

Jean Monnet Projects and the Possible Impact on Chinese Youth's Perception on the EU

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*The European Commission celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Jean Monnet Activities in 2019. Thus, it is the optimal time to review the impact of Jean Monnet activities on external perception on the EU and its integration. The article, with its focus on Chinese youth's perception, has employed comparative analysis of 5446 effective samples of the Survey on 'How Chinese College Students Perceive the EU', which was conducted among twenty-three universities around the country during the 2016-2017 academic year. The article concludes that **firstly**, Chinese college students mainly take in information in a more passive fashion and their opinions on foreign affairs including EU-related issues are overwhelmingly influenced by domestic macro-media reports or education; **secondly**, while students from universities with and without JMPs (Jean Monnet Projects) hold less divergent views on the general information about the EU and international relations in a wider sense, those respondents from universities with JMPs do perform better when it comes to EU-specific knowledge, such as the number of EU Member States, its motto and its institutional composition; **thirdly**, the comparative study on universities with and without JMPs has demonstrated that JMPs have produced some influence, but the impact is particularly limited, which is woefully insufficient to shape the general perception of Chinese college students on EU-related issues; and **finally**, Chinese college students come to be rather conservative regarding the items that imply a certain sense of politics, and this type of conservative tone, along with certain sort of nationalist sentiment, is deeply ingrained. The article ends with some policy recommendations.*

Keywords: The EU, Jean Monnet Projects, Impact, Chinese youth, Perception

1 INTRODUCTION

The Jean Monnet Programme (JMP), also known as JM Projects or JM Actions, is an EU initiative to encourage teaching, research and reflection in the field of European integration studies in higher education institutions. Essentially, without

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contradicting with the aim of promoting the EU, the JMP also creates more opportunities for professors and students to be aware of international issues, which in some way contributes to the internationalization of higher education. In 2001, China had its first three Jean Monnet Chairs.¹ From then on, professors, who are teaching European Union Studies through the curriculum and conducting research on EU matters, have proactively applied for Jean Monnet activities, and ten Chinese universities have executed over twenty Jean Monnet activities, including Jean Monnet Modules, Chairs and Centres of Excellence.² So far, ten universities³ in mainland China have succeeded in carrying out several activities, including Jean Monnet Modules, Chairs, Projects and Centre of Excellence. Among these universities, the Centre for European Studies (CES) of Sichuan University, located in Southwest of China, is one of the most proactive research centres in European Studies. The CES has four Jean Monnet Chair professors, which is the largest number of Jean Monnet Chairs in single university, and implemented several projects. Speaking of the Jean Monnet Programme, Vito Borrelli,⁴ director of China Office for the EU Jean Monnet Programme, said in an interview by China's Ministry of Education that there is another Jean Monnet activity to support the teaching and research of the European integration under the Erasmus+ Plan. Vito noted particularly that 'in China, we have three Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence, which focus on the teaching and research of EU issues, respectively in Renmin University, Sichuan University and Fudan University. These three centres are of great importance for spreading knowledge of the European integration'.

In 2019, the European Commission celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Jean Monnet Activities. Thus, this is an unmistakably good time to review whether

¹ Jean Monnet Chairs are teaching posts with a specialization in European Union studies for university professors or senior lecturers. The Jean Monnet Chair Programme forms one of key activities of the Jean Monnet Programme. So far, approximately 880 Jean Monnet Chairs (or Chair Professors) have been nominated worldwide. It is the European Commission that appoints professors as Jean Monnet Chair professors.

² According to the European Commission, Jean Monnet Activities (including JM Professors, JM Projects, and so on) are designed to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide and also foster the dialogue between the academic world and policy-makers, in particular with the aim of enhancing governance of EU policies. There are three types of activities, including teaching and research (Jean Monnet Modules, Chairs and Centres of Excellence), JM support to Associations, and policy debate with the academic world (Jean Monnet Networks and Jean Monnet Projects). Key activities include courses, research, conferences, networking activities, and publications in the field of EU studies.

³ Total are ten universities in Mainland of China have JMP: Sichuan University, Southwest Jiaotong University in the west China; Renmin University of China, Tsinghua University, China University of Politic Sciences and Law, three in Beijing; Fudan University in Shanghai; Hebei University in Baoding, Hebei Province; Wuhan University in Wuhan, Hubei Province; Nankai University in Tianjin and Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province.

⁴ V. Borrelli, *Educational Cooperation and Exchanges Under the China-EU High-level People-to-People Dialogue* (Chinese), 9 J. World Educ. 3–5 (2017).

