immigration*

*policy?*). This wasn't necessary as we had made it quite clear that this question only had to be answered if one had knowledge of New Zealand immigration policies. The fact that the highest cohort automatically answered 4 stars (39%), followed by 5 stars (32%) and 3 stars (21%) may serve as an indication that Chinese student culture has some aim-to-please elements to it; students answer what they think researchers want to hear. An alternative hypothesis is that Chinese students have an overall positive perception of New Zealand and that they'll answer positively a question such as this relating to New Zealand in a topic they are unaware of.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Earlier Exposure and Education**

Many of the interviewed students mentioned that they might be more likely to move to and live in New Zealand if they had experienced life there at an earlier age. For example, if they were to do an exchange to a New Zealand high-school, they may be more likely want to stay and continue life in New Zealand after graduating high school. This could be achieved by promoting directly to high schools and tertiary institutions and collaborating with local Chinese educational agencies to more heavily promote New Zealand as an educational destination to parents seeking to send their child abroad to study.

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This also ties in with the visa restrictions that were brought up in conversation with many students. People don't know much about immigration policies but assume that they are not particularly welcome, which may also reflect their concern that they will not be welcomed in New Zealand due to their ethnicity, cultural differences or self-perceived "poor English".

## **2. Promote Short-term Migration**

A campaign targeting recent Chinese graduates, specifically those possessing the skills experiencing a short-term shortage in New Zealand and in Canterbury may help ease the burden on the regions. Leveraging upon the feeling of duty many students expressed and playing into idea many students feel about giving back to their home country. The campaign can be framed as a short-term migration opportunity, which would allow graduates to gain international work experience, skills which are highly in demand in China and to differentiate themselves from millions of other higher education graduates and developing a competitive advantage (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

As mentioned earlier in this report, a JP Morgan report predicts a coming shortage of Chinese graduates with international management skills. A similar report by McKinsey states that there is a deficit in 'soft-skills' amongst Chinese graduates such as communication, leadership and international/cultural competence (McKinsey & Company, 2015). Emphasising the opportunity to develop specific in-demand skills in New Zealand may prove fruitful for bringing recent Chinese graduates to Canterbury. Allowing them to return back to China as a more experienced and valuable worker, potentially improving their employment prospects.

## **3. Marketing**

Questions around where CMF could advertise and where educated students in China view ads almost always led to comments about advertising online, on sites and platforms like WeChat (a social network), Taobao (large online shopping site) and Baidu (China's search engine equivalent of Google). WeChat does not offer advertising functions but could be used to communicate with people in China and thus one of our recommendations is an investigation into the use of this platform as part of CMF's strategy to attract more Chinese students to Canterbury.

### Platform

Due to censorship of the internet in China, traditional social media platforms, channels and browsers popular in Western countries such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Google are not available without the use of a virtual private network (VPN). Therefore, alongside current marketing and promotional efforts

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in New Zealand, focusing more heavily on platforms popular in China such as WeChat, Baidu, Weibo, and Alibaba may be useful. The recommendation for the Mayoral Forum is to produce and curate content for these platforms specifically about the region, to attract attention to the Canterbury region. For example, user-generated content, as well as regional travel and destination guides and tours offered in Chinese.

With a higher than global average internet penetration rate, the use of the internet in capturing the awareness and attention of the Chinese population is crucial (Russell, 2017). Furthermore, the vast majority of Internet users in China access the Internet using mobile devices (CNNIC, 2016). A recommendation for the Canterbury Mayoral Forum is to take advantage of this high smartphone and internet usage. Chinese social media platforms could be more actively used and include a targeted approach to reach the skilled and educated youth demographic.

