Concepts and Methods

in Migration Research

Conference Reader

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Concepts and Methods in Migration Research

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The instruments and the designs of empirical approaches are the compelling consequences of ideas about the object of investigation – regardless of whether these ideas are based on the implicit assumptions of a researcher's point of view or on highly elaborated theoretical positions. However, in migration research current concepts like "ethnicity", "integration", or even "migration background" are still the subjects of ongoing controversies. Nevertheless, their impact on any kind of empirical investigation cannot be overlooked. Thus, debates on the methods employed in migration research cannot avoid discussing the applied method's underlying perspectives on immigrant societies and populations.

This was one of the starting points for the conference "Concepts and Methods in Migration Research" held in the *Harnack Haus* in Berlin during November 2006. It was the second meeting of the study groups funded in the context of the "migration and integration" programme of the Volkswagen Foundation. The conference programme followed the idea that a considerable number of the issues in migration research discussed with regard to "methods" and "methodology" are not exclusively problems of measurement, sampling, or data analysis of whatever kind. Instead, controversies concerning methodological issues also depend on diverse ways of defining the status and living conditions of immigrant populations in contemporary societies. Not least, current paradigms and terms also vary according to social and political contexts which themselves are shaped by diverse naturalization policies, and public debates. In addition, there are different disciplinary discourses with specific controversies on migration and its impact. Thus, the interrelation between methodological issues and conceptual debates, which is generally relevant for migration research, may gain specific importance for the ongoing "migration and integration" programme with its international and interdisciplinary outlines.

The conference "Concept and Methods in Migration Research" aimed to discuss both key concepts of empirical research with regard to their impact on empirical investigations as well as existing methods of inquiry and data analysis in current migration research. In referring to aspects of measurement on one side and of qualitative data interpretation on the other, the diversity of research methods was taken into account in the conference programme as well. Nevertheless, as to the subject "concepts and methods", there are specifics relating to the applied methods within the existing traditions of empirical research and their paradigms. Standardized inquiries usually have to use predetermined definitions of the concepts and items applied in the measurement. Thus, for empirical investigation there is a need for clarity in terms and definitions despite the still existing ambiguities in current conceptual debates.

Unlike standardized approaches, qualitative inquiries, according to their own research traditions, explore concepts gradually and are even allowed to redefine them during the research process. How immigrants' status and living conditions in today's societies are conceptualized can thus be a result of empirical investigation rather than its starting point. Yet, whereas standardized surveys usually entail a wide range of data, in current migration research often based on cross-national inquiries, interpretative approaches are mostly case orientated and provide general outlines, for example by developing typologies on the structure of a social phenomenon.

Although there are differences in paradigms of research methods, any empirical approach faces considerable challenges and even pitfalls if used to understand aspects of migration and integration in today's immigrant societies. To give an example: with regard to the fact that many of the study groups[1] already in existence use comparative approaches – regardless of the type of investigation they practice – they have to face common methodological issues like equivalence of applied definitions within the referred societal contexts or the conceptualization of the compared units of analysis.

Thus, how to define and compare diverse social, local, and political contexts of immigration processes is a general problem regardless of the type of empirical approach used in the investigation. Likewise during the conference concepts and methods were discussed with regard to common issues in migration research and to their impact on distinct approaches in empirical investigation. The papers included in the reader were presented by invited speakers and experts who were asked for basic input on conceptual debates on one side and on issues of methods and methodology in current migration research on the other.[2]

Andreas Wimmer starts with an overview of theoretical concepts in migration research that seek to distinguish between various immigrant communities and autochthons as a starting point for understanding "ethnicity", thus establishing ways in which this term is used in current scholarly debates. He criticizes an implicit Herderian perspective that tends to naturalize existing social divisions instead of analyzing the various circumstances of their (re)production. Thus, his paper *How (not) to Use 'Ethnicity' in Immigrant Societies: Towards a Boundary-Making Perspective* provides a critical insight into major analytical and empirical problems of given approaches to "ethnicity" and the way it is used as a concept in migration research. As a more convincing approach *Andreas Wimmer* suggests a boundary-making perspective that focuses on the processes of the emergence and transformation of social

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[1] See the overview on the now 12 study groups funded on behalf of the "migration and integration" programme in: http://www.migration-integration.de. The conference took place as a meeting of the 8 study groups which were the result of the first announcement of the programme.

[2] The papers were presented at the conference "Concepts and Methods in Migration Research", the 2nd meeting of the study groups, whereas the conceptual perspective discussed by Nina Glick Schiller was presented at the 3rd meeting "Migration, Integration, and the Impact of Education" in Hamburg.

groups and their way of establishing inter-ethnic assumptions. He concludes with a discussion of research designs that are assumed to be adequate for future work in this field.

Nina Glick Schiller investigates units of analysis in migration studies that are built on the essentialism she considers at the foundation of much of the discourse on migration. In her paper *Beyond the Nation State and its Units of Analysis: Towards a New Research Agenda for Migration Studies* she argues for a replacement of methodological nationalism with a "global power perspective" on migration. As she points out, the suggested analytical perspective includes three main aspects: perspectives on locality, the analysis of transnational fields of power, and a concept of multiple pathways of immigrants' local and transnational incorporation. Yet, in criticizing that current migration research has an internal politics and that scholars have often failed to place processes of international migration, policies, discourses, and national rhetorics within their analytical frameworks, *Nina Glick Schiller* does not suggest a value-free social science. Instead, she argues for an explication of political positions within social theory. She concludes by pointing out the need to study and to popularize a concept of migration process that is a part of global forces experienced by both migrants and non-migrants.

Nicolas Perrin and *Michel Poulain* point out whether and how we can use official statistics on immigration in Europe, thus relating to problems of measurement in today's EU member states resulting from different national migration policies and their definitions of current migration issues. In their paper *How Can we Measure Migration in Europe? Results of the Project "Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration"* they discuss problems of availability, reliability, and comparability of migration statistics in the countries of the European Union. They show how diverse definitions and immigration politics in the EU member states cause considerable problems for the validity of statistics on migration in Europe and how ongoing efforts work towards a harmonisation of European statistics. In their conclusion the authors present recommendations of the *THESIM* group concerning how to use and how to improve migration statistics in Europe.

Jürgen Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik discusses the way socio-demographic variables are used in international surveys, especially those that are common in academic research. Unlike official statistics, in the context of scientific research the impact of measurement is basically the result of scholarly debate. Thus, current ambiguities in the measurement of migration processes are mainly based on the ways terms and theoretical concepts are defined and employed. In his paper *Harmonisation of Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables in Cross-National Comparison* he demonstrates methods by which to harmonise demographic and socio-economic variables in cross-national comparative survey research. How immigrant populations and their status are defined in survey research still varies according to the national concepts applied. Yet, instead of the attempts to translate existing terms and items

in migration research *Jürgen Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik* demonstrates how demographic and socio-economic variables in cross-national comparative survey research can be harmonised by the transformation of national concepts and national structures to instruments which are meaningful for an internationally applicable measurement.

Roswitha Breckner explores characteristics of case-oriented biographical analysis, which since its beginnings in the Chicago school has been, along with ethnographic studies, one of the main approaches in qualitative migration research. With regard to this tradition, her paper *Case-Orientated Comparative Approaches: the Biographical Perspective as Opportunity and Challenge in Migration Research* demonstrates the potential of biographical approaches, which are a basic instrument in today's qualitative research as well. In relating to dominant debates in migration research she shows how biographical analysis is a method to deconstruct and to explore current assumptions in the understanding of immigrants' living conditions and social worlds. She shows the potential of the instrument by a comparative case study on the biographical meaning of crossing social borders during migration. *Roswitha Breckner* concludes with a conceptual discussion on "migration and biography" by exploring the main structures of social processes and contexts linked with migration. Yet, whereas these structures are meaningful beyond the context of a single case, they are perceived by individuals in a way that is shaped by their varying social worlds and biographical experiences.

How (not) to Think about Ethnicity in Immigrant Societies.

Toward a Boundary-Making Perspective[1]

Andreas Wimmer

Abstract

Since its beginnings in the Chicago school, migration research has assumed that distinguishing between various immigrant ethnic minorities and the national majority is the obvious starting point for understanding incorporation and assimilation processes. I show that this implies a Herderian perspective on the world which naturalizes its division into a series of distinct "peoples". Three major analytical and empirical problems of this approach to ethnicity are discussed, drawing on three decades of comparative anthropological research. A more promising approach is the boundary-making perspective that looks at the dynamics of the emergence and transformation of ethnic groups. Seen from this perspective, "assimilation" and "integration" appear as reversible, power driven processes of boundary shifting, rather than the result of overcoming given cultural differences and social distance. The last section discusses four research designs that are most adequate for future work along these lines. They take territories, individuals, social classes, institutional fields or event chains instead of ethnic communities as units of analysis and observation.

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1 How not to think about ethnicity

In the eyes of 18th century philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, the social world was populated by a multitude of nations and ethnic groups, analogous to the species of the natural world. Rather than dividing humanity into "races" depending on physical appearance and innate character (Herder 1968: 179) or ranking peoples on the basis of their civilizational achievements (ibid.: 207; 227), as was common in the French and British traditions of the time, Herder insisted that each nation represented one distinctive manifestation of a shared human capacity for cultivation (*Bildung*) (e.g. ibid.: 226). In the naturalist language of the times, he stated that if each of these nations had remained in its place, one could have perceived the world as a garden, where this human nation-plant flourished here and another one there, each following its own *Bildung* and nature (Herder 1968:326).

