

An emotional economy of migration driving Mainland Chinese transnational sojourning across migration regimes

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Abstract: In focusing on the way emotional ideologies underpin migration regimes, this article underlines how migrants manage their emotions in a quest towards wider economic and social integration. It compares the experiences of Mainland Chinese immigrants who are in Canada with those that returned to China temporarily but plan to re-migrate to Canada eventually, thus sustaining transnational journeys. The article suggests that the intersection of emotional and migration regimes imposes norms and sanctions that direct migrants towards what are considered appropriate emotions and emotional subjectivities. The economic logics shaping the circulation of emotions within and across geographical space during transnational sojourning is referred here as the emotional economy of migration. The article argues that certain emotions appreciate or depreciate in value as they are mobilised geographically during such transnational sojourning. The analysis contributes to migration scholarship by drawing out the emotional logics, circulations and calculations that structure and prop up the political economy of migration regimes.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration brings with it a variety of experiences. There are exciting moments [and] happy moments but also moments when you feel lost and experience loss. After all you experience cultural disparity, language difficulties and employment challenges... It is challenging to adapt to change so in the process you adjust yourself.

The above interview excerpt by a Mainland Chinese immigrant in Canada reflects the gamut of emotions experienced by migrants. For some, the adjustment to a new milieu is too difficult, prompting decisions to return to their country of origin temporarily. Transnationalism studies recognise that immigration or return migration are unlikely to mark the end of a migrant's journey (e.g. Ley, 2010; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005). Rather transnational migrants embark on complex geographical trajectories, weighing up the costs and benefits of human mobility as they do so (Ho, 2011a). Highly skilled and investor migration in countries like Canada is often framed as an economic transaction in which migrants exchange their financial and human capital for the right of abode and citizenship in another country (Nonini, 2004; Ong, 1999).

Under such neoliberal migration regimes (Kofman, 2005), the categorisation and regulation of migrants and their dependants have been studied at length (e.g. McKeown, 2008; Raghuram, 2004), but these migration experiences denote an emotional quality and calculation that has yet to be fully examined in analyses of migration regimes. Drawing on Mainland Chinese transnational sojourning between Canada and China, this article focuses attention on how the emotions

circulate within and across geographical space during transnational migration. The conceptual contribution of this article lies in what it refers to as an emotional economy of migration, which foregrounds how emotional ideologies contained in emotional regimes (Reddy, 2001) intersect with migration regimes (Larner, 2007). Both types of regimes govern human behaviour through subjectification techniques co-produced by ideology, discourse and practice.

Literature in the sociology of emotions and emotional geography signals how the emotions act as a type of logic that operationalises decision-making and contributes to subjectification (e.g. Hochschild, 1983; Ho, 2009). The coagulation of such emotional logics, usually directed at achieving particular goals, has the capacity to materialise into an emotional ideology, which upon reaching a critical sphere of influence then functions as a type of emotional regime that establishes norms and sanctions (Reddy, 2001). Emotional ideologies and emotional regimes thus script what is considered appropriate emotions. Ahmed (2004a) argues that the emotions accumulate and circulate in society to shape individual and collective human relations in affective economies. Such circulating emotions carve out emotional subjectivities, underscoring the emotional quality of subjectification and the significant role of the emotions in our social worlds (Ho, 2009).

An emotional economy of migration pays attention to, first, how the intersection of emotional and migration regimes regulates what is considered appropriate emotions and emotional subjectivities amongst migrant populations, and second, the way migrants mobilise the emotions as a type of currency for use across geographical space during transnational migration. The intersection of emotional logics with the economics of migration guides migrant decision-making on their geographical journeys. But these emotions are also constituted by wider social relationships that will be discussed in this article.

Scholars have used the term, 'emotional economy' in different ways. Christie et al (2008) invoke it to describe the role that the emotions play in shaping purchasing decisions in the housing market. Lindquist (2010) also refers to an emotional economy when writing about the emotional negotiations of Indonesian prostitutes who undertake sex work. Both cases emphasise the enfolding of emotions in the economy and economic decision-making (also see Ettliger, 2009; Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2004). Migration regimes in neoliberal contexts similarly operate on such market logics. Such regimes encompass not only the institutional apparatuses set up by states to regulate the mobility and rights of migrants (e.g. visas and bureaucratic regulations; see McKweon, 2008), but also the norms and values which migrants are expected to uphold (Larner, 2007; Ho, 2011a). Such migration regimes regard migrant labour as a means of deriving economic gains for the nation-state whilst placing the onus on migrants to accumulate desirable citizenly qualities that would make them contributing members of the nation-state.

This article critically examines the emotional logics contained in the narratives Mainland Chinese migrants (both immigrants and return migrants) use to describe their migration experiences. They allude to a social compact in which the state and other social actors expect migrants, individually and collectively, to behave in emotionally appropriate ways. Return migration decisions thus become equated with a failure on the part of migrants to align themselves with the emotional ideologies

expected of them by migration regimes. The article focuses on how emotional ideologies and emotional regimes contribute to charting migrant journeys across countries as they navigate the demands of migration regimes in both societies of origin and arrival. The next section discusses the literature on emotions and migration regimes that informs the article's conceptual framing.