Jean Monnet Activities have strengthened external perception on the EU and its matters. This article focuses on examining Chinese youth's perception. For China and the EU, political will and policy actions are the fundamental driving forces for promoting cooperation and development. From the perspective of specific cooperative behaviours, however, both economy and trade sector and cultural exchanges require both sides to continuously explore and understand each other and to deepen mutual cognition. A decade ago, Chan pointed out that China and the EU have been interested in improving their respective profiles and reciprocal understanding through some forty political dialogues and mechanisms.⁵ In September 2009, at the General Meeting to celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary of the implementation of the Jean Monnet Programme, former President of the European Commission Mr Barroso said, over the past twenty years, the JMP had been an important vehicle for us to study and promote the European model of transnational cooperation in the Europe and the world. The EU Education and Culture Commissioner Figel once said, the JMP brings together a large number of world-class experts specializing in the study of the European integration and playing a key role in promoting EU Project and its integration. In 2012, the 'high-level people-to-people exchange dialogue' between China and the EU called for the participating institutions, including governments and departments of culture and education, not only to establish mutual understanding and trust, but also to create extensive public awareness of cultural exchanges both in European and Chinese universities. For the EU and China, the logical extension of the official discourse of 'equality and mutual trust' naturally involves mutual cognition and understanding between citizens from both sides. Therefore, it is of great significance for policy-makers and researchers to promote mutual understanding and shape positive perception.

The article has employed comparative analysis of 5446 effective samples of the Survey on 'How Chinese College Students Perceive the EU', which is taken as a part of Jean Monnet Project entitled 'European Integration: Realities and Challenges – Perspectives from Chinese Youth' and was conducted among twenty-three universities around the country during the 2016–2017 academic year. Unlike the former survey, which was concentrated among the universities located in the Southwest part of the country, the universities included in the 2016–2017 Survey are from all over the country. Through the Survey, we eventually collected 5446 valid questionnaires. The collected data are divided into two groups, that is, data from these universities with JMP and data from those without JMP. Based upon comparative analysis and positive analysis, the article is trying to explore the possible

⁵ K. Chan, *Images, Visibility and the Prospects of Soft Power of the EU in Asia: The Case of China*, 8 Asia Eur. J. 133–147 (2010).

impact that Jean Monnet activities may have on Chinese college students' perception of European integration and EU knowledge in general.

The cognition process is an individual cognitive activity, acquiring and processing information heavily influenced by the collective contexts and the information sources. Whether in China or in EU Member States, the communities of college students are supposed to be one of the most important social groups for researchers to examine and weigh public opinion. According to the results of the 2014 survey about European college students' perception of China, which was conducted among five European universities from Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands,⁶ most European college students are willing to make friends with Chinese people and optimistic about the development of China-EU relations. However, there are statistical significant differences in the cognition of China and China – EU relations between the students from these universities. In a context of insufficient information or due to some misunderstanding in the course of information transmission, media reports are sometimes biased, which may exert impact on the European students' cognition of China and China-EU relations. It is equally important to have a better understanding of Chinese college students' cognition of the EU and especially how they perceive the EU. In doing so, mutual communication can be further improved. Actually, while the perception of the EU in China is increasingly positive, the perception of China in several EU Member States is increasingly negative.⁷ Burnay et al. mentioned, some surveys have also shown that 'the Chinese people think more favourably about the EU than they do of the US or Japan'.⁸ This argument is in line with the 2016–2017 survey results. In the 2016–2017 Survey, over 80% respondents view the EU-China relationship in an sanguine lens, while only less than 40% respondents see the US-China relations in the same way.

According to a new Pew Research Centre survey,⁹ 'A median of 58% of adults across thirty-three surveyed countries have a favourable opinion of the EU, while just 27% hold an unfavourable view'. Unfortunately, the survey has no data of China. In response to this problem, this article is also taken as an effort to make Chinese youth's attitudes toward the EU visible. The article will particularly focus on the cognitive results of Chinese college students'

⁶ J. Shi, D. Yi & Zy Li, *The Differences of Recognition in China-EU Dialogue: A Survey and Analysis of the China-EU Relation Recognition Among the Students from Four European Universities*, 6 J. Sichuan U. 77–85 (2015).

⁷ BBC *Global Survey Poll*, https://globescan.com/images/images/pressreleases/bbc2017_country_ratings/BBC2017_Country_Ratings_Poll.pdf (accessed 14 Nov. 2019).

⁸ M. Burnay, J. Hivonnet & K. Raube, 'Soft Diplomacy' and People to – People Dialogue Between the EU and PRC, 19(Special) Eur. For. Aff. Rev. 35–56, 50 (2014).

⁹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/21/attitudes-toward-eu-are-largely-positive-both-within-europe-and-outside-it> (accessed 19 Nov. 2019).

perception of the EU and its integration. The students are from different universities with JMP¹⁰ or without JMP. Through questionnaire surveys and data analysis, we are able to give a practical view on whether the JMP exerts impact on Chinese college students' perception of the EU or not. The results achieved could be used to summarize and analyse the Chinese youth's understanding of the EU and the possible influence of the JMP on Chinese youth. These results could be crucial for decision makers of both China and the EU when it comes to promotion of culture diversity and mutual communication. Through comparing the general results of the data analysis of the survey, the article tries to answer the following two questions: (1) whether the Jean Monnet Programme exerts impact on how Chinese college students perceive the EU and its integration and (2) whether there exist significant statistical differences between those Chinese college students from universities with and without the Jean Monnet Programme.

