

**Reframing Sociologies of Ethnicity & Migration in Encounters with Chinese
London**

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that the intersecting sociologies of ethnicity and migration work from a series of interconnected blind spots hindering effective analysis of the current UK situation. Both operate analytically within the limitations of an 'immigrant problem' framework; are overinvested in state agendas; privilege a nation state analysis; are narrowly focussed on distributions of migrant bodies, and on receiving, at the expense of sending, contexts. Exploring these limitations with data derived from a modest small-scale qualitative study of young Chinese migrants in London 2 I argue for a reframing along four dimensions. Firstly, in an era of elite migration, sociology could reach beyond its immigrant problem framework and open up to a broader range of UK migrant ethnicities and circumstances. Secondly, a stronger focus on cities as the scale on which lives are lived, and through which diverse streams of translocal activity are routed, would open new avenues of sociological exploration. Thirdly, including translocal activities connected with distributions of ethnic migrant bodies, such as capital transfers, would broaden its focus, taking migration and ethnicity more centrally into the analysis of globalisation as one of its constituting practices. Finally, paying attention to sending, as well as arrival cities, reveals migrants' thinking and shapes the ways in which they live, as my data shows. The Chinese are both one of the UK's neglected minorities, and one of its fastest growing populations. They are a good example of new UK migrants and they bring globalisation's realignment with the rising significance of China to the UK.

Key Words: Chinese, London, migration, ethnicity and urbanism

Framing: Ethnicity, Race and Migration Sociology

The development of the sociology of race and ethnicity and the sociology of migration as distinct sub-disciplines marks the expansion of sociological thinking, allowing sociologies of race and ethnicity to specialise in the social consequences of immigration; while sociologies of migration focus on global trends, types of migrants and particular migration streams (conceived in ethnic terms), making them diverse sub-disciplines (Solomos 2014) 3. Ethnicity and race shape migration sociology, just as migration shapes the sociology of race; each frames the other and offers a rationale for

combining them in the UK context. Their interconnection belongs to a seminal moment in the development of modernity and its analysis in the early sociology of the Chicago School's (Park 1967 [1925] Burgess 1967 [1925]) exploration of urban spatial residential patterns in the making of America from European migrants. As the dynamics of (approximately) white settlement were grafted onto histories of plantation slavery and persistent racial segregation, migration, ethnicity, race and patterns of urban residence held a prominence in sociology that was exported throughout the twentieth century. Loosely connected fields of knowledge centred on how social worlds work, sociology was forged in what David Goldberg (2014:87) calls systems of racial thinking, embedded in social forms and the epistemologies through which they were theorised. Along with the social forms it analyses, sociology was shaped by race categorisation and oppression, which provided a framework for the investigation of migration and urban form as nation-state projects.

Reconfigured in the British context, race, ethnicity and migration organised sociological engagement with post-war Commonwealth immigration, as the Chicago sociologies of race and migration reverberated in the co-production of immigration and racialised patterns of urban settlement and housing tenure (Rex and Moore 1967, Rex 1981) condensed in urban form. Given these tight intersections between the two sub-disciplines, sociologies of migration and race and ethnicity will be referred to together in this paper using the short-form sociology.

Framing: Creating the Migrant Problem

The migrant problem is construed in the social, political and sociological context just outlined. It is firstly an immigrant problem and a colour problem. The six million UK

emigrants who live overseas (Sriskandarajah & Drew 2006) are only recently a focus of sociological enquiry (Knowles & Harper 2009, Walsh 2006, Conway & Leonard 2014, O'Reilly 2000, Benson and Osbaldiston 2014); framed by an analysis of racial whiteness as privilege, defined as *unproblematic* (Findlay 1995:515). As the immigration problem settled on people of colour, those with ambiguous racial locations – Arabs and Chinese for example – attracted less attention. *Numbers* of black immigrant bodies, swamping the island nation (Moore and Wallace 1975), even though net migration didn't begin to rise until around 2000 (<http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/long-term-international-migration-flows-and-uk>), form a second strand in the migrant problem, and its solution, in strict border controls, is the third. Successive post war British governments controlled immigration through legislation and rule changes from 1962, establishing a cross party political consensus which persists.

The migrant problem followed immigrants through borders, placing their settlement practices in question. Defined as being unhealthy, unruly, dysfunctional, underachieving or simply criminal: (new and settled) immigrants were processed by the criminal justice system, by social welfare, and by health and education agencies. These agendas, set by local and state agencies, established the framework in which late 20th C UK sociology operates.

