

Wessendorf Susanne

Pioneer migrants and their social relations in super-diverse London

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

Original citation: Wessendorf, Susanne (2017) *Pioneer migrants and their social relations in super-diverse London*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. pp. 1-18. ISSN 0141-9870
DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2017.1406126](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1406126)

© 2017 [Informa UK Limited](#)

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/87166/>
Available in LSE Research Online: March 2018

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's final accepted version of the journal article. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

Pioneer migrants and their social relations in super-diverse London.

Susanne Wessendorf¹

International Inequalities Institute (III)

London School of Economics, London, UK

Abstract

Urban areas in Europe and beyond have seen significant changes in immigration patterns, leading to profound diversification characterized by the multiplication of people of different national origins, migration histories, religions, educational backgrounds, legal statuses and socio-economic backgrounds, a condition now commonly described as super-diversity. An important part of this super-diversity are individual migrants who do not follow established chain migrations. Little is known about processes of settlement of migrants who do not form part of larger migration movements and who are not able to draw on the support of others of the same national, ethnic, linguistic and religious background. This article describes patterns of settlement of such individual migrants in London. Drawing on the notion of 'pioneer migration', the article focuses on social networks, examining the kinds of social relations pioneer migrants form in the course of settlement, and showing that many migrants strive to form social relations beyond co-ethnics.

Key words: pioneer migration, super-diversity, methodological nationalism, social relations, settlement, London

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 dynamics of super-diversity in many urban communities is the presence of many migrants who arrive individually and do not follow established chain migrations. Migration scholarship generally focuses on large migration movements. However, many initial migration movements do not involve, or even evolve into, migrations of much larger numbers of people (de Haas 2010). Little is known about processes of settlement of individual migrants who might not be able to draw on the support of people with whom they share the same national, religious, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic background and who have preceded them in undertaking the same migration journey during a similar time period. 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 how do they make friends?

¹ Contact details: Susanne Wessendorf, s.wessendorf@lse.ac.uk

This article describes patterns of settlement among a diverse group of such individual migrants, here conceptualized as pioneer migrants. 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 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 process (Boyd 1989; Massey et al 1998). Migration literature on early settlement generally assumes that migrants will gravitate towards co-ethnics with whom they share a language, similar cultural values and religious beliefs. In her review of the social scientific literature on transnational and local migrant networks, Moraşanu (2010) shows how this literature has been dominated by a focus on specific ethnic groups, interpreting migrant networks as ethnic networks so that 'mixed networks never achieve prominence or are altogether ignored' (Moraşanu 2010:6). This orientation has been changing in the context of work attempting 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 and anthropology (Blokland 2003; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013; Glick Schiller et al 2006; Wimmer 2004).

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 social characteristics. The research participants had migrated individually and lacked social capital when arriving, and had arrived within the last ten years. The aim of the research was to move away from the assumption that country of origin or ethnicity are the main factors shaping settlement, also critiqued as methodological nationalism (Fox & Jones 2013; Glick Schiller et al 2006; Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002). Looking 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 (Brubaker 2004; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2013; Wessendorf 2013; Wimmer 2004). Approaching the field without assuming specific sociological categories to be more relevant than others could also be described as a super-diversity lens which does not assume ethnicity and nationality to be the determining factors in migrant settlement (but see Aptekar, this issue)., Pioneer settlement in 21st century London is considerably different to the settlement of migrants after World War II when migrants came from a smaller number of (mostly post-colonial) countries of origin, often shared common histories and aspirations, and settled in areas characterized by much less previous immigration than current super-diverse neighbourhoods.

