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## Pathways of settlement among pioneer migrants in super-diverse London

**Article (Accepted version)  
(Refereed)**

**Original citation:**

Wessendorf, Susanne (2017) *Pathways of settlement among pioneer migrants in super-diverse London*. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44 (2). pp. 270-286. ISSN 1369-183X

DOI: [10.1080/1369183X.2017.1341719](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1341719)

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Available in LSE Research Online: March 2018

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## **Pathways of Settlement among Pioneer Migrants in Super-Diverse London**

### **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. This ‘diversification of diversity’ is now commonly described as ‘super-diversity’. Despite an increasing number of studies looking at how people live together in such super-diverse contexts, little is known about new patterns of immigration into such contexts of migrants who do not follow established migration patterns. Where do recent migrants who cannot draw on already existing migrant or ethnic ‘communities’, find support? What do they do when they arrive? Drawing on earlier studies on ‘pioneer migration’, this paper reformulates the notion of such pioneer migrants and asks what factors impact their settlement process, particularly in regards to economic integration. The paper argues that it is not ethnicity or country of origin which are the main factors shaping this process, but legal status and cultural capital.

Key words: Pioneer migration, super-diversity, cultural capital, socio-economic integration, legal status

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. 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 migration patterns, with migrants

arriving individually or in small numbers and not following established chain migrations. Little is known about processes of settlement of individual migrants who do not form part of larger migration movements.

This paper describes patterns of settlement among individual migrants without an established network to join when they came to London to start a new life. These migrants might not be able to 'dock onto' an already existing 'community' when they arrive. How do these migrants settle? What kinds of networks of support do they form? Where do they get information about settlement, and how do they find housing and work? This paper focuses on one important aspect of settlement, namely how these pioneer migrants settle in regards to work and their professional lives. It shows how legal status and cultural capital are crucial factors in shaping this process.

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), IT literacy, as well as, in the case of migrants, knowledge of the majority language. It also includes knowledge of the local habitus in terms of taste, dress, style, etc., also described as embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990)<sup>i</sup>. Importantly, forms of capital can be converted into other forms of capital, an issue particularly relevant to the pioneer migrants discussed in this paper, many of whom arrive with the hope to convert their high cultural capital into economic capital (Bourdieu 1986). One of the main characteristics of pioneer migrants is their lack of social networks and social capital when first arriving. For this reason, and possibly more so than for migrants who 'dock onto' pre-existing social networks, their cultural capital, coupled with legal status, largely determine whether they manage to establish themselves economically and socially. This paper shows how those with higher cultural capital find it easier to create social capital by way of, for example, volunteering and through work. This applies to both those with a secure and those with an insecure legal status.

The aim of the focus on legal status and cultural capital is to highlight other-than-ethnic factors in migrant settlement. Studies on migration and settlement most often focus either on migrants from a specific country of origin, or of a specific legal status (i.e. refugees,

students, highly-skilled migrants on work visas, etc.). The research on which this article is based attempted to account for the diversification of migration by focussing 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 they were the first ones of their cohort to arrive in the UK, and that they had arrived within the last ten years. As explained in more detail in the section on pioneer migrants, cohort here refers to factors such as socio-economic, class, educational, religious, regional, etc. background. The aim of this focus was to move away from the assumption that country of origin or ethnicity are the main factors shaping migrant settlement. Also critiqued as ‘methodological nationalism’, scholars have pointed to the overemphasis of ethnicity and country of origin in analysing migration and migrant settlement (Buhr 2017; Fox & Jones 2013; Glick Schiller et al 2006; Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore 2017; 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 2013a:495). To look at the role of other-than-ethnic factors in migrant settlement could also be described as ‘super-diversity lens’, drawing attention to categories such as legal status, educational background, migration history, routes of migration, place of settlement, etc.. This lens enables us to analyse whether, when, how and why ethnicity or national origin can become salient or not (Wessendorf 2013; Wimmer 2007).

The focus of the research on ‘pioneer migrants’ thus aimed to examine the role of limited co-ethnic social capital when arriving in London, and the ways in which migrants who cannot (or do not want to) draw on the help of an ‘ethnic community’ build different networks of support. The paper shows how those with higher cultural capital, including those with an insecure legal status, generally found it easier to create social capital, for example by way of volunteering and, for those with permission to work, through employment. Because of the importance of volunteering and work, this paper specifically focuses on the role of employment in regards to settlement, drawing on research which has shown that employment is one of the main factors which facilitate integration (Cheung & Phillimore 2014; Phillimore & Goodson 2006).

Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2013) have developed the useful notion of ‘emplacement’ to refer to ‘a relationship between the continuing restructuring of a city within networks of power and migrants’ efforts to settle and build networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific locality’ (ibid. 2013: 495). These ‘networks of connection’, as well as the socio-economic context in which migrants settle, are crucial for pioneer migrants.

Drawing on the notion of ‘embedding’, Ryan (2017) similarly shows how the work place can play a crucial role in creating not just professional connections but also more personal social relations integration (see also Castles et al. 2002; Cheung & Phillimore 2014).

The first section of the paper develops the notion of ‘pioneer migration’, drawing on theories around migration systems and defining more specifically the characteristics of pioneer migrants. Following details of the research methods and selection of the case study, the paper delves into the empirical material, first discussing the impact of legal status and the prohibition to work on asylum seekers and undocumented migrants’ settlement processes. It uses Erel’s notion of ‘migrating cultural capital’ (Erel 2010) to show how cultural capital is crucial even within this category of people who are not allowed to work. Those with higher cultural capital feel more able to engage in training and voluntary work, in contrast to those with lower cultural capital who feel ‘blocked’. The following section focuses on migrants with a secure legal status, describing processes of deskilling among highly educated migrants, and their difficulties to transfer their cultural capital to the UK labour market. Often, they have to change their careers and start from scratch. The paper concludes by showing how the analysis of pioneer migrants’ pathways of settlement highlights the importance of cultural capital, coupled with legal status, rather than country of origin or ethnicity, as the main factors which shape settlement processes. These factors ultimately determine whether migrants experience their migration as successful or not.

### **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.

What makes Bertin a pioneer migrant? Bertin arrived in London without any pre-existing social networks, and, at the time, there was no established flow of migration of young middle-class Spaniards who moved to London. There were thus no other migrants with a similar social background whose example (and advice) he could have followed. Importantly, however, very few of the research participants arrived completely unconnected. Most of them relied on what Phillimore and her colleagues have described as ‘foundation networks’ (Phillimore et al 2014). These contacts were not necessarily characterized by close ties, but were often weak or indirect (Granovetter 1973), and sometimes simply took the form of an address of a friend of a friend on a piece of paper. These first contacts usually lead to initial housing until migrants find their feet. However, in contrast to migrants who form part of chain migrations and whose social networks often lead to more than just initial housing, Bertin’s example demonstrates how pioneer migrants have to invest more actively into their economic and social integration.

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).<sup>ii</sup> An important element of migration systems is chain migration, a process by which potential migrants find 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 come first may have little to do with those who come much later, as shown, for example, with early Indian migrants to the UK as compared with current Indian migrants (Visram 2002). It is important to point to these differentiations within country of origin 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'. The research participants presented in this paper share the characteristic that they lack social networks upon arrival because they are among the first ones of their (socio-economic, regional, class, etc.) cohort to arrive in London. For example, a young Yemeni highly educated Muslim woman from Yemen's capital has very little in common with an orthodox Jewish woman who has no schooling and comes from a small Yemeni village.

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 by my research participants, many of whom had relatively high cultural capital in terms of their education and socio-economic backgrounds, even if they arrived with limited economic capital. Because the migration

literature usually focuses on large migration movements, surprisingly, little is known about pioneer migrants who do not follow the ‘beaten track’ (de Haas 2010:1589).

Before describing in more detail how some of the pioneer migrants who participated in my research settled in London, the following section describes how and in what context the research was conducted.

### **Methods and case study selection**

The paper is based on qualitative research in London from 2014 to 2015, primarily the London Borough of Hackney, including 23 in-depth interviews as well as 4 focus groups with recent migrants who might be defined as pioneers because they lacked established social networks upon arrival and came to London individually. Furthermore, 18 interviews were undertaken with people working in the migrant sector, involving a total of 69 respondents. Questions asked in interviews with migrants included: *What did you do when you first arrived? How did you find housing and work?*

While the project initially focussed on Hackney as a super-diverse area of London (Department for Communities and Local Government 2015; London Borough of Hackney 2015; Wessendorf 2014), it soon transpired that people do not migrate to Hackney, but to London, and they end up in Hackney, mostly due to social contacts through which they find housing. Hackney as a residential area thus only becomes important in the course of migrants’ settlement, and in particular once they form families.