Paul Gilroy (1987:11) acknowledges the problematic status attached to Asian and African Caribbean immigrants (and once-immigrants): the term immigrant used to unsettle the settled. In this paper I use the term migrant to refer to immigrants and people of migrant heritage. Sociology set about investigating the ways in which

African Caribbean people became the criminalised targets of excessive policing (Holdaway 1996, Daniel 1979, Feuchtwang 1992, Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts 1978, Keith and Murji 1990), and their communities raided (Gordon 1986). Sociology exposed social work for misreading family circumstances (Knowles 1990, Connelly 1990, Cheetham 1981, Ahmed 1981a and b). It showed that Caribbean migrants were misunderstood as educational failures (Carby 1982, Jansen 1990, Cashmore and Troyna 1983); problematized by health care agencies (Rack 1981, Wallis 1981); and revealed, in excessive policing, the rationale behind 'riots' (Kettle and Hodges 1982, Lawrence 1982:53, Gilroy 1982, Cashmore and Troyna 1984 Solomos 1989). It showed that South Asians' family practices were pathologised and scrutinised by immigration officials and local authorities (Alexander 2005). And it investigated the residential segregation (Rex 1981, Smith 1989, Farrar 1997, Peach et al 1981, Peach 1975, Smith 1993) that identified South Asians as a problem of integration.

I played a part in this output, which responded with integrity to the circumstances of the time, inverting state agendas problematizing black and Asian migrants. We analysed the social forms and lives shaped by migration, race and ethnicity, concluding that migrants poorly understood victims of racial discrimination and socially unjust resource allocations. But operating within this migrant problem framework, if only to refute it, acknowledges its salience and with it the designation of migrants as victims. This underestimates and oversimplifies migrants: it is a limited position from which to imagine, think, write and speak, foreclosing other possibilities and more positive iterations of migrant lives, which were developed in postcolonial literatures and histories.

As early 21st C sociology deepens its connection with state agendas, integration is the issue which secures a still closer alliance. Disturbances in northern English towns (2001) brought new (Labour) impetus to demands for *integration* and rising anxiety about *community cohesion*, identifying South Asians as problematic in new ways. A report from the *Commission on Integration and Cohesion* (2007) brought resources to local authorities implementing integration through municipal infrastructures. At the same time the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) invited funding bids for research into community cohesion and integration through its 'Connected Communities' initiative. A proliferation of ESRC funded research into Moslem lives in the UK after the (2005) London bombings (Arnold 2012: 64) developed alongside this. Thus sociology took a more active role in generating the knowledge on which the management of migrants' lives, and restriction of their citizenship rights, rests as 'poorly integrated citizens' are progressively recast as Islamic enemies within.

As UK governments devolve the dispersal of research funding to research councils, they can tie cash-strapped universities more closely to government priorities. This is exacerbated by the *impact agenda* trialled in the 2013 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), requiring academic research to demonstrate its reach beyond the academy; further squeezing the space for independent critical thinking and research.

To summarise: migration sociology is deeply entwined with sociologies of race and ethnicity. Each creates for the other its conditions of existence. Both are framed by interpretations of race and ethnicity as black, and as socially and politically problematic. Recent developments foreground British Muslims as targets of

government initiatives with national security in mind, at the same moment as sociology has a tighter relationship with government. These factors have consequences in shaping sociology. They constrain its critical capacities, placing some migrants in the spotlight while obscuring others, and conflating migrant circumstances into narrowly conceived dimensions of social disadvantage. This constructs a particular version of the immigrant that no longer describes contemporary migration or the UK's emerging ethnic diversity.

Why the Chinese?

The Chinese are one of the UK's neglected minorities. Small, successful and ambiguously racialised, these attributes exclude them – in all but one respect, which we will come to later - from the immigrant problem framework of government policy and sociology (Knowles 2012). Vertovec's (2007:1024) concept of 'superdiversity' encourages research on the 'small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified (new) immigrants of the last decade', like the Chinese. Definition of Chinese territories and peoples are, of course, complicated. Hong Kong struggles to maintain its (limited) Special Administrative Region (SAR) autonomy from Beijing. Taiwan maintains its independence in the face of Mainland incorporation. The term Chinese covers a multitude of ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences even within Mainland China. Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwanese establish important political and cultural differences with Mainlanders in popular discourse: and there are substantial Chinese populations in Singapore and Malaysia. In using the term Chinese in this paper, I acknowledge these complexities without engaging with them.

By the mid forties there were less than five thousand Chinese in the UK. A small stream of arrivals from Hong Kong throughout the 1960s generated chain migration into the restaurant trades (Watson 1977), consolidating the Chinese in the public imagination. While the number of Chinese had risen to 156,938 by the 1991 census (Cheng 1996:161) it remains a small minority. 0.72% of the population of England – a little over 53 million – identified themselves as Chinese in the last census: 79,503 Chinese people (equivalent to the population of Bristol) live in England.