This article 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 person's 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). Cultural capital proved to be crucial in regards to the research participants' social network formation. As I will discuss below, one of the characteristics of pioneer migrants is that they often have higher cultural capital than those who follow established migration patterns. In fact, 18 out of the 23 pioneer migrants who participated in the research 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). This enabled them to form social relations with people of similar educational backgrounds. Elsewhere, I have shown how high cultural capital also made a difference in the kinds of social relations and social capital undocumented migrants and asylum seekers build during initial settlement (Wessendorf 2017 [forthcoming-b]). Among the study participants presented here, high cultural capital seemed to facilitate the formation of social networks beyond their 'ethnic group', whereas the (minority of) research participants with low cultural capital more heavily relied on co-ethnic and religious social networks upon arrival. Even if only in small numbers, the pioneers with limited education or knowledge of English tended to cluster together and form stronger ethnic ties. Both historical research on immigrant settlement as well as more recent research has shown that during the early stages of settlement such co-ethnic networks can be crucial in accessing resources and information (Cheung & Phillimore 2013). The co-ethnic social networks of the research participants with low cultural capital might thus be related to their newcomer status. Over time, and with increased knowledge of English, they might well build networks beyond co-ethnics. In fact, a range of studies indicate that migrants with lower cultural capital build alliances across ethnic differences, in neighbourhoods, work-places, religious sites and political associations (e.g. Hudson et al. 2009; Lamont 2002; Morasanu 2013; Werbner 1999).

The article 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, and 18 interviews with people working in the migrant sector such as English teachers and social workers, altogether involving a total of 69 respondents. Respondents (including those who participated in focus groups) came from 31 countries of origin including Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Argentina, Chile, and Southern Azerbaijan. Sixteen of the 23 interviewees were female and research participants' ages ranged from 23 to 47. At the time of writing this article, a comparative study was undertaken in Birmingham, with 25 research participants. Preliminary results reflect patterns of settlement and social network formation similar to those found in East London. This paper, however, only draws on the interviews with the London research participants. 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. The author lived in the area where research was conducted and, on some occasions, had the opportunity to see research participants beyond a one-off interview, thus extending her knowledge about their life-worlds. East London could be described as a typical immigrant reception area, with a long-standing history of immigrant succession, especially since World War II (Butcher 2017; Butler & Hamnet 2011; Neal et al. 2015; Wessendorf 2014).

The research participants had various legal statuses, ranging from EU citizenship to work visas, asylum seekers and refugees. What became clear is that legal status determined all other aspects of settlement, although it is not, I should note, a focus in this article. UK asylum dispersal policies mean that asylum seekers are housed in places not of their choice (Hynes & Sales 2010), and asylum seekers are not allowed to work. The six asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in the study were by far the most disadvantaged among the research participants due to their legal status. I address the impact of, among other things, the prohibition to work and resulting social isolation elsewhere (Wessendorf 2017 [forthcoming-b]).

I begin by providing a short overview of the literature on pioneer migration, considering how it relates to super-diversity in terms of differentiation within groups as well as the formation of social networks which go beyond co-ethnics. I link this literature with scholarly discourses concerning cohesion and social capital, which often assume that migrants draw on bonding social capital with co-ethnics. The empirical section 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, although they were not necessarily from the same country or region of origin. I discuss the reasons for this lack of interest in co-ethnic social networks, ranging from political tensions to gender differences and issues of social control.

Pioneer migrants and social networks

Bertin from Spain arrived in London some 10 years ago, aged 22. He knew no one. He came with his girlfriend, and they first stayed in a hostel in central London. Although he had high cultural capital in terms of his education and previous work in the film industry in Spain, he was forced 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 in 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 get work and establish themselves in London, and after only a few months moved to Dublin, where a friend of his girlfriend's cousin was living. They obtained accommodation through this contact, and found work with a builder through an advertisement on gumtree, a website advertising accommodation, employment and goods. After about ten months in Dublin, their English had improved and they had saved enough money to return to London and try again. This time, Bertin managed to find (badly paid) work in the film industry, and slowly worked his way up the ladder. Today, Bertin is well established in the film industry as a digital composer, although it took him ten years to get to this position. In the meantime, he also helped about fifteen friends from Spain 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 in London. But he slowly established himself both professionally and socially, to the point that when Spain faced a severe economic crisis, he was able to help friends follow in his footsteps. He thus turned from pioneer to gate keeper.

What makes Bertin a pioneer migrant? Bertin was pioneering in that he migrated as an individual and not as part of a group, and he did not follow an established path of migration. He also exemplifies that migration at the initial or pioneer stage is 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 came with high cultural capital, even if many had limited financial resources on arrival.

