

Introduction

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This work has been published in the framework of the LIA (International Associated Laboratory) “Post-Western Sociology in Europe and in China”¹ established in 2013 in partnership with the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research), ENS Lyon (École Normale Supérieure de Lyon) and CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking). The LIA partner institutions in China are the Institute of Sociology of CASS, the Sociology Department of Peking University, the School of Sociology and Political Science of Shanghai University, and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Nanking University. In France Professor Laurence Roulleau-Berger, Research Director at CNRS, Triangle, ENS Lyon, is the LIA scientific director and, in China, Professor Li Peilin, Director of the Academic Division of Law, Social and Political Studies and Former Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Peking), is the LIA scientific director.

Following the release of more than ten books and reviews on Post-Western Sociology since 2008, to which both French and Chinese researchers contributed,² the present publication is a very important LIA project which shows the creation of the new Post-Western sociological paradigm. It is based on shared research experiences by French and Chinese sociologists and from theoretical cross analyses. By using French and

1 In 2021 the LIA has changed of name and is calling International Advanced Laboratory (IAL)

2 Among selected publications: Li Peilin and L. Roulleau-Berger, eds. 2013. *China's Internal and International Migration*. London, New York: Routledge; L. Roulleau-Berger, Liu Shiding, eds. 2014. *Sociologies économiques française et chinoise : regards croisés*. Lyon: ENS Éditions; Xie Lizhong and L. Roulleau-Berger, eds. 2017. 社会学知识的建构-后西方社会学的探索 *The Fabric of Sociological Knowledge. The Exploration of Post-Western Sociology*, Beijing University Press; L. Roulleau-Berger and Yan Jun. 2017. *Travail et migration. Jeunes chinoises à Paris et à Shanghai*. La Tour-d'Aigue: L'Aube; L. Roulleau-Berger, Liu Neng, dir. 2018. “Temporalités chinoises et “compressed” modernités.” *Temporalités* 26; L. Roulleau-Berger and Li Peilin, eds. 2018. *Post-Western Sociology. From China to Europe*. London, New York: Routledge; L. Roulleau-Berger. 2021. “Introduction: On Post-Western Sociology.” and “The Fabric of Post-Western Sociology: Ecologies of Knowledge Beyond the ‘East’ and the ‘West.’” *The Journal of Chinese Sociology* 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-021-00148-9> and <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-021-00144-z>.

Chinese experiences in the field of migration as a starting point, we built a conceptual space in which both specific and common sociological knowledge emerge at once, and where established theories based on very different traditions and stories can communicate. The fundamental scientific challenge is the co-production of “Western” and “non-Western” theories for the creation of new knowledge on both local societies and global society.

In this publication, we therefore carried out a cross-sectional study on internal and international migration in China and in France through various research programs, in particular the CMIRA research program “*Young migrants, economic marginalization and urban skills in Lyon, Milan, Shanghai*” (2015–2019), funded by the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region and by the INJEP (French National Institute of Youth and Popular Education). This initiative was supervised by Professor Laurence Roulleau-Berger and Professor Liu Yuzhao, School of Sociology and Political Science of Shanghai University, with the participation of Doctors Marie Bellot, Grégory Giraudo-Baujeu, Beatrice Zani, Triangle, ENS Lyon; and associate Professor Yan Jun and Doctor Su Liang from the School of Sociology and Political Science, Shanghai University. The results of this epistemological and methodological work will enable us to develop the new paradigm of Post-Western Sociology in social sciences.

Inventing a Post-Western Sociology seems to push forward the transformation of a worldwide scientific hierarchy built on scientific norms elaborated from Western hegemonies. Thinking in terms of the plurality of the “provinces of knowledge,” therefore seems less relevant than examining the theoretical and methodological continuities and discontinuities between the French and Chinese analyses of migrations and investigating the differences between situated and global knowledge in different societal spaces.

In order to enable Chinese and Western sociologists to better understand and practice the concept of Post-Western Sociology, while advocating for said concept, academic exchanges must be further strengthened and more academic cooperation must be fostered, with the latter involving the formation of more “Western” and “non-Western” social scholars to jointly participate in the practice of studying “Western” and “non-Western” societies simultaneously, whether it involves their own culture or others’. This book is the result of an attempt to carry out this joint practical process of knowledge production, one in which both Chinese and French scholars are involved.

The present publication is relevant on many levels:

–It shows how the “knowledge on migration” in France and China is created, staging the foundations of sociology, i.e., the permanent and reciprocal movement between fields and theories.

-It describes the experience of international Franco-Chinese research based on a mutual decision by French and Chinese researchers to focus on “foreign” fields and situated theories.

-It allows social science lecturers to circulate in both French and Chinese societies in order to avoid “orientalist” practices and the development of new epistemic injustices.

-It brings the terms of the debate on quantitative and qualitative methods in social sciences back into a context of the inflation of “big data” through the biographical narrative, which enables the description of social processes, rather than states, in different societal contexts. This in turn allows the development of spaces of common thought between Chinese and French sociologists.

This work will be divided into three parts in an original approach in order to demonstrate how Chinese and French sociologists create a Post-Western theory by building on the sociology of migration in France and in China.

The first part, written by the co-editors of this work, presents the theory of Post-Western Sociology and state of art of academic knowledge in the field of sociology of migration in France and China. In both spheres, a great deal of research focused on subject areas: gender and migration, urban integration and work, migration and globalization. Next, the field areas and survey methods of the research programs in France and in China that gave rise to this work will be presented. Finally, the methods for selecting and analysing the fieldwork interviews will be explained.

In the second part, we create knowledge by crossing sociological perspectives on shared topics in an effort to further develop the Post-Western Sociology paradigm by carrying out field research in France and in China and by comparing our research methodologies. This publication aims to make the creation process of Post-Western Sociology intelligible. Each chapter contains a summary of biographies written in both China and France, along with comments from both French and Chinese researchers. Accordingly, we present the overlapping perspectives of French and Chinese researchers on the biographies of young Chinese migrants in China and young descendants of immigrants in France in five major subfields of sociology of migration in France and China:

- Migration and Education
- Migration, Gender and Family
- Migration between Urban Integration and Segregation
- Migration and Work
- Migration and Governance

The third part aims to shed light on common and local knowledge in the fabric of Post-Western Sociology. Chinese authors mostly concentrate their efforts on local knowledge in producing a form of epistemic autonomy to formulate theories of migration in sociology. While their approach engages with American authors for the most part, Chinese researchers produce situated concepts that are the products of Chinese sociology. On French side, the author will underscore the theoretical continuities and discontinuities between different analyses that have been developed in this work in order to shape the framework of Post-Western Space in Sociology.

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