Finding pioneer migrants is difficult because they lack established ‘ethnic community organisations’ as well as places like shops or restaurants through which they could be contacted. Therefore, the project expanded its focus to other areas of London, and four of the 23 interviewees lived in other (similarly super-diverse) parts of London, namely Haringey and Southwark. However, the area in which they lived played an important role in regards to belonging and social network formation. Their residential area’s demographic super-diversity provided many of my informants with a sense of belonging, or ‘not sticking out’, an issue I discuss elsewhere (Wessendorf 2016).

Research participants were found through personal social networks formed during previous fieldwork in the area (Wessendorf 2014), snowball sampling, religious and voluntary organisations, and English classes. Interviews were conducted in English, French, Italian and Spanish, transcribed and coded in NVivo. Respondents came from 31 Countries of origin including Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Argentina, Chile, Southern Azerbaijan, etc. Full ethical approval was gained for the project in advance of fieldwork



being undertaken. Research participants quoted in this paper have read a draft version of this paper and were offered to comment on it. They could choose to change their names.

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.

[about here Table 1]

The participants of the research presented here share the characteristic that, at the time of their migration to London, they were not represented in census statistics of countries of origin because of their small numbers. However, as discussed earlier, country of origin is not the only factor which defines a pioneer migrant, but pioneers can also be among the first ones of their region of origin, religious, class or educational background to arrive.

### **Pioneer migrants’ economic emplacement**

While migrants who form part of larger migration movements and chain migrations can dock onto social networks embedded in, for example, niche labour markets such as ethnic businesses (Braun 1970; Gardner 1995; Moch 2003), pioneer migrants cannot draw on such resources. How do pioneer migrants establish themselves in the labour market?

To conceptualize the ‘economic emplacement’ (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013a) of migrants with different legal statuses, Erel’s (2010) notion of ‘migrating cultural capital’ is extremely useful.<sup>iii</sup> She shows how migrants create new forms of cultural capital when settling in a new place. She not only refers to institutional cultural capital (formal education), but also ‘embodied cultural capital’ (Bourdieu 1986), expressed by way of habitus, ways of speaking and bodily comportment. Cultural capital also consist of ‘informal education transmitted through the family, political parties, cultural groups, etc’ (Erel 2010: 643). Migrants thus create mechanisms to validate their cultural capital both through formal institutions, but also informal social networks and political activities (ibid. 2010). This cultural capital is relevant even for people who are not allowed to work. This section first looks at the role of cultural capital for pioneer migrants with an insecure legal status such as

asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, showing how higher cultural capital facilitates the settlement of migrants who lack social capital upon arrival, even among those with an insecure status. The second part of this section discusses the obstacles faced by migrants with a secure legal status, and how their cultural capital helps them to create supportive social networks and thus social capital, which facilitates their economic emplacement.

### *Legal status and the role of cultural capital in pioneer migrants' settlement*

Many undocumented migrants lose their status some time after their arrival in the UK, for example when their student or spousal visa expires. To exemplify this, I here use the example of Alisher who arrived in 2007 with a student visa. Depending on knowledge of English and educational background, pioneer migrants develop various strategies to find work. Some start off with very practical strategies, like Alisher, who used his cultural capital throughout his changing legal status. Alisher only knew one person when he arrived in London, a fellow Uzbek, who was unable to provide him with any other support but initial housing.

I made a CV and decided to go around the centre of London and just pass my CV over to some places, no calls, I think it was one of the last CVs, and this guy looked at it and said 'ok, go and shave and come tomorrow'. So I went early, he asked me to come 10 o'clock but the place was closed so I was like wait wait wait, 11 still not open, strange ... he came at 11.30 and asked 'what time did you come?'. I said '10 o'clock', he said 'I can see you were waiting a long time, so you need this job'. He took me from beginning, he showed me from basically everything, I learned something, also practice my English, I had knowledge and understood, but I couldn't speak much in conversations, it was a good experience, and also like, meet, make friends, learn something, basically integrate, it was a big step. So it wasn't just about work, it was more than that, it was learning and experience and meeting different people (Alisher, Uzbekistan).

Alisher is a typical example of how some of my research participants started off in London, finding work quite coincidentally by handing out their CVs in shops and restaurants.

