

MIGRATION, URBANIZATION AND INEQUALITY

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Historical aspects: contrasting urban/ageing trajectories

United Kingdom

- **18/19th Centuries:** industrialisation-internal rural-urban migration-urbanization
- **20th Century:** population ageing
- **21st Century:** population ageing, de-industrialisation, counter-urbanization, transnational rural-urban

Historical aspects: contrasting urban/ageing trajectories

China

- 20th (**second half**)/21st Centuries (**first half**):
industrialisation- rural-urban migration-
urbanization-population ageing

Level of urbanisation/population change (selected years) (%)

Year	Country	Level of Urbanization	65+
1901	UK	78	4.7
1951	UK	79	10.9
2007	UK	89	16.7
2030	UK	92	22
1951	China	13	4
2007	China	45	8
2030	China	64	15.7

Sources: UN Population Projections and UK/China Censuses

Migration and inequality

- Rural inequality brought into urban context (Wu, 2007)
- Cumulative disadvantage over the life course affecting migrants arising from income, housing, health and pension inequalities (Nazroo, 2006)
- Pressure of remittances – recent migrants may send home 20/30 per cent of net income (Datta et al., 2006)
- Transnational/long-distance care (Baldasser et al., 2007; Burholt, 2004) feature of the lives of migrants

Similarities between the UK and China

- Migrants live in places often viewed as 'unsafe' by the majority population and local government in the two countries
- But as migrant populations develop services and facilities of their own they themselves come to see them as 'safe' places
- Remittances important to both China and the UK
- Migrants in both countries experience inequality and discrimination in urban areas

Differences between UK and China

- Migrants are transnational in the UK but mostly national in the case of China
- Most migrants in China are not covered by social security or pension insurance
- Most migrants in China cannot remain in urban areas as they enter old age but must return to native rural areas
- Children of migrant families in China have to go back to their hometown to undertake high school education

Research Priorities

- How are those 'left behind' affected as migrants move from rural to urban areas?
- How are migrants in China and UK affected by contrasting patterns of urbanisation?
- What variations are there in how different minority groups respond to migration?
- Do migrants require special attention in social and economic policy?

Research priorities

- **What are the social, health and economic differences between Chinese migrants to the UK in the 60 plus age group and the UK population?**
- **What is the impact of different marriage patterns within Chinese migrants to the UK on lifestyles/resources in late life?**
- **What are the variations in social networks between migrant groups in China and UK and their influence on quality of life?**

Methodological Challenges



- Issue of who counts as a 'migrant' – complexity of term and development of different types of migration (e.g. rural-urban; urban –rural; circular migration)
- Tracking movement of migrants is difficult – especially among those who are not registered and/or have no legal status
- Problem of collecting data in deprived/marginalised urban areas