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# One complex society, Two colliding groups: issues on integration of internal migration

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“Oh, hi. Come in, please.”

It's Mr. Han's restaurant. It is a restaurant that is filled with people and restless chatters. His restaurant has nothing the same with the characteristic of Wuxi, forming a separated world from the outside. Mr.

Han likes this atmosphere.



“I've come to Wuxi since 2004. It's a nice city but I never seem to integrate into it. Actually, I never consider myself a Wuxi person.”

“Most of the time it's fine. But, you know, when you hang out with Wuxi friends, both of us have to compromise according to each other's habit, while sometimes those can develop into conflicts.”

Mr. Han is not the only case that doesn't integrate into society. Though accumulating 1.6 million migrants, Wuxi doesn't have all its migrants integrated into society. In fact, the majority of the migrants still live a different style from that of the locals, just like what Mr. Han does.

### **View on identity**

Though the homogenization among the cities has rendered the process of integration easier for migrants, many migrants still possess certain different habits and customs.

In our interviews with 33 subjects, though more than half have changed their census registration to Wuxi, 27 out of 33 still remain their identities.

The reason for that can be mainly attributed to the social circle: many of the migrants may face obstacles when finding local friends, mainly because of different habits. Therefore, their social circles are mainly composed of people of the same origin.

That's the same case for Mr. Han and some of his customers.

Mr. Wang is a regular customer of Mr. Hang. He is also an immigrant who came to Wuxi years ago. He is from Beijing. Being driven mad by the living expense, he chose to live in Wuxi. As most cases, he has some difficulties when making Wuxi friends.

“ I love to eat garlic with sauce at home, but my Wuxi friends really hate me to do so.” “ Most Wuxi people are too stingy I think, who are totally different from northeasterners like us.”

The possible inharmony under social interaction and stereotype towards certain regions make the integration difficult.

# Experience in career

Though our subjects are all in the manager position, their unique experience in careers still reveals something.

The main factor that helps migrants to accumulate their capitals can be categorized into two periods: pre-migration period and post-migration period. The pre-migration period, as the name suggests, is the period when migrants gain advantage before they move. Such advantage may be brought by family relationship and geographical relationship.

Mr. Yang, one of our interviewees, owns a big company at the age of 25. The main force behind his success at young age as a migrant is his mother. Yang's mother has been working in Wuxi before and gathered many social resources. Advantaged by the help of his mother's resources, Mr. Yang successfully established his business.

However, the post-migration period is totally a different story. Post-migration period refers to the period when migrants have already moved in and settled. Migrants who accumulate their capital at this period is at the majority of our investigation, comprising approximately 65% of the subjects(33 interviews and 102 questionnaires).

With no outer source to help them, the only thing they can rely on is themselves. Through the work, social activity, or rituals, they make friends and build their own social network. However, without the agent to introduce them into society, they face greater barriers. Bias, ignorance, distrust can all hinder them from flourishing.

“I have been active to familiarize the surroundings and participate activities to incorporate into the society, but not being a native here means fewer opportunities and friends to introduce me, so I am kind of excluded here. In fact, some Wuxi people are not willing to trust me and fear that I'm looting away their jobs. ” Miss Li, a beautiful lady with red hair, complained and decided to go back to hometown in the future.

To facilitate the integration of migrants, the situation faced by the latter group needs to be addressed.

## Family issues

Various backgrounds can make the family situation of migrants complex, but generally, neither of the couple is likely to be a local people.

In the investigation, 55.68 percent of subjects have got married and over 91.3 percent of these people didn't marry the local people.

Statistic is strong, but real life examples are clearer. Miss. Wang, a villager in Fuqing, came to Wuxi for better life quality at the age of 25 after divorcing with her husband. Being masterful in hairdressing, she opened her own hairdressing store in Wuxi, along with her two children. Difficulty in life makes it unbearable to face the cost of stepping out of the comfort zone and interact with local people.

Even those who have a lot of local friends still find it hard to find suitable mate.

