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Being new and unconnected. Pioneer
migrants in London



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Abstract

Urban areas in Europe and beyond have seen significant changes in patterns of immigration, leading to profound diversification. This diversification is characterized by the multiplication of people of different national origins, but also differentiations regarding migration histories, religions, educational backgrounds, legal statuses and socio-economic backgrounds, a condition now commonly described as ‘super-diversity’. An important part of the ‘diversification of diversity’ is the emergence of new migrant source countries. Migration scholarship generally focuses on large migration movements, although many initial migration movements do not evolve into migrations of larger numbers of people. Little is known about processes of settlement of individual migrants who do not form part of larger migration movements and who might not be able to ‘dock onto’ an already existing ‘community’ when they arrive. This paper describes patterns of settlement among a diverse group of such individual migrants from recent countries of origin who have come to London to start a new life. Drawing on earlier migration literature and the notion of ‘pioneer migration’, the paper focuses on one crucial aspect of settlement, namely social networks, looking at the kinds of social relations pioneer migrants form upon arrival and in the course of their settlement, and showing that many migrants strive to form social relations beyond co-ethnics.

Keywords: migration, settlement, integration, social networks, pioneer migrants.

Author

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Urban diversity has taken on new forms in recent years. Not only has the nature of immigration been changing globally, but over the past two decades, the demographic changes brought by immigration have accelerated. In the case of the UK, people have been arriving under various legal categories such as work schemes, economic migrants, students, asylum-seekers, undocumented persons, and more, and they have been coming from a range of countries of origin, doing a broader range of jobs and for more varied lengths of stay than before (Vertovec 2007). These new patterns of immigration have resulted in super-diversity, a condition of more mixed origins, ethnicities, languages, religions, work and living conditions, legal statuses, periods of stay, and transnational connections than many cities have ever faced (Meissner & Vertovec 2015; Vertovec 2007).

An important part of the diversification of diversity (Hollinger 2000 [1995]) is the emergence of new migrant source countries. Migration scholarship generally focuses on large migration movements. However, many initial migration movements do not evolve into migrations of larger numbers of people (de Haas 2010). Little is known about processes of settlement of individual migrants who do not form part of larger migration movements. These migrants might not be able to ‘dock onto’ an already existing ‘community’ when they arrive. How do these migrants settle in a super-diverse context? What kinds of networks of support do they form? Where do they get information about settlement, and where do they make friends?

This paper describes patterns of settlement among a diverse group of such individual migrants from recent countries of origin who have come to London to start a new life. The paper focuses on one crucial aspect of settlement, namely social networks, looking at the kinds of social relations pioneer migrants form upon arrival and in the course of their settlement.

Social networks have long been recognized as key to understanding both migration and migrant settlement, with a large body of literature analysing their role in various stages of the migration and settlement process (Boyd 1989; Massey et al 1998; Ryan et al. eds. 2015). In her review of the social scientific literature on transnational and local migrant networks, Moraşanu (2010) importantly shows how this literature has been dominated by a focus on specific ethnic groups whereby migrant networks are interpreted as ‘ethnic networks’. Thereby, ‘mixed networks never achieve prominence or are altogether ignored’ (Moraşanu 2010:6). This has been changing in the context of work which attempted to shed light on other-than-ethnic factors in shaping migrants’ social relations (Ryan 2011; Moraşanu 2013; Williams 2006); some

of which draws on scholarship in urban sociology (Blokland 2003; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013; Glick Schiller et al 2006).

The research on which this article is based did not focus on migrants from a specific country of origin, but on a broad range of countries of origin and migrants with various educational backgrounds, legal statuses, religions and other such factors. The research participants shared the fact that migration from their countries of origin to the UK was relatively new, and that they had arrived within the last ten years. The aim of this focus was to move away from the assumption that country of origin or ethnicity are the main factors shaping their settlement. Also critiqued as ‘methodological nationalism’, scholars have pointed to the overemphasis of ethnicity and country of origin in analysing migration and migrant settlement (Fox & Jones 2013; Glick Schiller et al 2006; Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002), an approach which assumes that ‘ethnic or ethno-religious identities, beliefs, practices, networks or practices are central to the lives of people of migrant background’ (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013:495). To look at the role of other-than-ethnic factors in migrant settlement enables us to analyse whether, when, how and why ethnicity or national origin can become salient or not (Wessendorf 2013; Wimmer 2007).

Because pioneer migrants cannot rely on pre-existing co-ethnic social networks or ‘communities’, they are a particularly interesting example to examine settlement processes through this super-diversity lens, a lens which does not assume ethnicity and nationality to be the determining factor in migrant settlement, but which openly asks what categories are relevant to people’s lives, ranging from legal status to religion, race, educational background, etc.