2 METHODOLOGY

In an article entitled 'Preparing for the Challenges: To Promote the Dialogue between the Youth of China and the EU',¹¹ the authors point out that Chinese college students show very positive attitudes towards bilateral cooperation between China and the EU, though only less than 40% students concern about EU development. It is also said that Chinese college students have high expectations for strengthening dialogues and communications between China and the EU and for working together on international issues.¹² The authors have argued that 'there are significant statistical differences among those Chinese college students from different cities or different types of the universities'.¹³ Nevertheless, it needs further clarification regarding how the universities with JM projects know the EU and its integration better than those without JM projects. Namely, it is to figure out the differences between universities who execute EU promotion activities and those who do not. To this end, the data are divided into two groups. First group includes seven universities with JMP¹⁴ and has 1943 sample questionnaires in total. The

¹⁰ In the following tables, JMP refer to universities with JM Projects (JMPs), and NJMP refers to universities without JMPs.

¹¹ *Opportunities and Challenges: Sustainability of China-EU Relations in a Changing World*, 138–158 (J. Shi & G. Heduk eds, Beijing: Social Science Publish May 2019).

¹² *Ibid.*, at 147.

¹³ *Ibid.*, at 152.

¹⁴ There are seven universities with JMPs in the first group in our survey: Sichuan University, Southwest Jiaotong University in the west China; Renmin University of China and China University of Politic Sciences and Law, in Beijing; Fudan University in Shanghai; Hebei University in Baoding, Hebei Province; Nankai University in Tianjin.

second group includes eight universities¹⁵ and has 2001 samples in total. The aim is to examine whether Jean Monnet activities have influence on Chinese college students' perception of the EU and its integration.

The basic hypotheses in the article are:

- (1). *In the universities with the Jean Monnet activities, Chinese college students know the EU and its integration better.*
- (2). *There are differences among the Chinese college students from different cities and different levels of their school regarding their understanding about the EU and European Integration.*

The research methodology includes two dimensions: empirical analysis is used to study the questions before and comparative analysis is employed to verify the hypotheses. The comparative study is conducted not only between two groups, but also between two universities, with JMP and without JMP. For example, between Nankai University (NKU) and Nanjing university (NJU). Regarding the selection of the universities, on the one hand, consideration was given to both comprehensive universities and non-comprehensive universities (such as engineering universities, foreign studies universities, teachers' colleges, etc.) so as to diversify the backgrounds of targeting groups; on the other hand, consideration was also given to cities both with JMP universities and NJMP (Non-Jean Monnet Projects) universities to ensure comparability. In doing so, the survey tries to avoid concentrating on students from the fields of arts and social sciences, such as international relations and economy. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to students, who were required to answer the questions anonymously. 'Randomly' means that the respondents, either knowing JM activities or not, are free (not) to fill in the questionnaires. The actual results of data collection have shown that there are only a few incomplete questionnaires, which are considered invalid in the data analysis. Moreover, a reasonable comparison method is another important factor that we had to take into consideration. That is, how to choose the universities without JM activities. There are two tiers of cities in the chosen target group: universities from the same city, and universities from different

¹⁵ The other sixteen universities without JMPs include six universities in Sichuan and one in Guiyang in Southwest China, three in Shanghai and one in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province in Eastern China, and the other six are located in the Central and Northern China. The eight universities included in the second group are Nanjing University (NJU, Nanjing); Southwest University of Finance and Economics (SUFU, Chengdu); Guizhou University (GZU, Guiyang); Shanxi University (SXU, Taiyuan); Capital University of Economics and Business (CUEB, Beijing); and Hunan University (HU, Changsha); Shanghai Jiaotong University (SHJTU, Shanghai) and East China Normal University (ECNU, Shanghai). For details, see Shi & Heduk eds, *supra* n. 11, at 143–145.

cites but with the same level. According to the different sample-size, eight out of sixteen universities in the Non JMP group were selected so that the comparative analysis makes sense.