OPERATIONALISING MIGRATION REGIMES EMOTIONALLY

The significance of the emotions that emerge during the migration process and which shape migrant experiences and societies is gaining explicit recognition in migration studies and the wider disciplines that inform it, such as geography, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies and political science. McKay (2007) examined, for example, the emotional transference of care that is connoted by migrant remittances while Baldassar (2008) and Ryan (2008) studied the emotional labour that goes into maintaining transnational familyhood. These studies focus on the private sphere of familyhood, but Ahmed (2004b) and Brown (2006) also consider how personal and collective emotions shape public attitudes towards migrants. Although there are overlaps between affect and the emotions (e.g. Kobayashi et al, 2011), the literature in geography places different emphasis on how they are deployed analytically (see Pile, 2010). Whereas the literature on affect is concerned with the intensities and drives of a pre-cognitive or non-cognitive state, this article focuses on how the emotions are cognitively managed by migrants and capitalised upon by migration regimes.

The emotions are integral to, not only public attitudes towards migrants, but also migrant attitudes towards the uncertainty that is wrought by the migration process. Lindquist (2010), for example, draws attention to the way notions of shame lead female prostitutes in Batam, Indonesia, to consume drugs that will enable them to perform an identity necessary for the sex work they do but which can be difficult to reconcile with their religious beliefs. Wolf (2002) similarly explains that shame or embarrassment to the family conditions the behaviour of children in Filipino immigrant families, deterring them from seeking professional counselling for depression or suicidal tendencies. Such approaches foreground 'what the emotions *do* and how emotions *work*, rather than what the emotions *are*' (Figuro, 2008:284; emphasis original). These writings resonate with a broader scholarship that sees the emotions as emerging out of, and constituting, social and cultural practices. The emotions are not only regarded as a type of logic prompting decisions and actions, but are also amenable to regulation (Hochschild, 1983).

The coagulation of emotional logics can materialise as an emotional ideology that directs people into learning the emotions considered appropriate for certain social situations. Such emotional ideologies feed into what Reddy (2001:323) calls an emotional regime, which he explains are 'the complex of practices that establish a set of emotional norms and that sanction those who break them'. Emotional regimes thus establish emotional ideologies or feeling rules (Hochschild, 1983) that when transgressed prompts individuals to deploy emotional management techniques and recalibrate their emotions until it is aligned with a prescribed set of feeling rules. Further, exchange theories on the emotions posit that 'when people feel that the outcome of an exchange is fair and just, they experience positive emotions, and when they perceive the payoffs of an exchange to be unjust, they feel negative emotions' (Turner and Stets, 2005:180). This view of the emotions suggests a positive or negative value is attached to the emotions and emotional management entails careful

calibration to balance the ledger. Such arguments on the emotions, emotional ideologies and emotional regimes are particularly useful for analysing how transnational migrants navigate constraints and opportunities (Coe, 2008).

Neoliberal migration regimes manage and channel migrants across the skills spectrum into highly and lowly skilled work for greasing the wheels of global commodity chains that extend across migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries. Systems of governance in migration regimes include visa or citizenship regulations, the rights and responsibilities ascribed to migrants, and their social relations with family members, fellow migrants and non-migrants in their communities of origin and arrival. Migrants are thus embedded in a moral economy of social belonging (Hage 2002). On the one hand, as emigrants they are expected to repay a debt of communality to the society they have left. Carling (2008:1459) observes that there is an exchange of 'moral currency' between migrants and non-migrants. On the other hand, as immigrants they are required to pay dues for the right to belong to the country of immigration. This could mean acquiring citizenly qualities desired by migration regimes, such as aspiring towards economic productivity and wider social integration.

Migration regimes comprise not only of institutional apparatuses but also societal norms or values. Intersecting with migration regimes are emotional regimes that direct migrants into what are considered appropriate emotional subjectivities. Using emotional management techniques, migrants recalibrate conflicting emotions triggered during social situations that do not correspond to the feeling rules or emotional ideologies of the emotional regime that prescribes norms and sanctions. Failure to reconcile conflicting emotions that arise from disappointing or difficult experiences after immigration could prompt return migration decisions (Cassarino, 2004). Yet the returnees are not exempt from the emotional ideologies of migration regimes after return migration, especially if they have in mind plans for re-migration to the immigration country they had left. Herein lies the analytical value of an emotional economy of migration.

An emotional economy of migration is attentive to the way the emotions are mobilised by migrants and capitalised upon by migration regimes. It directs inquiry into the economic underpinnings that channel certain emotions into doing 'work' as part of the social compact between migrants and the migration regime. The emotions function as a type of logic directing the emotional ideologies of migration regimes. When feeling rules are transgressed during the exchange of emotions, migrants manage their emotions to align themselves with the prevailing emotional ideology of the migration regime. The emotions are thus relationally formed and adaptive to the demands of migration regimes. The adaptable nature of the emotions lends itself to being used for instrumental ends in the functioning of the global capitalist economy (Berezin, 2005; Ettliger, 2009). This article asks, first, how do emotional ideologies regulate the emotions and emotional subjectivities (i.e. enacting an emotional regime with norms and sanctions) in migration regimes, particularly under neoliberal contexts?