The paper draws on Bourdieu’s differentiation between economic, cultural and social capital to illustrate variations in settlement patterns. Economic capital refers to economic resources and assets, while social capital refers to the resources gained from ‘durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition’ (Bourdieu 1986:248). Social capital is thus defined by its ‘ability to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks’ (Portes 1998:6). Cultural capital consists of a persons’ collection of knowledge and skills, including formal education (also referred to as institutionalized cultural capital or human capital), IT literacy, as well as, in the case of migrants, knowledge of the majority language (Bourdieu 1986). It also includes knowledge of the local habitus in terms of taste, dress, style, etc. (Bourdieu 1990).

The paper is based on qualitative research in East London from 2014 to 2015, including 23 in-depth interviews as well as 4 focus groups with recent migrants from

new source countries, and 18 interviews with people working in the migrant sector, involving a total of 69 respondents. Research participants were found through personal social networks formed during previous fieldwork in the area (Wessendorf 2014), snowball sampling, through religious and voluntary organisations, English classes and serendipitous encounters, for example on playgrounds. Interviews were conducted in English, French, Italian and Spanish, transcribed and coded in NVivo. Respondents (including those who participated in focus groups) came from 31 Countries of origin including Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Argentina, Chile, Southern Azerbaijan, etc. Importantly, legal status determines all other aspects of settlement. In fact, the notion of 'settlement' can hardly be applied to asylum seekers. UK Asylum dispersal policies house asylum seekers in places which are not of their choice (Hynes & Sales 2010). Once their claim is accepted or refused, they have to move to a new accommodation, and they often chose to move to a place where they have some kind of support network. Although their pathways of settlement are very different to those with a secure legal status, the research included asylum seekers and undocumented migrants as well as migrants with a secure legal status. The aim of this approach was to show how cultural capital is crucial for migrants of all legal statuses, an issue I discuss elsewhere (Wessendorf forthcoming-b).

The paper first provides a short overview of the literature on migrant networks and social capital and its applicability to pioneer migrants, thereby formulating its questions more clearly. It introduces other ways of analysing migrant social networks such as Glick Schiller and Çağlar's (2016) notion of 'sociabilities of emplacement' and ideas of 'patchworking' (Moraşanu 2013). The paper then develops the notion of pioneer migration and summarizes the methodologies used for the project. The empirical part of the paper first describes how initial social contacts are often with co-ethnics, but that most research participants soon developed different kinds of networks with people who shared similar interests or the same language, but who were not necessarily from the same country or region of origin. The paper discusses the reasons for this lack of interest in co-ethnic social networks, ranging from political tensions to gender and social control. The final part of the paper shows how pioneer migrants' settlement is often shaped by one or a few key encounters, sometimes fleeting, and sometimes more enduring. These key encounters sometimes lead to resources, and could thus also be described as social capital. Other times, they simply facilitate a sense of feeling more at home in London thanks to the opening up of possibilities to socialize and make friends.

Migrant social networks

According to Dekker and Engbersen (2012), much of the migration literature, which focuses on established migration movements (or ‘systems’) of large numbers of people, understands migrants’ networks as consisting of what has also been described as ‘strong ties’ (Granovetter 1973) such as family relations or close friendships and tight co-ethnic networks. However, the example of pioneer migrants demonstrates how, as has been shown more generally in urban contexts, many people today no longer form part of dense and close ‘communities’, but develop a variety of changing and loose networks consisting of ‘weak ties’ (Dekker & Engbersen 2012; Granovetter 1973; Wellman 1999). These weak ties can be crucial for migrants who are pioneering in their movement to a new place and cannot draw on existing and established social networks in the immigration context.

Literature on migrant settlement has used Bourdieu’s (1986) notion of social capital to describe the role of social relations in regards to the integration of migrants (e.g. Cheung & Phillimore 2013; Goodson & Phillimore 2008). This paper focuses on migrants with limited social capital when settling in London, and how they form varied social relations in the process of settlement. Importantly, however, few migrants arrive unconnected, and, as I will show later in the paper, most new arrivals have at least one connection with someone from their country of origin, a phenomenon which is unsurprising in a city like London where almost every country of origin is represented (London Datastore 2015). But these ‘foundation networks’ (Phillimore et al. 2014) are often characterized by ‘weak ties’ (Granovetter 1973).

Literature on migrant settlement has drawn on Putnam’s (2000) conceptualization of social capital in thinking about the role of social relations in migrant settlement. Similar to Granovetter’s (1973) finding that ‘weak ties’ with individuals of different social groups can lead to valuable resources and information, Putnam differentiated between ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ social capital, referring to networks within and across groups (Putnam 2000). Academic and policy literature on migrant integration has drawn on this notion of bonding and bridging social capital, emphasising the merit of bridging social capital both for migrant integration as well as ‘social cohesion’ (Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) 2007), a notion which has been much criticized across academic disciplines (see, among many others, Hickman et al 2012; Portes & Vickstrom 2011; Cheong et al 2007). Especially the policy literature on ‘cohesion’ has assumed that it is ethnicity and religion which define the boundaries within and beyond which migrants build ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ social

capital. In her critical review of the use of the concept of social capital in the literature on migrant settlement, Ryan (2011) shows how Polish migrants consciously extended their friendship networks beyond co-ethnics, but with people of similar educational backgrounds in order to learn more about the place of settlement. Rather than nationality, it was factors such as shared interests, similar careers and educational backgrounds which shaped social relations during settlement. They were thus bridging beyond ethnicity, but bonding with migrants in similar social positions. Ryan (2011:711) suggests that it might be ‘useful to focus on the specific relationships between and the relative social location of actors as well as the actual resources available and realisable within particular social networks’. Thus, some of these relations *can* lead to forms of capital such as information about work or housing, but they not always do. In relation to undocumented migrants in Berlin, Huschke (2014) emphasizes how social capital ‘needs to be conceptualized not as something one “has”, but as the *process* of negotiating and accessing support through social networks’ (Huschke 2014:14, her emphasis).