Microsoft EXCEL and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) are used for the data input and data analysis by the research team of the project. As mentioned above, the survey was conducted in twenty-three universities, and all the participants made anonymous answers so as to allay their misgiving. Those questionnaires where students only finished part of the questions are counted as invalid samples. The basic information about these two groups (universities with JM Projects and without JM Projects) is as follows:

Table 1 Age: □1. ≤ 20; □2. 21-29; □3. ≥ 30

		< 20	21-29	> 29	Missing	Total
Age	JMP	55.3% (1072)	43.6% (844)	1.1% (22)	5	1943
	NJMP	63.1%(1263)	36.4% (729)	0.4% (9)	0	2001

Table 1 shows that NJMP group has more undergraduate students than JMP group. While 81.5% JMP group students are undergraduates, NJMP group has 88.8% undergraduates. Besides, male students account for 49.8% in NJMP group and 37.6% in JMP group. The NJMP group has more science and engineering students. Those who have been to Europe account for 6.9% in the JMP group, which is higher than that of NJMP group (2.6%).

3 COMPARATIVE RESULTS BETWEEN TWO GROUPS

3.1 CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THEIR BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE EU

The beginning parts of the Survey are designed to test students' basic knowledge of the EU and to answer the first research question 'Does the Jean Monnet Programme influence how Chinese college students perceive the EU and its integration?'. In the questionnaire, the first five items are related to the basic information about the EU. Respondents are required to make a single choice.

Table 2 *Answers to the Following 5 Questions (% , Single Choice Only)*

	<i>Item</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>
1	The European Union (EU) is the world's largest regional integration organization, till the end of 2015, there are total twenty-eight Member States. *** ¹⁶	JMP ¹⁷	52.0	12.0	36.0
		NJMP	48.3	8.5	43.2
2	The EU's top three institutions are: European Parliament, Council of the European Union and European Commission.	JMP	50.5	10.6	38.9
		NJMP	49.5	8.7	41.8
3	The European Community (EC) is the predecessor of the European Union and the six founding members are: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. **	JMP	56.6	11.9	31.5
		NJMP	51.7	13.7	34.6
4	The motto of the EU is 'Unity in Diversity' *	JMP	57.2	8.6	34.2
		NJMP	54.4	9.7	35.9
5	The EU was the largest trading partner of China, while China was the second largest trading partner of the EU in 2014.	JMP	29.6	28.0	42.4
		NJMP	30.0	27.3	42.7

The general overview has demonstrated that students from universities with JMPs know about the EU better. According to the statistical *K*-square test, the two Groups have shown significant statistical differences in terms of item no.1, no. 3 and no. 4. It is reasonable that students may need to receive some information, whether in active or passive approaches, so as to know about EU Member States, its founding members and its motto. In this regards, universities with JMPs have the advantages to provide students with the relevant information. Even though no significant difference exists on the EU institutional composition, students from universities with JMPs still perform slightly better than those from universities without JMPs.Delete¹⁸

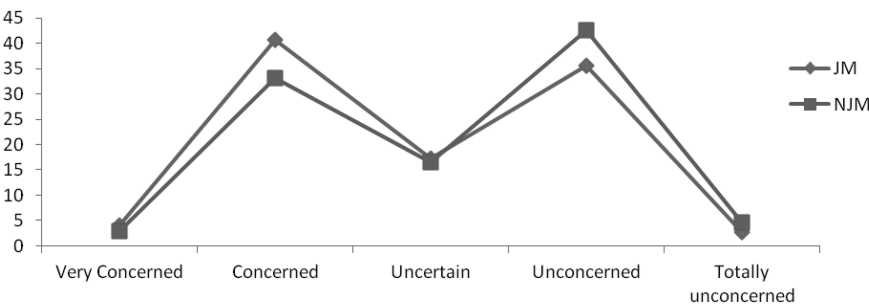
¹⁶ *K*² Chi-square test for the significant difference, * $\alpha < 0.05$, ** $\alpha < 0.001$, *** $\alpha < 0.0001$.
¹⁷ We use JMP to show the answer from JMP group, and NJMP means those universities without any JMP project.
¹⁸ DeleteWe will give more data results in the two universities compare later.

It can be seen from Table 2 that the results are not as cheerful as they are expected. To explore more information, respondents are asked to answer another question: ‘Are you concerned about the EU’s development?’ The answers are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3 *Answers to the Following Question (% , Single Choice Only)*

<i>Answer</i>		<i>Very Concerned</i>	<i>Concer- ned</i>	<i>Uncert- ain</i>	<i>Uncon- cerned</i>	<i>Totally Unconcerned</i>
Are you concerned about the EU’s development? ***	JMP	4.0	40.6	17.2	35.6	2.7
	NJMP	2.9	33.2	16.6	42.6	4.7

*** $\alpha < 0.0001$, (Statistically significant)



It is clear that nearly 45% students from universities with JMPs are concerned about the EU’s development, which is much higher than the percentage of universities without JMPs. On the other hand, over 47% students of universities without JMPs are unconcerned about the EU’s development, which is equally much higher than the percentage of universities with JMPs. The percentage of those who are uncertain about the issue is almost the same in both groups. Although the general overview has indicated that the results are within the expectation, students from universities with JMPs have not performed in a dramatically impressive and conspicuous fashion. After all, the percentage of students who are uncertain and unconcerned about the EU’s development is higher than that of those who are concerned. The reasons behind the undesirable percentage may need to be further explored through conducting more surveys.