#### User-Generated Content

WeChat is the main social media platform used in China and is used by 80% of China's internet users (Russell, 2017). Social media is now being used a tool to not only share overseas experiences with friends but also as a way to discover new destinations and influence travel-related decisions. Particularly with younger travellers, with 97% of millennial travellers posting on social networks and sharing their experiences with friends (Chase, 2015). The authenticity of word of mouth recommendations, whether in person or electronically, makes user-generated content a valuable source of promotional material. User-generated content can be leveraged to promote New Zealand and the Canterbury region specifically, as a tourist destination amongst young Chinese travellers. WeChat's 'Moments' allows for users to post live videos, photos, and other updates with a geotagged location, with their friends. By actively encouraging travellers to post to social media whilst in these regions, it could help inspire and spread awareness of not only New Zealand and Canterbury as a tourist destination, but as a potential place to migrate to. Having placards in major tourist hotspots encouraging photo posting to WeChat (similar to the cut-out photo frames Instagram has in some tourist areas overseas) may increase Canterbury's presence on Chinese social media.

#### Key Opinion Leaders

Similar to 'influencers' in Western social media, Chinese social media have KOL's or Key Opinion Leaders. These people boast a considerable following of loyal followers and a built-in audience of a particular demographic(s). These KOL's engage their followers by posting regular updates on their personal lives through photographs videos, status and location updates, and more recently through the use of live streams. Incorporating these leaders as a part of a social media marketing campaign could be of value. New Zealand has had great success in the past with leveraging the value of Chinese social media leaders to attract Chinese into New Zealand. 'Consumers were able to follow actress and New Zealand 'Ambassador' Yao



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Chen's travels before being promoted to plan their own tour of the places she visited. In a joint venture campaign, Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand worked with other KOL's to generate awareness, interest, and bookings (Tourism New Zealand, 2012). The campaign leading to an increase in site traffic and visitor arrivals to New Zealand. Celebrity endorsement (the endorsement of New Zealand products by Chinese celebrities) would be of additional help; Chinese products use celebrity endorsement as a common advertising tactic, as celebrity endorsement increases product sales in China.

#### **4. Role of New Zealand Tourism**

In order for people to be motivated to move to New Zealand, they must first be aware of the country as an option and have a positive outlook on NZ's possibilities. Tourism and tourism marketing can play a key role in raising awareness about New Zealand, not only as a potential tourism destination, but also as a place to migrate to. It is expected that people will feel more positively about moving to a country they have previously visited. The students interviewed were aware of, but often possessed little knowledge of New Zealand as a country to migrate to. Immigration tourism may be a viable option to help overcome this. Traditionally, tourism focuses on attracting short-term visitors to experience a new place. The Canterbury region may collaborate with tourism and immigration agencies (such as Christchurch NZ and Tourism New Zealand) as well as other local and national businesses and cultural communities to promote and operate tours aimed at target migrant Chinese. These tours can focus on showcasing the abundant and relevant employment opportunities in the regions, high quality of life and the cultural and communal support offered in these areas. As well as educating and informing potential migrants of relevant legislation, policies and other criteria fulfilments such as the minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score.

#### **5. WeChat City Guides**

A recommendation is that New Zealand could build something similar to what Tourism Australia built; a WeChat city guide for major Australian cities.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2017, Australia created a WeChat city guide for Chinese Tourists (Tourism Australia, 2017). This will be very useful for Chinese tourists because of the popularity of WeChat in China and the difficulties which Chinese tourists would otherwise have navigating in Australia (Tourism Australia, 2017). A New Zealand WeChat city guide could be very beneficial for Chinese migrants and

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tourists to New Zealand as well (Tourism Australia, 2017) and therefore creating a New Zealand WeChat city guide would help make it easier for Chinese migrants to move to New Zealand and integrate with the culture here. Considering the CMF's rural focus this could then be very useful in the promotion of rural Canterbury as Chinese migrants will have better ease of access to information and navigation in rural areas. Smaller Canterbury towns such as Ashburton or Rolleston could be clearly mapped with points of interest and places to get help as well as containing descriptions of daily life, guides on cultural differences and how to understand them, amongst other features.

