

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

IMMIGRANT CHINA

Angers (France), 3-6 October 2012

Convened by:
Wei Shen and Frank Pieke

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. Executive summary

The ESF Exploratory Workshop – ‘Immigrant China’ was successfully held at ESSCA School of Management, in Angers over three days – 4-6 October 2012. Delegates, including senior scholars and early stage researchers arrived on 3rd of October and casual socialising activities took place during that evening. Since group meals were organised for the whole workshop duration, participants had the chance to continue their academic discussions and networking both formally and informally. This workshop was convened by Professors Wei Shen (Centre for European Integration, ESSCA School of Management, Angers, France) and Frank Pieke (Chair of Modern China Studies, Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands), with the administrative support from ESF’s secretariat and Mrs Aline Brisset, ESSCA School of Management,

Initially, there were 24 invited academic participants, including the representative of ESF, Professor Rainer Kattel from Estonia and member of the ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences – SCSS. However, due to personal and professional reasons, two delegates had to unfortunately withdraw from the programme last minute. Nevertheless, the workshop had a truly international dimension and multidisciplinary representation. Among the 24 participants who eventually made to the workshop in Angers despite minor travel problems¹, 8 European countries were represented (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway and United Kingdom) and the participation of scholars outside Europe (China, Japan, Singapore and the United States) brought broader global perspectives on the conference topics and discussions. There was a good mix of research experiences and gender balance (as nearly half of the participants were female – 10/22). The variety of academic disciplines (anthropology, sociology, geography, law, economics, education, demography, political sciences, gender and area studies) ensured a lively discussion and intellectual exchange throughout the workshop. Overall, this ESF event brought together leading experts in the field covered by the conference; the cultural and academic diversity greatly contributed to its overall success and formed a solid basis for international research cooperation in the future.

Thanks to ESF's generous sponsorship of ESSCA School of Management, the event could take place in the Academic Council room, which has all necessary up-to-date presentation and conference tools. The atrium on the mezzanine level adjunct to the Academic Council room provided an airy and ideal venue for lunches and refreshment breaks, where many of the energetic debates were held. Delegates were also able to make use of the School's facilities, such as the wireless internet, photocopy / printing and library resources. Mrs Aline Brisset and a dedicated student helper were present for the whole duration of the conference, to provide any logistical support to the delegates, from travel reimbursement to local touristic information.

Scientific Objectives and Agenda

The main scientific objective of the workshop was to explore an entirely new field of study: international migration and immigrant communities in contemporary China. It is now well documented that China's economic development has seen massive domestic migration. International migration from China is also a rapidly maturing field of research. However, China's rise as an immigration country is still largely ignored. Recently immigration to China has become much more diverse and this workshop addressed this timely topic by focusing on a set of analytical research questions, establishing a theoretical and comparative framework and forming a network of researchers working in this new field across Europe, in cooperation with experts in China and beyond.

In order to achieve the scientific aim of the workshop, four specific objectives were established prior to the event:

- To bring together scattered and fragmented knowledge about contemporary migration to China in a truly inclusive research network, which is both wide reaching and mutually enriching. The workshop served as a perfect kick-off meeting for European and international experts in the field.

¹ Due to a strike of railway in Belgium by its national rail service – SNCB.

- To examine the current research trends in field. With this scientific objective, a variety of theoretical and contextual research papers were presented, together with case studies during the workshop.
- To compare different methodological approaches for analysing migration to China. Thanks to the rich multidisciplinary background, different research methodologies were considered and compared to identify innovative multi-method ways of research.
- To disseminate research findings and form future research projects. The workshop is viewed as the first step for a bigger pan-European research project. The scientific outcomes of the event are now being edited for future publication in a special issue of an academic journal.

The workshop's agenda, based on the above-mentioned scientific aims and objectives was fully realised through interactive workshop sessions – including presentations of papers, discussants' remarks and open discussions.