To describe the variegated ways in which migrants form social relations upon settlement, it might be more useful to draw on Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s idea of ‘sociabilities of emplacement’ (Glick Schiller et al. 2011; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013; 2016). They develop their concept out of long-standing scholarship on urban sociology and urban space (Simmel 1995 [1903]; Tönnies 2005 [1887]), referring to sociability as interaction which ‘is built on certain shared human competencies to relate to multiple other persons as well as a desire for human relationships that are not confined to or framed around solely utilitarian goals’ (Glick Schiller et al 2011:414-415). These cannot simply be described as friendships, as sometimes they can be fleeting, and other times of limited durability. In contrast to ‘sociality’, which refers to an individual’s entire field of social relations, the focus of ‘sociability’ lies on relations in which individuals see each other as equal and the relations are not about difference (Simmel & Hughes 1949). Although sociabilities ‘may include relationships of social support, providing help, protection, resources and further social connections’, they are different from other kinds of social relations because they provide ‘pleasure, satisfaction and meaning’ by giving actors a ‘mutual sense of being human’ (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2016:19). With ‘emplacement’, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2013:495) refer to ‘a person’s efforts to settle and build networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific locality’.

Importantly, Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s focus lies on relations between dispossessed individuals who suffer from the economic downturn in the locality where they

live. In contrast, 18 out of the 23 pioneer migrants who participated in the research presented here would not describe themselves as dispossessed, even those with very limited financial capital. They had high cultural capital when arriving in London, including knowledge of English and IT skills, institutionalized forms of capital such as higher education, as well as knowledge of the local habitus in terms of taste, dress, style, etc. (Bourdieu 1986). Similar to Ryan's (2011) Polish informants, this cultural capital enabled them to form social relations with people of similar educational backgrounds. Elsewhere, I show how this applied across legal statuses, and high cultural capital made a difference in terms of settlement also among undocumented migrants and asylum seekers (Wessendorf forthcoming-b). Importantly, however, the minority of research participants with low cultural capital and limited knowledge of English were more likely to seek co-ethnic or religious networks of support.

The idea of sociabilities of emplacement works well independent of the degree of cultural capital, as many of the pioneer migrants' social relations cannot simply be analysed with the notion of social capital, because they are not defined by the resources migrants gain from them. At the same time, however, some social relations *can* lead to specific resources. Such relations are not necessarily defined by closeness or intimacy, but they are often 'loosely bounded' and 'sparsely knit' (Wellman 1999:18). As I will show towards the end of this paper, sometimes even just a fleeting encounter can change a migrants' life, especially during the initial stages of settlement.

Defining pioneer migrants

Bertin from Spain arrived in London some 10 years ago. He knew no one. He came with his girlfriend, and they first stayed in a hostel in central London. Although with high cultural capital in terms of his education and previous work in the film industry in Spain, he had to start from scratch in London because of his limited knowledge of English. He spent the first weeks walking around central London, handing out his CV to cafes and bars. By chance, he bumped into a Spanish-speaking woman in a cinema, who gave him the telephone number of an acquaintance who was renting a room in North East London. Despite finding housing, Bertin and his girlfriend did not manage to find work and establish themselves in London, and moved to Dublin, where a friend of his girlfriend's cousin was living. They found accommodation through this contact, and he found work with a builder through an ad on

gumtree. After about ten months in Dublin, their English had improved enough and they had saved enough money to come back to London and try again. This time, he managed to find (badly paid) work in the film industry, and slowly worked his way up the ladder of the industry. Today, Bertin is well established in the film industry, but it took him ten years to get there. In the meantime, he has also helped about fifteen friends from Spain to settle in London, providing them with initial accommodation and information about jobs, housing and other practicalities.

Bertin is a true pioneer, starting off with no contacts whatsoever, but slowly establishing himself both professionally and socially, to the point when, once his country of origin faced an economic crisis, he was able to help his friends to follow in his footsteps. He thus turned from pioneer to ‘gate keeper’. Bertin’s story is a good example of the innovative and resourceful ways in which some of my research participants managed to settle in London. His lack of social contacts in London, coupled with limited knowledge of English, led him to move to Dublin and draw on his social capital there. While in Dublin, he improved his English, which then enabled him to resettle in London, despite his continuing lack of social capital there.