The article further considers how the emotional economy of migration extends across geographical space. Recent literature questions the assumption that return must be permanent and to a purported homeland, usually seen to be the country of birth (King and Christou, 2011). In fact, several forms of 'return' are perceptible, one of which sees the return of an individual to their *country of birth*, and another in which

immigrants return to their *host* country following a brief sojourn abroad (e.g. Ali, 2011). The state and other social actors in *both* sending and receiving countries are key actors in modulating the migration regimes that govern migrants. These social actors encompass migrants, their families as well as social networks in communities of origin and the communities to which they migrate (Coe, 2008). From immigration to return migration and re-migration, migrants mobilise the emotions to adapt to new environments but are just as likely to use their experiences in different places to acquire the emotional subjectivities desired by migration regimes. The second question the article addresses is how do the emotions circulate as a type of currency across geographical space during transnational migration?

Following a methodology discussion, the article next provides research findings to demonstrate the way Mainland Chinese migrants invoke emotional management techniques to reconcile their encounters with deskilling and integration barriers in Canada. Their narratives reveal the emotional ideologies of migration regimes. The section after that considers the emotional ideologies, norms and sanctions of an emotional regime associated with immigration and citizenship. The framing of such an emotional regime suggests that returnees have failed to use emotional management to adapt to the emotional ideologies of the migration regime. The final empirical section presents counter-perspectives by returnees who invoke a different set of emotional subjectivities to rationalise their return migration decisions. However, the discussion also suggests that returnees that intend to re-migrate are prepared to adjust their emotions and use their return journey to accrue emotional subjectivities fitting with the migration regime they had left temporarily. The article concludes by signalling the importance of keeping in view how the workings of the emotional economy legitimise migrant uncertainty and contribute to structural inequalities between migrants and their 'host'/'home' societies.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted amongst Mainland Chinese migrants in Canada and China, focusing on immigration and return migration trends. The methodology included semi-structured interviews, participant observation and analyses of Chinese and English language websites, media and government reports on immigration in Canada as well as return migration in China. The interviews were conducted with Mainland Chinese migrants who had gained legal residency rights in Canada through the skills immigration program that leads to Canadian permanent residency or citizenship status. To qualify for this program, applicants must possess tertiary level qualifications and they usually also have substantive professional experience obtained in China. The interview respondents are mostly in the 30-40s age range, the majority of which are married but their family units are geographically split between Canada and China. This 'astronaut' family arrangement (Ong, 1999) is common amongst Chinese immigrant families as the main breadwinner may return to the country of origin for better job opportunities but leave the spouse in the immigration country to take care of children who are studying there.

The interviewees in Canada were recruited through immigrant and community support service associations and online advertisements posted on websites frequented by Mainland Chinese migrants. Through a snowballing method, thirty interviews were carried in Vancouver. This was followed by thirty more interviews with returnees in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou (i.e. sixty interviews in total). The

interviewees in China were recruited via Canadian social networking associations in the three Chinese cities and further snowballing from the interview contacts established during fieldwork in Canada.

The interviews were conducted in Mandarin unless the interviewee initiated an English language dialogue. The interviews helped develop a better understanding about their reasons for migration and settlement experiences in Canada (for both the immigrants and returnees). For the returnees, the interviews also addressed their experiences after returning to China and the ties they continue to maintain with Canada. The article is further informed by participant observation at the activities organised by the associations described above. Detailed fieldnotes were recorded in a research diary after each event.

EMOTIONAL IDEOLOGIES OF MIGRATION REGIMES

Mainland Chinese immigration made up the largest inflow of migrants to Canada from 1996-2006 (Statistics Canada, 2009). Canada is an attractive destination for Mainland Chinese migrants because of the educational opportunities it presents for their children, the social stability of a mature economy and the convenience of Canadian citizenship for international travel. Entry through the skills and investment immigration routes is regarded popularly as an economic transaction between migrants and their host countries (i.e. human or financial capital in exchange for citizenship). However, there is another economic dimension to this story; despite arriving through the skills immigration program, Mainland Chinese migrants discover soon the difficulties of finding employment in Canada that commensurate with their Chinese educational and professional qualifications. They are relegated to low-paid menial jobs with insecure employment conditions that affect their ability to provide their families with the quality of life they had hoped for prior to immigration (Guo, 2006; Ho, 2011b; Teo, 2007). As employees on casual contracts they provide low-cost labour for the Canadian economy in both the productive (e.g. as assembly line workers) and reproductive spheres (e.g. as nursing assistants or cleaners). Surplus extraction in production processes is made possible by the combination of productive and reproductive labour, which such migrants provide during their border-crossings (Yeates, 2004).

Employment and lifestyle adjustments result in a period of uncertainty and an emotional roller-coaster ride for the Mainland Chinese migrants, as indicated in the article's opening quote. Their new circumstances necessitate emotional management (Hochschild, 1983) so as to confront the challenges they encounter. For example, Li (female, fifties) had been an engineer in China but after immigrating to Canada, she experienced deskilling when her credentials from Mainland China became devalued in the Canadian labour market. Reflecting on her experiences, Li said:

When we decided to migrate, we heard engineering is a 'hot' industry but when we arrived the situation had changed. We didn't expect this to happen. In China, there is a saying, 'if you learn mathematics, physics, chemistry, you can go everywhere'. But this is not always the case. Still, we think it's your life attitude that matters. If you are optimistic... you have to conquer your barriers and get out of your comfort zone. I found it very hard because I am actually not confident but if I don't overcome it how will I reach my goal? You have to work on that, day-by-day, step-by-step...