## **6. Immigration Policy**

New Zealand immigration and visa policies are a barrier to many Chinese assimilating into New Zealand. To better allow families to assimilate into New Zealand culture, the government could implement immigration policies which support the migration of educated Chinese individuals to New Zealand. Some examples of possible immigration policy include: improving the ease of full family migration and integration programmes such as English courses, Maori and New Zealand culture classes. Full family migration is a crucial aspect for improving the skilled migrant numbers in New Zealand. The views of the interviewed students reflect this as family was often mentioned as a major contributing factor when deciding if and where to migrate to after completing their studies. Young adults in China often stay with their families until marriage and often return home to China to look after their family. These policies should help to lessen this return to China and increase the number of skilled migrant workers in New Zealand. Many respondents stated of their perceptions regarding the limitations of civil rights of foreigners. There need to be changes made in government policies to promote the perception that the treatment of foreigners is accommodating to employment in areas of skills shortage. This includes clear pathways to permanent residence and in the long term citizenship status for skilled migrants. This is so that they develop the feeling that New Zealand can be seen as a long-term home, and not just as a place of temporary residence. However, if the goal is only to bring migrants in for a period in which they can work before returning home, emphasis should be put on working visa time allocations and accessibility. More research should be conducted into the ideal time allocations, but would ideally be longer than the 12 months which the current working holiday visa allows for. This approach would remove the skilled migrants from contributing to the aging population entirely.

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## 7. Rural Perceptions

Rural life in China is extremely different to rural life in New Zealand. Despite the “quieter and more relaxing” environment (according to anecdotal evidence), the standard of living in rural China is considerably lower. In some parts of the Chinese countryside, basic needs such as “running water and transportation” are inaccessible (BBC News). Living conditions can often be unsanitary and the average wage of people living in the countryside is lower than its city counterpart. Young people of the Chinese countryside often “aim to move to the city” in the hope of improving the living conditions of both themselves and their family. As a result, there is also an aging population in rural China.

The students interviewed were generally apprehensive about life in rural New Zealand. Their presumptions of the New Zealand countryside shared similarities with the characteristics of rural China. However, this is not true. Despite being quiet, the living conditions of rural New Zealand is generally high. To attract Chinese students to rural New Zealand, the association between rural New Zealand and rural China must be minimised.

## 8. Advertise Research Facilities

We found from the survey results that a lot of top Chinese students are keen on moving to Europe or America. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of these students intend to undertake research and that New Zealand is not regarded highly as a place to conduct postgraduate research in many fields. If we can change the perception on New Zealand as a place to conduct research, and advertise this inside of top universities of China, this will encourage top students to migrate to New Zealand. With two universities in Canterbury and a research base for Otago in Christchurch, there is potential to market the Canterbury region as a hub for postgraduate research in New Zealand.

## **Conclusion**

The research conducted has resulted in a clearer picture of the psychology and goals of some sectors of university students in China. Throughout this research, a lot of feedback and recommendations have been generated on how the Canterbury Mayoral Forum could attract more educated and skilled Chinese students to the rural Canterbury sector. Students have low awareness of New Zealand and associated immigration policy, they are also much more likely to want to stay to live in China as a result of cultural barriers, family commitment or nationalism/patriotism. Students in second and third-tier universities seem to be more interested in moving overseas than those from first tier universities and therefore those from second and third tiers should be targeted more. Starting efforts to recruit bright young Chinese students earlier (i.e. in

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high school or before university) has been suggested by many respondents in our research as a way to increase retention rates and get people to the rural sector. Many Chinese students do not feel like rural areas offer many opportunities, likely based on their own experiences and views on the Chinese countryside. If CMF is to advertise rural life in New Zealand, it needs to ensure potential Chinese immigrants to New Zealand understand the job, research, and personal development opportunities that exist in New Zealand, especially those in rural areas. Many people in China care more about their job than their lifestyle, as they are expected to pay for their parents wellbeing later in life and also have been taught from early age that “if they too work hard, they can be rich” - the new underlying message of the Chinese government under Xi Jinping (anecdotally reported by Kevin Rudd in recent lectures). Both anecdotal and interview responses point firmly to the internet and specifically mobile devices as sources of all information and advertisement. If CMF were to create a following on, for example, WeChat, through either organic promotion or paying influencers to promote rural Canterbury, it seems likely that knowledge of and interest in a life in rural Canterbury will increase significantly amongst the targeted demographic of educated and skilled Chinese students.