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 has been, 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 a migration system which emerges

as a result of initial pioneer migration coupled with feedback mechanisms consisting of information travelling back from the destination country, which leads to further migration (Mabogunje 1970; Bakewell et al. 2012).ⁱ 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).

In the context of research into super-diversity, differentiations within migrant groups have recently gained increasing attention (Vertovec 2007; Meissner & Vertovec 2015). Pointing to the danger of methodological nationalism when studying 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 origin groups can thus consist of several sub-groups originating from different regions, cities, ethnic, religious or class groups, migrating at different times, and receiving different legal statuses in the settlement destination (see also Berg 2011). Migrant flows are often differentiated by class and education, and early pioneers in many cases are distinct from later arrivals. For example, initial labour migration to Western Europe after World War II was often followed by family migration, student migration or the migration of high-skilled professionals (Kubal et al 2011a; 2011b). Early and later arrivals from the same nation of origin need not have much contact, as shown by the case of Indian migrants who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s and current arrivals (Visram 2002). In general, 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'.

According to Dekker and Engbersen (2012), much of the migration literature, which focuses on established migration movements, understands migrants' networks as consisting of what have also been described as strong ties (Granovetter 1973) such as family relations or close friendships and tight co-ethnic networks. However, the case of pioneer migrants demonstrates how, as has been shown more generally in urban contexts, many people today do not 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). Pioneer migrants usually arrive with limited social capital when settling in London. However, few migrants arrive unconnected, and most new arrivals have at least one connection with someone from their country of origin. These 'foundation networks' (Phillimore et al. 2014) are often characterized by weak ties (Granovetter 1973).

Putnam's (2000) differentiation between bonding social capital, referring to social relations within groups, and bridging social capital to refer to social relations across groups, has been crucial in thinking about the role of social relations in migrant settlement. Academic and policy literature on migrant integration has emphasised the merit of bridging social capital both for migrant integration as well as social cohesion (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007), although the notion has come in for criticism for putting the burden of cohesion and bridging social capital on migrants rather than the majority society (see, among many others, Hickman et al 2012; Portes & Vickstrom 2011; Cheong et al 2007). The policy literature on cohesion in particular has assumed that ethnicity and religion define the boundaries within and beyond which migrants build bonding and bridging social

capital. In her critical review of the use of the social capital concept, 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, factors such as shared interests, similar careers and educational backgrounds shaped social relations during initial settlement. They were thus bridging beyond ethnicity, but bonding with migrants in similar social positions (see also Meissner 2016; Ryan 2011).

Foundation contacts

How do pioneer migrants settle in a new place? What is the role of social networks in the settlement process? How do pioneer migrants access practical and emotional support when they arrive? Initially, most migrants rely on foundation networks, meaning pre-existing networks of acquaintances, friends or family (Phillimore et al 2014). Foundation networks that develop out of initial contacts are key for pioneers, and as they root themselves in London, they create further social networks which are characterized by a combination of co-ethnics and others and, interestingly, in some cases by an attempt to distance themselves from co-ethnics. Although pioneer migrants cannot dock onto already established ethnic communities, almost all of my research participants had at least one contact when they arrived. Indeed, in the case of pioneer migrants, the notion of 'foundation networks' are better termed '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 (Bertin, the Spanish migrant in the film industry, was an exception to this generalization.) Apart from 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 reason they came to London was that they had one contact there. 'I wouldn't have come without knowing at least one person' was a common statement. Importantly, however, these contacts were not necessarily characterized by close ties, but were often weak or indirect.

For example Aika from Kyrgyzstan, who came to London when she was 22, 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.

Aika did not like the room in Wimbledon, nor the area, and instead found a shared house with other people from Kyrgyzstan in Hackney through the same person to whom she had brought the package. Especially in regards to housing, foundation contacts were crucial for all of my research participants.