Overall Conclusions

At present, China continues to be one of the world's most important sources of emigrants. Chinese are fanning out across the globe, contributing to economic growth in their destination countries and the development and globalization of China's own economy and society. There is little doubt that China will continue to play this role for at least another ten years, and quite possibly even longer. What is happening in China will have a significant implication for the global migration order.

On the other hand, China as an immigrant country has been the object of only very limited empirical research until now, , mainly due to the lack of available and reliable data. Most of the existing research focuses on specific case studies, which are isolated, lack holistic investigation and a comparative analytical framework. Studying the continuous increase in the number and diversity of immigrants and comparing their different research findings, the delegates of the workshop identified four different types of migration: business migrants, student migrants, family migrants and overseas Chinese returnees. On the basis of this typology, it was proposed at the workshop that a research network should be formed with the objective to launch a

comparative project on these four target groups. All delegates showed interests in taking part in the project and would seek national, European and international funding to finance the research. The delegates from China have furthermore offered to provide access to useful Chinese statistical sources on migration and demography, as well as important legal information on migration management and governance.

All workshop participants are particularly grateful to the financial support received from the European Science Foundation, ESSCA School of Management, Leiden University and the City of Angers. A city tour of Angers, a reception at the Jean Lurçat Contemporary Tapestry Museum and conference meals also enriched the conference programme and provided participants with a memorable cultural experience of the Loire Valley.

2. Scientific content of the event

The ESF Early Exploratory Workshop started with an official opening address by Professor Catherine Leblanc, Dean and Director-General of ESSCA School of Management, who warmly welcomed the delegates. In her speech, Professor Leblanc highlighted the fact that international migration is the human face of globalization and is not a new topic for Europe. Millions of Europeans have left the continent to the new world in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nowadays Europe is also the home for migrants from different parts of the world, who come here to study, work or live with family and friends. She further pointed out that migration has brought both challenges and opportunities to European societies, making immigration and integration hotly debated topics in France and other European countries; and as China is now on its way to become a global economic and political power, it is also experiencing some of the challenges we face in Europe. However, here in Europe, we still know very little on these important changes in China and their implications for Europe and the rest of the world. Following the welcome remarks, Professor Kattel also welcomed the participants on behalf of the European Science Foundation and gave a detailed introduction on ESF's origin, organisation and work. He also shared the news that the ESF will soon be restructured and there would be

unfortunately no further follow-up funding available for the project. The opening session was moderated by Professor Albrecht Sonntag, associate dean and head of the Centre for European Integration (CEI) of ESSCA, who gave an overview of research activities on China and China-Europe relations at ESSCA and expressed his thanks for the participants to travel to Angers to this important event.

After the official opening, Professor Wei Shen of ESSCA, one of the workshop co-conveners delivered an introductory talk on the rationale, context and aims/objectives of the workshop. Professor Shen stressed the timeliness and socio-economic relevance of the research theme of 'Immigrant China' and underlined the importance of the workshop in bringing together leading experts in the field with the hope to establish an international, multidisciplinary research project. In addition, Professor Shen also drew the attention of participants to the existing research difficulties such as issues related to research data on foreign migrants in China. A tour de table of workshop delegates took place after Professor Shen's introductory remarks, to allow delegates to get to know each other's disciplinary background, affiliation, and on-going research projects.

The early exploratory workshop was divided to five sessions, each addressing a specific scientific focus:

Session I

The first session was the contextual session, which provided an excellent overview of China in the current global migration order. Professor Pál Nyíri (VU Amsterdam) gave an insightful talk on the place of human flows in Chinese globalisation. He argued that China, through its emergence as a great power, has seen a set of global networks that in some ways stand apart from the existing order of globalisation. Human flows are a crucial part of these. Following this, Haiyan Zhang (Antwerp), Antonella Ceccagno (Bologna) and Bin Wu (Nottingham) gave three in-depth analyses of new waves of Chinese migration to Europe and migrants' network, activities and mobilisation in a number of EU countries. Professor Zhang cited his recent work on the Euro-China Investment Report 2012 and China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Europe, and pointed to the role of ethnic communities in the