Alisher had studied linguistics back home, but was willing to start with whatever job he could find in London. He had come to London to study English, but also needed to find work to finance his studies. The job at the restaurant enabled him to form new friendships and improve his English. Because the restaurant owner was Turkish, Alisher also learned Turkish while working there, a language related to Uzbek. His example shows how work not only facilitates financial security during settlement, but it is also crucial for social integration into the various social milieus present in super-diverse contexts (Wessendorf 2014). Alisher's

life is now very different, as he has become an undocumented migrant. For political reasons, he cannot return to Uzbekistan. Despite being undocumented, he continues to build his career by volunteering in various organisations and taking IT classes wherever they are offered for free and without requirement of documentation. Alisher represents an impressive example of how, against the odds, some migrants continue to attempt to build their lives and expand their experiences. Although his future looks bleak, he is trying to make the most out of the present by continuing to learn new skills and finding some kind of routine in his everyday life through volunteering and education. Similarly, Mohammed, a 30 year old refugee from Yemen who, at the time of the interview, was awaiting a decision on his asylum claim, told me how he had to somehow keep occupied. He was highly educated and had passed several years of medical training in Yemen, before having to leave the country for political reasons. He only had two acquaintances when arriving in London, but soon made friends through volunteering and by attending arts-related events. He found out about these events and volunteering via the internet, thanks to his IT literacy and language knowledge. When talking about approaching organisations for volunteering opportunities, he told me the following:

M: I shouldn't just halt and stop. Because [immigration] lawyers, I mean I have experienced it, for months they don't have time, and it's OUR lives, WE don't have time, WE don't have the time! And so yeah, it shouldn't be wasted in waiting, each person should be active in what they do, continue their personality, not be detached from the person who they are, because those wars and conflicts and guns make trauma and make schizophrenia.

S: And it helps to keep going, right?

M: Yeah, a person moves to a peaceful society, he has to keep going. I stopped some time, and I was like, thinking, this is not going to take me from A to B you know. So that's why I had to find opportunities for volunteering, I had to find opportunities for networking, and restoring and continuing the things I was doing back home. It keeps me who I am, yeah, it keeps my life going.

Fortunately, Mohammed was highly educated, spoke very good English and also had the habitus to be able to function within British institutions and organisations. In other words, he had the cultural capital needed to participate in the professional realm in London. This cultural capital thus enabled him to form new social contacts and thus make up for his lack in social capital upon arrival.

However, other research participants who were either undocumented or waiting for a decision on their asylum claim felt much more limited and 'stuck' in their lives because of not being able to work or study. Many of them spoke less English and had little to no formal education before moving to the UK. For example, one of my Ivorian undocumented research

participants who spoke very little English felt completely blocked by his status. He lived in London with a spousal visa for the first five years. Apart from his wife, he initially had very few social contacts. Due to problems with his wife, his visa did not get renewed and he became undocumented, losing his job as support staff for the BBC. He experienced the loss of legal status and work as ultimate loss of status as an individual with a meaningful life. Losing his work also cut him off from social contacts beyond a small network of West African peers in a community mosque, many of whom with similarly low cultural capital. Towards the end of the interview, he showed me his BBC work card, his national insurance card and his card for a college of further education, all of them expired. The cards symbolised his past legitimate life in the UK. He, like some of the other undocumented French speaking African migrants I interviewed, repeatedly emphasised that he was now 'blocked' (French: *bloqué*) because he could not work. Being a pioneer migrant, he neither had a large enough network of co-ethnics who spoke the same language and could potentially provide some kind of informal support, for example by giving him with the opportunity to get employment in an ethnic niche. In contrast to Alisher from Uzbekistan, he did not have the cultural capital and, as a result, confidence which would have enabled him to access voluntary organisations where he could have built social capital and possibly some skills. But even for Alisher, not being allowed to work and not being able to build a future dramatically impacts on his well being. The impact of legal status and the right to work is expressed by Alp from Southern Azerbaijan, who waited for a decision on his asylum claim for 3.5 years and who explains how ...

... once your status comes, you can plan, you can organise, you can START, you feel you are living! I mean for 3.5 years I didn't have status it's... some stages you really psychologically you get to that point which are really really low.

While, thanks to his cultural capital, Alp, like Alisher and Mohammed, was active in various organisations throughout the years of waiting for status, receiving the right to study and work finally enabled him to build a life. He is now studying law and he is still volunteering for different organisations.