Ethnies and nations represent the main actors on the stages of Herder's world history, which thus is a tale of their emergence and decline, their migrations and adaptations to local habitat, but also their mutual displacement, conquest, and subjugation. According to the Herderian tradition of thought, *ethnies* and nations are total social phenomena, constituted by three isomorphous aspects: First, they form communities held together by close ties among their members (cf. ibid.: 407), thus representing what the founder of romantic political theory, Adam Müller, later called a "Volksgemeinschaft". Secondly, they represent identities formed around a sense of shared destiny and historical continuity (ibid.: 325). Identification with, and being categorized as member of, an ethnic community coincide in an unproblematic way. And finally, each ethnic culture and language enshrined a unique world view, the *"Genius eines Volkes"* in Herderian language (cf. ibid: 234). The boundaries of society, the horizon of identity, and the realms of shared culture thus coincided. Community, ethnic category/identity, and culture became synonymous.

The social sciences have largely inherited this Herderian view and have taken ethnic groups and nations to be the constituent parts of human society. Is this because the human brain is hard-wired to perceive ethnic or national groups in analogous terms to species in the natural world, as some anthropologists and psychologist have argued recently (Hirschfeld 1996; Gil-White 2001)? Or is it because nationalism has become the most powerful political ideology of the modern world, shaping both the political landscape *and* the categorical lenses through which we observe it (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002)? Whatever the answer, it is remarkable that more demanding social science approaches that analytically distinguished between community, ethnic category, and culture, had little influence on mainstream social science. This is illustrated by the fate of Max Weber's brilliant analysis of race, ethnicity, and nationhood that he scattered over several chapters of *Economy and Society* (Weber 1978a: 385-398, 922-926). It had little impact on mainstream social sciences until they were re-

discovered half a century later. Another case are the writings of the founding father of American anthropology, Franz Boas, who emphasized the disjuncture between cultural area and national or ethnic communities (e.g. Boas, 1928). These insights were subsequently forgotten and his legacy recast in a Herderian mold.

1.1 Herder's heritage in immigration research

Herderianism continues to be well represented in the landscape of contemporary research, including much research in the field of migration and immigrant integration, as this section will show (drawing on Wimmer 1996). The classic assimilation paradigm in migration studies, which has experienced an extraordinary revival both in the US and in Europe (Alba and Nee 1997; Esser 2006), also assumes that the boundaries of culture, category/identity, and community coincide in an unproblematic way. The units of analysis are communities of immigrants from a particular country of origin who make their way into the social mainstream. At the end of the process, the communities are dissolved through intermarriage and spatial dispersion, minority cultures are diluted through processes of acculturation, and ethnic identities become ever thinner until all that remains is what Herbert Gans has famously called "symbolic ethnicity" (Gans 1979). The more sophisticated versions of assimilation theory, including the original typology developed by Gordon, did indeed analytically distinguish between the social, the cultural, and matters of social classification and identity and posited that assimilation proceeded with different speed on these parallel pathways (Gordon 1964). However, by taking ethnic groups as units of analysis and by assuming their bounded and coherent character during the first stages of the process, Gordon nevertheless continued to think within a Herderian framework.

This also holds true for the "new" versions of assimilation theory that revised some of the assumptions of "old" assimilation theory, most importantly the conviction that all roads should and will lead, in the end, to the mainstream. Westport and Gordon even believed, it may be recalled, that the black population in the United States would follow the assimilatory pathways that voluntary migrants from Europe had presaged. Newer versions of assimilation theory, foresee different possible end results of the process, including persistent non-assimilation of immigrant communities. In "segmented assimilation theory" (Portes and Zhou 1993), the most prominent neo-assimilationist approach, what is "segmented" are the pathways of immigrant incorporation (confusingly still called "assimilation"). Two new outcomes are added to the tableau. First, ethnic communities/identities/cultures may persist over time and allow individuals to achieve upward social mobility without having to develop social ties with mainstreamers, without having to acculturate to mainstream culture, and without necessarily identifying with the national majority. Besides this ethnic enclave mode of

immigrant incorporation, there is a "downward assimilation" path where immigrants develop social ties with, identify with, and acculturate to the black segment of American society, rather than the "white mainstream". As this short characterization makes clear, however, the basic analytical scheme of "old" assimilation theory is maintained: It is ethnic communities/cultures/categories thought as a Herderian whole that move along the three possible paths of assimilation, and it is ethnic communities/cultures/categories that end up either in the mainstream, the ethnic enclave, or the stigmatized world of black America.

Socio-psychological research that derived from the anthropological branch of the Chicago school has developed into similar directions. John W. Berry's well known typology of "acculturation" strategies distinguished between assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry 1980). Despite the distinct individualistic language that often characterizes work in this tradition, the basic dimensions are nevertheless defined in collectivistic terms and refer to group-level processes. The typology is based on the distinction between culture and community. Assimilation can proceed on one, both, or none of these two dimensions, producing the following four-field typology. Social and cultural assimilation combined produces "assimilation", social assimilation combined with cultural retention is "integration", cultural non-assimilation together with social non-assimilation receives the "separation" label (the ethnic enclave mode), while both cultural assimilation together with social non-assimilation is "marginality" (equivalent to "downward assimilation"). While this scheme certainly represents an advantage over straight-line assimilationism, it nevertheless remains tied to the same basic outlook on the social world: It is made up of different kinds of peoples, each characterized by a unique culture and, at least initially, a separate social universe.

Assimilation theory's nemesis, multi-culturalism or "retentionism" in Herbert Gans' terms (Gans 1997), leads back to full-blown Herderianism. Multi-culturalism postulates that even across generations, such cultures, identities and communities remain vital, viable, and visible. Contrary to classic assimilation theory, it conceives such ethnic persistence as highly desirable and does not believe that the compartmentalization of society into a series of ethnic enclaves represents an obstacle to the social mobility of immigrants or the social cohesion of the society at large. Normative positions (that "cultures and communities" should be maintained) often trumps over empirical questions (whether they actually *are* maintained) (cf. Waldron 1995): If they are *not* maintained and therefore "lost" to assimilation, it is because these cultures/communities/identities have been suppressed and not given public recognition by the dominant community, otherwise they *would* have been maintained. Thus, even if such cultures and communities no longer exist, they still provide the framework through which multi-culturalists observe the world (see e.g. Modood Forthcoming).

A similarly straightforward Herderianism dominates much of ethnic studies at American universities. Most scholars working in these fields assume the givenness of ethnic categorizations, the integrity and coherence of ethnic cultures, and the boundedness of ethnic communities. Without such assumptions, the very principle of constituting "Asian American Studies", "Native American Studies", "Chicano Studies", "African-American Studies" as separate social science disciplines each focused on a clearly identifiable object of analysis would be questionable. These disciplines thus resemble, in design if not in actual research practice, the history and folklore departments of recently founded nation-states which documented their people's history of oppression and eventual liberation from foreign domination, their people's cultural uniqueness and civilizational achievements, and so forth (on the nationalist foundations of ethnic studies, see Espiritu 1999: 511; Telles and Ortiz Forthcoming, chapter 4; for a textbook representing this perspective, see Aguirre and Turner 2007). US-style ethnic studies have had, for better or for worse, quite some impact on the research scene in Europe, especially in Great Britain (Banton 2003).

Some more recent approaches have criticized both assimilationism and multi-culturalism but remain so closely tied to it that they mirror their basic view on the social world even in an apparent gesture of rejection. Such is the case in the recent wave of research on creolization (Palmie 2006), hybridity (Bhabha 1995; Werbner and Modood 1997) or multiple identities, much of which is coined in a cultural studies language. The biological metaphor of hybridity assumes that a new species is born out of the crossing of two already existing species. While the hybrid culture remains open to both parent cultures and is thus less bounded and restricted than the original ones, the world remains populated by groups, hybrid and others, that are defined by their distinguishable cultural features, their separate identities, and their communitarian character (cf. Caglar 1997; a similar critique of the "multiple identities" school is offered by Floya 2002).[2]

The literature on transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Vertovec 1999; Portes 2001) suffers from similar problems. It has greatly helped to overcome another feature of Herderianism that I have not discussed so far: The idea that each ethnic or national group occupies a specific territory, the cornerstone of the nationalist variants of this tradition of thinking. Transnationalism showed that some ethnic groups, particularly migrant communities but also long established diasporas, actually live in various places at the same time. They thus seem to transverse the grid of nation-states. Still, the world is made up by clearly

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[2] The same could be said about the "mixed race" scholarship and activism in the United States, which mostly sees peoples of mixed background as constituting yet another, separate "race", not unlike the racial thinking in late colonial Mexico, which described the various mixtures of peoples each producing a separate "casta" with a distinguishable character and social status.

demarcated communities of identity and shared culture, albeit now including some deterritorialized communities stretching over several nation-states.

1. 2 Three problems with the orthodox approach

The Herderian view has not only influenced the way the social sciences portray immigrant societies, but even more so how lay members of society talk about and perceive the social world they inhabit. Common sense concepts of society and professional social science discourse reinforce and complement each other nicely - which adds to the plausibility of both and assures that sociologists of immigration have an audience in the wider public, such as when they warn of the decline of the "assimilation capacity" of the new immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), the increasing "cultural distance" between autochthons and *Ausländer* Hoffmann-Nowotny 1992), demand recognition of the culture of immigrant communities (Wieworka 1996), and so forth. However, the prize for such cohabitation with common sense is analytical fuzziness, as will be shown in this section. A breach with common sense might make it more difficult to convey sociological insights *tel quel* to the wider audience, but it may make these insights more powerful (cf. on "race", Wacquant, 1997). Would the Darwinian-Mandelian synthesis in post-War biology ever have emerged if lay concepts of how humans came into the world would not have been overcome?

The comparative literature on ethnicity offers an important starting point for a more distanced and analytically more precise understanding of the empirical issues that immigration research has been struggling with. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of these insights have been gained in anthropology, where identification and familiarity with the lay concepts cannot be taken for granted and where, perhaps more importantly, the researcher might encounter societies that have not (yet) adopted Herderian (or proto-nationalist) modes of classification. Three insights from this research tradition are especially relevant for research on immigrant integration,[3] and they all point towards the problematic nature of assuming the equivalence of culture, community, and ethnic category. I will discuss these three points subsequently.

The Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth was first to question the assumption that culture and ethnic category map onto each other in an unproblematic way (Barth 1969; but see already Boas, 1928). Let me illustrate Barth's view with the following two graphs (figure 1). The left hand side model represents the Herderian orthodoxy, according to which ethnic groups simply reflect the landscape of cultural difference and social connectedness. The more similar two persons are in terms of culture, here described as a three dimensional space (perhaps representing similarities and differences in terms of language, degrees of

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[3] On anthropology and immigration research see also Vertovec Forthcoming.

religiosity, and gender relations), the more likely they are belonging to the same ethnic category. Barth showed in a collection of ethnographic essays, that in many cases across the world this is actually not the case (see the right hand side model). Rather, ethnic distinctions resulted from marking and maintaining a *boundary* irrespective of cultural differences as observed by the outside anthropologist, and despite the flow of cultural traits, individuals and social relationships across the boundary.

Figure 1
A Herderian and a Barthian world
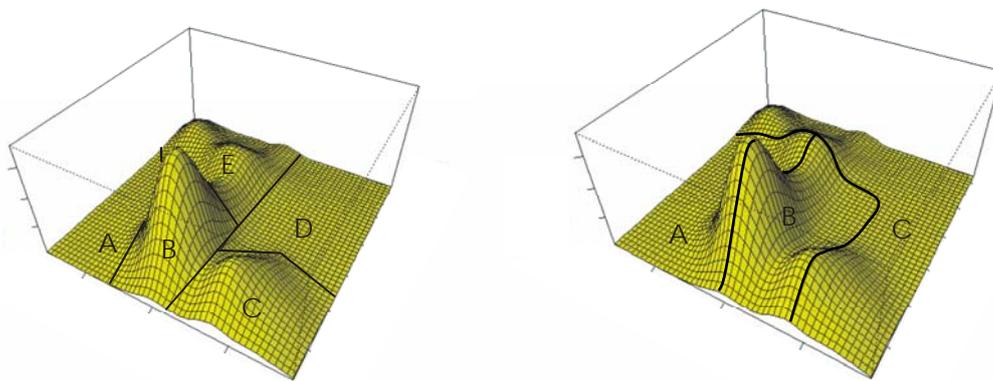
Barth's boundary approach thus implied a paradigm shift in the anthropological study of ethnicity: Researchers would no longer study "the culture" of ethnic group A or B, but rather how the ethnic boundaries between A and B were inscribed onto a landscape of continuous cultural transitions and uninterrupted social relationships. Conformingly, the definition of what constitutes ethnicity changed: It no longer was synonymous with objectively defined cultures, but rather referred to the subjective ways how actors *perceived* cultural difference. Ethnicity is thus a matter of social categorization (and identification), rather than a feature of the cultural world itself. This brings us back to the one author Barth never cites: Max Weber and his definition of ethnicity as a "*subjektives Zugehörigkeitsgefühl*" (a subjective sense of belonging), expressed in the idea (not necessarily the fact) of shared culture, common history, or phenotypical similarity (Weber 1978b).

To put it briefly, the Weberian/Barthian tradition has shown that ethnic categories/identities should be distinguished from cultures. Another branch of anthropological thinking, starting from Moerman (Moerman 1965) and leading up to the so-called situationalist school (Nagata 1974; Okamura 1981), demonstrated that ethnic communities should also be distinguished from identities/categories and should not be treated as homologous and co-extensive aspects of social reality. The Herderian view, by contrast, assumes that a "*Volksgemeinschaft*" is always held together by a "*Volksgeist*", or to use more contemporary language, that ethnic communities correspond to ethnic identities and categories.

However, many examples show that ethnic categories and identities may be of a relational nature[4] and produce a hierarchy of nested segments, as the following graph illustrates. It refers to the range of possible categories that a person of Hmong origin living in Southern California may identify or be associated with (see the right hand sight model). The Hmong represent a small tribal group that stood out for their loyalty to American troops during the Vietnam War and were thus granted collective asylum. In opposition to a white Hmong, she would identify as a Blue Hmong. If she encounters a Chinese from Vietnam, her Hmong identity would be the most salient. If she meets an African American, she would be Asian American, and so on.

Figure 2
A Herderian and a Moermanian view on American ethnicity
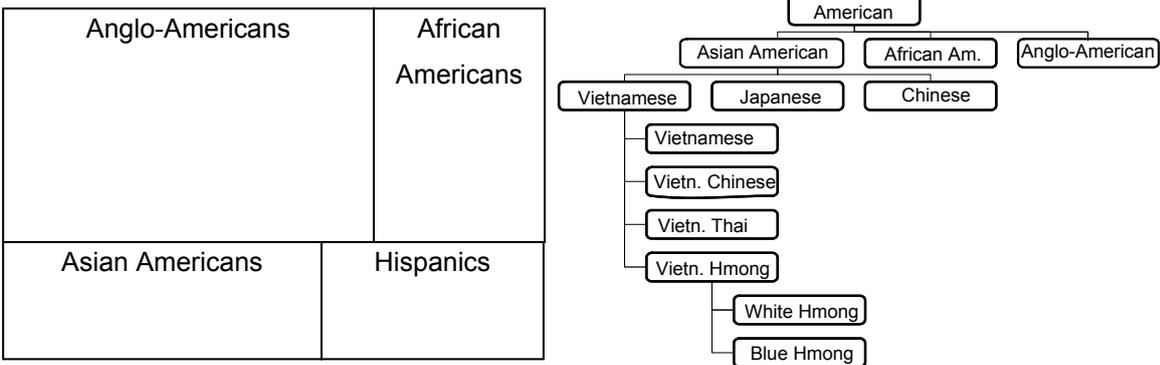
Not all of these levels of categorical differentiation, however, are socially relevant. Only few can be described, in sociological terms, as corresponding to anything that resembles a community. Community and ethnic categories are to be analyzed in separate terms and should not be conflated. This does not imply that there are no systematic relationships between the two, quite to the contrary: An interesting range of hypotheses comes to mind that specify this relationship. One might for example assume that the fault lines in the categorical system of ethnic classifications that do correspond to a community with dense networks of social interactions are more important for structuring life courses and personal identities than others (Modood Forthcoming). But one might also assume that politics, rather than the everyday web of social relations most powerfully structure these identities and life courses. After September 11, to give an example, the American vs. Non-American level of identification was much more salient and important than all the other subdivisions (Collins 2004). Finally, one might also find that those levels of ethnic differentiation along which

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[4] Keyes (1976); Jenkins (1997); Burgess (1983); Okamura (1981); Waters (1990:52-58); Okamoto (2003); Brubaker (2004, chapter 2).

individuals experience racial discrimination are the most relevant for the formation of identities (Bonilla-Silva 1996). Whatever the empirical answer to this question, it seems clear that distinguishing between community and category is necessary in order to even ask it in the first place.

A third important insight that has not yet been fully assimilated into mainstream migration research is the fact that identification with a category and categorization by others might not coincide. In other words, we may have to distinguish between ethnic identity and category. This insight has slowly grown over the past two decades. Important contributions were Richard Jenkins discussion of the Janus-faced nature of ethnicity: it operates both as a category of self-ascription and categorization by others, and the two do not necessarily overlap (Jenkins 1997). To give an example, one might see oneself primarily as Vietnamese American, while mainstream Anglos will lump all individuals of East Asian descent into the category "Asian" (cf. Kibria 2002).

Jenkins calls categories of identification "ethnic groups", while categories imposed by outsiders remain just that: "ethnic categories". This terminological choice might be more confusing than illuminating because self-categorization and categorization by others are processes of a similar nature, albeit with potentially different outcome. But the general point that Jenkins makes is valid: That ethnic categories might be contested rather than universally agreed upon and that contestation is part of the broader struggle over power and prestige, the legitimacy of certain forms of exclusion over others, of discriminating against certain types of people and favoring others.

This point has later also been raised by scholars using Bourdieusian language. They described processes of ethnic categorization as part of the politico-symbolic struggle between different "visions of the legitimate divisions" of the social world (Wacquant 1997; Loveman 1997; Brubaker 2004, chapter 1; Wimmer 1995). Individuals and groups struggle over who should be allowed to categorize; which categories are to be used, which meanings they should imply, and what consequences they should entail. Contrary to the Herderian view, which assumes that ethnic groups provide a quasi-natural horizon of identity to all human beings, this school of thought describes ethnicity as classificatory practice: an attempt to make one's own view of who belongs and who does not generally accepted and consequential for everyday life. The outcome of these classificatory struggles is principally open. In some cases, it leads to widely shared and taken for granted ethnic distinctions with only minimal space for individual re-interpretation, disidentification and boundary crossings (such as in Northern Ireland: Wright 1987; among Mongolian herders: Gil-White 1999). In other cases, no consensus over where the boundaries between ethnic groups lie has emerged, and individuals vary dramatically in their views on the social universe and their own place within it (on Brazil: Harris 1970; Ghana: Sanjek 1981; Northern Thailand: Moerman

1965). It is in such situations that the Herderian perspective collapses completely: Unable to identify which the "ethnic groups" are that make up a society, the researcher shares the confusion of his informants.

In summary, the Herderian school of thinking collapses ethnic identities, categories, communities, and cultures into one single social phenomena and thus lacks the analytical tools to properly understand their interrelationship: that ethnic categories may crosscut groups of shared culture, while the boundaries between them are marked with cultural diacritica; that ethnic categories are relational and segmentary in nature and that therefore not all correspond to communities held together by dense webs of social ties; that ethnic categories may be contested rather than uniformly agreed upon, and that ethnicity therefore is the result of classificatory struggles rather than a given division of the human population that both researchers and members of society simply describe.