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## **Appendix**

### **Brief Student Profiles**

Below are the anecdotal results collated from the qualitative interviews. These interviews were conducted face-to-face at a variety of cafeterias on the Peking University campus during meal times. There is a variation between the length and detail of each interview due to the nature and time constraints of an interview.

- **Medicine – Undergraduate (female)**
  - Wants to become doctor after university
  - Plan to stay in China – unsatisfied with the medical scene in China and wants to change it
- **Finance and Economics – Undergraduate (male)**
  - Unsure what to do after university
  - Wants to move to countryside because city life is too fast-paced and loud
- **Marketing – Undergraduate (male)**
  - Wants to stay in China
  - Enjoys city life and fast-paced environments
- **Law – Postgraduate (female)**
  - After Master's degree, wants to do a PhD at Peking University
  - Wants to stay in China
  - If she immigrates, she wants to move to Japan because criminal law in Japan has many similarities to criminal law in China
  - Limited knowledge of NZ: Beautiful sceneries
- **Engineering – Postgraduate (male)**
  - After Master's degree, plans to do PhD in Hong Kong
  - Wants to travel to Europe and America after PhD because engineering is advanced over there
  - Limited knowledge of NZ: Near Australia
- **Computer Science – Undergraduate (male)**
  - Want to study in New Zealand
    - Reasons: Want to experience an overseas lifestyle
  - Some knowledge of New Zealand: Beautiful, near Australia, former UK colony, work visa hard to obtain, new government have stricter immigration policies
  - Barriers in travelling to NZ: money
- **Chinese – Postgraduate (female)**
  - Wants to become an editor/writer
  - Has considered going overseas – understands difficulty of doing so



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- Limited knowledge of NZ: Healthy food
  - English – Undergraduate (male)
    - Wants to study another undergraduate degree after current degree, perhaps teaching
    - Wants to travel overseas, especially the USA
    - However, will come back to China to live
      - Reasons: Loves his family and Chinese culture – “I’ve grown up here”
  - Chinese – Undergraduate (female)
    - Wants to do a postgraduate after degree
    - Never wants to immigrate overseas
    - Used to be an exchange student in Taiwan, was not used to it
  - Physics – Doctorate (male)
    - Wants to research after degree
    - Would like to work at research institutions in the USA and UK but worries that he is not competitive enough
      - Reason: There are excellent universities in the USA and UK
  - Computer Science – Doctorate (male)
    - After PhD, wants to continue with research
    - Wants to go to Europe to do research
      - Does not want to go to USA because it is too dangerous (liberal gun laws)
    - Limited knowledge of NZ: Close to Australia
  - Computer Science – Undergraduate (male)
    - After degree, wants to work in a large established company in China
    - Wants to either go the USA for an exchange
    - Wants to work in city in China
      - Reasons: Familiar environment, friends, food, bustle of city
  - Human Geography – Postgraduate (female)
    - After university, wants to work in in company in China
      - Reasons: “loves China” (the country as a whole); there are problems in China and she wants to help solve them; language barrier when moving overseas
      - If her English improves, she wants to visit New Zealand
      - Generally, her parents are supportive no matter what she does
    - Limited knowledge of New Zealand: friend has a working holiday visa
    - Prefers countryside over city because of its relaxing and quiet lifestyle
    - How to bring more Chinese to New Zealand?
      - Looser immigration laws