Thus, having legal status and the right to work are the primary factors shaping settlement. However, within this separation of having or not having the right to work, cultural capital and the skills acquired before moving to the UK importantly shape how pioneer migrants establish themselves in the UK, because higher cultural capital facilitates the

formation of social capital. In the following section, I look at how people who have a secure legal status make use of their cultural capital when settling in London.

*Working against the Odds: Deskillling and the Formation of New Careers*

In her conceptualization of migrating cultural capital, Erel (2010:647) asks how cultural resources are ‘valorized as capital, recognized, circulated and interlinked with social and economic capital’. In this section, I present some examples of how, often as a result of the non-recognition of their qualifications, pioneer migrants attempt to validate their cultural capital by way of volunteering and innovative ways to create new businesses.

Gabriela from Brazil, the florist mentioned earlier, is a typical example of this validation of cultural capital in the course of settlement.<sup>iv</sup> She came to London after living in Portugal for 12 years, where she worked as a professional florist in a big company. But she wanted to expand her professional experiences, and possibly create a pathway to a British University education for her daughter, and decided to move to London. Gabriela only had one British acquaintance when arriving in London, who helped her find housing with a Brazilian family, with whom she had little in common. Despite the lack of a support network, Gabriela soon found work in a flower shop, but hoped to find a better paid and more challenging job elsewhere. To reach this aim, she started volunteering for the Royal Horticultural Society, which she described as prestigious role for which she had to apply. She described how she enjoyed the three day training, and how she then got invited to volunteer at Hampton Court. When I stated that she had been very active, she replied as follows:

Yes because in my area, I want to improve my life, I don't want to stay there [where she's at now], I would like to add things for my CV, to improve myself step by step, show them that I'm involved in something every time, this is important. I always do this, when I was in Lisbon I tried to always do, every time, because volunteer work is very important, for an organisation like RHS [Royal Horticultural Society], it's something very powerful.

Gabriela is a typical example of the ambition expressed by the pioneer migrants who participated in my research and who, due to their lack of social capital, had to be particularly proactive in building their careers.

However, many migrants face obstacles regarding their careers when arriving in the UK. In fact, one of the surprises which especially highly educated pioneer migrants meet is that they experience considerable deskilling once they arrive in the UK. Building on earlier studies on deskilling in the process of 20<sup>th</sup> century migration, more recent studies on 21<sup>st</sup>

century migration processes have shown that deskilling among highly skilled migrants continues to be a common pattern, especially during the initial period of settlement (Erel 2010; Liversage 2009; McGregor 2007, see also Ryan 2017). As in the example of Bertin, for many, this can be due to limited English skills. However, even those migrants who arrive with good English have to start anew when arriving in the UK, and many do not find their professional skills recognized. As mentioned above, for pioneer migrants, this process is exacerbated by the absence of pre-existing contacts or possibly access to niche labour markets.

Paula from Argentina, who was an established journalist in Buenos Aires before moving to the UK, told me about the challenges she faced of not being valued for her previous career:

So for a while I did jobs that I had done 10 years ago, 15 years, translations, organising someone's script, you know, and I was showing my CV. (...) I was one of the youngest editors of Argentina's largest paper, one of the youngest editors they ever had, I had a name in the media, it was a really strong career. I remember showing my CV and thinking, they are treating me like I'm saying I worked in a newsletter in a public community centre (...). I mean the Anglo vision was, nothing that you, and nothing that you have done outside the UK is important (...).It doesn't count. Unless of course you've won the Nobel Prize or the Pulitzer Prize, if you won the Pulitzer prize lets' talk, but aside from that? That was a huge shock. How not interested and not open the English were to receive someone eye to eye.

Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of institutional cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), Bauder (2003) describes the systematic de-skilling of highly educated migrants in Canada. Institutional cultural capital refers to institutionally sanctioned competences such as educational degrees and certificates. He shows how de-skilling often results from the non-recognition of foreign credentials, including the dismissal of foreign work experiences, which systematically excludes migrants from highly skilled jobs. Among my research participants, this process often led to wanted or unwanted career changes which sometimes took several years and were accompanied with much frustration about the limited access to higher segments of the labour market. Out of necessity, many skilled migrants have to mould new careers and find creative ways to validate their cultural capital in the context of London's job market. Paula, mentioned above, ended up founding her own company as a film producer and has been rather successful with it over the years. This decision was partly motivated because, when working for the BBC, she realized that her cultural capital would never be acknowledged as equal to that of her (male, white) British colleagues, despite similar

qualifications. This 'privileged access to skilled jobs for those considered properly part of the nation' (Erel 2010:648) has also been conceptualized as 'national capital' (Hage 1998).