Widely regarded as successful, Chinese children over-achieve educationally and adults show high rates of entrepreneurial activity (Ng 1968, Parker 1995, Pang and Law 1998). ‘The Chinese are well educated, the proportion of college educated and above surpassing that of the white population. They have a lower unemployment rate and are disproportionately over represented in professional and skilled occupations’ (Cheng 1996:179). Unproblematic, they were largely ignored by governments and sociologists (Jackson and Garvey 1974; Brody 1958, Chau and Yu 2001). Parker (1995) and Song (1999) probed sites of everyday Chinese life and identity making in restaurants with British born Chinese youth, who were, as Parker (1995: 2) notes, excluded from the ‘new ethnicities’ conversation, which settled around South Asia and Caribbean people. Parker and Song’s (2006) study of British born Chinese people’s online presence, and Francis and Archer’s (2005) paper on the navigation of stereotypes by high achieving British Chinese schoolboys are exceptional; as are studies by Lam et al (2009) and Pharoah (2009). With these exceptions, studies of Chinese migrants, based on a long-settled British-Chinese from Hong Kong and Fujian, need updating.

Only as illegal migrants are the Chinese incorporated into the migrant problem victim framework, demonstrating that this as the route to migrant visibility. The 2000 Dover discovery of 58 Chinese bodies in the back of a truck (Song 2004), and the twenty-four undocumented gang-driven cockle pickers drowned in 2004 at Morecombe Bay, contextualise the Chinese as mute helpless victims (Chak-Kwan Chang et al 2009, Hsiao-Hung Pai 2008).

Reports of China's rising geopolitical influence and economic growth appear regularly in UK news coverage. When Xi Jinping visited in 2015 he was feted by the House of Windsor and driven through London a gold coach. Yet none of this raises the profile of Chinese migrants. One of the great Diasporas, China is the world's fourth largest country of emigration. By the end of the twentieth Century 33 million ⁷ ethnic Chinese lived outside of Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Skeldon 2011) ⁸. And although the Diaspora favours the US, Canada and Australia, preferences are sensitive to conditions in these countries as David Ley (2010) notes. Recent changes shift Chinese migrants towards Europe, opening new routes to London.

The Chinese are now the UK's fastest growing minority

(<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/05/ethnic-minorities-grow-politicians-need-less-crude-approach-attracting-them>) and China is our largest source of new arrivals. ONS estimated that 40,000 Chinese came to the UK last year, more than from any other country

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10480785/Most-immigrants-to-the-UK-now-come-from-China-figures-show.html>) in part due to a growing volume of students. Before entry visa applications for 2011 show that China, with 283,008

applications, is second to India (462,507) as a source of migrants while Hong Kong generated a further 8,574. The new Chinese migrants are China born. They outnumber UK-born Chinese by 2 to 1 (2011 Census) and they come from the Chinese Mainland. Acknowledgement of the significance of UK Chinese migrants is overdue.

The Significance of the Urban Scale

Sociology's orientation towards nation state scales of analysis – see for example Ratcliffe and Inness (2011) and Stillwell and Dukes (2005) – correctly acknowledges the significance of state borders in the regulation of migration. Although cities were conceived as territories of migrant life from the early 20thC, they were understood as containers of migrants, registering, in micro-form the actions of nation states, rather than as active partners in critical conjunctures between states and cities (Knowles 2003, Alexander and Knowles 2005). Dwyer et al's (2013) work on Slough and Bradford, for example, sees cities as lens onto nation-state processes they reflect, rather than constitute.

Contemporary conceptualisations of cities have recovered their agency in generating the social processes they also ground. These stress continuous city-making, emergence and composition (Amin and Thrift 2002, Leese 2002, Darroch 2010, Swanton 2010, McFarlane 2011); interactions between architectural and other material and human fabrics (Harvey 1990, Ingold 2000, Latham and McCormack 2004, Boutros and Straw 2010); and the idea that cities are constituted in the multiple mobilities that converge upon them (Clifford 1997, Urry 2000, Ingold 2004, Amit 2007, Middleton 2009). Conceived as junctions in a shifting matrix of local and translocal routes (Knowles 2014), cities are shaped in the routine mobile habits of residents, sojourners and

temporary visitors, as well as by objects and other circulations routed through them. More than points of entry, exit and transit; more than places of long and short-term residence (Smith and Eade 2008:5-7), cities ground transnational practices and route connected mobile subjects. Translocal migrant ethnicities are imbricated in urban space through everyday bodily encounters (Amin and Thrift 2002, Swanton 2010) and the personal urban cartographies of mobile subjects (Knowles and Harper 2009). To paraphrase Swanton (2010:450), this takes migration into the very fabric of the city and its visual economy, making a more fluid, emergent and provisional mapping of new migrant ethnicities and cities possible.