Li's narrative indicates that she came to Canada thinking that she can qualify for professional employment in engineering, which she describes as a 'hot' industry to mean that engineers were highly sought after by employers. After arrival she realised she lacked the prior work experience in Canada preferred by employers and needed skills and language re-training. Setting out to re-skill herself, Li found it 'hard' but mobilised her emotions to be optimistic and persevere to 'reach [her] goal'. Her story of striving to 'overcome' deskilling through emotional negotiations is a common one told by the Mainland Chinese migrants interviewed in this study.

Critics argue that racism underlies the labour market barriers inhibiting Mainland Chinese migrants from realising their human capital potential (e.g. Bauder, 2003; Li, 2004). The Mainland Chinese migrants interviewed also described chilly attitudes by Canadians they meet, which they interpret as covert racism (Li, 2007). When asked if he had experienced racial discrimination at work, Wang (male, forties) who re-skilled to be professionally recognised as an engineer again, said that he feels socially rejected and excluded at his workplace. He explained that: 'I sense that a few of my Canadian colleagues don't really like to socialise with me or say hello to me, but they are friendlier to other Canadians at work'. Racism tends to be personalised and experienced emotionally as feelings of shame associated with rejection (Figuro, 2008). But personal emotions circulate relationally (Ahmed, 2004b) to be felt by the collective, in this case amongst the Mainland Chinese migrants as they exchange stories of racism and the shame of rejection with one another during their interactions in the workplace, social settings (e.g. in churches or children's schools), vocational institutions and through Chinese language internet forums.

These social interactions also lead the Mainland Chinese migrants to gradually become cognisant of the emotional ideologies associated with immigration, that is to direct their emotions into doing 'productive work' for the Canadian economy but which also potentially eases their societal integration to gain acceptance as newcomers. The coagulation of such emotional logics, as described in the migrant narratives below, cement into an emotional regime establishing norms and sanctions. Migrants learn about the emotional ideologies, norms and sanctions through social interactions with fellow migrants as well as with different social actors in the migration industry. This migration industry encompasses sectors as diverse as the property market that is targeted at new migrants who aspire towards home ownership; job placement agencies and educational institutions for language learning and vocational training; and immigrant welfare services run by provincial and local governments or non-governmental agencies sponsored partly by the state. These firms and organizations are culpable of participating in upholding emotional ideologies that expect migrants to regulate their emotions and emotional subjectivities in order to find employment and strive towards wider social integration. What would have been privately felt emotions thus becomes a matter of concern to the public domain.

While fellow migrants may share in one another's emotional struggles concerning immigrant adaptation, the emotional ideologies of the migration regime direct such migrants into invoking 'appropriate' emotions or disciplining 'inappropriate' emotions during their social interactions as well. In particular, migrants who learn to cope with the difficult circumstances posed after immigration stress to aspiring fellow migrants the importance of managing their personal emotions appropriately to re-qualify for professional employment and become economically productive in the Canadian

labour market. Having re-established her career, Li now plays a mentoring role in her workplace to new migrant colleagues. She would share with them her story of working for fourteen to fifteen hours a day and also during the weekends. She accepted a reduced pay rate and took on multiple projects in her job. She also practised speaking English diligently and attended classes in the evening to re-qualify as a professional engineer in Canada. Li reminds her new colleagues to mobilise their emotions and ‘work on’ overcoming the challenges of deskilling. Her experience and emotional negotiations are revealing of the emotional ideologies underpinning migration regimes that expect migrants like her to render oneself useful to the economic functioning of the nation-state by recalibrating their personal emotions. The emotional ideologies of such an emotional regime channel their emotions towards economic productivity; the emotions thus function as a type of emotional currency that can appreciate in value if mobilised appropriately towards economic productivity and societal integration.

For migrants, managing their emotions also entails emotional distancing from the hard-hitting realities of deskilling, an experience especially disappointing for men who are seen to be the breadwinners in their families. For example, Sheng (male, thirties, engineer) experienced deskilling but he adjusted his negative emotions (Turner and Stets, 2005) to come to terms with his new situation:

When you decide to come you have to tell yourself that you have given up what is [in China]. You can’t always think of what it is like over there or how good it used to be there. I always tell my friends this when they say to me, ‘remember how well things used to be in China? If only I didn’t come to Canada’. I will reply, ‘you should forget about the past since there is no turning back for us’. [For myself] if I keep thinking about what it is like in China I will not feel at peace here and find it unsuitable. My psychological and emotional state would be worse. If I went back I won’t be able to find a job equivalent to my previous position. Those jobs have been given to other people. Then if I came back to Canada again it won’t be good as well. I have friends who experienced this and it’s not good. For myself, I remain in Canada happily... Changing myself is for the sake of adapting to a new life here so that I can be happier. If I had made plans I would have been disappointed [and] always a loser.

Immigrant adaptation implicates deliberate emotional management to recalibrate feeling rules by framing their new situation positively (Ryan, 2008). Sheng’s anecdote stressing that, ‘when you have decided... you have to tell yourself that you have given up what is on the other side’, is suggestive of an emotional distancing that refuses to be drawn into sentimentality over what they have left behind (‘you should forget about the past’). Instead, he puts aside his expectations and removes himself emotionally from the disappointment to become happier (‘changing myself is for the sake of adapting to a new life here so that I can be happier’). Such is the advice that migrants like Sheng share with fellow migrants (‘I always tell my friends’), sustaining the emotional ideologies of the emotional regime associated with immigration. Fortifying their resolve to manage their personal emotions are aspirations for their children’s education and future life chances, which they believe will be better in Canada than in China. They calibrate the value of positive emotions against negative emotions to align themselves with feeling rules.