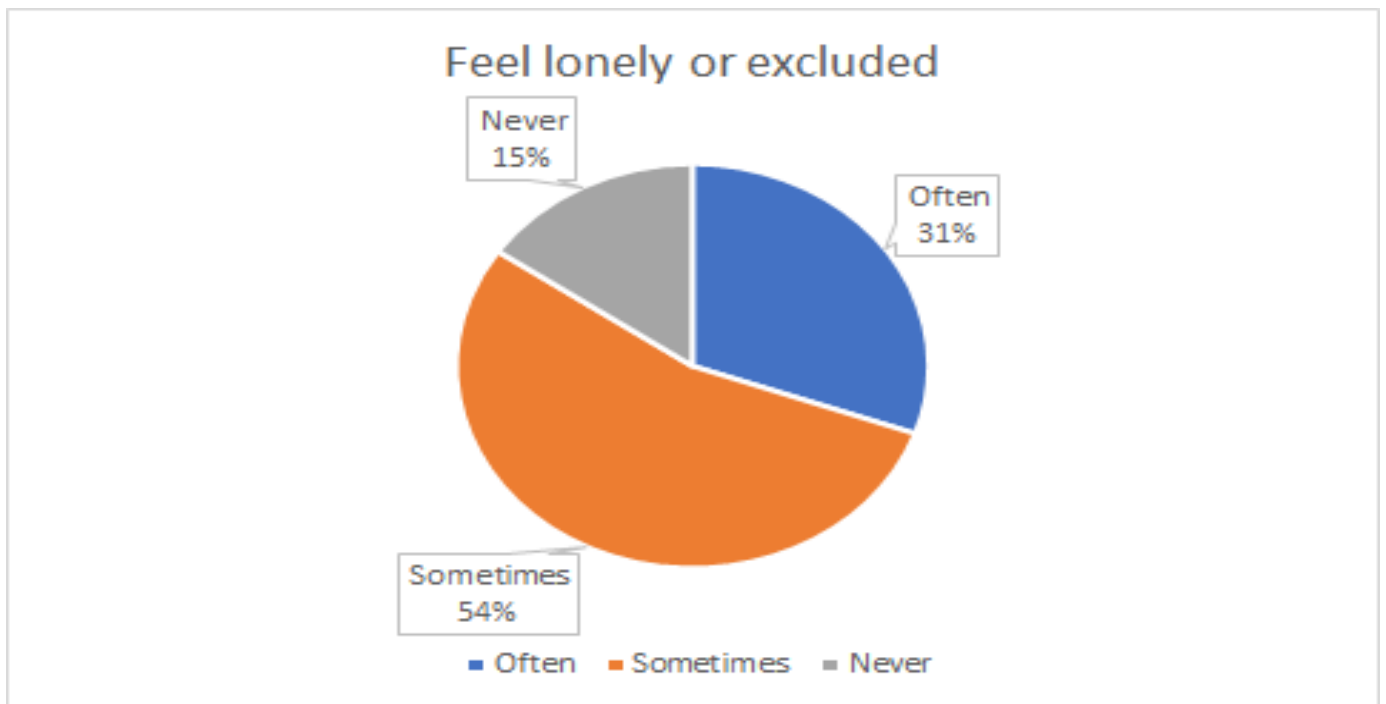
“ It’s difficult to find a boyfriend in Wuxi; they consider me as an unstable foreigner because my families are still in Guangdong and I work alone in the new city.” Miss. Li, the manager of an agent company, talked about the situations of migrants in Wuxi.

Since marriage is a life-long promise, it’s reasonable that the identity as a migrant may weaken the promise, thus creating obstacles for marriage.

## Education of the younger generation

In Jiangsu Province, the children who are brought by their parents into a new city has far passed 80 thousand. It’s quite promising that more than 99% of them can receive normal education. However, how the children can integrate into the school shows a different view.

It is essential that children have healthy mental status. The mental status can deeply effect their study and their future mental health. However, according to a study that samples 2661 migrants’ children and found that only 15 percent of the children will not fell lonely.



Source: our questionnaire

It seems clear that, more or less, the migratory student face a hard situation in incorporating into the environment.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the current status of the majority of the migratory people are facing obstacles in integrating into the new environment. The obstacle may from themselves: the resistance to change the identity to the new city, and from outside: the stress originated from stereotype, bias, distrust that may prevent marriage, adequate education and career.