First contacts are sometimes made on the way to the UK. An undocumented migrant from Mali arrived at Heathrow airport with an address on a piece of paper of someone he did not know, but whose contact information he was given en route while waiting for his tourist visa in the Ivory Coast. Through this initial contact, he found both housing and work. Similarly, Alp, aged 34, 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 give 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, although 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 from their country of origin or who 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 can also lead to 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 assistance in practical aspects of settlement, as well as emotional support. For example, the research participant from Georgia (aged 34) found a Facebook site of Russian-speaking mothers who share information online about settling and raising children in London. Not only do they share the same language, but also the experience of motherhood and similar educational backgrounds. Some of these mothers sometimes meet for picnics and thus form new, pan-ethnic friendships.

Another example of social networks based on language are those of Spanish speakers; many have formed social relations with people from 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 socializing. Language and religion are thus important factors linking people pan-ethnically and potentially leading to networks of support (Wessendorf 2017 forthcoming-a). Sometimes, religious affiliations override the importance of language, as in the case of an illiterate Orthodox Jewish Yemeni refugee woman who spoke no English upon arrival at the age of 22. 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 in his early twenties, had one Uzbek contact in London with whom he shared a flat for two weeks after his arrival. He then found a room through an advertisement in a free Russian newspaper which he had picked up in central London. Since then, he has not had any Uzbek friends, but developed friendships with people from many different national and ethnic backgrounds. His experiences indicate 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 will end up socializing – or even want to socialize – with each other. To come back to the notion of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) and the assumption that individuals gravitate towards co-ethnics, what is clear is that migrants from specific countries cannot simply be lumped together: they are divided by time of arrival and participation in different waves of migration, but also region of origin, educational background, and class position, among other characteristics (Bakewell et al. 2012; Berg 2011; Meissner 2016). Moreover, some migrants are not interested in keeping ties to co-ethnics (Ryan 2011, Moroşanu 2010).

It should be noted that many crucial encounters during the early stages of settlement are serendipitous and unexpected, but end up providing support and resources or simply making the pioneer migrants feel more comfortable in London. For example Hamam, the Orthodox Jewish woman from Yemen mentioned above, spent the first three years in London without any knowledge

of English, but 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 also represented her first opportunity to obtain formal education and access to literacy. For Hamam, 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 earns a living by selling children's clothes she makes. And Gabriela from Brazil moved in with an Italian young man who was renting a room in his flat. Through her new 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 these friendships were based on shared experiences of being migrants, as well as common interests.

Beyond co-ethnic networks

Aika from Kyrgyzstan 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 common 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 actually distance themselves from co-ethnics. Moraşanu (2013), in her study of Romanians' social networks in London, noted how students and professionals in particular showed a specific cosmopolitan outlook and consciously attempted to meet non-Romanians. Similarly, although they lacked explicit cosmopolitan orientations, low-skilled Romanian migrants formed relations beyond co-ethnics, which were sometimes nurtured by a shared situation of precariousness. Among my research participants, it was mainly those with high cultural capital who spoke the majority language and were able to navigate the local system by way of obtaining information about settlement on the internet, and gaining access to the labour market, who were keen to form social relations beyond co-ethnics. Migrants who spoke limited English, including those with high educational backgrounds, relied more on co-ethnic social networks. There were different reasons why pioneer migrants attempted to build networks with people of other national and ethnic backgrounds, ranging from political tensions in their 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 (aged 32) who had been granted refugee status, preferred to limit her relations with other Chechens for fear of information about her whereabouts and activities reaching the 'wrong' people back in Chechnya, a concern also reported in other studies of refugees in the UK (Williams 2006). Others I spoke with simply did not feel they had enough in

common with migrants from their countries of origin; those who felt this way were often among the very first ones from their region of origin, class or educational background to arrive and did not see themselves as part of a larger migration movement.

Maria Paula from Colombia, for example, came to London as a student in 2007 in her twenties 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. He turned out not to be a crucial contact in Maria Paula's settlement process, because his interests and life style differed so much from hers. Nor did she feel she had much in common with those in the other part of the Colombian community in London, consisting of people primarily working as cleaners and with relatively low levels of education. Maria Paula noted that 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 also were not working class. Her friends were mainly of non-Colombian backgrounds and people she had met at university when she first arrived in London.