European landscape of Chinese enterprises, based on his analysis of corporate and entrepreneurial firms. Professor Ceccagno, who has worked extensively on Chinese immigration to Italy, demonstrated the relations between Chinese migrant entrepreneurs and the rescaling of industrial districts in Italy and the impact of the financial crisis on Chinese migrants. A most striking new feature of these Chinese migrants is that they are currently expanding from performing only simple manufacturing tasks for Italian suppliers to actually managing the entire productive process in the garment sector. Based upon findings from a series of fieldwork in Veneto, Italy and East Midlands, UK, Prof. Wu's (Nottingham) talk contended that class consciousness has co-existed, sometimes uneasily, alongside ethnic and cultural relationships amongst Chinese migrant workers and has played an important part in the making of new Chinese communities. Prof. Wu illustrated complex factors behind the formation, diffusion and development of class-consciousness amongst Chinese immigrant workers. Professor Giovanna Campani (Florence), in her role as the discussant, responded to the four presentations and highlighted the gender aspects of Chinese migration. The rich discussions following the presentations were chaired by Professor Ron Skeldon (Sussex), who is a renowned expert on international migration and who shared his own thoughts on immigrant China, having already suggested research on China as an emerging destination for economic migration in 2011.

Session II

Talent migration was the focus of the second session. How to attract foreign science and technology talents and encourage the returns of overseas Chinese has been on the priority list for Chinese Government. The first presentation, by Professor Cong Cao (Nottingham), however explained why the Chinese government's policies of attracting first-rate overseas academics back have only yielded mixed results at best. His presentation discussed the reasons behind the hesitation of overseas Chinese to return at a time when China is in desperate need of talent to turn itself into an innovation-oriented society, and provided insight into some of the realities that returned entrepreneurs face in China. The two discussants - Dr. Elaine Ho and Professor Wei Shen not only commented Cao's paper, but also gave a brief overview on their own work on talent and return migration. Dr. Ho (Singapore) vividly illustrated

how mainland Chinese returnees from Canada are being caught between “Two Worlds” in China, due to the country’s *Hukou* system. She argued that considerations of the *Hukou* system, stipulating access to rights and privileges in China, has shaped the return migration experience of Mainland Chinese migrants who have already been naturalised as Canadian citizens. Professor Shen (Angers), who has published widely on Chinese students’ return migration, pointed out the unexpected impact of China’s notorious ‘One Child Policy’ on the return migration of students, due to their family kinship. Professor Catherine de Wenden (Paris) chaired the discussions.

Session III

The third session considered new forms of migration to China, and was chaired by Professor Frank Pieke (Leiden), co-convenor of the workshop. Using population data from China, Professor Lihua Pang (Beijing), a demographer, gave a thorough presentation on the trends and characteristics of foreigners living in China based on her initial data analysis. Professor Pang agreed that the data remains a major research obstacle for researching foreign migrants in China, due to the collecting methods and access restriction, and kindly offered help for non-Chinese researchers to obtain statistical sources. Dr. Hélène Le Bail (Tokyo/Paris) is a specialist on marriage migration and African migrants in China. In her talk, Dr. Le Bail used her fieldwork findings in both China and Japan to show the role of marriage migration in Asia and the globalization of the reproductive sphere, in particular she highlighted the changing patterns of migration and implications of government policies on marriage migration. Ms. Caroline Grillot (VU Amsterdam) gave another angle on marriage migration, her talk discussed the conjugality transformations in China through the lens of an apparently marginalised social phenomenon in terms of both location and of practice: cross-border marriages between Vietnamese women and Chinese men in China’s Guangxi and Yunnan provinces, and highlighted the impact of social marginality in the development of alternative patterns of conjugality in borderlands. Ms Xiao Ma (Leiden)’s presentation provided a refreshing examination on urban migrants and the production of multi-culturality against the background of globalization in China. More specifically, Xiao Ma investigated the situation of the Wangjing community, the Korean-Chinese community in Beijing, and demonstrated

the cultural behaviour of Korean immigrants, cultural organizations in the community as well as residents' interaction. This session resulted in a lively debate, particularly on gender and migration in China, led by Ms Michelle Kleisath (Seattle).