Thus cities condense the challenges we face in ethnicity and migration sociology: places where lives are generated; where traces of elsewhere are registered in architectural, commercial, religious and other surfaces of emergence; as well as in bodies in motion on the journeys of everyday life. Human and non-human trajectories converge on cities; and tracing these reveals (otherwise hidden) ethnic-migrant lives, journeys and activities. This makes cities the appropriate scale for an analysis of migration, and highlights the importance of London, through which more streams of Chinese activity (and migrants) are routed than anywhere else in the UK. In referring to *Chinese London* instead of the Chinese *in* London, I intend both an urban focus, and a more inclusive analysis of translocal activity than migrant bodies alone offer (Knowles and Burrows 2016). Migration is one among other streams of translocal activity co-constituting globalisation, taking it to the centre of globalisation theory (King 2012).

Mapping Migrant Bodies and other Streams of Translocality

Placing Chinese London in its broader context, the 2011 Census data show that the Chinese are highly dispersed. The Scilly Isles are the only local authority in England and Wales with no Chinese residents, and only 6.4% of electoral wards have no Chinese. The Chinese are an integral, subtle, part of the fabric of the nation. London (124,250) and the SE (53,061), the NW (48,049) especially Manchester, and the West Midlands (31,274), especially Birmingham, show Chinese concentrations. The granular geographies of local authorities and districts reveal that the highest concentration – but not the highest number - of Chinese is in Cambridge (4,454 or 3.6% of the population). Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Exeter, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Southampton - cities with elite Russell Group universities – also have high concentrations. Of this more later.

London with a Chinese population of 124,250 (or 1.52% of population) rising to 300,000 if estimates of undocumented migrants are included (Pharoah 2009); lies at the centre of Chinese Britain. Dispersed throughout inner and outer London, the highest intensities - in concentrations and numbers - of Chinese are in the city of London (263 or 3.57%), the boroughs of Tower Hamlets (8,109 or 3.19%), Camden (6,493 or 2.95%), Southwark (8,074 or 2.80%) and Westminster (5,917 or 2.70), the location of London's Chinatown, Chinese London's iconic neighbourhood. Canary Wharf – at the centre of the Eastward extension of London's financial district - also shows an intensity of Chinese residence (15.6%). London's now disappeared 19th century Chinatown in East London's Limehouse has the highest number (1792) of Chinese residents if not the highest concentration (12.3%). Like the city itself, Chinese London is a work in progress.

But there is more to Chinese London than these distributions of Chinese bodies.

Various kinds of capital transfer co-constitute Chinese London too. Some of these are routed through students, highlighting their activities and influence. In what follows I gather together some of the relevant streams of translocal activity and suggest that they provide a more thorough way of thinking about Chinese London than migration alone offers us.

China is a major source of international university students (Shen 2005) 9. The UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (2004-5) reported that there were 47,740 Chinese students in higher education: by 2011-12 this had risen to 78,715 (<http://www.universities.ac.uk/Documents2013/ukandchina.pdf> checked 01/2015).

This is boosted by a growing number of school students in the (independent) school system: Chinese make up a third of the (26,000) non-British pupils.

(www.ft.com/cms/s/o/4abc6490-838c-11e3-86c9-00144feab7de.html 22 January 2014). Education is an important route from China to the UK: most of the informants in our London study first arrived as students.

Students route broader streams of activity. They connect London (and the UK) to transformations in Chinese society. Close connections with sending countries are rarely acknowledged by a sociology focused on the social implications of migration for life *in* the UK – see for example Solomos (2003 [1989]). But it is impossible to understand the Chinese presence in the UK without knowing of relevant developments in contemporary China. Studies show that 80% of wealthy Chinese - with assets of £1 million and upwards - want to send their children abroad for education

(www.ft.com/cms/s/o/4abc6490-838c-11e3-86c9-00144feab7de.html 22 January

2014). Xiang and Wei (2009) suggest that interest by the Chinese upper middle class in overseas education results from the extension of university education to broader sections of the Chinese population, increasing demand and competition for places, especially in prestigious universities. A number of our Beijing informants in London suggested a preference for top tier Beijing Universities, with the UK as a third choice after the US. Elite UK universities, they tell us, are easier to access (Knowles 2015a). Overseas education provides distinction from outside of the Chinese system for those who are not part of its concentrated elite with close party connections and privileged positions in the logics of wealth accumulation. Overseas education thus provides ‘a new elite with symbolic political capital’ (Xiang and Wei 2009:514-5) and pathways to social mobility in the new China (Huijuan 2008), via London, drawing these locations into the production of new Chinese social architectures.