What makes Bertin a pioneer migrant? Looking at migration from a historical perspective, migration scholars have identified different stages of migration processes to describe how migration from a sending to a destination country changes and becomes established over time (Lindstrom & López Ramírez 2010). Migration is, for example, divided into three periods: the initial or pioneer stage, the ‘early adopter’ or group migration stage and the mature or mass migration stage (Jones 1998; Petersen 1958).

An established flow of people, goods, services and information between two places or a set of places has also been described as ‘migration system’. Drawing on Mabogunje (1970) Bakewell et al. (2012) describe how migration systems emerge as a result of initial pioneer migration coupled with ‘feedback mechanisms’ consisting of information travelling back from the destination country, which then potentially leads to further migration. Migration systems thus ‘link people, families and communities over space in what today might be called transnational or translocal communities’, and they consist of places which ‘exchange relatively large numbers of migrants, and are also characterized by feedback mechanisms that connect the movement of people between particular countries, areas, and even cities to the concomitant flows of goods, capital (remittances), ideas and information (ibid. 2012:418).¹ An important element of migration systems is chain migration, a process by which potential migrants find

1 For a critical evaluation of migration systems theory, see Bakewell et al. (2012).

out about opportunities and are provided with help for transportation, accommodation and employment by previous migrants (MacDonald & MacDonald 1964).

Pointing to the danger of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) when tracing migrants based on country of birth or citizenship, Bakewell et al. (2012:424) emphasise that groups from specific nations ‘can generally be broken down into several subgroups, periods of arrival, and modes of and reasons for migrating’. National ‘groups’ can thus consist of several, possibly unrelated sub-groups originating from different regions, cities, ethnic, religious or class groups, migrating at different times, and receiving different legal statuses in the destination of settlement. In the context of research into super-diversity, these differentiations within groups have recently gained increasing attention (Vertovec 2007; Meissner & Vertovec 2015). For example, in the context of migration to Europe, initial labour migration was often followed by family migration, but then, unrelated to these earlier migrations, student migration or the migration of high-skilled professionals would follow (Kubal et al 2011a; 2011b). Those migrants who came first may have little to do with those who came much later, as shown, for example, with early Indian migrants to the UK as compared with current Indian migrants (Visram 2002). The example of different waves of migrants also shows that migration flows can be differentiated by class and education. It is important to point to these differentiations within groups, as pioneers for each wave could be identified. According to Bakewell et al. (2012:426) the notion of ‘pioneer’ should be contextualized ‘with regard to the specific group, time-frame and locality (of origin, and settlement), and type of migration’.

What are the characteristics of ‘pioneer migrants’? Migration at the initial or pioneer stage has been shown to be an innovative process. Pioneer migrants have been recognized as taking higher risks than subsequent migrants, they are often entrepreneurial, relatively well off and better educated than later migrants (MacDonald 1964; de Haas 2010; Browning & Feindt 1969; Petersen 1958). This was confirmed in the project represented here, where three quarters of the research participants arrived with high cultural capital. However, many of them had limited financial resources when first arriving.

Importantly, pioneers ‘do not just provide an example of new behaviour; they also facilitate the adoption of this behaviour by others’ (Lindstrom & López Ramírez 2010:55). As exemplified with Bertin at the beginning of this section, they provide information about work opportunities, transport to the place of immigration, accommodation, etc. to others from their country of origin. They thus assist others in their migration process. According to De Haas (2010), however, only a minority of

initial migrations actually turn into network or chain migration. He points out that individual migrations are ‘the most common scenario of countless initial migration moves that never result in take-off network migration’ (2010:1607).

How do pioneer migrants settle in a new place? What is the role of social networks for the settlement process?

In the following section, I look at the role of ‘foundation networks’ (Phillimore et al. 2014), and how, beginning from these initial contacts, pioneer migrants create further social networks which are characterized by a combination of co-ethnics and others, or by an attempt to distance themselves from co-ethnics.

Foundation contacts

Initially, most migrants rely on what Phillimore and her colleagues have described as ‘foundation networks’, meaning pre-existing networks of acquaintances, friends or family (Phillimore et al 2014). Although pioneer migrants cannot dock onto already established ‘communities’, very few migrants arrive unconnected and almost all of my research participants had at least one contact when they arrived (Bertin was an exception to this).

However, in the case of pioneer migrants, the notion of ‘foundation networks’ could be reduced to ‘foundation contacts’, because the initial contacts are often characterized by a single connection, rather than a connection to a network of people. Among my research participants, these connections were often with a co-ethnic. In a place like London, so many nationalities are represented that most migrants are likely to find at least some fellow migrants from their country of origin, or people who speak the same language (London Datastore 2015). Apart from those of my research participants who came to London to study and had thus set up a university place prior to arrival, including accommodation through the university, most other participants stated that one of the reasons they came to London initially was that they had one contact. ‘I wouldn’t have come without knowing at least one person’ was a general statement. Importantly, however, these contacts are not necessarily characterized by close ties, but are often weak or indirect.