3.2 PERCEPTION ON CHINA-EU RELATIONS

Regarding how Chinese college students view China-EU relationship, the results are listed in Table 4 below, from which some hints could be found.

Table 4 Questions Related China-EU Relationship (% , Single Choice Only)

	Items		Positive	Uncertain	Negative
1	I am willing to make friends with Europeans	JMP	93.6	5.6	0.8
		NJMP	92.2	7.4	0.4
2	There are no big conflicts of strategic interests between the EU and China, and this is the premise of friendly cooperation.	JMP	84.9	12.2	2.9
		NJMP	86.1	10.3	3.6
3	The EU and China should become a real substantially comprehensive strategic partnership.	JMP	66.5	27	6.5
		NJMP	65.1	27.8	7.1
4	The EU and China could strengthen unity and mutually support each other on addressing big international issues.	JMP	90.2	8.4	1.4
		NJMP	90.5	8.1	1.4
5	China and the EU should strengthen cooperation in the field of international politics so as to counterbalance the US.	JMP	65.2	23.9	10.9
		NJMP	66.6	24.7	8.7
6	China and the EU should enhance communication and improve mutual understanding, especially the People-to-People Dialogue.	JMP	94.2	4.6	1.2
		NJMP	92.5	6.5	1.2

It is conspicuously noticeable that the overwhelming majority of Chinese college students are in favour of developing friendship with Europeans, strengthening EU-China cooperation on international issues and promoting mutual understanding at the level of civil societies. However, when it comes to topics that are more or less about politics, Chinese college students become more conservative. The positive percentages of the second, third and fifth items are much lower than those of the other items. It is easy to note that the words ‘conflicts, strategic, counterbalance, etc’. in these items are more political. The political hint holds the respondents from

giving very positive responses, which is actually in the very line with the general Chinese public's conservative attitudes towards politics. On the contrary, the respondents' attitudes towards soft power-related issues (i.e. friendship, unity & support, mutual understanding, etc.) are quite sanguine and bold. The thing is that there is no considerable difference between universities with and without JMPs. There are some possible explanations. Firstly, it could be that these items do not require respondents to have much EU knowledge but the basic knowledge of China's external relations. That is, students can answer the questions without being lectured through JMPs. Secondly, college students have diversified accesses to taking in information and are increasingly concerned about international issues.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING THE EU

In order to prove that JMPs exert certain impact on how Chinese college students perceive the EU and its integration, more items are included to further distinguish the perception of students from universities with JMPs from that of students from universities without JMPs. Items related to the institutional nature of the EU, its characteristics and issues mentioned in Chinese media are chosen so as to catch the first impression of the respondents on EU-related issues and their reactions. The respondents can give multiple choices in each item. The results are sequenced from the highest percentage down to the lowest percentage that the students from JMP universities have in terms of each item (Table 5).

Table 5 Your First Impression on the European Union (% ,Multiple Choices)

	Item	JMP	NJMP
1	An organization of regional Integration	77.4	76.2
2	European debt crisis	46.7	46.4
3	Social welfare	48.2	44.8
4	Advanced sciences and technology	33.4	32.9
5	Free movement of people	37.1	30.7
6	Greek crisis	26.8	22.4
7	A peace organization	14.1	15.9
8	Environmental protection	14.8	14.9
9	Drastic changes in Eastern Europe	12.7	13.7

	<i>Item</i>	<i>JMP</i>	<i>NJMP</i>
10	Ukrainian crisis	12.7	12.2
11	Other choices, and please specify ()	2.4	1.8

The Table 5 clearly shows that (1) the top six items from universities with and without JMPs are exactly in the same sequence and (2) respondents from universities with and without JMPs do not hold very different views on the selected items except Item 3 and Item 5. The only conspicuous differences are that a considerable percentage of students from JMP universities hold that the EU is about social welfare and free movement of people. Of the top ten items, students from NJMP universities have shown a slightly higher percentage in Item 7 (a peace organization), Item 8 (environmental protection) and Item 9 (drastic changes in eastern Europe). Though the difference is not significant, these three items are quite important issues in terms of the EU’s mission and its history. The positive result is that students from JMP universities hold stronger impression on most of the top ten items than those from NJMP universities, which is in line with what is expected.