The Mainland Chinese migrants rationalise the disappointing outcomes of their immigration by framing their circumstances as, first, part and parcel of obtaining life experience (i.e. taking things in their stride) and, second, seeing themselves as individuals who have overcome the challenges life has thrown their way. Some interviewees attributed their ability to adapt to 'luck' (*yunqi*). However, 'luck' carries a double meaning here. First, it refers to the chance encounters in life that turned out to be propitious for them (e.g. work opportunities and peer encouragement). Second, it also connotes a degree of modesty to downplay their personal hard work, an ability to manage their emotions and adjust their mindsets to make the most of their new lives in Canada. Such satisficing approaches, arrived at through a careful calibration of the emotions, directs migrants into conforming to the emotional ideologies associated with immigration, or as the next section argues, they may face sanctions under the prevailing emotional regime.

The preceding discussion highlighted the significance of emotional management for immigrants adapting to a new life abroad. Their narratives suggest that they individualise the experiences and challenges of adapting to a new country, attributing it to their personal emotional subjectivities. They distance themselves from negative emotions and recalibrate their feelings positively so as to cope with deskilling and the challenges of re-skilling to improve their employability. Emotional distancing bears resemblance to neoliberal tactics of governance at a distance (Rose, 1999) and places the onus on migrants to manage their emotions, thus individualizing responsibility. The findings presented here show that migrants regulate their emotions and emotional subjectivities individually, but their narratives also point to the wider social relationships that prop up the emotional regime associated with immigration. The emotional ideologies contained within this emotional regime are constituted by social relationships with employers, firms and organizations in the migration industry, fellow migrants, and not forgetting the well being of the family unit. With these social relationships in mind and by managing their emotions to function as economically productive members of the Canadian labour market, migrants participate in an emotional economy that takes them a step closer towards what the state and society consider are desirable citizenly attributes.

BECOMING AN IDEAL IMMIGRANT WITH DESIRABLE CITIZENLY QUALITIES

Migration regimes are closely associated with citizenship discourses promoting immigrant integration as a pathway towards becoming a fully accepted and contributing member of the nation-state. Most of the recent Mainland Chinese migrants entered Canada through the skilled immigration program and gain permanent residency or citizenship rights this way. But their income levels are low because of deskilling, leading certain public discourses to claim that they are less deserving citizens because they contribute fewer taxes and have poor earning potential. An example can be found in a newspaper feature on Canadian immigration where a politically conservative commentary cited census data to criticise recent skilled immigrants in the following way (Grubel, *The Globe and Mail*, 13 May 2012):

Data based on the 2005 census and published by Statistics Canada show [skilled immigration selection] policies have not been successful. Immigrants who arrived between 1987 and 2004 earned incomes that were on average equal to only 70 per cent of the incomes of Canadians. These recent immigrants have

higher than average levels of unemployment and lower labour force participation rates. They also disproportionately have incomes below the official poverty line. Significantly, these recent immigrants pay income taxes that are only 54 per cent of the national average. Because of their low incomes, they also pay less than the average in other taxes. At the same time, these immigrants are entitled to all of Canada's generous social programs and enjoy the benefits of the country's spending on infrastructure and security.

For some Mainland Chinese migrants, deskilling experiences and demeaning societal discourses about them (such as the news commentary described above) trigger return migration decisions. Those migrants that choose to remain in Canada mobilise their emotions to re-skill themselves and prove the naysayers wrong, as discussed in the previous section. But they in turn see the returnees as recalcitrant individuals. In their view, the returnees lack the determination to turn their situations around and harbour a grudging attitude towards Canadian society. For instance, Li reflecting on the situation of friends who left Canada to return to China said:

My friends who returned to China say they are very tired. I realise that there are some people who are able to realise their dreams and others who cannot. I think it boils down to your motivation. In my workplace, the immigrants who are able to join usually have a positive attitude. [You] can't always have a high morale, sometimes it will drop but that's when you have to adjust yourself.

As Li observes of her own social circles, the stereotype attached to returnees is unflattering: returnees fear failure. Fear has a negative value attached to it resulting in a deficit of emotional currency and ensuing lack of motivation and poor economic productivity. Migrants vulnerable to fear are expected to remove themselves from this emotion and 'be brave' (Yan, female thirties). Drawing on her own experience of re-skilling to re-qualify as a solicitor, she said:

Many new immigrants just have to adjust a little bit, to look at things more from a positive side and be more practical and brave. You are ten thousand miles from your home country and brave enough to come here. You just have to be brave enough to do something else.

Returnees are further criticised for not detaching themselves from the negativity associated with disappointment, triggering emotional subjectivities of bitterness and discontent. Sheng had retrained to qualify as an engineer and he shared his own experience and view towards returnees in this way:

The important thing is your emotional state and mindset. There is no perfect place. Wherever you are there is something good and something bad about it. When you decide to give up what you have there you have to face up to it. And don't compare what is good about Canada with what is bad about China or you will always be a loser... some people say Canada is dull so why don't they change their hobbies to enjoy the unique scenery, go skiing and snowboarding? They complain all day, pulling a long face, they haven't found what can make them happy because they don't take the initiative... Perhaps I am luckier. On the website forums you will find examples of people who post a message saying 'I am telling everyone bye. I haven't met a good person in Canada. The landlord is mean and the other tenants or the neighbours are not nice to me'. I believe this is a minority of cases. Why is it you? Maybe it's because you are not in a good mood, maybe you don't treat your friends well, maybe you are not willing

to let go for who you used to be and interact with new people. That's why you always experience the bad things.