Maria Paula from Colombia exemplifies both the disappointment of not having one's skills recognized, and the way in which migrants have to mould their careers in new and often innovative ways. She came to the UK with a University degree, but wanted to add a degree in political communication for which she was studying at a London University. While she accepted having to work in an admin job in the student office during her studies, she was surprised to find herself working as a receptionist for another three years after she finished her studies. She did not manage to find a way into the job market on the level she felt she was qualified for (and on which she had been working back in Colombia).

I planned to stay out of Colombia 5 years, planned to do masters and work and [*ironically*] 'earn a lot of money and then go back and be in a higher position there after my return' [laughs]. Pure dreams! Because I arrived, found it a bit disappointing at University, then finding a job was a nightmare; it was actually not possible to find it in my field. London is extremely competitive, everybody is here, everybody has 3 PhDs, 15 languages, it's amazingly competitive, my English wasn't good enough to be at the level that I thought professionally I should be, and my language wasn't meeting their standards, (...), and then anyways, during the whole process and especially finishing the masters I decided that I didn't want to do that anymore ... And slowly slowly out of necessity, my career started to change into teaching, and that's what I do now.

Although Maria Paula puts her difficulties in finding a job down to competition and insufficient English, she also lacked the social capital which, had she not been a pioneer migrant, could have facilitated her entry into employment. Maria Paula now teaches Spanish at schools, organizes workshops on Latin American current affairs for the Colombian embassy and other institutions, and runs a weekly Spanish singing group for parents and their children. She thus slowly set up her own business, and is now happy with what she does.

This is one of many examples of how highly educated migrants change their career as a result of their migration. Importantly, this process is directly related to the process of being a pioneer migrant and initially lacking social capital, to becoming more embedded in social networks in London and establishing social contacts which facilitate the formation of new careers. Like Francisca from Chile, who has a degree in psychology, but worked in various cafes when moving to London. While doing this, and working in a café next to a Yoga studio, she slowly started setting up her own yoga classes, and has managed to increase her teaching and create a new career in this field. Similarly, Aika from Kyrgyzstan studied engineering and then art and fashion in London, while also working in an organic shop. Thanks to the

moral and practical support of a British friend's mother, she managed to create her own business, selling children's clothes made of Ghanaian fabric. Again, Aika was able to mobilize her own resources thanks to her cultural capital. However, it was the transition of being a pioneering newcomer with very limited social capital, to becoming more embedded locally through social contacts, which enabled her to create her own business.

Paula, Maria Paula, Francisca and Aika share their attempt to transfer the skills from their countries of origin to the new context of immigration, and to find adequate and satisfactory professional positions in London. Often, this process involves unpaid work such as volunteering, and several years of considerable compromises in regards to pay as well as professional status. Importantly, it is during these years that these pioneer migrants manage to make up for their initial lack in social capital, and, facilitated by their cultural capital, they manage to create social networks of support which help them to build new professional lives. This confirms Ryan's observation of the temporal and structural dimensions of embedding (Ryan 2017).

## **Discussion**

An important part of the demographic condition of today's super-diversity in certain urban areas is the increase of migrants who do not form part of established chain migrations and who have very limited social networks upon arrival. These are people who do not follow the beaten track. Although they form a minority of the total migrant population, this kind of migration movement, characterized by individual migration, forms the most common type of migrations (de Haas 2010). This paper was an attempt to describe patterns of settlement among these migrants, with a particular focus on 'economic emplacement' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013b). 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.

Legal status is the main factor which shapes the settlement process, and those who do not manage to gain legal status in the UK or await a decision of their asylum claims for long periods of time face barriers beyond their control. Not being able to legally work and build a life was described as the most dehumanising experience by my research participants (see also Crawley et al 2011; Smyth & Kum 2010). The demoralizing effect of the prohibition to work cannot be emphasised enough. Although not being allowed to work massively impacted on



the lives of all undocumented migrants and asylum seekers in my research, those with higher cultural capital sometimes managed to at least build skills and develop social capital by way of volunteering and training. This helped them break out of isolation resulting from the inability to access paid work. Cultural capital thus differentially shapes the settlement process of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.