Table 6 What can be the Identities of the EU? (% , Multiple Choices)

	<i>Items</i>	<i>JMP</i>	<i>NJMP</i>
1	Regional cooperation and integration	71.8	69.6
2	Euro	70.1	71.1
3	Flag of the EU	31.3	32.3
4	integration process	33.5	33.0
5	Social welfare	22.6	21.9
6	Peace organizations	8.1	9.0
7	Environmental policy	8.9	7.5
8	The Schengen Agreement	11.2	6.5
9	Schumann plan	5.4	4.8
10	Jean Monnet	3.7	2.6
11	Eastward Enlargement	3.9	2.1
12	Other choices, and please specify ()	0.5	0.4

According to Table 6, views on the Schengen Agreement as an EU identity are quite divergent between students from universities with and without JMPs, and more students from JMP universities are in favour of taking the Agreement as an identity of the EU. This also shows that students from JMP universities may have better knowledge of the EU's Schengen Agreement, which was signed in Schengen of Luxembourg in 1985 and represents a milestone in EU history of realizing free movement among Member States. There are twenty-six countries inside the Schengen Zone, including four non-EU countries (i.e. Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland). In particular, what impressive and significant for outsiders is Schengen visa. Once travellers have Schengen visa, they have free access to any of Schengen Zone countries. The explanation for the low percentage of students from NJMP universities could be that these students have weak knowledge of the EU on the one hand and have no experience of visiting the EU on the other hand. Surprisingly, the result about the Schengen Agreement is not in line with the expectation.

However, it can be found that the items in Table 6 are more about EU knowledge-based choices. That is, if students do not have some basic knowledge of the EU and its integration history, their choices are likely to be the results of subjective selection rather than objective judgment. Even though the percentage of students from JMP universities is not much higher than that of students from NJMP universities, it cannot be denied that the former group students may have better knowledge of the EU. In particular, these students are more sensitive to EU knowledge-based items. Besides, there is no contradiction regarding the items no. 2 and no. 3 because students actually do not need special knowledge to know Euro and EU flag, which are very general information about the EU. In particular, regarding these two items, as the percentages from NJMP universities are slightly higher than those of JMP universities, there is a higher possibility to say that Euro and EU flag are more representative. In a word, students from JMP universities have higher percentages on EU knowledge-based items while students from NJMP universities have stronger perception of general information about the EU. The only contradictory thing might be the views on the EU as a peace organization, where students from NJMP universities have stronger perception of the EU as a peace organization both in Table 5 and Table 6. However, if the EU is taken as one of general international organizations, which are normally peaceful, then the higher percentage of students from NJMP universities can be explained in a rational way.

The respondents' perception of the recent issues that the EU is facing and of the issues covered in Chinese media is as follows:

*Table 7 What do you Think are the Biggest Problems to the EU Development at Present?
(%, Multiple Choices)*

	<i>Item</i>	<i>JMP</i>	<i>NJMP</i>
1	Europe's Debt Crisis, Euro Crisis	70.4	73.1
2	Refugee problem	64.0	62.6
3	Imbalance of economic development among EU Member States	39.4	36.7
4	Ageing society	31.8	32.2
5	Economic downturn and high unemployment	31.8	32.1
6	Problem of internal system of EU	23.4	23.8
7	People of EU Member States fear Muslims, or Islam phobia	21.5	18.8
8	UK referendum on leaving the EU	20.1	21.1
9	Regional security	18.4	14.8
10	Integration of Non-European immigrants with local citizens	15.9	13.1
11	Other choices, and please specify ()	1.5	1.1

Table 7 has demonstrated that there is no considerable difference between students from universities with and without JMPs on how they view the challenging problems the EU faces. Respondents from both types of universities almost share the same sequence of challenges except that students from NJMP universities consider Brexit as a more problematic issue for EU development than Islamophobia. Based upon the results of Table 7, a conclusion can be drawn that JMPs has not exerted tangible impact on how students perceive the challenges that are problematic for EU development. There are several possible explanations for such results. First of all, JMPs may have some influence, but the impact is rather limited to a small group of students. In China, Jean Monnet activities are usually executed by research centres relating to European Studies. This means that students from these research centres or from social sciences in a wider sense may have more chance to know about the JM activities, which may have nothing to do with students from other disciplinary fields. Secondly, according to common sense, it is quite obvious that Chinese domestic media reports have stronger impact on how Chinese students view the biggest problems the EU is facing. Undoubtedly, the top two problems (European debt crisis and refugee crisis) are very prominent issues in terms

of Chinese media coverage, and it could explain why the percentages from both Groups are relatively quite high. Besides, due to racial sensitivity of the issue, Islamophobia (in a general sense) is usually minimized or not covered in Chinese media, which actually explains the slightly lower percentage of students from NJMP universities on the one hand and implies that students from JMP universities may talk about European Islamophobia on the other hand. Another very interesting thing that could demonstrate the influence of Chinese domestic media is Brexit-related issue. According to the percentages, students from NJMP universities consider Brexit slightly more problematic for EU development, which is in fact in line with domestic media reports. Instead, students from universities with JMPs, who may have better knowledge of the EU-related issues, are more conservative regarding Brexit influence on EU development, and maybe this is based upon their rational judgment rather than pure subjectivity.