The narratives by Li, Yan and Sheng illustrate the moralising feeling rules (Hage, 2002; Hochschild, 1983) or emotional ideologies expected of immigrants under the prevailing emotional regime. In the view of migrants who remained in Canada, when an immigrant is unhappy or dissatisfied with circumstances, he or she should adjust their emotions by framing their perspectives differently. In other words, when life hands them lemons they are expected to make lemonade out of it. Those that defy this emotional ideology are penalised by way of having greater difficulty finding jobs or integrating socially, and the emotional regime further imposes blame sanctions on them (e.g. 'that's why you always experience the bad things' or 'you don't take the initiative').

Wider public discourses in Canada resonate with the views expressed by these Mainland Chinese migrants. The same newspaper feature mentioned at the start of this section carried another story of a 'happy' immigrant who in spite of juggling several menial jobs deliberately managed his emotions so as not to become a 'sour-grapes man' (Friesen, *The Globe and Mail*, 13 May 2012). The report concluded by stating, '[Today] sitting with his young son and daughter, Mr. Sonsona wears a T-shirt that says: "All things are possible." He is very happy with his life in Canada.' Media reports like this portray successful immigrants as those able to distance themselves emotionally from negative feelings. Managing their emotions to arrive at emotional subjectivities of courage and contentment enables them to overcome the integration challenges of settling into a new country and take a step closer to becoming an ideal citizen. Conversely, the emotional regime sanctions returnees by blaming them for not managing their emotions well enough to conform to the emotional ideologies of migration regimes. In the emotional economy of migration, they suffer from a deficit of emotional currency that results in the inability to re-skill themselves for the Canadian economy, leading to return migration decisions.

Bringing together the preceding section on how positive emotions bear appreciation value and this section highlighting the depreciated value of negative emotions allows this article to argue that the circulation of emotions in migration regimes can be likened to currency valuation. In an emotional economy of migration, accruing and projecting desirable emotions as a type of capital equips immigrants to become contributing members of the nation-state, whereas those unable to manage their emotions are portrayed as ineffective and more likely to return to their country of origin because of economic failures and integration difficulties. The downside of such attitudes, attributing immigrant success or failure to their emotional management towards immigration and integration, is it glosses over what Bauder (2003) argues are systemic racisms that contribute to immigrant deskilling and integration barriers. Critics may suggest that the Mainland Chinese migrants, like their Hong Kong counterparts studied by Ley (2010), have property and other assets despite being cash-poor in Canada. But as Guo (2010) points out, it is critical to address issues of recognitive justice that would redress institutional inequities and unequal access to social goods, such as opportunity and social status. Yet the elusive quality of the emotions and emotional subjectivities undermines the traction of such arguments. Instead attaining satisficing attitudes, as discussed earlier in this section, is the means by which migrants arrive at an emotional equilibrium (conditioned by the emotional

regime) that allows them to get on with their everyday lives in Canada. Otherwise return migration could be a more attractive option. Yet as the next section shows, returnees remain subject to the emotional ideologies of migration regimes even during return migration. The following discussion of return migration also demonstrates the malleability of emotional currency across different migration regimes.

THE MALLEABILITY OF EMOTIONAL CURRENCY ACROSS GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE

The above section demonstrates how the emotional regime associated with immigration impacts wider impressions towards return migration decisions. Cerase's (1974) typology of return migration described the 'return of failure' as 'returned migrants who have failed, failed both to get launched in the new society, and – what is even more significant – to live up to their expectations of the advantages to be derived from emigration'. Such portrayals of 'failed returnees' remain influential in popular imagery and policy discourses. Failing to find a place in Canadian society and choosing to return are seen as the outcome of not trying hard enough to adjust one's expectations through emotional management helping to reconcile the conflicting emotions that arise from disappointing experiences.

Yet, interviews conducted with the returnees in China suggest that they frame their decisions differently. Zhang (male, forties, business owner) spent a few years in Canada before returning to China and he explained his return migration decision this way:

I believe I will not find a good job in Canada. Rather than wasting my time there, I prefer to return to China. If I stayed there for a few years to get working experience perhaps by then in China I would have gained a lot more. I came back to start my own business.... I might as well return to take a gamble in China. Canada is already a mature economy. It doesn't have the drive of an emerging economy [like China]. Here I can find opportunities so what if it's polluted and less systematic?

Zhang depicts returnees like him, not as losers or unhappy migrants, but as risk-takers. They are cutting their losses in Canada and pursuing their ambitions in China courageously. Narratives such as this undermine the emotional ideologies popularly associated with return, portraying returnees as unmotivated, cowardly and discontented. The earlier mentioned newspaper feature on immigration in Canada also tackled return migration trends, suggesting that a 'sense of opportunity is luring many young and skilled people to make the U-turn' for their countries of origin (Nolen, *The Globe and Mail*, 13 May 2012). The same report noted the push factors from Canada that lead to emigration decisions:

Some emigrants, asked why they'd returned, describe repeated experiences with racism and a dominant culture they found chilly and hard to penetrate – they never felt quite welcome.