For example Aika from Kyrgyzstan, who knew no one in London when she arrived, had one contact via someone in her home town who had given her a package for a Kyrgyz acquaintance in London.

I arrived here, and somebody asked me if I could pass on a parcel to somebody who lived in London, I didn't know anybody at all when I was coming. I booked a room for 2 weeks in Wimbledon, I didn't know how to get there, you know, but because I was passing on this parcel I was hoping that they can tell me, direct me, how to get there. ... So the friend of a friend was kind enough to show me all the way to Wimbledon.

But Aika didn't like the room in Wimbledon, and neither the area, and found a shared house with other people from Kyrgyzstan in Hackney through the same person for whom she had brought the package. He lived in Hackney, and when a room in his house became available after two weeks, she moved there. Especially in regards to housing, foundation contacts were crucial for all of my research participants.

First contacts are sometimes also made on the way to the UK. An undocumented migrant from Mali arrived at Heathrow airport with a suitcase and an address on a piece of paper of someone whose contact he was given en route, when waiting for his tourist visa in Ivory Coast. Through this initial contact, he found both housing and work. Similarly, Alp from Southern Azerbaijan, an area in northern Iran, had met other Southern Azerbaijanis in Calais before he crossed to England on the back of a lorry in 2006, and he contacted these people again once he had arrived in London. Those whose asylum claim was successful were able to help him by giving him information about solicitors and legal advice centres to help with his asylum claim. After living in the UK for nine years, and after finally getting limited leave to remain in 2010, he continues to have this network of friends who speak the same language, but he also has a group of friends of other national backgrounds, some of them neighbours, others fellow students.

For migrants who might not bump into other people on the street who come from their country of origin or speak the same language, the internet can play an important role during settlement. In their study of Brazilian, Ukrainian and Moroccan migrants in Dutch cities, Dekker and Engbersen (2012) show how social media not only facilitate continuing relationships with those left behind, but they can also revive social contacts in the immigration context. This was exemplified by an Argentinean research participant who found out via facebook that some of her friends from back home were in London. There are also numerous internet platforms where migrants can find both support in regards to practical aspects of settlement, as well as emotional support (Dekker and Engbersen 2012). For example, my Georgian research participant found a facebook site of Russian-speaking mothers who share information online about both settling and raising children in London. Not only do they share the same language, but also the experience of motherhood and similar edu-

cational backgrounds. Some of these mothers sometimes meet up for picnics in the park and thus form new, pan-ethnic friendships.

Another example of social networks based on language is that of Spanish speakers, many of whom have formed social relations with people of other Latin American countries or Spain with whom they share similar educational backgrounds. There is also a network of Malinke speaking Muslims from West Africa who regularly meet at an Ivorian Muslim community centre for worship and for socializing. Language and religion are thus important factors linking people pan-ethnically and potentially leading to networks of support (Wessendorf forthcoming-a). Sometimes, religious affiliations override the importance of language, like in the case of an Orthodox Jewish Yemeni refugee woman who was illiterate and spoke no English upon arrival. When she arrived in London with her husband, their only contact was one uncle. Their settlement was entirely shaped and supported by the network of the international Orthodox Jewish community within which her uncle was embedded.

Alisher from Uzbekistan, who came to London as a student, had one Uzbek contact in London with whom he shared a flat for two weeks after his arrival. But he then found a room via an ad in a free Russian newspaper which he had picked up in central London. Since then, he has not had any Uzbek friends, but made friends of many different backgrounds. He exemplifies that just because people speak the same language, have the same religion or come from the same country of origin does not mean that they want to socialize together. I would now like to turn back to the caution expressed at the beginning of this paper in relation to ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) and the assumption that individuals gravitate towards co-ethnics. Not only can migrants from specific countries be broken down into different waves of migration, regions of origin, educational backgrounds and other such factors (Bakewell et al. 2012), but some migrants are not interested in keeping ties to co-ethnics (Ryan 2011, Moroşanu 2010). These migrants are the focus of the following section.

Beyond co-ethnic networks

Aika from Kyrgyzstan, mentioned above, was initially grateful for finding a house so easily, but she was soon unhappy to be sharing this house with other Kyrgyz.

A: After staying there for 3 months I decided that it was like not leaving Kyrgyzstan.

S: Because the whole house was other people from Kyrgyzstan?

A: Yes, and it wasn't what I wanted. I was totally against that because I said I didn't come here to experience you guys, because I know what you're like, it was, I mean [laughs] I have Kyrgyz friends, don't get me wrong, you miss your home, you miss the people, but it was completely, it wasn't what I wanted. So my friend, one of my best friends came three months later and when she came I said to her 'let's move, because now it's two of us we can move somewhere else', so we moved to Old Street and lived there together for a year.