3.4 CHANNELS USED TO UNDERSTAND THE EU

In the following section, we will try to know the differences between the two groups by their channels used to understand about the EU and the European integration. No matter what information those students get, and what their impressions on the EU or European integration, first we would like to make sure that most information they get is not from their own experiences, because there is less than 5% of the students have personal experiences in Europe. So their information about the EU and Europe only can be through the ways indirectly.

According to the 2014 Survey conducted among European universities, the main channels used by European college students to know about China are ‘Internet (61.9%), Newspaper (60.4%) and Television (54.2%)’.¹⁹ Likewise, the 2016–2017 Survey was designed to obtain information about the ways of understanding the EU and its integration by Chinese college students. The answers could be found in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Channels to Know the EU (% , Multiple Choices)

Item		JMP	NJMP
1	TV and Radio News	72.0	74.5
2	Internet	48.8	44.5

¹⁹ J. Shi, D. Yi & Z. Li, *To Adjust the Strength and Tactics of the China Internet External Publicity*, 18 Eur. Stud. Forum 117–119 (2015) (Chinese).

	<i>Item</i>	<i>JMP</i>	<i>NJMP</i>
3	social networking platforms (Micro-blogging, WeChat, and so on)	43.4	39.6
4	Newspapers and magazines	39.7	36.9
5	Books	35.2	32.1
6	Movies	31.8	31.5
7	Classroom learning	35.9	30.6
8	TV special programs	23.3	20.6
9	Chatting with Chinese friends	10.5	9.7
10	Chatting with European friends	5.5	3.3
11	Visit and travelling to Europe	4.5	3.1
12	Other choices, and please specify ()	0.5	0.4

Undoubtedly, Chinese college students mostly get information about the EU through television and radio news. This is probably how general Chinese people at home and abroad obtain information, as Burany et al. point out that: ‘In practice, China is trying to shape its image through a very large range of tools, ... Xinhua News and CCTV (China Central Television) ...’²⁰ As almost all Chinese universities install TVs in public space, not least in the canteen, students can receive macro-media education through TV channels. Nevertheless, this type of education is carried out in a passive manner. This is an important way explaining how macro media cover foreign affairs and then influence public opinions. What should be stressed is that students and general audience are in a passive absorption status when acquiring information via TV channels.

It is not difficult find under careful observation that while respondents from universities without JMPs are more dependent on TV and radio news to understand the EU, students from universities with JMPs are more relying upon the Internet, social networks and newspaper, through which they are able to get information in a proactive approach. One explanation for this contrast is that students who are possibly influenced by JMPs, are more proactive in getting information about the EU and may unconsciously double check the information when it comes to EU-related issues. In fact, this finding also explains why the students from NJMP universities are more likely to be influenced by Chinese domestic media coverage according to Table 7.

²⁰ Burnay, Hivonnet & Raube, *supra* n. 8, at 46.

According to Table 8, a general conclusion is that the top channels employed by Chinese college students to understand the EU are TV and radios, the Internet, social media networks and newspaper, of which TV and radios are the most influential ways of promotion and propagandization. Besides, it is not a surprise that social media networks come to the third if the fact is noticed that according to the 44th China Statistical Report on Internet Development, issued by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC),²¹ till June, 2019, China's Internet population reached 854 million, with a penetration rate of 61.2%; the number of mobile Internet users is 847 million, with 99.1% of mobile Internet users; and Chinese netizens are still dominated by people at the age-group of 10–39 years-old, who account for 65.1% of the overall population. 99% of the college students who participated in the Survey are under twenty-eight and occupy a large percentage of mobile Internet users in China.

3.5 UNIVERSITIES WITH AND WITHOUT JMPS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In the previous sections, some differences have been observed between universities with and without JMPS. In the following section, further analysis will focus on a comparative study on groups of universities categorized according to the Chinese city tier system and the state of implementing JMPS so as to explore the possible statistical significant differences between specific universities.

To develop a comparative study on the differences between universities, four groups of universities are selected and the analysis will be based on the data of Table 2. Two groups are chosen from four different cities, and the other two groups are chosen from Shanghai: Nankai University (Tianjin) and Nanjing University (Nanjing), Hebei University (Baoding, Hebei Province) and Shanxi University (Taiyuan, Shanxi Province), Fudan University (Shanghai) and Shanghai International Studies University (SISU), Fudan University and East China Normal University (ECNU, Shanghai). According to Chinese city tier system, Tianjin, Nanjing and Shanghai belong to the first-tier cities, and Baoding and Taiyuan are the second-tier cities. Universities in the same city tier are grouped because cities in different tiers reflect differences in consumer behaviour, income level, population size, consumer sophistication, infrastructure, talent pool, and business opportunity.²²

²¹ <http://www.cnnic.cn/hlwzfzyj/hlwxxzbg/hlwjtjbg/201908/P020190830356787490958.pdf> at 1.