The Mainland Chinese returnees interviewed also cited accounts of covert racism and the lack of inclusivity in Canadian society. Coupled with a stronger sense of belonging to China, these factors prompt return migration decisions, such as for Guang (male, forties, business owner):

Most immigrants who move during their thirties and forties have difficulty adjusting because of their emotional and psychological states. Many of them

feel a stronger sense of belonging in China. I use my mother tongue [Mandarin] here and I like it here. If it weren't for the social instability it would be even better. [In Canada], it is beautiful and safe but you will always feel that it lacks familiarity. For one, you are a new arrival and you have not immersed yourself in its culture, business or society. You are always skimming the surface, going in circles.

Guang had commuted between China and Canada for several years. He tried to develop business opportunities in Canada at first but was unsuccessful, partly for language reasons and also because he had to rebuild his social networks after the international relocation. Eventually he decided to deploy the 'astronaut' family strategy (Ong, 1999) by basing his business in China and travelling regularly to Canada where his wife and child remained. Eventually this arrangement led to a strain in his marriage and culminated in a divorce, cementing his return migration to China where he felt he belonged culturally and could excel professionally.

While the above examples show that the emotional ideologies associated with immigration can become vulnerable to challenge during onward migration (i.e. contravening the emotional regime), the returnees can become subject to emotional ideologies expected of emigrants by their societies of origin as well (Coe, 2008). In the view of non-migrants, migrants who do well abroad should settle for good in the adopted country and those who return must have fared badly. This is reflected in the narrative shared by Fen (female, forties, administrative assistant) who said her non-migrant friends chided her for emigrating:

Many of my co-workers who remained in China have senior government roles now. They ask me, 'why did you go overseas? You have not gained anything except for a son'. Sometimes I feel the same way too but when I think further about it, I don't think it's a big deal. It's not a bad thing to have more life experiences. I say to them, 'do you dare to go anywhere in the world by yourself? I do. I can even support myself'. Before I left China I didn't know how to do anything. I had a helper so I didn't know how to cook. But in Canada you don't have a choice. You have to rely on yourself. When I gave birth to my son, the nurse said, 'this is your second baby so I don't have to teach you how to bathe for the child'. My husband and I said, 'no, no'. The nurse thought it was strange and taught us how to do it from the start. But when we gave birth to my first child, it was my mum and the mid-wife who helped me do everything. I didn't do it myself. In a way, I am grateful to Canada for giving me a chance to experience it all, haha...

Fen's anecdote illustrates the reproachful attitudes towards returnees for their 'failed' migration ('you have not gained anything except for a son'), directed at triggering remorse or regret. While in Canada, Fen conceived her second child, which is prohibited under China's one-child policy. She responds to her friends' pejorative remark by arguing that other than the privilege of biological reproduction, she has learned to become more courageous and independent. Fen's reply is indicative of emotional negotiations to come to terms with her migration decisions, even saying in half jest that she feels a sense of gratitude to Canada for giving her the opportunity to overcome challenges. Returnees like Fen deploy emotional management to reconcile their return migration decisions with the conflicting view that successful emigration should result in permanent settlement elsewhere. She is in fact mobilising the

emotions from her experience in Canada to assert her personal worth after return migration. In this respect, the emotional currency that had been devalued in Canada actually appreciated in value during return migration.

The majority of the returnees interviewed indicate that they plan to re-migrate to Canada again when their young children are of school-going age or when they are prepared to have an early retirement. Critically, such migrants recognise that they need to prepare themselves emotionally, or accumulate emotional currency again, for re-migrating to Canada. Ming (male, thirties) is a senior academic who worked in Canada as a part-time university tutor for several years before deciding to resume a full-time academic career in China. He emphasised the importance of managing one's emotions and expectations in preparation for moving back to Canada:

When you immigrate you need to have a certain emotional and psychological mindset. You need to be able to find peace within yourself. This way you can truly enjoy what Canada has to offer as a country. When I first arrived I did not have that mindset. But now I am better prepared. When I go back again I will be very happy there, people do change. The truth is, I left Canada not because I am disappointed with it. I was more disappointed in myself.

Emotional preparedness, as Ming pointed out, is seen as an important component of sustaining transnational journeys. In anticipation that he would have to compromise his academic career after returning to Canada, he aims to accumulate not only a comfortable cache of personal savings during his career stint in China but also build up emotional resilience. In this sense, return migration provides temporary respite from the challenges presented by immigration and complements a longer-term transnational trajectory of re-migration (Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Kobayashi et al, 2011).

Recounting his migration experiences, Lu (male, forties, manager) similarly signalled that his stay in China is only temporary:

It was a risk we took by immigrating. When I look back I can't say for sure if I would choose to make the same decision. I don't have an answer to that. We can say it is part of our life experience. We enjoyed it, on the one hand, but on the other hand, we suffered as well... I think our time in China is temporary though. I won't stay here forever. I will return to Canada to live and work. I can't say for sure that I will find work. It depends on the job market opportunity so I can only be open to any possibilities, opportunities. I am used to it, not having a sense of security. It is a lifestyle choice because as an immigrant you won't always have options. You are giving up what you have established, what is certain and what is stable about your life and career. You have given it up.