Session IV

Chaired by Professor Pál Nyíri and discussed by Dr. Hélène Le Bail, the fourth session addressed business migration to China, which is now home to numerous international businessmen and tradesmen, from Japanese in Shanghai to Africans in Guangzhou. To start, Professor Karsten Giese (Hamburg) raised questions of social and economic organization; perceptions of "the other"; social integration, as well as questions of social change and innovation related to the presence and the activities of Chinese migrants within West Africa and the influences of West African migrants in China on both their host and home societies. Dr Elaine Ho shared findings from her new research project on the urban aspirations of African migrants in China, through fieldworks in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, while Ms Heidi Østbø Haugen (Oslo) also provided insight on the lives of Africans in China through her research on China-Africa relations. Without doubts, the economic and trade relations have surged in recent years, as shown by both Ho and Haugen. Both of their works called for a more in-depth look on human relations and engagement. The last presentation in the session, by Professor Wei Shen, analysed the impact of recent Arab migration to China in the past three decades following China's open-door policy of economic reform. His talk used the city of Yiwu as an example to illustrate the economic, social and religious influences on the city and showed a variety of primary and secondary sources on the subject, including national and local statistics, interviews with migrants and other stakeholders, as well as reviews of media accounts. All four papers highlighted the relations between trade and migration, as well as sensitive issues of integration and identities in China. During the discussions, the topics of race and discrimination, like the use of terms such as 'Chocolate City' on Africans in Guangzhou were heavily debated.

Session V

Building on the previous four sessions, the fifth session involved three forward-looking presentations which provided an outlook on China as an immigrant country, and asked the question whether China is ready for this (forthcoming) reality? Professor Frank Pieke pointed out that China is beginning to face the formation of more permanent immigrant communities, many of which are residentially clustered and occupationally specialized. Their impact on China's existing cultural, regional, and occupational diversity will have considerable repercussions for the kind of country China will be ten or twenty years from now. Ms Michelle Kleisath's talk applied tools shaped by critical race theorists and fieldworks in Western China to investigate how race influences the structure and practices of transnational NGOs, and how various stakeholders in these organizations understand their own racial positionality, revealing new pathways by which the transformation of development practice is possible. Professor Guofu Liu (Beijing), one of the best-known legal experts on migration law in China, gave a detailed analysis on the changing legal framework on migration and immigration in China. Professor Liu emphasised that, since the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, Chinese immigration law has been experiencing significant change. In particular, that brought about by the acceptance of a market economy in 1991, and by access to World Trade Organization membership in 2001. Due to the dilation of the legislation, the issue of conflict between Chinese immigration law and other Chinese laws has become serious. He also made useful comparisons of Chinese laws with other migration countries. This panel was moderated by Professors Giese and Skeldon, both providing brilliant feedback on all three papers, and it continued with another round of vigorous discussion on law and race.

The concluding session was planned to allow for feedback and suggestions of how to follow up on the research project. Dr Jan Schneider (Berlin), an experienced EU migration policy analyst, now affiliated with The Expert Council of German Foundations for Integration and Migration (SVR) in Berlin, reflected his views on the topic as an outsider who has never worked specifically on Chinese migration. He pointed out the difference and similarities in dealing with migration and integration in China, Germany/Europe, and called for more comparative work in the field.