²² *China Focus: China's Second-tier Cities Battle for Top Talent*, Xinhuanet (31 Oct. 2017), www.xinhuanet.com (accessed 19 Feb. 2020).

Table 9 *a – Value of K2 Chi-square Test for the Significant Difference on Two-Pair Universities Compared*

<i>Basic Knowledge of the EU (K² – Test) a – value</i>				
	University With JMP	Nankai	Hebei	Fudan
	University Without JMP	Nanjing	Shanxi	SISU
				Fudan
				ECNU
1	The European Union (EU) is the world’s largest regional integration organization, till the end of 2015, there are total twenty-eight Member States.			
2	The EU’s top three institutions are: European Parliament, Council of the European Union and European Commission.	★★	★★	
3	The European Community(EC) is the predecessor of the European Union, and the six founding members are: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.		★★	★ ***
4	The Motto of the EU is Unity in Diversity	★★	★★	★★
5	The EU was the largest trading partner of China while China was the second largest trading partner of the EU in 2014.			

Level of the significant statistical differences: ★*a*<0.05, ★★*a*<0.001, *** *a*<0.0001

According to statistical analysis, some statistically significant differences are found regarding the second, third and fourth items. The findings are in line with the general findings in section 3.1. **Firstly**, the differences are mainly concentrated on item two, item three and item four. As students need some EU knowledge to identify true or false regarding these three items, the statistically significant differences on these items apparently indicate that students from universities with and without JMPs do respond differently and JMPs may produce some impact on how Chinese college students perceive the EU and its integration. **Secondly**, as Hebei University and Shanxi University are both located in the second-tier cities, which to a large extent means that the extent of their internationalization is lower than

that of universities from the first-tier cities, the differences between them are most significant. Students from these two universities have very divergent views on all the three aforementioned items. Indirectly, this means that JMPs are likely to exert more tangible impact on students from less internationalized universities and cities. **Thirdly**, although students from Fudan University and ECNU do not show much difference on the rest four items, their extreme contrast regarding the third item reveals that students from JMP universities do know better about the EU's founding Member States. **Finally**, even though Nankai University and Nanjing University in the first group and Fudan University and SISU in the third group are all from the first-tier cities, and their students are living in a comparatively highly internationalized atmosphere, some significant differences do come into being when it comes to the EU's institutional composition and its motto, which also reflects the possible influence of JMPs. Therefore, basically speaking, it can be said that JMPs exert certain impact on how Chinese college students from different universities and cities view the EU and its integration.

4 CONCLUSION

The above analyses have presented a clearer overall view of how Chinese college students understand the EU and whether JMPs exert impact on how students perceive the EU and its integration. To summarize, there are four major findings. **Above all**, Chinese college students take in information in a more passive fashion and their opinions on foreign affairs including EU-related issues are overwhelmingly influenced by domestic macro-media reports or education. In particular, domestic media have been dominant in covering major issues and in shaping public opinions. **Secondly**, while students from universities with and without JMPs hold less divergent views on the general information about the EU and international relations in a wider sense, those respondents from JMP universities do perform better when it comes to EU-specific knowledge, such as the number of EU Member States, its motto and its institutional composition. According to the aims of Jean Monnet activities, which 'are designed to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide',²³ JMPs have exerted some positive impact on these young professionals. However, it has to be noted that knowing about EU-related issues is an important step of perceiving the EU and its integration, but this does not necessarily mean that the respondents share the same values, on which the EU project is founded. **Thirdly**, the comparative study on the universities with and without JMPs has demonstrated that JMPs have produced some influence, but the impact is quite

²³ 23European Commission, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/jean-monnet_en.

limited, which is certainly insufficient to shape the general perception of Chinese college students on EU-related issues. **Finally**, Chinese college students come to be rather conservative regarding the items that imply a certain sense of politics, and this type of conservative tone, along with certain sort of nationalist sentiment, is deeply ingrained. Without much doubt, it will be a time-consuming process to infuse a new life into the conservative force.

Based upon these findings, some policy recommendations are proposed. The **first** recommendation is to diversify the applicants and applications of JMPs. So far, JMPs in China are mostly carried out by research centres of European Studies, which limits the possible access to the majority students. Younger generation is the future shaper of EU-China relationship, and their opinions are of great importance for a better future. Thus, to enlarge the 'sphere of influence' is the premise of producing desirable results of future JMPs. The **second** recommendation is to combine JMPs with EU-China people-to-people dialogue policies so that JMPs can reach a wider range of civil societies and play an important role in promoting reciprocal understanding and mutual trust. The **third** recommendation is to strengthen engagements from both sides and enhance interactions in the course of implementing JMPs so as to maximize students' access to first-hand information through direct and face-to-face communications.