Aika represents a typical example of pioneer migrants who, drawing on foundation contacts with (a limited number of) co-ethnics upon arrival, actively attempt to build networks with people who are not from the same country. Some of them even distance themselves from co-ethnics. With the example of Romanians' social networks in London, Moraşanu (2013) shows how especially students and professionals showed a specific cosmopolitan outlook and consciously attempted to meet non-Romanians. Similarly, albeit not with explicit cosmopolitan orientations, low-skilled migrants formed relations beyond co-ethnics, which were sometimes nurtured by situations of precariousness. Among my research participants, it was primarily those with high cultural capital who attempted to build networks with people of other national and ethnic background, whereas those with low cultural capital who were more disadvantaged more strongly depended on co-ethnic and co-religious networks.

There are different reasons why those research participants with high cultural capital attempt to build networks with people of other national and ethnic backgrounds, ranging from political tensions in the countries of origin, to issues around social control, as well as lack of shared educational and class backgrounds. For example Amina, a Woman's Rights Activist from Chechnya who was granted refugee status, prefers to limit her relations with other Chechens for fear of information about her whereabouts and activities travelling back to Chechnya, an issue also observed by Williams (2006) among refugees in the UK. Others simply do not feel enough commonalities with migrants from their countries of origin, and they might be among the first ones from either their region of origin, or of their class or educational backgrounds to arrive. They thus perceive themselves as pioneers and not part of larger migration movements because they do not form part of the 'typical' migration pattern from their country of origin. A good example of this is Maria Paula from Colombia. She came to London as a student in 2007 and had one initial contact, the son of a friend of her mother's. He formed part of the Colombian elite who had come to the UK to study at Oxbridge and worked in sectors such as banking. Because of

their differing interests and life-styles, he was not a crucial contact in her settlement process. While this acquaintance represented a small part of the Colombian community in London, consisting of an Oxbridge educated elite, the other part of the community consisted of people who were primarily working as cleaners and who were of less educated backgrounds. Maria Paula complained how, for example when the Colombian embassy organised events for Colombians in London, it was not ‘for people like her’, i.e. educated middle-class people who did not form part of the elite, but were neither working class. She thus primarily made friends of non-Colombian backgrounds through university when she first arrived in London.

Similarly, Gabriela from Brazil could not relate to fellow Brazilians when coming to London, explaining this with both regional differences within Brazil, as well as a lack of shared interests. Francisca from Chile similarly told me that yes, there were quite a few other Chileans in London, but most of them came here to study and planned to return. They formed a tight social milieu to which she could not relate, also because she had more permanent plans of staying here and wanted to distance herself from the educated Santiago middle-class social milieu which she had formerly been part of back home.

Another important reason for limiting contacts with co-ethnics mentioned by my informants is social control. Their migration was partly motivated by getting away from tight-knit communities of origin, but also by exploring new ways of life and finding a place where they feel less constrained in their social identities. This has also been described as ‘negative social capital’ (Portes 1998). De Haas points to the danger of ‘automatically conceiving migration as an act of group solidarity or as part of household livelihood strategies’ (de Haas 2010:1606). My informants’ statements very much confirm this attempt to build a new life away from tight social structures experienced back home, and potentially confronted with among co-ethnics in London. Elsewhere, I discuss how especially women experience London as liberating because, as exemplified by Aika from Kyrgyzstan, they could ‘dress down a bit’ (Wessendorf 2016). Aika emphasised that one of the reasons she did not want to live with Kyrgyz people in London or return to Kyrgyzstan was that she enjoyed her new freedoms gained in the UK as a woman:

It was kind of ‘ah, actually I don’t have to do this if I don’t want to’, and there was a, I don’t know [in Kyrgyzstan] you’re kind of a waitress you’re kind of a slave in a way you know. If you’re the youngest you have to do this, if you’re a woman you have to do this, or if you are a sister-in-law you have to... you know it’s always this kind of rigid some sort of regulation within the society you have to follow and it was really tiring. And once

you've been exposed that things can be different you realize, do you really want to be back in that society?

Similarly, a 25 year old refugee woman from Yemen prefers staying in a youth hostel while looking for work and establishing herself financially, than staying with one of the Yemeni families whom she knows in London.

I'm trying my best to be, to have space, not to be in contact with them, because, for me I want to start a new life, and I don't want someone to be like, controlling me from above. And they don't understand the space and the privacy and this stuff. So I'm trying to have, to stay away from them.

It is unsurprising that it is the women who emphasise the importance of leaving behind social control when settling in London, an issue observed in other places as well (Wessendorf 2013).

On a more practical level, my research participants also simply said that to just be spending time with co-ethnics would limit their ability to improve their English and expand their knowledge about the place in which they settled, an issue also observed by Ryan (2011) among Poles in London. Importantly, albeit not for all, those who arrive with a secure legal status and who are fairly highly educated, do not necessarily feel the need to get support from co-ethnics. According to Bakewell et al. (2012:431),

... the more highly skilled and wealthier pioneers are likely to be less dependent on family and kin to migrate, as well as to settle and feel good in the destination, because of their financial and human as well as cultural capital, which allow them to migrate more independently. As they are less dependent on family networks and ethnic business clusters and more likely to be attracted by job opportunities, they are also less likely to cluster at destinations, thereby lowering the chances for migration system formation.