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- Target different demographic: low-skilled workers (high-skilled are not so keen)
  - Psychology – Postgraduate (male)
    - No intentions moving overseas because parents want him to stay
  - Science Philosophy – Postgraduate (female)
    - After master’s degree, wants to do a doctorate (ideally overseas)
      - Barriers to moving overseas: needs funding from Chinese government, needs work experience in China, wants to look after parents so it will depend if they are willing to move overseas
    - Prefer cities over countryside
      - Reasons: convenient, busier, more cultural interest
    - How to bring more Chinese to New Zealand?
      - Better quality of universities (including professors)
      - Make it easier to overcome barriers in policy, insurance, and housing
      - Emphasise the better living conditions in New Zealand
  - French – Undergraduate (male)
    - Unsure of what to do after degree
    - Considered going overseas, maybe France
    - Prefer city over countryside because it is convenient
    - Limited knowledge of New Zealand: good holiday destination and living conditions
    - Will only move to New Zealand if they can bring parents
    - How to bring more Chinese to New Zealand?
      - Cheaper cost of living
      - Looser immigration policies
  - International Relations – Doctorate (female)
    - After PhD, wants to become research scholar
    - Does not want to move overseas
      - Reasons: parents, identity, and believes in traditional Chinese values
    - Prefer city over countryside because it is convenient
  - Mathematics – Doctorate (female)
    - After PhD, wants to teach in a university
    - Wants to work in the USA (ideally UC Berkeley)
      - Reasons: better research facilities and more advance research in her field
      - Considered moving to NZ in the past. Does not want to now because the opportunity in NZ to impact the world is low
    - Limited knowledge of NZ: good environment
    - Despite growing up in a city, prefers countryside because it is more comfortable and quiet

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- Computer science – Undergraduate (Male)
    - Wants to complete study abroad during undergraduate studies
    - After undergraduate study, want to pursue postgraduate study
    - Wants to come back to China
    - Reasons: Contribution to Chinese society
  - Environmental Science – Undergraduate (Male)
    - Considering Masters
    - Japan would be his preferred working location
  - History – Undergraduate (Female)
    - Has received a job offer in Japan and interested in going
    - Considers job prospects more important than job location
  - Medical Science – Undergraduate (Male)
    - Wants to work and maybe later consider postgraduate
    - Considers working abroad a hindrance to job opportunities
    - Would prefer to stay living in China
  - Literature – Postgraduate (Female)
    - Has been and travelled extensively in New Zealand
    - Likes that the people in New Zealand are nice and that there are a lot of Chinese people as well especially in Auckland
    - Interested in working in Iceland
  - Literature – Undergraduate (student)
    - Very interested in travel
    - Dream destination Norway but also very interested in New Zealand
    - Likes these locations as they are both very remote and beautiful
  - Medicine – Undergraduate (female)
    - After undergraduate studies, investigating options for research
    - Has interest to explore the world
    - Limited knowledge of New Zealand; milk powder and the industry
  - Physics – Undergraduate (male)
    - Want to study Masters at Fudan University
    - Long term, migrate to Shanghai or stay in Beijing
    - Knowledge of New Zealand limited, which consist of honey and dairy products
    - Not considering on moving overseas
  - Engineering – Undergraduate (male)
    - Considering postgraduate study, masters or PhD
    - Prefer to migrate to Shanghai

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- Familiarity with the location of China, because of the common ethnicity and language
  - Chemistry – Postgraduate (male)
    - Currently completing PhD and looking for job or post doctorate
    - Looking at opportunities in United States and Switzerland
    - Worries for salaries, social security benefits, civil rights of foreigners and immigration related issues.
  - Applied Economics – Postgraduate (male)
    - Undertook undergraduate studies in Australia
    - Enjoyed time in Australia because of freedom from pressures of life and nice people
    - Discouraged from overseas migration because of distance and flight logistics
  - Life Science – Undergraduate (male)
    - Interested in migrating to Australia after graduation. One reason are the wide array of flora and fauna
    - From Beijing
  - Physics – Undergraduate (male)
    - Interested in migrating in Australia. Warmer and less variance of climate in Australia
    - Limited knowledge of New Zealand, beautiful scenery