Similarly, Gabriela from Brazil (aged 37) could not relate to fellow Brazilians when she came to London, explaining this in terms of regional differences within Brazil, as well as a lack of shared interests. Francisca from Chile (aged 35) told me that yes, there were quite a few other Chileans in London, but most came to study and planned to return. They formed a tight social milieu to which she couldn't relate, partly because she had more permanent plans to stay in the UK and also because she wanted to distance herself from the educated Santiago middle-class social circles which she had 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 the desire to get away from tight-knit communities of origin, as well as wanting to explore new ways of life and find a place where they felt less constrained in how they identified and led their lives. 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 research participants' statements attest to the attempt to build a new life away from tight social structures experienced in the home community, which, many feared, might be reproduced by becoming too involved with co-ethnics in London. This is especially true for women, who often felt that home-country norms and customs were stultifying. Aika emphasised that one reason 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?

Likewise, a 25 year old refugee woman from Yemen preferred staying in a youth hostel while looking for work and establishing herself financially, rather than living with one of the Yemeni families she knew 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 stay away from them.

These attempts to 'start a new life away from tight-knit communities could also be related to the life-stage of these relatively young pioneer migrants.

On a more practical level, research participants also said that spending time with co-ethnics would simply limit their ability to improve their English and expand their knowledge about the place where they settled, an issue also observed by Ryan (2011).

And there is another critical point that is interlaced with many of the examples presented here. Those who arrive with a secure legal status and are fairly highly educated typically do not feel the same need to seek economic and social support from co-ethnics as those with less education or precarious legal status. As Bakewell et al. (2012:431) note,

... 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 made up for this as well as their limited social capital with high cultural capital. A study of professional Brazilian migrants in the UK found that 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 Britain (Kubal et al. 2011a). Among my research participants with high cultural capital, including refugees whose initial motivation to move to the UK was political rather than to enhance their career, the goal of professional establishment and ultimately social upward mobility in the UK was at the centre of their settlement strategies Wessendorf (2017 [forthcoming-b]). What is noteworthy is that the research participants who had very little cultural capital relied more heavily on co-ethnic and religious social networks which, as mentioned earlier, might be due to limited knowledge of English and, over time, might well change. For my research participants, cultural capital thus clearly enabled and shaped relations that extended beyond co-ethnics.

Conclusion

An important part of the demographic condition of today's super-diversity in certain urban areas is the presence of pioneer migrants who lack social capital and do not follow established migration movements, and who are differentiated by such characteristics as legal status, religion, country of origin and educational background. This article is an attempt to describe patterns of settlement among these pioneer 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 financial 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 distanced themselves from co-ethnics. Reasons for this ranged from wanting to improve their English, to issues around social control and gender relations, or political factors related to conflicts in their country of origin, as exemplified by the Chechen refugee. However, distancing from co-ethnics was also related to high cultural capital in terms of educational background and knowledge of English, which enabled them to form social relations with people of similar educational backgrounds. The social networks of migrants with little cultural capital in terms of knowledge of English, educational background and embodied cultural capital, it is critical to emphasize, were more constrained and limited to co-ethnics or people with the same language or religion. As I have pointed out, this might be due to the limited period of time they had resided in London at the time of the research; with longer residence in London, and greater proficiency in English, their networks might well expand and diversify. Indeed, other studies have shown not only that co-ethnic networks are crucial for working-class migrants (Cheung and Phillimore 2013) but that these migrants also have a range of social relations and interactions beyond co-ethnics (Hudson et al. 2009; Morasanu 2013; Werbner 1999).

Literature on migration and migrant settlement has generally looked at migrants who form part of larger and longer-established migration movements, assuming that social relations upon settlement are primarily defined by ethnicity and nationality. With the example of pioneer migrants, and, it should be said, mostly highly educated pioneers, this article has shed light on the variegated pathways of settlement which result from diversified immigration into super-diverse contexts. These pioneer migrants 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 (2013) describes such social network formation as patchworking, which sums up well the ways in which pioneer migrants meet people through places like work, house shares, and civil society organisations and form relations with people of different backgrounds.