Students route several streams of capital transfer. A Chatham House Survey (cited Xiang and Wei 2009:516) showed that Chinese students in Britain pay £479 million in living expenses and £300 million in tuition fees. They also need places to live. Jack, a young Londoner working in a Beijing wealth management company, and part of our parallel study of young Londoners in Beijing (Knowles 2015), helps Chinese students’ parents’ access UK property markets.

‘... We're the number one London property brokers in Beijing... driving up house prices in London, but every case that I've ever worked on it's been a Chinese family who are sending a student to London and want to purchase a property whilst there, especially when their daughters are there. 90% of it is parents of students, and how many students move to London every year? I have no idea, but it's thousands...’ (Jack)

Chinese students route capital transfers into UK housing markets, another stream of activity co-composing Chinese London. There are others. During my fieldwork on Young Chinese Migrants in London (Knowles 2015a) I was invited to join the activities of the elite London Business School's China Business Forum (Spring 2013). At these networking events it was clear that students (and their parents) are the targets of luxury cars, jewellery, watches and designer clothes marketing strategies. Students route, as they consume, capital accumulations of older newly wealthy Chinese, constituting Chinese London and the new Beijing in the process.

Business studies students in particular constitute a matrix of commercial connections from the UK to China through alumni and business networks. The London Business School, the London School of Economics, and the Cass Business School all have Chinese forums. The Britain Youth Association connects students and young professionals through its branches in London, Oxford and Beijing. Other platforms include the Britain-China Accountancy Association, the Chopsticks Club, the Association of Chinese Financial Professionals in the UK, Chinese Entrepreneurs Global, China-Dialogue, and the Future Leaders in Asia Group. Promoting commercial ventures of various kinds, these organisations deepen UK businesses' access to China's vast markets through students. More than temporary migrants, students are important translocal actors routing several streams of city-shaping activity between the UK and China.

Moving to other capital transfers making the (built) fabrics of Chinese London, there is evidence of increased activity. In 2013 Chinese investors accounted for 7.5% of all

foreign investment in the under £1 million portion of the London property market: a significant rise on 2010. (www.innovoproperty.com/london-property-popular-with-wealthy-chinese-investors). Also in 2013 Chinese buyers accounted for 4.2% of all prime London sales, a significant rise from the year before. After Indians, Russians and the French come the Chinese, reflecting the significance of interest in London (www.ft.com/cms/s/o/4abc6490-838c-11e3-86c9-00144feab7de.html). Property purchases transfer the resources of absent buy to let investors looking for a return on capital, and temporary business and tourist visitors (who spent \$102 billion in 2012, China Daily April 30 2014), sending new streams of Chinese money through London.

The Estates Gazette Rich List notes that Wang Jianlin, worth an estimated £10.4 billion has knocked London's wealthiest landowner, the Duke of Westminster, off the number one spot (www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/china-business/10506297). Chinese investors have stakes in infrastructure projects, including Thames Water and Heathrow Airport (BBC News 14 October 2013). New built architectures of Chinese London are rising: a billion pound business park at the Royal Albert Dock in East London is under construction; a hotel and apartment complex in the former power station at Battersea is in the planning stages; and Zhongrong have a £500 million plan to rebuild Crystal Palace. This, too, is Chinese London and the UK government seeks and endorses these investments.

Built, human and financial fabrics, activated by investors, students and migrants, 'new transnational actors' exploring favourable 'market relations in the global political economy' (Milutinovic 2008) co-compose Chinese London in a multitude of ways: extending it beyond the once iconic surfaces of Soho's Chinatown. As a new, more

diffuse and less identifiably Chinese London rises, so Chinatown is displaced, its restaurants and other businesses are driven by rising land values into cheaper parts of the city. This Chinatown story is familiar in cities throughout North America and Australia. And transnational actors from other places too shape London. Plutocratic capital from Russia, Ukraine, and the Middle East combine with local City bonuses to remake the city. London is as Russian as it is Chinese. Focusing on cities, and on the circulations co-composing their ethnic migrant fabrics, opens sociology to diverse streams of translocal activity moving along the same circuits as migrants.