Professor Suisheng Zhao (Denver), a political scientist and editor of *Journal of Contemporary China* (JCC), also shared his thoughts on migration and China's international relations. Furthermore he also gave a brief introduction on the JCC and submission requirements for the edited special issue of the workshop. The sustainability of the research after the workshop was the last discussion topic. All delegates agreed to identify and apply for sources of external funding for sustaining the research network and its activities. The three-day event was concluded with a networking lunch.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome

As intended, this project has brought together fragmented European expertise on migration and contemporary China in an interdisciplinary workshop. It had a mixture of senior and early stage researchers from different geographical backgrounds and disciplinary fields, such as sociology, geography, anthropology, or political science. The breadth and scope of expertise needed for this workshop was (and is) simply not available in one single European country. As a result, Europe-wide collaboration and the participation of scientists from China was needed for making this workshop relevant and for preparing the development of future research projects that would combine the disciplinary theory, knowledge and methodology that best suits the research topic. The scientific aim and objectives of the workshop were realised through a thorough examination of the research context on China as an immigrant country from multiple European and Chinese perspectives; a careful consideration of various research methods and approaches for future research projects.

The effective valorisation of the workshop results will now be ensured through an edited special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary China* (Routledge). The three-day workshop also provided a basis for sustained cooperation, as delegates decided to form a joint research project and seek external funding. The EU's Marie Curie Initial Training Network & International Research Staff Exchange Scheme is especially thought as a suitable funding instrument. The follow-up activities will

provide structure and rhythm to already existing loose contacts built on collaborations and research interests on the European level in an inclusive environment.

4. Final programme

Wednesday 3 October 2012

Wholeday *Arrival of participants*

Thursday 4 October 2012

10:00-10:30 **Registration of Participants** (coffee and tea will be provided)
Lobby, ESSCA School of Management, 1 rue Lakanal, Angers)

10:30-11:00 **Workshop opening moderated by [Albrecht Sonntag](#), Associate Dean & Director for Centre for European Integration, ESSCA**

Official Welcome Remarks by [Catherine Leblanc](#), Dean of ESSCA

Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)
[Rainer Kattel](#) (ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences - SCSS)

11:00-11:30 **Introduction of the Workshop and Participants**
[Wei Shen](#) (ESSCA School of Management)

11:30-12:30 Session I: China and International Migration Order: Changing Dynamics and Patterns
Chaired by Ronald Skeldon (University of Sussex)

Human Flows in Chinese Globalization
[Pál Nyíri](#) (Free University of Amsterdam)

Significance of Chinese ethnic communities for China's FDI in Europe

[Haiyan Zhang](#) (Antwerp Management School), *joint paper with Zhi Yang (Central China Univ. of Technology) & Danny Van Bulcke (Univ. of Antwerp)*

12:30-14:00 *Lunch*

14:00-16:00 Session I (continued)
Chaired by Ronald Skeldon (University of Sussex)

Chinese Migrants and the Rescaling of Industrial Districts
Antonella Ceccagno (University of Bologna)

Bringing class back in: class consciousness and solidarity among Chinese migrant workers in Italy and the UK

Bin Wu (University of Nottingham) *joint paper with Hong Liu*
(Nanyang Technological University)

Discussant - Giovanna Campani (University of Florence)

16.00-16.15 *Refreshment Break*

16:15-17:30 **Session II: China as a Talent Magnet**
Chaired by Catherine de Wenden (CERI, Sciences Po de Paris)

Talent migration and technological entrepreneurship in China

Cong Cao (University of Nottingham)

Discussants - Elaine Ho (National University of Singapore) and Wei Shen (ESSCA School of Management)

17:00-17:30 **Transfer back to Hotel**

18:00-19:00 **Walking Tour of Angers**

19:00-20:00 **Conference Reception hosted by the City of Angers**

Olivia Tambou

Adjointe déléguée aux relations internationales, Angers
Location: Jean Lurçat Contemporary Tapestry Museum

20:00-22:30 **Conference Dinner at La Ferme (2 Place Freppel, Angers)**

Friday 5 October 2012

09:00-12:30 Session III: New forms of Migration to China
Chaired by Frank Pieke (University of Leiden)

Foreigners in China: Who are we talking about?