Although none of my research participants arrived with much financial capital, they shared the cultural capital and the lack of social capital with the pioneers mentioned by Bakewell, making up for limited social capital with their high cultural capital. With the examples of Brazilian and Egyptian migration to the UK, Kubal et al. (2011a; 2011b) show how the success of these migrants' journeys did not rely on co-ethnic social capital both in the UK nor in the country of origin, and, similar to my research participants, they were not particularly interested in keeping such ties. They saw their migration as an individual project whose success did not depend on family or co-ethnic acquaintances, but rather on their professional establishment in the country of immigration. Among my research participants with high cultural capital,

including refugees whose initial motivation to move to the UK were political rather than to enhance their career, this professional establishment and ultimately social upward mobility in the UK stands at the centre of their settlement strategies (Wessendorf forthcoming-b). Importantly, however, the five research participants who had very little cultural capital (both institutionalized as well as in terms of knowledge of English and their habitus) relied more heavily on co-ethnic and religious social networks. For my research participants, cultural capital was thus a clear enabler to form relations beyond ones ethnic ‘group’,

Importantly, however, not all new social relations can be described as social capital in the sense that they lead to resources. In the following section, I discuss how pioneer migrants describe some of the encounters and social relations during the period of settlement as key to their wellbeing and their establishment in London.

Key encounters and sociabilities of emplacement

Sometimes, it just takes one person to make a difference in an individual’s settlement in a new place. Most of these encounters are serendipitous and unexpected, and many of my research participants only realized in hindsight how crucial this encounter was. In this section, I describe such ‘sociabilities of emplacement’ (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2016), differentiating between two types: more fleeting sociabilities and deeper ones, characterized by longer term contact and sometimes friendships. To illustrate these different types of encounter, I would like to use the example of Alisher from Uzbekistan.

Alisher came to the UK as a student, but when his passport expired, he was unable to renew it due to the political situation in his homeland. While claiming asylum, he was dispersed to Norwich, where he spent nine months. When his claim got refused, he had nowhere to go but London, which is the only place where he could imagine finding some help. He had no money to go to London, so went to the police station to ask how he could get to London. One of the policemen accompanied him to the train station and convinced the conductor to let him get on the train. This simple gesture of support enabled Alisher to get back to the capital with the hope of finding a roof over his head. When in London, he spent the first few nights sleeping on buses, until he got so ill that he ended up at an emergency department at a hospital. The nurse who treated him also asked him whether he needed help, and he explained his situation. She gave him a list of daycentres in the area. Through one of the centres, he gained access to a Winter Night Shelter, where he made friends with a Colombian woman who had more experience of living in London

and found him accommodation at a hostel. There he found out about the Red Cross, where in turn he got referred to a Catholic organisation, which found him accommodation at yet another night shelter. This is where he met his 'first English friend', Peter, which 'changed my life totally, I learned a lot through Peter, about English society, saw a different side of England'. He described how he learned about the 'English point of view, how they see people who are here, he introduced me to his family, I could see inside the English life, what they do, their lives, their relationships with their parents. Where I come from, it's completely different'.

Alisher's story represents different levels of emplacement, ranging from fleeting encounters to a deeper friendship with someone 'local' who enabled him to feel a sense of inclusion within what he describes as the 'English way of life'. The policeman, the nurse and the various individuals within the institutions he passed provided important gestures of support which represented turning points in Alisher's life. The friendship with Peter represents the kind of sociability of emplacement exemplified in Glick Schiller and Çağlar's work which highlights relationships between newcomers and long-term residents as relationships that 'cannot be understood through concepts of alterity, strangeness and tolerance for the other' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2016:30), but rather through a 'space of commonality (...) despite being differently positioned in hierarchical structures' (Hage 2014:236).

Other research participants accounted for similar types of encounters and relations. For example Hamama, an Orthodox Jewish woman from Yemen, who spent the first three years in London without any knowledge of English, got support from a Jewish nurse after the birth of her third child. Only through this nurse did she find out about English classes. Gaining access to these classes was not only a huge step towards learning English and finally feeling less isolated, but it also represented her first ever opportunity to formal education and access to literacy. For Hamama, this was a life changing experience.

Aika from Kyrgyzstan, quoted earlier, told me how her life changed thanks to an English friend's mother who, when struggling to find out what to do with her life, provided her with materials for sewing, and advised her to open her own business. She now manages to make a living by selling her own children's clothes.

While these relations could also be described along the lines of social capital because they led to specific knowledge, information or resources, my research participants also accounted for various sociabilities like that between Alisher and Peter, which were unrelated to resources. Gabriela from Brazil, for example, moved in with someone who was renting a room in his flat. Through her Italian housemate, she met

many other people who shared similar interests and through whom she finally felt a sense of home and belonging in London. They did not share an ethnic or class background, but their friendships were based on shared experiences of being migrants, as well as shared interests.