Migrant Disadvantage

In so closely aligning ethnic migration with social disadvantage and constructing a version of the immigrant framed as a social problem and a victim, argued earlier, sociology is ill equipped to offer a more complex picture, for example, exploring differences in migrants' resources. If this was ever an appropriate way of thinking about migrants – rather than reluctance to disaggregate social differences bundled together by ethnicity and race – it is no longer, and the Chinese show this. Wealthy Chinese investors circulate capital around London co-composing the city and students, with stays of two to six years, add aspiring youth from comfortable circumstances to the migrant fabrics of Chinese London.

If boroughs and neighbourhoods are an (imperfect) proxy for resources, significant numbers of Chinese are distributed through London's wealthier areas. Camden, Westminster, Islington and Kensington and Chelsea – boroughs with high property values and clusters of NHIs - are in the top eight local authorities in England for

Chinese concentrations. The top ten postcodes for Chinese residence-clusters are all areas with higher than average for London housing prices.

My study glimpses a microcosm of migrant resources. The young (25-35) informants in our London study¹⁰ are highly qualified. They work in well-rewarded niches in financial services and run their own businesses. Using neighbourhood as a proxy for resources, they fall into three categories: the suburbanites of the outer city; those who live in what estate agents call super-prime neighbourhoods; and the East London gentrifiers whose efforts have regenerated London.

The gentrifiers live in the newly built towers of East London's docklands, in the E14 postcodes around Canary Wharf. As a number of them work in financial services, this positions them between London's two financial centres in the City of London and its Eastward extension in Docklands. The super prime residents live in Notting Hill, Chelsea, Marylebone and Pimlico. In describing why she chose Chelsea, Jan provides a glimpse of how elite status through neighbourhood translates from Beijing to London.

'Well, we knew Chelsea, even before I came to the UK... Chelsea, the football team... And even before that, I knew Hampstead... My ex-boyfriend, in China, he's a university teacher as well, an English Major. We read a lot of English literature, or something, and we know that the professionals, like the lawyers and doctors, they live outside of London, or just like Hampstead... We know these are good areas. ... In China, those places have a big name we notice them... that's why in Imperial Wharf a lot of rich Chinese bought their flat... as an investment, but they don't live there, that's why Imperial Wharf is

more than two thirds, I think, empty. We call it a ghost city... Imperial Wharf, the name is like from the emperor... if you live in those kinds of places, you've got something special...'

A postcode analysis of Chinese residence – beyond the scope of this paper – could explore the resources of Chinese London through the optic of property and neighbourhood. Contrary to sociology's migrant problem-victim assumptions, Chinese London is affluent; it comprises super prime neighbourhoods; it involves lucrative employment in business and financial services; and it has graduated from elite universities. These are the consequences of new architectures of UK border control, redefining what it means to be a migrant. The historic elision in sociology between ethnicity, migration and social disadvantage no longer addresses contemporary migrants to the UK, pointing to the need to develop new analytic frameworks.

From 2008 (fully implemented in 2011) UK border control shifted from a focus on permanent migration for settlement, to temporary migration, and from unskilled to highly skilled migrants. The new rules and the points-based system explicitly favour elite migrants. *'High value migrants'* meet the criteria for what the UKBA calls *'tier one'* visas issued to those who display *'exceptional talent'*. These must be *'internationally recognised as world leaders or potential world-leading talent'*; entrepreneurs who want to set up or take over a business; graduates with *'world class'* innovative ideas or business skills establishing businesses in the UK; investors who want to make a *'substantial financial investment'*, a provision aimed at HNIs with a minimum of a million pounds to invest. Tier two visas process intercompany transfers *'for employees of multinational companies'* and skills transfers from other countries through graduate traineeships. A small quota of skilled workers earning between

£35,000 and £150,000 are eligible: while those earning over £150,000 are not subject to quotas.

But the new architectures of border control re-embed old values. As net migration figures must show a downward-trend, the burdens of restriction fall on other migrants. So-called unskilled migrants are squeezed as this channel closes. Migrants joining family settled in the UK are subjected to stringent English language tests and income checks: a squeeze on poor settled migrants. Migration shifts from the post-colonies and from claims of association, to claims based on assets of various kinds. This leaves many intending migrants at the mercy of traffickers: it leaves them travelling by unsafe methods; and sometimes it leaves them dead in the back of trucks. In cutting off legal channels of entry, the new border controls can only increase illegal migration, socially polarizing migration into rich and poor. These new polarities warrant investigation. While race and ethnicity probably remain significant in accumulation of resources, the new rule effect a shift towards elite status. Sociology's framework doesn't fit the new elite migrant: it needs new frameworks able to explore differences in migrant-resources and competition between migrants.