Many of the research participants who had legal status arrived in the UK with high cultural capital, but little to no social capital and often limited financial means. Nevertheless, and thanks to their cultural capital and language skills, they managed to establish themselves in London. What they shared is that they took high risks when coming to the UK. They had to put up with considerable deskilling, experiencing an unexpected setback in their careers. The barriers they faced in terms of integrating into the professional field which they were hoping to access when coming to London were often insurmountable, which forced them to change their careers and find creative ways to make a living outside the field they were working in back in their home countries. This process often happened over several years and as part of becoming more socially embedded in London and thus building social capital. Also, changing careers often involved ‘bargaining activities with institutions (such as professional bodies, universities) and people (such as employers or managers)’ about the value of their cultural capital (Erel 2010:649). The example of these highly skilled pioneer migrants shows that, despite London’s diversity and seeming cosmopolitanism, exclusionary practices along lines of nationality, language and gender continue to exist.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to look at migrant integration through a super-diversity lens by focussing on the role of other-than-ethnic factors in migrant settlement. Pioneer migrants who cannot draw on long-established migrant ‘communities’ upon arrival are a particularly interesting example to examine this. Legal status and cultural capital are the main factors which shape their socio-economic integration. For people who lack substantial social capital when settling in London, it is ‘migrating cultural capital’ (Erel 2010) which plays a major role in their settlement process. This migrating cultural capital consist of a combination of what migrants bring with them in terms of educational background, knowledge of English and embodied cultural capital, as well as resources and knowledge which they develop in situ. This cultural capital can also contribute to the development of social capital, for example by way of accessing organisations where people can volunteer and build social relations which might lead to other forms of capital. Hence, in terms of patterns of settlement, the

biggest difference between my research participants was not country of origin or ethnicity, but it was legal status coupled with cultural capital, especially education, knowledge of English and IT literacy, which could be validated in the place of residence (Erel 2010) and transformed into other forms of capital. Hanadi, who comes from the upper echelons of Yemeni society and is highly educated, has much more in common with an educated Latin American migrant than with a Yemeni woman of about the same age, who was illiterate when arriving in London and spoke no English. These differences not only confirm criticisms of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002; Fox & Jones 2013) when analysing migration, but they also exemplify the diversification of current migrations, with migrants of the same country of origin having very different backgrounds in terms of education, religion, migration routes, sexual orientations, causes for migration and other such factors. This diversification of migrations calls for the need of a differentiated analysis of integration, which takes these factors of super-diversity into account. To elaborate on all of these factors would have gone beyond the scope of this paper.

The paper also demonstrated the need to include highly skilled migrants in our analysis of integration in the age of super-diversity. Migrants with high cultural capital whose educational credentials often get undervalued in the UK labour market have rarely been the focus of debates around integration, which have mostly concentrated on low-skilled migrants. It is important to recognize the challenges faced by highly skilled migrants, especially in regards to the non-recognition of foreign degrees.

Lastly, when analysing integration in an era of super-diversity, the locality where migrants settle is crucial. This calls for a comparative analysis of different localities of settlement. While this would have gone beyond the scope of this paper, the paper demonstrated how the particular economic opportunity structure of London enabled some of the highly skilled pioneer migrants to create new businesses which cater to an emerging and diverse middle-class clientele. It is the coming together of legal status, migrating cultural capital and the opportunities offered in specific localities which ultimately shape pioneer migrants' settlement.

### **Acknowledgements**

This research was funded by the European Commission Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship Programme. I would like to thank all the research participants for taking their

time to talk to me. I would also like to thank Jenny Phillimore for continuing feedback and support.

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<sup>i</sup> For a critical review of the notion of cultural capital, see Goldthorpe (2007).

<sup>ii</sup> For a critical evaluation of migration systems theory, see Bakewell et al. (2012).

<sup>iii</sup> This is not to be confused with van Hear's (1998) notion of 'migratory cultural capital', referring to accumulated knowledge about migration as a result of a 'community's collective migration history' (1998:51).

<sup>iv</sup> Although there exists a sizeable Brazilian 'community' in London, Gabriela could not relate to fellow Brazilians because of different interests, her different migration history via Portugal, and different regional origins within Brazil. She sees herself as 'pioneering' in that she did not follow the 'beaten track' or get any support (except from initial housing) from fellow Brazilian.