It is difficult to describe these types of relationships in the way that categories such as bridging or bonding social capital have been used, assuming that the categories across which migrants bridge or bond are defined by ethnicity and nationality. Like Ryan's (2011) Polish research participants, the pioneer migrants who participated in this study formed bridging relations across ethnicity and country of origin, although they bonded with people of similar educational backgrounds.

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 2017 [forthcoming b]). Furthermore, examining pioneer migrants' settlement in places which are super-diverse raises questions about notions of integration and cohesion which emphasise the need for migrants to build bridging

relations beyond their (ethnic) 'group'. The fact is that many pioneers already have established these kinds of bridging relations. While some pioneer migrants find comfort in meeting co-ethnics, almost all of the participants in 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' (Brubaker 2004) approaches towards analysing migration and migrant settlement and showing the variegated backgrounds represented in patterns of immigration in the 21st century.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the research participants for taking their time to talk to me. This research took place while based at the Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) at the University of Birmingham, and I would like to thank my colleagues for inspiring discussions. I would also like to thank Jenny Phillimore for continuing feedback and support.

Funding

This research was funded by the European Commission Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship Programme [Grant number 621945].

References

- Bakewell O, de Haas H, Kubal A. 2012. Migration systems, pioneer migrants, and the role of agency. *Journal of Critical Realism* 11:413-37
- Berg, M. L. (2011). *Diasporic generations : memory, politics, and nation among Cubans in Spain*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn.
- Blokland T. 2003b. *Urban Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity
- Bourdieu P. 1986. The Forms of Capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. JG Richardson, pp. 241-59. New York: Greenwoodpress
- Boyd M. 1989. Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: recent Developments and New Agendas. *International Migration Review* 23:638-70
- Browning HL, Feindt W. 1969. Selectivity of Migrants to a Metropolis in a Developing Country: A Mexican Case Study. *Demography* 6:347-57
- Brubaker R. 2004. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Butcher, M. (2017). Re-working encounter: the role of reflexivity in managing difference. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 1-20.
- Butler, T., & Hamnett, C. (2011). *Ethnicity, class and aspiration: Understanding London's new East End*. Bristol: Policy.
- Cheong PH, Edwards R, Goulbourne H, Solomos J. 2007. Immigration, social cohesion and social capital: a critical review. *Critical Social Policy* 27:24-49
- Cheung S, Phillimore J. 2013. *Social networks, social capital and refugee integration*. London: Nuffield Foundation
- Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC). 2007. *Our shared future: Communities and Local Government*
- de Haas H. 2010. The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36:1587-617
- Dekker R, Engbersen G. 2012. *How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration*. *IMI Working Paper 64*. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford
- Fox JE, Jones D. 2013. Migration, everyday life and the ethnicity bias. *Ethnicities* 13:385-400
- Glick Schiller N, Çağlar A. 2013. Locating migrant pathways of economic emplacement: Thinking beyond the ethnic lens. *Ethnicities* 13:494-514