Sending Cities

Sociology is focused on what happens once migrants arrive in the UK not their circumstances of departure. Detailed conversation with young migrants in our London micro-study reveals that the city platforms – Beijing and Hong Kong - from which they launched their journeys are important in why and how they live in London.

Beijing runs its own land distribution and zoning systems, the framework in which municipal authorities, officials and developers operate (Zhu 2012: 249) the ‘lucrative business’ (Paik and Lee 2012:286) of commercial and residential building that fuels China’s non-industrial growth. Urban real estate is an engine of investment and economic growth in contemporary China (Zhu 2012), and although the Chinese state is highly centralised, local city authorities control land rights and development (Zhu 2012): relentless urban transformation and expropriation result. One of the world’s most dynamic cities (Stokeman, Rabe and Ruff 2012:30), with a population of 21 million and rising, Beijing is experiencing wide-scale reconstruction. Pressure on globalised housing markets from foreign workers and newly wealth Chinese (Wu and Webber 2004) extends housing prices beyond incomes. Multiple streams of globalization produce ‘an increasingly cosmopolitan life’ (Pieke 2002:6); new geographical and social mobilities within China have opened more distant mobilities beyond it (Pieke 2002). But wide-ranging urban change also brings uncertainties (Xiang and Wei 2009:516). As the capital city condenses the social transformations that the Chinese are living through, these changes bring Chinese migrants to London, or keeps them there after graduation, where our micro-study revealed their thinking, and the salience of including sending cities in sociological analysis.

Our study reveals that young Beijing migrants in London relocate and secure family resources. As private property has no protection in China it must be secured offshore. And, with Xi Jinping’s recent clampdown on corruption, accumulated assets can be seen as evidence of profiteering.

‘The new leader is clamping down on corruption, so lots of people tell me this is not a good moment to be wealthy in China’ (Tian).

'In China, you see, that money is not clean. It's not clean money. So it's not safe if you leave it in China. If one day you lose power, then the government is starting to take it back. So if they invest the money in a strong market, in a safe place, they're safe' (Jan).

Alan's family have four properties in Central Beijing. Residential property owners have a 70-year lease and Alan says it's not clear what will happen when their leases expire. His family have sold one of their apartments to fund his tier one investor visa. His business involves advising other Chinese migrants on how to navigate tier one routes to London. He searches for lucrative investment opportunities in order to place further family resources beyond the reach of the Chinese state. Candy's family move profits from their chemical factory through her London teashop as they fund her investor visa. Lilli is looking for places to park her uncle's money. She describes the more lucrative, if less secure, methods of accumulation available in Beijing as extensive and complex. In London she thinks *'life is more naïve'*. London makes life in Beijing easier for wealthy Chinese.

London housing markets are another way of placing Chinese assets beyond reach. Here is Jan again.

'The Chinese rich ... (are concerned) about their rights, their property value.... They say, how much more money am I going to get from investment?... they're more interested in London, because they believe the London property market is strongest... I have a friend who has a decoration team. Two years ago he was decorating a house, bought that year in cash. £5 million just paid in cash...in South Kensington. Chinese, from Sichuan province, bought that house, in cash. And they were taking out everything, ... ' (Jan).

The situation in Beijing rebounds in where and how Chinese migrants live in London, a good reason for including this in the analysis. Jan suggests, and the East London gentrifiers tell a similar story, that Chinese living in Chelsea have nothing to do with each other: they are suspicious of each other and reluctant to admit to their resources for fear of it rebounding on families in Beijing. This strongly suggests privatised lifestyles and challenges the idea of ethnic communities. We might instead investigate contemporary forms of ethnic consociation. The 'Chinese community' may be as out-dated as the idea that Chinatown condenses Chinese London.

Hong Kong migrants in London experience uncertainties connected to Hong Kong's relationship with Beijing. Hong Kong migrants in our study are hedging against their city's eroded political autonomy and living conditions. Hong Kong's prodemocracy movement's protests against Beijing erupted onto the streets in the spring of 2014¹¹. 150 Mainland migrants a day are allowed into Hong Kong since it reverted to China (1997). Information on how this has changed Hong Kong reverberates through London. Migrants know that the city to which they may return is different from the one they left: *'it's still home... but the quality of home is falling away...'* (Jon). *'...the government wants to dilute the population of Hong Kong which has a really strong free will ...'* (George). Diluting the population, in George's estimation, erodes the strength of political protest against the editing of history in school textbooks and against growing social inequalities. Higher house prices result from the pressure Mainland migrants put on Hong Kong's housing stock. Its cultural distinctiveness is being diluted too. James describes Beijing as a *'dictatorship'*; ... *'I can never accept a government appointed by Beijing anyway...'* This impacts on James' willingness to return, as well as his decision not to mix with Mainlanders in London. He says, friends

have returned and regretted it: *'I wouldn't bring my kids up there'*. Including sending cities opens sociological exploration of the ways in which migration is lived in receiving cities.