Sometimes, as in the case of Maria Paula, such friendships also cross generations. A British friend of her husband's, who had lived in Colombia and whom her husband had known while still in Colombia, introduced her to his mother. She had come from South Africa many years ago. They became close friends, and Maria Paula describes her as 'her mum here (...) she just adopted me, "what do you need, do you need things for your bed?" She helped me, she was my reference for the National Insurance Number, getting all the paperwork done'. While this kind of relationship could also be described as social capital because it led to information and resources, the notion of sociability fits well because the relationship is based on mutuality and the simple pleasure of being friends. My research participants accounted for many more such relationships which were crucial in their settlement, too many to list here.

Conclusion

An important part of the demographic condition of today's super-diversity in certain urban areas is the presence of migrants from new source countries. These are people who do not follow the beaten track. This paper was an attempt to describe patterns of settlement among these migrants, with a particular focus on social network formation. As described in earlier literature on pioneer migration, many of the first people to move to a new country have higher economic and cultural capital than those who follow established migration routes (MacDonald & MacDonald 1964; Browning & Feindt 1969; de Haas 2010; Petersen 1958). They are among the innovators who individually and often independently chose to attempt a new life in an unknown place. Many of my research participants arrived in the UK with high cultural capital, but little to no social capital and limited financial means. Their pathways of settlement were extremely varied, but some similarities could be identified. Only a small minority arrived without even one connection. Most migrants had one contact, often indirect, for example in the form of an address on a piece of paper, or a package to pass on to a friend of a friend from back home, or a telephone number. While these initial contacts were usually with co-ethnics, most migrants soon expanded their networks

to people with whom they had things in common beyond national or ethnic backgrounds. Such new relations were sometimes along linguistic lines, with people who spoke the same language and with whom they shared common interests, other times new relations were formed on the basis of shared educational backgrounds. Many research participants attempted to form relations with people of other national or ethnic backgrounds. Reasons for this ranged from wanting to improve their English, to social control and gender relations, or political factors related to conflicts in their country of origin.

Literature of migration and migrant settlement has generally looked at migrants who form part of larger migration movements, assuming that social relations upon settlement are primarily defined by ethnicity and nationality. With the example of pioneer migrants, this paper has shed light on the variegated pathways of settlement which result from diversified immigration into super-diverse contexts. Migrants from new source countries who settle in such contexts do not follow the pathways of settlement previously assumed to be common by way of settling into ‘ethnic enclaves’ or ‘communities’. Rather, they innovatively and actively build networks across categories such as ethnicity, language and nationality. Moraşanu’s (2013) description of such social network formation as ‘patchworking’ adequately describes the ways in which pioneer migrants meet people through places like work, house shares, civil society organisations, etc. and form relations with people of different backgrounds. ‘Patchworking’ among the pioneer migrants described in this paper could also be related to the specific urban context of London and its manifold social milieus, which provide the possibility to access different lifestyles.

It is difficult to describe these types of relationships pioneer migrants form with categories such ‘bridging’ or ‘bonding’ social capital, often used to describe migrants’ social relations, which assume that the categories across which migrants bridge or bond are defined by ethnicity and nationality. Like Ryan’s Polish research participants, the pioneer migrants who participated in this study formed bridging relations across ethnicity and country of origin, but they ‘bonded’ with people of similar educational backgrounds.

Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s notion of ‘sociabilities of emplacement’ is more useful to describe the kinds of social relations built by the research participants presented in this paper. Such sociabilities are defined by the actors’ mutual enjoyment and shared domains of commonality (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016). Glick Schiller and Çağlar focus on disadvantaged migrants and long term residents in a town faced by an economic downturn. While some of the research participants presented in this

paper are similarly disadvantaged, especially those who are seeking asylum or who are undocumented, many other pioneer migrants would not define themselves as disadvantaged or dispossessed, despite their limited financial means. They have high cultural capital in terms of educational background and knowledge of English, and this enables them to form social relations with people of similar educational backgrounds, many of whom have come from elsewhere as well. Importantly, however, the social networks of migrants with little cultural capital in terms of knowledge of English, educational background and embodied cultural capital were more constrained to co-ethnics or people with the same language or religion. I have exemplified this in this paper with the examples of two Yemeni women of about the same age, one highly educated who distanced herself from co-ethnics because of issues around social control, and the other without any education, who was firmly integrated into the international Orthodox Jewish community.

Looking at pioneer migrants' pathways of settlement helps us to refocus our attention on other-than-ethnic factors of super-diversity such as legal status, class, religion and educational background when analysing migrant settlement (Wessendorf [forthcoming b]). Furthermore, looking at pioneer migrants' settlement in places which are already super-diverse helps us question notions of integration and cohesion which emphasise the need for migrants to build 'bridging' relations beyond their (ethnic) 'group'. While some pioneer migrants find comfort in meeting co-ethnics, almost all of the participants of this research also formed social relations beyond co-ethnics, people who are not necessarily British born, but who form part of the super-diverse social fabric of London. The example of pioneer migrants demonstrates the importance of moving away from 'groupist' approaches towards analysing migration and migrant settlement, showing the variegated backgrounds represented in new patterns of immigration in the 21st century.

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