However, this threefold revision of the Herderian notion of ethnicity does not imply that ethnic categories *always* and *necessarily* cross-cut zones of shared culture; some ethnic categories *do* correspond to communities of bounded social interaction; and some ethnic categories are *not* contested, as mentioned above, but widely agreed upon. In other words, some peoples in some places do indeed live in a world that comes close to the Herderian ideal. This does not, however, represent a problem for the approach advocated here, quite to the contrary: A Herderian world might very well be the outcome of the classificatory struggles and become stabilized and institutionalized over time.

As the anthropological record shows, however, this represents only one possible outcome of the process of ethnic group formation. In other instances, the process leads to Barthian/Moermanian/Bourdieusian worlds. Furthermore, the historical perspective reveals that Herderian worlds can transform themselves into Barthian/Moermanian/Bourdieusian ones and the other way round: culturally "thin" (Barthian), segmentally differentiated (Moermanian), and contested (Bourdieusian) systems of ethnic classification may transform into culturally thick, undifferentiated and largely agreed upon systems *à la* Herder. Compare the situation in South-Western Darfur in the mid sixties, when "non-Arabic", peasant Fur clans were crossing the boundary into the "Arabic", sheep herding Baggara ethnic category (Haaland 1969), with the situation today. The conflicts along the "Arabic"-Non-Arabic line - only one of the possible ethnic divisions in a system characterized both by contestation and segmental nesting - have led to a hardening of the boundary and to a de-differentiation of the system of classification (cf. de Waal 2005).

A similar shift to a Herderian world was brought about by the institutionalization of the "one drop rule of blood" to determine who belonged to a clear-cut and undifferentiated "black" category, thus erasing the various "mixed" categories that had existed in the US South

before (Lee 1993; Davis 1991). At the same time, life became less Herderian for others: for Jews, Italians and Irish who managed to become accepted as an ethnic sub-category of the "white" category (Saks 1994; Ignatiev 1995), which therefore underwent segmentary differentiation and new internal contestation (how "mainstream" are Jews and Catholics?). Similarly, Polish workers in the coal mining areas of Germany were the object of a policy of Germanization and finally became part of a culturally "thick", undifferentiated Herderian nation, the Germans (Klessman 1978), while a century later cold-war partition and re-unification led to the segmental differentiation of the national category into *"Ossis"* and *"Wessis"* (Glaeser 1999). In order to understand such processes of ethnic change, of the formation, transformation, and dissolution of ethnic boundaries over time, we need analytical language that allows us to describe them adequately and precisely.

2 How to think about ethnicity: The group formation paradigm

Over the past decade or so, a new paradigm has appeared in the social sciences that builds systematically on the contributions from anthropology and comparative ethnicity summarized in the preceding section. I call this the ethnic group formation or, alternatively, the boundary-making paradigm (cf. for the following Wimmer Forthcoming-b). It can be characterized by four axiomatic assumptions that derive from the various critiques of the Herderian approach summarized above. First, ethnic groups are seen as the result of a reversible social process of boundary making rather than as given component parts of the social world (constructivist assumption). Secondly, actors mark ethnic boundaries with cultural diacritica they perceive as relevant, such as language or dialect, dress patterns, different family structures, house types, or phenotypical markers such as skin color or facial features. These diacritica vary from society to society and are not equivalent to the sum of "objective" cultural difference that an outside observer may find (subjectivist assumption). Depending on the type of markers, we may distinguish between ethno-linguistic, ethno-regional, ethno-religious, ethno-cultural, ethno-national, and ethno-somatic categories. "Race" and "nation" are considered to be specific outcomes of the more general process of ethnic group formation, rather than ontologically separate phenomena following a distinct social logic. The subjectivist principle implies that only boundaries that are built upon perceptions of *ethnic* difference and corresponding practices of social closure are described and analyzed as ethnic. If none of the actors involved pursues a strategy of ethnic closure, boundaries that run parallel to ethnic divisions should nevertheless not be attributed to ethnicity.

Third, ethnic boundaries result from actions of individuals on *both* sides of the boundary and from their interactions *across* the boundary. Ethnic groups therefore do not grow naturally

from the social cohesion between individuals that share culture and origin, but result from acts of social distancing and closure vis-à-vis members of *other* categories (interactionist assumption). Consequently, privileging co-ethnics and discriminating against ethnic others in the various domains of social life - from making love to making war -represents the basis mechanism in processes of ethnic group formation and stabilization.

The interactionist assumption implies that actors on both sides of a boundary are involved in its construction and maintenance - not necessarily on a symmetric basis, as we have seen. For modern nation-states, this means that ethnicity is not the consequence of "minorities" maintaining a "separate" identity and community, as the Herderian common sense implies, but a matter of making minorities *and* majorities through defining the boundaries between them. "Nations" are therefore as much the consequences of such boundary-making processes as are "ethnic minorities" (cf. Williams 1989; Verdery 1994; Wimmer 2002).

Finally, the boundary perspective focuses on processes of group *making*, rather on the geometry of group *relations*, as for example in the US and British "race relations" approach (Niemonen 1997). To put it differently, it implies that the *formation* and *transformation* of ethnic groups is what should be at the center of our attention, rather than to look at how stable ethnic entities enter into variable relations with each other (processualist assumption). To be sure, this processualist understanding does not imply that all categories and groups are constantly changing, varying from situation to situation according to how manipulative actors see fit, as the more exaggerated versions of the constructivist paradigm assume. The boundary-making approach should also be able to analyze the emergence and the conditions of reproduction of historically stable and situationally less varied boundaries that leave little room for individual manipulation.

The boundary-making approach has recently gained some ground in migration research (Alba 2005, Zolberg and Woon 1999, Roger Waldinger 2003b; Waldinger Forthcoming, Bommes 1999) and others, including myself, have used the boundary-making language to review central issues of the field. While there are many differences in theoretical orientation of these authors, and even some quite substantial and explicit disagreement between them, their analysis nevertheless proceeds along similar ways. While it is too early to offer a review of the substantive empirical results that this emerging tradition has produced, we can describe in how far it differs from the standard approach in immigration research. I will do so in five movements, each building upon the previous one and leading from the basic theoretical issue of how to conceive the object of inquiry to the bread-and-butter question of choosing an adequate research design.

2.1 Making immigrants and nationals

The boundary-making approach denaturalizes the distinction between immigrant minorities and national majorities on which the field of immigration research is based. The consequences are twofold: First, a comparative perspective forces itself on the observer because it becomes obvious that the boundary between immigrants and nationals displays varying properties: Who is counted as an immigrant (including second and third generations), and who is not varies from country to country and from situation to situation. The enormous difficulties that cross-national researchers have in finding comparable data in nationally generated statistics testifies to this variation (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik 2003). Are French settlers who return from Algeria immigrants? Are *Aussiedler* immigrants or returning nationals? Are third and fourth generation immigrants still counted as minorities, as long as they are not "fully integrated" (as in the Netherlands), or are they disappearing from the screen of official statistics and thus also largely from social science analysis (as in France), or are they sorted into racial categories depending on the color of their skin as in the United States?

The distinction between immigrants and nationals varies because it is part and parcel of different definitions of where the boundaries of the nation are drawn (Brubaker 1992).[5] The definition of the nation's boundaries may change over time because nation-building is an ongoing process undergoing revisions and reversals, as the recent wave of introduction of dual nationality laws in many countries, the abandonment of white preference immigration policies in the US, Canada and Australia or the recent shift to a partial *ius sanguinis* in Germany illustrate (cf. the rather optimistic assessment of such changes by Joppke 2005). From a boundary-making perspective, therefore, the division between nationals and immigrants is part of the ongoing process of nation-building and needs to be studied rather than taken for granted if we are to adequately understand the dynamics of immigrant incorporation.

This leads us to the second consequence of the de-naturalization of the immigrant-national distinction. While migration appears from the mainstream point of view as a straightforward demographic process (individuals "moving" across countries), the boundary-making approach reveals the political nature of the process. "Immigration" only emerges as a distinct phenomenon and political problem to be "managed" once a state apparatus emerges that assigns individuals passports and thus membership in national communities (Torpey 1999), that polices the territorial boundaries, and that has the administrative and political capacity to distinguish between desirable and undesirable immigrants (Wimmer 1998).

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[5] The comparative literature that illustrates these points is quite substantial. See, among others, Bleich 2004; Janmaat 2006; Kastoryano 2002; Lentin 2004; Muro and Quiroga 2005; Phalet and Oerkény 2001; Sniderman *et al.* 2000; Szoke 1992; Triandafyllidou 2001; Wieworka 1994; Zapata-Barrero 2003.

Focusing on the politically constituted nature of the immigrant-national distinction also helps to broaden the perspective and to connect migration studies to other topics and fields. More specifically, it reveals that the creation and subsequent transformation of the immigrant category goes hand in hand with the making of domestic ethnic minorities (black Americans, Quebecois, Irish, etc.) during the process of nation-state formation. They represent different aspects of the definition of the national core group, in the name of which modern nation-states govern, and the demarcation of its boundaries towards ethnic minorities and immigrant groups. Both are seen and treated as human beings with a less dignified culture, and a problematic relationship to the state, and thus less qualified to enjoy the rights of citizenship (Wimmer 2002). Assimilation theory, both old and new, as well as multiculturalism do not ask about this historical genesis and subsequent transfiguration of the immigrant-national distinction, but take it as a given feature of the social world too obvious to need any explanation (cf. Waldinger 2003a). Thus, the social forces that produce the very phenomenon that migration research is studying and that give it a specific, distinct form in each society vanish from sight.