Conclusions

Migrants from Beijing and Hong Kong secure in London accumulated financial, cultural and social assets of various kinds. These mesh with developments in London. UK border controls favour wealthy elite migrants. Agents selling in London property markets seek buy to let investors in Asia for property locals can no longer afford. As UK middle class wages stagnate and private schools become unaffordable, Chinese students take up the empty places. As successive UK governments withdraw funding to universities, Chinese students plug gaps in their finances. London, Beijing and Hong Kong are connected urban circuits of people and resources that need to be investigated. City scales of analysis, incorporating sending and receiving cities, illuminate these connections particularly well, and sociology of ethnicity and migration would be better placed to explore them in taking cities into the centre of its analysis. Extending sociological analysis of ethnic migrant distributions to include circuits of resources, like capital transfers, captures global processes co-constituting cities, and poses new lines of sociological enquiry. What resources of different kinds do migrants bring with them? How do they deploy these resources? And to what ends? What translocal connections do they generate and how do they generate them? A more nuanced account of migration and concomitant streams of activity co-constituting globalisation may result from these questions.

The migrant problem-victim framework of sociology no longer speaks to the contemporary migrant – if indeed it ever did – and the Chinese clearly show this. New migrants are a combination of the elite and the undocumented: and these polarities can only increase. If the framework for locating migrants as poor victims no longer holds, the sociology of ethnicity and migration might develop more interrogative, less moralistic, approaches, which acknowledge migrant’s vulnerabilities. This places detailed investigation of migrant resources on the sociological agenda, along with enquiry into migrant contributions to city making. These issues are particularly pertinent to undocumented migrants. How do migrants live in UK cities? On what terms do they operate and with what knowledge? What material and resources and connections to elsewhere do they ground and how? What vulnerabilities must they navigate and on what terms? On what basis can new migrants be admitted? And on what grounds justly refused? What are their rights and entitlements? Are they considered alongside departing UK emigrants? If not, why is that? What arguments justify differential access to mobility? These urgent questions demand approaches which are less freighted with the moral frameworks of the 20th C as migrants press up against Europe’s borders.

Notes

1. This paper is based on a study funded by the ESRC 2012-2014 under its Hong Kong Bilateral Programme (ES/J017272/1). This support is gratefully acknowledged. While parts of the argument in this paper draws on this research, it is intended primarily as a theoretical discussion of long term trends in ethnicity and migration scholarship.

2. The data for this paper comes from a three-city investigation of young migrants in London, Hong Kong and Beijing. In each city migrants from the other two cities were the focus of the investigation. This report concerns young migrants from Hong Kong and Beijing living in London. It refers in passing to the study of young Londoners in Beijing. It is a modest, small-scale, qualitative study contacted through various UK-China networks and university alumni associations in London. Detailed interviews, walks and photo-elicitation sessions were conducted with 10 young people from Hong Kong (4 women and 6 men) and with 13 young people from Beijing (9 women and 4 men). All were in their mid twenties to early thirties. These informants were drawn from a larger group derived through an online questionnaire of 12 participants from Hong Kong and 27 from Mainland China.
3. John Solomos (2014) suggests this is partly the result of a proliferation of sociology and partly a desire in policy-making domains to keeping immigration separate from matters of racial discrimination and ethnic difference.
4. Although the 1950s are widely regarded as the first time UK politics dealt with race issues this is not the case. The early years of the 20th C brought debates on race from Indian independence negotiations and British anti-Semitism (Knowles 1990)
5. Ann Dummett (1973) discusses the obsession of British politics with what she calls 'the numbers game'.
6. The 1971 Immigration Act is the legal framework in which immigration is still controlled today although this has been updated many times by changes in the immigration rules.
7. This is a small proportion of a population of over 1.3 billion.

8. Skeldon (2011) takes these estimates from a World Bank Report.
9. Shen (2005) is citing a UNESCO Report.
10. We excluded students from our study in order to capture young people's decision-making in the early stages of their working life.
11. The Prodemocracy/Occupy Central Movement erupted onto the streets of Hong Kong most recently in 2014. It channels a number of sources of grievance about the ways in which the SAR is administered from Beijing, and in particular its control of the list from which the next Hong Kong Chief Executive will be elected in 2016.

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