Return migration to China is only part of a life-course journey for migrants like Lu and their return is still characterised by emotional negotiations ('I am used to it, not having a sense of security'). They intend to relocate to Canada once again but also recognise that to conform to the emotional ideologies of the emotional regime associated with immigration they must manage their emotions to become unemotional, or stoic, towards the disappointments and regrets triggered by their migration decisions.

The above interview narratives suggest that returnees undertake emotional management to rationalise their migration decision, thereby adapting to the different emotional regimes associated with migration. Disappointment with life in Canada is reframed during return migration in positive ways. The emotions that had been devalued in Canada appreciate in value during return migration, signalling the malleability of emotional currency as it circulates across geographical space. Moreover, most of the returnees interviewed in China indicate they intend to re-migrate to Canada again and they recognise that they need to accept stoically the uncertainties associated with transnational sojourning. As with the immigrants who remained in Canada, the returnees in China perceive adapting to life in Canada subsequently as a matter of changing their mindsets through emotional management in order to be 'very happy there'. They realise that they won't be as economically productive in Canada as during their return stint in China, so in the meantime they intend to accumulate not only monetary but also emotional currency in preparation for future circulation in the emotional economy of migration.

CONCLUSION

Emotions are experienced on a personal level but they also circulate relationally to be felt at a collective level through experiences shared by a social group. This article argued that when personal emotions are mobilized amongst a social group to achieve wider societal goals of economic productivity and migrant integration, the emotions move from being a private matter to one of public concern. Such analyses can be useful for assessing how the emotions are mobilized in the service of neoliberal economies more generally. But the article further introduced the idea of an emotional economy of migration to analyse how the emotional ideologies of neoliberal migration regimes script what is considered appropriate emotions amongst migrant populations.

In an emotional economy of migration, emotional ideologies contained in an emotional regime (with accompanying norms and sanctions) guide migrants into what the migration regime considers emotionally appropriate subjectivities. The case of the Mainland Chinese migrants suggests that they become cognisant of such emotional ideologies, norms and sanctions through exposure to public discourses (e.g. media reports) and their social interactions with fellow migrants and other social actors in the countries of immigration or return migration. The emotional regime directs migrants into deploying emotional management to distance themselves from negative emotions and accrue positive emotions. While immigrants seek to accumulate positive emotions to channel towards re-skilling and integration aspirations, returnees are seen to possess a shortfall of emotional currency that could have improved their earning potential and social standing. The way the emotions circulate in migration regimes functions as a type of emotional currency, or capital, in which the value attached to the emotions impacts financial and social standing.

The Mainland Chinese returnees however undermine such emotional ideologies by portraying themselves as risk-takers maximising their economic potential in China. They also reframe what was seen as a deficit in emotional currency by mobilizing devalued emotions positively to assert their personal worth during return migration. Moreover, expectations of re-migration direct them towards accruing the financial and emotional currency for sustaining their families after they relocate to Canada again. This shows that although the emotions may be mobilised by migrants and capitalized

upon by neoliberal migration regimes for instrumental ends, the emotions are shaped by wider social relationships situated in countries of origin and arrival, including with family members, other migrants, non-migrants, employers and migrant organisations.

Earlier literature has already signalled the place specificity of transnational relationships (Zhou and Tseng, 2001; Ley and Kobayashi, 2005; Kobayashi et al, 2011), but this article further advances geographical analyses of transnational migration by examining the intersection of emotional and migration regimes. This analytical focus allows the article to show how the emotions and emotional subjectivities are spatially situated. Even as migrants engage in transnational sojourning, they remain subject to the emotional ideologies of the migration regimes in which they are embedded. However the article also signals the malleable nature of the emotions as it circulates geographically across migration regimes. As a type of currency, the value attached to particular emotions can appreciate or depreciate depending on how it is mobilised in different places during transnational migration.

An analysis attentive to the emotions associated with and triggered by migration trajectories helps contribute to a more nuanced understanding of immigration, return migration and transnationalism, especially in other countries where managed migration is practised such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. Indeed these countries look to one another for policy lessons on categorising and regulating migrant behaviour even as they court highly skilled immigrants (Shachar, 2006). Studying the economy of migration is useful for analysing the circulation of emotions, how they are managed or mobilised, and the (appreciation or depreciation) value attached to emotional currency during transnational migration. The ebb and flow of the emotional currency that circulates alongside people flows can be revealing of an unequal social compact between migrants and migration regimes.

The emotional economy of migration reveals the emotional adjustments that migrants undertake to prepare themselves for coping with the emotional ideologies of migration regimes. There is much uncertainty wrought by their migration trajectories yet migrants and their societies of origin and arrival tend to attribute adaptation failure or success to individual emotional subjectivities rather than addressing the systemic issues that contribute to return migration and transnationalism decisions. Poignantly, as Reddy (2001:330) observes, ‘emotion claims can be neither true or false; instead they are more or less successful attempts to alter or stabilise’. What this means is the elusive quality of emotional ideologies that underpin migration regimes, and the propensity to reduce emotional travails to personal inadequacy, work in tandem to undermine migrant struggles to redress unequal power relations. But if as Ettlinger (2009) argues, accounting for the emotions in capitalist life could help redefine the practices of capitalism, then foregrounding the emotional economy of migration to take stock of and re-evaluate the flows of emotional currency within and across space might bring us a step closer towards progressive change.

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