2. 2 Making nationals out of immigrants: Rethinking assimilation as boundary shifting

De-naturalizing the distinction between nationals and immigrants and treating it as the product of a reversible and historically specific process of nation-building also opens up a new perspective on the old questions of immigrant "assimilation" and "integration". Zolberg and Woon (1999) and Alba and Nee (2003) were the first to re-define assimilation as a process of boundary shifting: groups that were formerly treated as aliens or "immigrant minorities" are now treated as full members of the nation. This again represents a genuinely political process, rather than the quasi-natural outcome of decreasing cultural difference and social distance as assimilation theory has it. Following the interactionist axiom discussed above, boundary shifting also depends on the acceptance by the majority population with a privileged relationship to the state and the power to police the borders of the nation. Boundary shifting thus needs to overcome existing modes of social closure which denied membership status to outsiders and reinforced the boundaries between majorities and minorities. Classic assimilation (and some strands of neo-assimilationism) takes it for granted that such acceptance is entirely dependent on degrees of cultural assimilation and social interaction, of "them" becoming and behaving like "us". The boundary-making perspective allows us to overcome this Herderian paradigm and to look at the processes of closure and opening that determine where the boundaries of belonging are drawn in the social landscape. Let me briefly illustrate the fruitfulness of this approach by taking the United States immigration history as an example.

Boundary shifting proceeded along different lines, depending on whether or not immigrants were treated as potential members of a nation defined, up to the First World War, in racialized terms as consisting of white, protestant peoples of European descent standing in opposition to descendents of African slaves (cf. Kaufman 2004). While British, Scandinavian and German immigrants thus indeed were accepted and crossed the boundary into the mainstream contingent on cultural assimilation and social association alone, Southern European Catholics, Irish Catholics, and Eastern European Jews had to do more boundary work to achieve the same. They were originally classified and treated as not quite "white" enough to be dignified with full membership status. Italians (Orsi 1992), Jews (Saks 1994), and Irish (Ignatiev 1995) thus struggled to dissociate themselves from African Americans, refrain from intermarriage and intermingling in shared neighborhoods, and thus prove worthy of being accepted as "white" mainstream.

Similar processes can be observed in later periods: Loewen provides a fascinating account of how Chinese immigrants in the Mississippi delta, who were originally assigned to, and treated as members of the "colored" caste, managed to cross the boundary and become an acceptable non-black ethnic group admitted to white schools and neighborhoods (Loewen 1971). They did so by severing their ties with black clients and expulsing Chinese who had intermarried with blacks from their community. In other words, they recreated the racial lines of closure that are constitutive of the American definition of the nation. Similarly, contemporary middle class immigrants from the Caribbean and their children are struggling to distantiate themselves from the African American community in order to prove their worth in the eyes of the majority (Waters 1999; Woldemikael 1989; etc.).

Similarly in continental Europe, old established immigrants from the guest-worker period dissociate themselves, sometimes even more vehemently than autochthons, from the recently arrived refugees from former Yugoslavia and Turkey, by emphasizing exactly those features of these groups that must appear as scandalous from the majority's point of view: their "laziness", their religiosity, their lack of decency and capacity to "fit in" the tightly organized world of working class co-operatives and neighborhoods. Guest-worker immigrants are struggling hard not to lose the hard won capital of "normalcy", achieved at the end of a long and painful process of boundary crossing, by being associated with these "unacceptable" foreigners (Wimmer 2004; similarly for London Wallman 1978; and for Cologne Kissler and Eckert 1990).

In these struggles over the boundaries of acceptance and rejection culture does indeed play a role, but not necessarily the role foreseen in classical assimilation theory or in multi-culturalism. Immigrants who struggle to become accepted and cross the boundary into "the mainstream" may aim at selectively acquiring those traits that signal full membership. Which these traits are varies from context to context. Proving one's worth through "hard work", i.e.

accepting the jobs that members of the majority have long abandoned, is probably a very widespread strategy that we find in many contexts (cf. Waldinger 2003b). In the United States, sticking to one's religion and ethnicity is an accepted, if not even a required feature of becoming national, while proving one's distance from the commands of Gods and the loyalty of co-ethnics is required in many European societies. The requirements of "language assimilation" also vary, even if the general rule is that the better one speaks the "national" language the easier it is to be accepted (Esser 2006). But while speaking with thick accents and bad grammar is acceptable for many jobs in the United States, as long as the language spoken is meant to be English, is it much less so in France. The variation, again, is explained by different forms and trajectories of nation-building which pinpoints certain cultural features as boundary markers rather than others (Zolberg and Woon 1999). The ethnic group formation perspective thus highlights the selective and varying nature of cultural adoption and emphasizes its role in processes of boundary making.

Classic assimilation theory (and some strands of neo-assimilationism), by contrast, perceives such processes through Herderian lenses: It takes the cultural homogeneity, social closedness, and identitarian unity of "the nation" for granted and looks, from the point of view of this nation, how individuals from "other nations", which are endowed with different cultures, stick together in their own communities, and identify with their home countries, are gradually absorbed, through a process of becoming similar, into "the mainstream" (Wimmer 1996; Waldinger 2003a). Those who do not become similar remain "unassimilated" and coalesce in ethnic enclaves or descend into the urban underclass ("segmented assimilation"). The power-driven, contested, and conflictual nature of the process of "assimilation" thus vanishes from sight. We therefore gain in analytical leverage if we conceive assimilation as a process of boundary shifting which results from the strategic interaction between individual and collective actors, including organizations and individuals belonging to the "national" majority. The focus of analysis thus shifts away from immigrants, their background and behaviors towards the negotiations between immigrants and nationals as well as the various corporate actors, including state agencies, that have a stake in the outcome of these struggles over the boundaries of belonging (cf. Kastoryano 2002).

2. 3 Ethnic boundaries in institutional fields: A labor market example

How are we to comparatively explain the varying outcomes of these struggles? What are the factors or configurations of conditions that explain why the boundaries shift here while they harden there? Why are certain immigrants included in the national "we" here but remain excluded there? To the best of my knowledge, there is no theory or model that gives a satisfactory answer to these questions. In what follows, I can only hint at one particular

approach which I believe has the potential to develop into such a comparative model, namely an institutionalist, field theoretic approach which lends itself to the study of ethnic group formation (cf. Wimmer Forthcoming-b).

I suggest looking at three elements that structure the struggles over boundaries and influence their outcomes in systematic ways. First, institutional rules (in the broad, neo-institutionalist sense of the term) provide incentives to pursue certain types of boundary-making strategies rather than others. Secondly, the distribution of power between various participants in these struggles influences their capacity to shape the outcome, to have their mode of categorization respected if not accepted, make their strategies of social closure consequential for others, and have their identity be recognized as relevant and worthy of recognition. Networks of political alliances are a third important element to understand the dynamics of ethnic boundary making in various social fields because we expect these boundaries to follow the contours of the political networks. Let me illustrate how such a field-theoretic approach would operate by showing how these three factors influence the dynamics of boundary making in labor markets.

Rather than assuming the ethnic segmentation of labor markets in immigrant societies and to look at which segment has which ethnic character, as in the ethnic niche tradition of research (Waldinger 1994), we have to observe the job trajectories of immigrants both into, but also outside of such niches, compare it to other individuals with other ethnic backgrounds but otherwise similar characteristics, and then determine in how far ethnic boundaries channel their opportunities and choices - without taking it for granted and therefore find such effects for all places, all groups, and all times (cf. Rath 2001). The combination of the three factors discussed above determines whether ethnic boundaries with powerful channeling effects do emerge and stabilize.

The starting point would be an analysis of institutional rules. The boundary-making consequences of labor market regimes have received quite some attention recently (e.g. Kogan 2006). It has become clear that there are fewer boundaries against immigrant labor in liberal welfare states with "flexible" labor markets and therefore a stronger demand for unskilled labor, confirming that strong welfare state institutions produce less permeable boundaries against non-national others (Wimmer 1998). The reason being, from an ethnic group formation perspective, that the high degrees of class solidarity and redistribution in welfare states depend on a strong nationalist compact and thus produce high degrees of social closure along national lines. The welfare state tends to come at the price of shutting the doors to outsiders who have not contributed to the making of the social contract and who thus should not be allowed to enjoy its fruits.

Welfare states, on the other hand, allow immigrants to say no to jobs they are forced to take in "liberal" societies that follow the "sink-or-swim" policy regarding immigrant economic survival. This would explain why we find less immigrant entrepreneurship in such societies and generates the hypothesis that immigrants rely less on ethnic networks when finding a job or employing others than they would in "liberal" labor markets (Kloosterman 2000). Ethnic networks and welfare state services might well be substitutes (as argued by Congleton 1995).

Another important feature of labor market regimes are the rules for accepting foreign credentials, which produce a rather dramatic boundary between home-born and foreign-born, and between members of OECD countries, who tend to recognize each others' diploma and professional credentials at least partly, and the rest of the world. The selective recognition of educational titles and job experiences is a major mechanism that impacts on immigrant earnings (Friedberg 2000; Bratsberg and Ragan 2002) as well as the labor market segments open to them. From a boundary-making perspective, this is not so much a consequence of an information cost problem that employers face when evaluating foreign credentials, as economists would have it, but rather a prime mechanism of social closure through which nationals maintain their birth-right of being treated preferentially on the territory of "their" country - even at quite dramatic costs for the economy as a whole, as economist have shown.

There is also some research on how rules and regulations regarding hiring practices influence the relative openness or closure of particular labor market segments. The somewhat surprising result is that the degree of labor market discrimination against equally qualified immigrants, as it has been uncovered by experimental field studies, seems not to be influenced by country-specific anti-discrimination laws and regulations (Taran *et al.* 2004).