Lihua Pang (Peking University)

Marriage Migration in China and Asia: Past and Present

Hélène Le Bail (Institut français de recherche sur le Japon)

Immigration and the risks of nonexistence - An overview of the Vietnamese wives' case in Southern China

Caroline Grillot (Free University of Amsterdam)

Community, network and the state: South Korea Town in Beijing

Xiao Ma (Leiden University)

Refreshment Break

Discussant - Michelle Kleisath (University of Washington)

12.30-14.00 *Lunch*

14:00-17:00 **Afternoon Session IV: Business Migration into China**
Chaired by Pál Nyíri (Free University of Amsterdam)

De facto Immigrants in China – the African case: State of affairs and future research agenda

Kartsen Giese (GIGA Hamburg)

Urban aspirations of African migrants in China

Elaine Ho (National University of Singapore)

Borders that unite - Trade and the movement of people between China and Africa

Heidi Østbø Haugen (University of Oslo)

China's 'Little Arabia' – Arab Migration to Yiwu

Wei Shen (ESSCA School of Management)

Refreshment Break

Discussant - Hélène Le Bail (Institut français de recherché sur le Japon)

19:00-21:30 **Conference Dinner at L'Ovibos (3 Rue d'Anjou, Angers)**

Saturday 6 October 2012

09:00-11:00 Session V: Immigrant China, is the country ready?
Chaired by Kartsten Giese (GIGA Hamburg)

China as an Immigrant Country

Frank Pieke (University of Leiden)

Immigrant, Expatriate, or Imperialist? Locating White Identity in Today's China

Michelle Kleisath (University of Washington)

Context, Impacts and Prospects of 2012 Exit and Entry Administration Law of China

Guofu Liu (Beijing Institute of Technology)

Discussant - Ronald Skeldon (University of Sussex)

Refreshment Break

11:00-13:00 Concluding Session: Immigrant China Research Agenda
Roundtable Discussion led by Wei Shen, Frank Pieke (Leiden), Suisheng Zhao (Denver, Editor of *Journal of Contemporary China*) and Jan Schneider (SVR Berlin)

13.00 - *Lunch*

End of Workshop and departure

5. Final list of participants

Giovanna Campani, University of Florence, Italy
Cong Cao, University of Nottingham, UK
Antonella Ceccagno, University of Bologna, Italy
Catherine de Wenden, CERI/CNRS, Sciences Po de Paris, France
Karsten Giese, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies, Germany
Caroline Grillot, Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Heidi Østbø Haugen, University of Oslo, Norway
Elaine Ho, National University of Singapore, Singapore
Rainer Kattel, ESF / Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
Michelle Kleisath, University of Washington, USA
Hélène Le Bail, French Research Institute on Japan, Japan
Guofu Liu, Beijing Institute of Technology, China
Xiao Ma, Leiden University, the Netherlands
Pál Nyíri, Free University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Lihua Pang, Peking University, China
Frank Pieke, Leiden University, the Netherlands
Ronald Skeldon, University of Sussex, UK
Jan Schneider, SVR Berlin, Germany
Wei Shen, ESSCA School of Management, France
Bin Wu, University of Nottingham, UK
Haiyan Zhang, Antwerp Management School, Belgium
Suisheng Zhao, University of Denver, USA

6. Statistical information on workshop academic participants²

Early Stage Researchers:	4
Gender (Female/Male):	10/12
Countries of employment:	Belgium: 1
	China: 2

² This figure includes the ESF representative, but does not include ESSCA's support staff and student helper.

Estonia:	1
France:	2
Germany:	2
Italy:	2
Japan:	1
Netherlands:	4
Norway:	1
Singapore:	1
UK:	3
USA:	2
Total:	22