- Glick Schiller N, Çağlar A, Guldbrandsen TC. 2006. Beyond the ethnic lens: Locality, globality, and born-again incorporation. *American Ethnologist* 33:612-33
- Goodson LJ, Phillimore J. 2008. Social Capital and Integration: The Importance of Social Relationships and Social Space to Refugee Women. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations* 7:181-93
- Granovetter M. 1973. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78:1360-80
- Hickman MJ, Mai N, Crowley H. 2012. *Migration and social cohesion in the UK*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Hudson, M., Phillips, J., & Ray, K. (2009). 'Rubbing Along with the Neighbours' - Everyday Interactions in a Diverse Neighbourhood in the North of England. In A. Wise & S. Velayutham (Eds.), *Everyday Multiculturalism* (pp. 199-215). York.
- Hynes P, Sales R. 2010. New Communities: Asylum Seekers and Dispersal. In *Race and ethnicity in the 21st century*, ed. A Bloch, J Solomos, pp. 39-61. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Jones RC. 1998. Remittances and Inequality: A Question of Migration Stage and Geographic Scale. *Economic Geography* 74:8-25
- Kubal A, Bakewell O, de Haas H. 2011a. *The Evolution of Brazilian Migration to the UK: Scoping Study Report*. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford
- Kubal A, Bakewell O, de Haas H. 2011b. *The Evolution of Ukrainian Migration to the UK: Scoping Study Report*. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford
- Lamont, M., & Aksartova, S. (2002). Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms. Strategies for Bridging Racial Boundaries among Working-Class Men. *Theory, Cultura & Society*, 19(4), 1-25.
- Lindstrom DP, López Ramírez A. 2010. Pioneers and Followers: Migrant Selectivity and the Development of U.S. Migration Streams in Latin America. *Annual American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 630:53-77
- Mabogunje A. 1970. Systems approach to a theory of rural-urban migration <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1538-4632.1970.tb00140.x>. *Geographical Analysis* 2:1-18
- MacDonald JS, MacDonald LD. 1964. Chain migration, ethnic neighborhood formation, and social networks. *Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 42:82-97
- Massey DS, Arango J, Hugo G, Kouaouci A, Pellegrino A, Taylor JE. 1998. *Worlds in motion: understanding international migration at the end of the millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Meissner, F. (2016). *Socialising with diversity: relational diversity through a superdiversity lens*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meissner F, Vertovec S. 2015. Comparing super-diversity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38:541-55
- Moroşanu L. 2010. Mixed Migrant Ties. Social Networks and Social Capital in Migration Research. *Best Participant Essays Series 2010/43. CARIM - V Summer School on Euro-Mediterranean Migration and Development*
- Moroşanu L. 2013. 'We all eat the same bread': the roots and limits of cosmopolitan bridging ties developed by Romanians in London. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36:2160-81
- Neal, S., Bennett, K., Jones, H., Cochrane, A., & Mohan, G. (2015). Multiculture and Public Parks: Researching Super-diversity and Attachment in Public Green Space. *Population, Space and Place*, 21(5), 463-475.
- Petersen W. 1958. A general typology of migration. *American Sociological Review* 23:256-66
- Phillimore J, Humphris R, Khan K. 2014. *Migration, networks and resources: the relationship between migrants' social networks and their access to integration resources*: KING Project - Applied Social Studies Unit
- Portes A. 1998. Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1-24
- Portes A, Vickstrom E. 2011. Diversity, Social Capital, and Cohesion. *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:461-79
- Putnam RD. 2000. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York; London: Simon & Schuster

- Ryan L. 2011. Migrants' social networks and weak ties: accessing resources and constructing relationships post-migration. *Sociological Review* 59:707-24
- Vertovec S. 2007. Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30:1024-54
- Visram R. 2002. *Asians in Britain: 400 years of history*. London: Pluto
- Wellman B. 1999. The Network Community: An Introduction. In *Networks in the global village: life in contemporary communities*, ed. B Wellman, pp. 1-48. Boulder; Oxford: Westview Press
- Werbner, P. 1999. Global pathways: Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds. *Social Anthropology/ Anthropologie Sociale*, 7(1), 17-35.
- Wessendorf, S. 2013. *Second-Generation Transnationalism and Roots Migration. Cross-Border Lives*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Wessendorf, S. 2014. *Commonplace Diversity. Social Relations in a Super-diverse Context*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wessendorf, S. 2017 (forthcoming a). 'All the people speak bad English.' Communicating across differences in a super-diverse context. In A. Creese & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Language and Superdiversity*.
- Wessendorf, S. 2017 (forthcoming b). Pathways of Settlement among Pioneer Migrants in Super-Diverse London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Williams L. 2006. Social Networks of Refugees in the United Kingdom: Tradition, Tactics and New Community Spaces. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32:865-79
- Wimmer, A. (2004). Does Ethnicity Matter? Everyday Group Formation in Three Swiss Immigrant Neighbourhoods. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(1), 1-36.
- Wimmer A, Glick Schiller N. 2002. Methodological Nationalism and Beyond. Nation State Formation, Migration and the Social Sciences. *Global Networks* 2:301-34

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