A side note on the issue of institutional discrimination might be in place here. We should resist to automatically interpret unequal representation in different segments and hierarchical levels of a labor market as a consequence of ethnic discrimination and closure on the institutional level. According to the subjectivist principle central to the boundary-making approach, it is only meaningful to speak of ethnic (as opposed to other types of) boundaries when they result from intentional discrimination against ethnic others. In Germany's labor market, to give an example, children of Turkish immigrants are heavily over-represented in the apprenticeship system and dramatically underrepresented in the institutions of higher education. This distributional pattern, however, results from sorting *all* children of working class parentage, independent of their ethnic or national background or their citizenship status, onto tracks leading into apprenticeships or other on-the-job training programs early in their school career. Such institutional sorting effects are not *ethnic* in nature - and therefore should be analyzed as separate processes influencing the labor market trajectories of

immigrants and non-immigrants alike, independently of genuine processes of ethnic boundary formation and closure. This is obviously not to deny that ethnic discrimination and closure *do* exist, in some places more than in others, and that they therefore are important elements in explaining labor market outcomes. How *much* they do, however, is a matter to be empirically investigated rather than simply "read of" the distributional patterns.

In the second step of analysis, one would look at the consequence of the different endowment of immigrants with economic, political and cultural resources (cf. Nee and Sanders 2001). Few researchers have analyzed the effects of such resource distributions from boundary-making perspective, however. It seems that immigrants with lower educational capital and less economic resources are particularly likely to end up in ethnically defined niches on the labor market, while better skilled immigrants are much less dependent on such niches and immigrants with some economic capital may choose between ethnic or mainstream business opportunities (see the case study of this author's immigrant community by Samson 2000). Furthermore, it seems that migrants that have been negatively selected on the basis of their *lack* of education and professional skills, such as those recruited through the various guest-worker programs in Europe or the *bracero* program in the United States and its contemporary substitute: the toleration of illegal immigration from Mexico, are particularly disadvantaged on the labor markets, especially when it comes to translating skills into occupation (Heath 2007). The likelihood for them to remain trapped in ethnically defined labor market niches seems to be especially high.

Despite these advances, it is striking how little we know about how resource distributions influence processes of ethnic boundary-making in labor markets. As in the analysis of labor market regimes, we would again have to understand how other mechanisms that are not related to the making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries influence the labor market trajectories of individuals. In other words, we would first need to understand how general processes of class reproduction and mobility impact on migrants' position in the distribution of various capitals. I am not aware of any study which would take the class background of migrants in their country of origin (as opposed to the country of settlement) and thus the social origin of second generation individuals into account, mainly because the stratification systems of country of origin and destination are deemed to be incompatible. Only a deeper understanding of how the general mechanisms of class reproduction affect migrants will allow us to tell whether the concentration of certain immigrant groups in certain professions, labor market segments, or occupational strata are the effects of class reproduction or the outcome of boundary-making processes. Are Mexican Americans in the United States and Portuguese in France remaining in skilled working class positions, as has been argued (Waldinger and Perlmann 1997; Tribalat 1995), because they pursue an ethnic strategy of niche development and defense, or because they are sorted into these positions together

with other individuals of a largely rural and peasant background by the mechanisms of class reproduction? In other words: are we observing individual level mechanisms of class reproduction or group level processes of ethnic niche building? Even the methodologically most sophisticated and analytically careful authors researching into the "ethnic penalty" on the labor market readily assume, following Herderian instincts, that what we do observe has to do with ethnicity, rather than class (e.g. Heath 2007; Silberman and Fournier 2006). In general, research on immigrants in the labor market quickly jumps to "groupist", Herderian assumptions when interpreting significant results for ethnic background variables (for a striking example see Bonilla-Silva 2004) - instead of looking for unmeasured individual level characteristics (e.g. rural-urban background) that might be unequally distributed across ethnic categories, for variation in contexts and timing of settlement, or for the selection effects of different channels of migration (e.g. refugees vs. professional migrants) when interpreting such effects.

Besides institutional frameworks and the resource distribution, we should look at how networks influence the formation of ethnic boundaries in labor markets. We know quite a bit about the role of networks in structuring of labor market access (Lin 1999) and especially in the process of ethnic niche formation. Network hiring characterizes many low-skilled labor markets and explains why resource-poor immigrants are more likely to end up in such ethnically defined segments (Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Network hiring seems to be a feature especially of companies that rely on labor intense production methods, where credentials and skills are less important than reliability and easy integration into existing teams, and in labor markets where undocumented workers abound. On the other hand, we know that weak network ties are also important for other segments of the labor market, as a long line of research in the wake of Granovetter's seminal article has shown (Granovetter 1973), and for better skilled immigrants (Samson 2000; Bagchi 2001).

Under which conditions such networks might coalesce along ethnic lines and produce clear-cut boundaries and what consequences such "emergence" effects have for the overall structure of labor markets still remains a mystery. As with processes of institutional sorting and the effects of capital endowments, one needs to carefully distinguish ethnic from other boundary making processes. Ethnically homogenous networks might be the consequence of family or village solidarity, rather than ethnic boundary making (cf. Nauck and Kohlmann 1999). The accumulation of such family ties does not automatically lead - in an emergence effect of sort - to *ethnic* solidarity and community. Family network hiring may therefore lead to the formation of a niche that only an outside observer wearing Herderian glasses could then identify as that occupied by an "ethnic group" - in analogy to species occupying certain ecological niches. In other words, even where we can observe clustering of individuals of the

same ethnic background, we should not jump to the conclusion that ethnic group level mechanisms are responsible for such clustering.

The final analytical step would consist in drawing these three lines of inquiry together and determining how the interplay between institutional rules, resource distribution, and networking strategies determine the specific trajectories of immigrant individuals in the labor markets over time. An analysis that proceeds along these lines would probably discover much more variation than the usual Herderian approach that focuses on how "Mexicans", "Chinese" or "Swiss" immigrants fare on the labor market or on which niche is occupied by which of these "groups". One might discover what exactly the mechanisms are that channel certain individuals into certain positions on the job market rather than others, how institutional rules, resource endowment and network structures determine which individuals experience which trajectory through the field. While some Mexican families might indeed pursue a strategy of proletarian reproduction, seeking stable low-skilled jobs that pay well over two or more generations, others might struggle to advance in the educational system only to discover that there are limits as to where they can get given the quality of schools they are able to afford and the discrimination they face when seeking other than the least-qualified jobs. Still others might experience an easy transition into the professional middle class, while yet others specialize in the ethnic business and draw upon a large network of clients from within a particular community (cf. Telles and Ortiz Forthcoming). These different trajectories are not, to repeat the point, randomly distributed over individuals, but would have to be explained as the combined effects of field rules and their changes over time, the individual's endowment with economic and cultural capital as well as the subsequent changes in its volume and composition, and the variable position of an individual in an evolving network of social relationships through which information about jobs and access to certain types of professions is mediated.

Depending on the labor market trajectory, the meaning of the ethnic background may change quite dramatically, as will the way that other individuals with other backgrounds perceive and interact with these individuals. Whether or not these multiple positions and forms of interaction coalesce into a clearly distinguishable ethnic segment of the labor market and how many individuals with the same background are indeed ending up in such ethnic niches is thus an open, empirical question that a multi-level research design as the one outlined here and applied by some (e.g. Nohl *et al.* 2006) is best able to answer. Standard research, by contrast, often seems to jump on an ethnic group explanation wherever the opportunity arises. In research designs that take ethnic groups as units of observation (e.g. "The Chinese of Los Angeles"), only those individuals that indeed form part of ethnic networks, enclaves or niches are included in the surveys and interviewed, while everybody else disappears from the picture. In research designs that take individuals as units of observation, ethnic

background variables are often interpreted as consequences of group level effects. Most researchers who analyze regressions on the determinants of unemployment, for example, interpret country of origin variables either as the consequence of ethnic discrimination or, if the sign of the coefficient is positive, of a group's "social cohesion" or ethnic culture (usually some equivalent to a Protestant work ethic) (cf. Portes and MacLeod 1996).

3 De-ethnicizing research designs

As the previous section has made clear, the ethnic group formation perspective calls for certain types of methodologies which make it easier to observe different outcomes of the process of ethnic group formation. It is necessary, in other words, to de-ethnicize research designs to see *both* the emergence of ethnic groups and their absence. In the Herderian tradition, a researcher usually chooses one or several "ethnic groups" as her units of observation and then determines in how far this group has been able to maintain its culture, cohesion, and identity - the preoccupation of the proponents of multiculturalism and transnationalism - or has occupied certain positions in a segmented labor market, as in the ethnic niche tradition, or traveled down one or the other path of assimilation.

Such study designs risks to misrepresent the actual processes of group formation on the ground, which may well follow different principles than those of ethnic community-building, as the following example illustrates. Research in Swiss immigrant neighborhoods revealed that notions of community and belonging were defined in cross-ethnic terms. Long-established residents, both autochthons and migrants of the guest-worker period and their children, primarily distinguish between insiders and outsiders, between normal and abnormal, decent and indecent "kinds of people". Ethnic categories play a subordinate role in this categorical universe: Based on the perception of "typical" members of ethnic categories, they are assigned to either side of the boundary between insiders and outsiders. Ethnicity or race, however, does not represent the main principle for constructing the boundary and both insiders and outsiders are ethnically (and "racially") heterogeneous groups. Network analysis reveals that the main interactional cleavage indeed separates old-established neighborhood residents from newly arrived immigrants.

Were one to trace the destiny of "Tamils", "Italians" and "Turks" in Switzerland, as in a standard research design, one would not have been able to describe these trans-ethnic modes of social organization and categorization. The choice of units of observation is thus of crucial importance. The ethnic group formation perspective calls for non-ethnic units of observation which make it possible to see whether and which ethnic groups and boundaries emerge, are subsequently transformed or dissolve - rather than to assume their existence,

relevance, and continuity by binding the observational apparatus to such groups and communities. In the following, I discuss the most important alternative units of observation: territories, individuals, social classes, institutional settings, and event chains.

Choosing territorial units, such as neighborhoods, cities, regions, etc. provides an opportunity to observe which levels and forms of categorization are the most relevant for everyday forms of group formation (see the theory of locality developed by Glick Schiller *et al.* 2006). A first example is the study of a neighborhood of Cologne by Kissler and Eckert (1990). The authors wanted to understand how this field is perceived from the perspective of the old-established, of new immigrants, and of members of the alternative scene. Using the configuration analysis developed by Norbert Elias, they reached a similar conclusion as our study of Swiss neighborhoods: that the non-ethnic distinction between 'established' and 'outsiders' is the most pertinent social categorization for neighborhood residents. Gerd Baumann's (1996) fine work on a neighborhood in London, however, documents a different outcome. He looks at how young people of Caribbean and South Asian background perceive and categorize their neighborhood. To his own surprise, ethnic categories derived from official multicultural discourse ('Afro-Caribbean', 'Muslim', 'British', etc.) play a much greater role than he had originally assumed. In Wallmann's study of working class housing co-operatives in Southern London, however, similar results as those in Cologne and Switzerland were obtained (Wallman 1978). Other studies in other neighborhoods could be cited that document yet other possible outcomes of the group formation process (cf. Sanjek 1998). In is only by choosing neighborhoods as units of observation that the varying outcomes of ethnic group formation processes are put into relief.

A second possible approach is to choose individuals of varying backgrounds as units of analysis, without pre-arranging them into groups. This is often done in quantitative research in economics and sociology, where ethnic background is added as a dummy variable into the regression equation. While this overcomes many of the problems of the standard community studies design, the interpretation of findings is often haunted, as discussed above, by Herderian assumptions: More often than not, researchers interpret the ethnicity factors as evidence for either discrimination or the specifies of ethnic cultures and communities. From an ethnic group formation perspective, however, finding significant results for ethnic dummies represents the beginning, not the end of the search for explanation.

Various processes that are *not* part of an ethnic community and culture can produce significant results for background variables: a particular immigration history leads individuals to enter a labor market at a certain point in time when certain opportunities were within reach, while others were not; members of certain ethnic categories might be disproportionably from rural or urban backgrounds; previous labor market experiences might differ systematically (e.g. in former Communist countries with life-long guaranteed

employment), migration channels produce selection effects (compare e.g. refugees resettled through UNHCR vs. guest-workers recruited through agents vs. illegal immigrants crossing the border with the help of *coyotes*), and so on. Ideally, one would therefore combine quantitative with qualitative research to find out which of these processes are responsible for the ethnic effect (for an example of such research, see Piguet and Wimmer 2000).

Once qualitative research points into the direction of such hidden individual level characteristics, which might or might not be the case, one would go back to the quantitative stage and try to add new variables (e.g. year of immigration) or proxy variables (e.g. immigration from a country that is predominantly rural or urban, had a Communist past or not) that capture the individual level effect in a direct way, thus eliminating or reducing the effect of ethnicity.

Third, one may take social class as units of analysis and focus on how in the neighborhoods and workplaces occupied by individuals of similar socio-economic standing ethnic boundaries are perceived, talked about, and enacted in everyday interactions. This is the research strategy that Michèle Lamont has pursued in several interrelated projects. One book reveals that among the middle classes of an American small town ethnicity and race are considered far less important markers of difference than individual achievement and personality (Lamont 1992) - similar views as those found among successful black professionals (Lamont and Fleming 2005). In the working classes, by contrast, the black-white divide is of considerable importance for individuals' sense of their own place in society, their moral worth and personal integrity (Lamont 2000). An ethnic (or racial) community approach would have overlooked such important differences in the role that racial boundaries play in American society. Focusing exclusively on the African American experience or, as in "white" studies, on the boundary-making processes among "mainstream Anglos" would loose from sight that the dynamics of boundary making varies dramatically depending on which end of the overall class structure one focuses upon.

There is no reason, however, why a study design should not start by taking individuals from a particular country (or countries) of origin as a units of observation. When studying "Turks", "Swiss", or "Asians", however, one should be careful to avoid the Herderian fallacy of assuming communitarian closure, cultural difference, and strong identities. The study has to ask, rather than take for granted, whether there is indeed community organization, ethnic closure in networking practices, a shared outlook on the host society etc. In the course of such analysis, three pitfalls are to be avoided.

First, one needs to carefully determine whether or not an observed pattern is indeed "ethnic" or whether other, lower levels of social organization are responsible for the pattern, most importantly village and family forms of solidarity. Given that most villages and families are

mono-ethnic, the observers should beware of interpreting village or family networks as evidence of ethnic homophily. A well conceived, careful study along these lines has been conducted by Nauck. He found that the support networks of Turkish immigrants in Germany are about as familistic as those of German non-migrants (Nauck and Kohlmann 1999). Interpreting the mono-ethnic character of their networks as a sign of ethnic closure would therefore grossly misrepresent reality: Turkish migrants do not trust other Turkish immigrants with whom they do not relate through family ties any more than they would do German families.

Second, a study design that takes ethnic groups as units of analysis should pay careful attention to those individuals who are "lost to the group", i.e. who do not maintain ties with co-ethnics and are not members of ethnic clubs and associations, do not consider their country-of-origin background meaningful, do not frequent ethnic cafés and shops, marry somebody from a different background, work in jobs that have no ethnic connotation, and do not live in ethnic neighborhoods etc. In order to avoid sampling on the dependent variable, one should avoid snow-ball sampling asking "Mexicans" to name "fellow Mexicans"; one should also avoid studying a neighborhood with a clear ethnic connotation because one then looses those Mexicans who have never lived in "the barrio" from the analytical picture.

Third, careful attention should be given to the variety of strategies of ethnic boundary making one finds among individuals sharing the same background in order to make sure that one does not end up privileging those strategies that emphasize communitarian closure and cultural difference. Several well designed studies have recently been conducted that show in detail how research that takes a particular immigrant group as a starting point might be designed without ending up reifying that group and its boundedness (Wessendorf Forthcoming; Glick Schiller *et al.* 2006). Perhaps the best possible research design is a genuine panel study that pursues immigrants from the same country (or village, or region) of origin over several decades, ideally across generations. Edward Telles' and Vilma Ortiz' Mexican American project (Telles and Ortiz Forthcoming) represents the ideal case of such a study design. They have traced almost all Mexican Americans that were surveyed in the 1950s to the 1990s and interviewed a very large number of their children and grandchildren as well. This and other comparable research shows that individuals pursue a variety of different strategies of ethnic boundary making (see the typology in Wimmer Forthcoming-a), leading to different modes of incorporation.

Another mode of de-ethnicizing the study of ethnicity in immigration societies is to study institutional environments in which non-ethnic (or trans-ethnic) interactions are frequent. One then observes how networks form in such interactional fields, how actors interpret and categorize this environment using various principles of social classification, and under which conditions classifications and networks actually do (or do not) align along ethnic divides.

Much of this literature has an explicit anti-ethnic bias and studies the conditions for trans-ethnic relationships to stabilize in such diverse institutional environments as churches (e.g. Jenkins 2003), schools (e.g. Kao and Joyner 2006), workplaces (e.g. Ely and Thomas 2001), and neighborhoods (Nyden *et al.* 1997). However, such a bias is not a necessary corollary of the methodology: Research in specific institutional settings can bring to light the salience and importance of ethnic groups as well as those of trans-ethnic ties and modes of categorization. Studying organizational fields thus allows specifying the institutional conditions under which ethnicity emerges as a principle of social organization without already *assuming* that this is the case, as does most mainstream research on immigrant ethnicity.

Finally, one could imagine research designs that build upon the "social drama" tradition in anthropological research that flourished during the forties and fifties of the past century (Gluckman 1940; Turner 1957; cf. Burawoy 1998). Max Gluckman, for example, observed a one day ceremony to open a new bridge in South Africa's Zululand which brought together the white administration, Zulu rulers and chiefs, as well as various segments of Zulu society. The various speeches and rituals allow the observer to see how various principles of classification, including the racialized distinction between white rulers and African subjects, come into play and are negotiated between actors who pursue a variety of classificatory strategies. I am not aware of any study of immigrant ethnicity that would pursue this line of analysis and take an event, or rather a chain of events, as its unit of observation. It seems to provide yet another promising movement to shed off the Herderian blinders that have for so long restricted our understanding of ethnicity in immigrant societies.

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Beyond the Nation-State and its Units of Analysis: Towards a New Research Agenda for Migration Studies[1]

Nina Glick Schiller

Abstract

The methodological nationalism of many migration scholars precludes them from accurately describing the transnational social fields of unequal power that are integral to the migrant experience. Because their scholarship is built on units of analysis that developed within nation-state building projects, few migration scholars situate national terrains and discourses within an analysis of the restructuring of the global economy, the rescaling of cities, and the rationalization of a resurgent imperialist agenda. A global power perspective on migration facilitates the description of social processes by introducing units of analysis and research paradigms that are not built on the essentialism of much of migration discourse. An alternative approach to migration studies that builds on a global power perspective would include: (1) scalar perspectives on locality, (2) transnational fields of power, and (3) multiple entry points and pathways of local and transnational incorporation.

Contents

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[1] Some of these ideas were discussed at the third meeting of the VW Study Groups "Migration and Integration". The paper was delivered at Transnationalisation and Development(s): Towards a North-South Perspective, *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung*, Bielefeld University, May 31 and June 1.

Introduction

On a phone booth in Manchester, England – where I now live as a transmigrant – I saw an advertisement. "Send money home from closer to home" it read. It went on to announce that you can now send funds to locations around the world from any British post office. The British Post Office now competes for the lucrative business of sending migrant remittances while Spanish banks extend mortgages to migrants living in Spain who are building houses "back home" in Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America (Escalante 2007). This facilitation of migrants' money transfers and homeland investments is echoed in the policies of powerful globe-spanning financial institutions such as the World Bank, which have proclaimed migrant remitters as the new agents of international development (Lapper 2007; Heine 2006). Researchers of development and migration, while noting the possibilities and contradictions of migrant remittances on sending and receiving localities, take for granted that migrants are both local and transnational actors (Dannecker 2007; Faist 2007; Fauser 2007; Guarnizo 2007; Khadria 2007; Østergaard-Nielsen 2007; Raghuram 2007).

Yet politicians and the mass media in Europe and the United States focus their concern primarily on questions of "integration", seeing migrants' transnational ties as threats to "national security", attacking migrants for their supposed lack of loyalty to their new homeland. Migrants are also portrayed as threats to the nation through their effects on national economies, draining them of resources and services. Politicians, demagogic leaders, and media personalities blame migrants for national economic problems including the growing disparity between rich and poor, the shrinking of the middle class, the reduction in the quality and availability of public services and education, and the rising costs of health care and housing. Calls for tightening borders and ending the influx of migrants are widespread, and countries around the world are shutting their doors in the faces of people desperate to flee war, rape, and pillage. Rates of deportation are rising dramatically. Within these anti-migration discourses, little is said about either migrants' provision of vital labor, services, and skills to their new land or migrants' role in the reproduction of workforces - including their sustenance, housing, education and training - in countries around the world. These populations then provide labor used and exploited as temporary or permanent workers - from highly skilled to unskilled - in other nation-states.

What is the response of migration theorists to this set of contradictory positions on migration on the part of corporate and political interests? To date, I would argue, migration scholars have not developed a critical perspective adequate to make sense of these contradictions. They have not developed a global perspective that can place within the same analytical framework international migration and development debates, policies and discourses, national rhetorics on migration and refugee policies, and migration scholarship. Instead, migration scholars have adopted the perspective of their respective nation-states.

Much of the European and US scholarship on migration confines itself to the questions "how well do they fit into our society", "what are the barriers that keep them from fully joining us," or "which cultures or religions don't fit in." In these analyses, migrants' tendencies to cultural persistence and ethnic organization, attributed either to their identity politics or to a reactive ethnic response to discrimination, become the independent variable that determines the degree of fit for migrants within the context of a specific nation-state. As Michael Bommes (2005:7) has noted, "assimilationists conceptualise society as a big national collective". In the United States, migration scholars who see themselves as pro-immigration increasingly embrace what I call "born-again assimilationism" to show that migrants do indeed become part of the national fabric and contribute to it (Alba and Nee 2003: Borjas 2001; Smith 2006; Waldinger 2006). In Europe, the term used is integration, which is often differentiated from assimilation (Bommes 2005; Esser 2001; 2003; 2006). But whether the concept being deployed is integration or assimilation, most scholars of migration reflect and contribute to an approach to the nation-state that poses a nation and its migrants as fundamentally and essentially socially and culturally distinct.

Even the scholars of transnational migration, including those who highlight migrants' roles in transnational development projects, conclude with reassurances that migrant transnational activities are relatively minimal or contribute to their integration into the nation-state in which they have settled (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; R. Smith 2006). They have not provided a perspective on migration that explains why within a neo-liberal globally restructured economy, development policies look to migrant remittances to sustain impoverished communities, while at the same time the national policies of states in various regions of the world restrict migration and the movement of workers and define migrants as a fundamental challenge to the nation-states of settlement.

The purpose of this paper is investigate and critique the methodological nationalism that lies at the foundation of much of migration scholarship and to argue for its replacement with a global power perspective on migration. By global perspective I mean an analytical framework rather than a systems theory. The analytical framework must be able to theorize the reproduction, movement, and destruction of various kinds of capital and human populations across national borders and look at the construction of social relations, institutions, systems of governance and modes of identification in particular localities and across space and time. Such a framework will allow us to identify contradictions and disjunctures in contemporary scholarship as well as forms, spaces, ideologies, and identities of resistance to oppressive and globe spanning relations of unequal power. The position the paper advocates resonates with those migration scholars who advocate institutional analyses of contemporary migration policies and discourses but goes beyond them by proposing a framework that can link contemporary forces of capitalist restructuring to the specific localities within which migrants

live and struggle. Authors such as Andrew Geddes (2003) have argued that rather than examining the specific backgrounds of immigrants, migration and migration policy is best understood by examining the national and EU perspectives on migration and integration. Jane Freedman (2004) adopts a similar perspective in discussing the French relationship to migration. Bommes (2005:3-4) argues for "a concept of modern world society, i.e. a society that is functionally differentiated in different realms (like the economy, politics, law, science, education, health etc.) and modern organizations."

In this paper I extend this argument further, noting that the methodological nationalism of many migration scholars precludes them from accurately describing the transnational social fields of unequal power that are integral to the migrant experience. Because their scholarship is built on units of analysis that developed within nation-state building projects, few migration scholars situate national terrains and discourses within an analysis of the restructuring of the global economy, the rescaling of cities, and the rationalization of a resurgent imperialist agenda.[2] The irony, of course, is that in a period during which many areas of scholarship have developed an analysis of uneven and unequal globalization, migration scholars who study globe spanning flows of people remained inured within concepts of society and culture that reflect essentialist and racialized concepts of nation.

A global power perspective on migration facilitates the description of social processes by introducing units of analysis and research paradigms that are not built on the essentialism of much of migration discourse. An alternative approach to migration studies that builds on a global power perspective would include: (1) scalar perspectives on locality, (2) transnational fields of power, and (3) multiple entry points and pathways of local and transnational incorporation. None of these approaches are dependent on the divide between the nation-state and migrants. In other papers, I have addressed the concept of multiple pathways of local and transnational incorporation and examined the pathway of fundamentalist Christianity within a scalar perspective on locality (Glick Schiller 2005a; Glick Schiller, Caglar and Guldbrandsen 2006a, b). I have also addressed the relationship between methodological nationalism and different disciplines including migration studies (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002a, b). In this paper, after critiquing the methodological nationalism of migration studies historically and substantively, I further explore the concepts of transnational fields of power that restructure locality.

I want to be clear from the very beginning that by eschewing methodological nationalism and establishing a global framework for the study of migrant settlement and transnational

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[2] For important exceptions see Dannecker (2007), Delgado Wise (2007), de Haas (2007), Faist (2007), Guarnizo (2007).

connection, I am not saying that the nation-state is withering away.[3] I argue that transformations in the positioning of nation-states within global fields of power affect the processes through which migrants move, settle, and maintain transnational connection. My particular interest is the contemporary restructuring of capital that is repositioning the specific localities from which migrants leave and in which they settle in relationship to global fields of power (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2006). To understand the restructuring of globe spanning institutional arrangements, including the changing role and continuing significance of states, we need a perspective that is not constrained by the borders of the nation-state.

1. The methodological nationalism of migration studies: rooted concepts

A growing number of social theorists have argued that methodological nationalism has been central to much western social science (Beck 2000, Beck and Sznaider 2006; Martins 1974; Smith 1983; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002a, 2002b). Methodological nationalism is an ideological orientation that approaches the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states. Nation-states are conflated with societies and the members of those states are assumed to share a common history and set of values, norms, social customs, and institutions. Some writers label this orientation the *container* theory of society to highlight that most social theorists, including Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Talcott Parsons, have contained their concept of "society" within the territorial and institutional boundaries of the nation-state (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Black 1994; Wolf 1983; Urry 2000). I find the term *methodological nationalism* more useful, however, because it reminds us that conventional "objective" social theory harbours a political position and that researchers routinely identify with the concerns and discourses of their own nation-state.

In migration studies methodological nationalism facilitates: (1) the homogenization of national culture (2) the homogenization of migrants into ethnic groups – seen as bearers of discrete cultures – who arrive bearing cultural, class, and religious differences, and (3) the use of national statistics organized so that ethnic difference appears as an independent variable in the reporting of levels of education, health status, degrees of employment, and level of poverty. In other words, as they are currently constituted, migration studies and their ethnic

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[3] I have consistently been quoted as arguing that nation-states are declining in significance and for calling for a post-national world. I have never done that. Together with most scholars of transnational migration, I see nation-states, their legal systems, migration policies, and institutional structures as significant in the establishment and persistence of transnational social fields (Basch et al; Glick Schiller et 1992; Glick Schiller 1999; 2003; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; 2001; Faist 2000; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2003; Levitt 2001a; b; Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Despite this now extensive literature, some analysts persist in accusing these scholars of ignoring the persisting importance of nation-states. See for example Bommes (2003; 2005) and Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2005).

studies counterparts contribute to the reinvigoration of contemporary nation-state building projects (Brubaker 2004; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002a; b).

Casting the difference between native and foreigner in ethnic cultural terms has become so commonplace that it requires historical scholarship to recover a consciousness of cultural difference within cities and states that was not formulated in ethnic terms. Isin Engin (2006:328) notes that in Europe there was a dramatic change in the way the disreputable urban population was depicted and distinguished from the upstanding citizen.

[H]istorical differences through which difference itself has been constituted in theorizing the European city are important. The manner in which the difference is constituted, understood, and expressed shows remarkable historical discontinuities. It is noteworthy to observe, for example, how, within a few decades, understanding of difference in the city shifts quite radically from the manners and habits of the working classes in the 1840s to the manner and habits of the immigrants in the 1920s. It is not that the categories 'immigrants' and 'working classes' are mutually exclusive or interchangeable, but discourse in the 1920s decisively shifts to racializing and ethnicizing those who arrived in the city in a manner that was inconceivable in the 1840s.

At the beginning of this period of globalization scholars such as Fredrick Ratzell (1882) treated all movements of people across the terrain as a single phenomenon linked to the distribution of resources across space. Ratzell did not distinguish between internal and international migrations because national borders were not central to his analysis of human movement. His writing reflected the assumptions of his times, namely that the movements of people within Europe, and across the Atlantic from Europe and the Middle East to North and South America, were normal and natural. The emerging science of demography began to examine an array of factors that affect migrant flows and patterns of settlement including specificities of locality of departure and origin.

The fact that migrants came and went, maintained their home ties by sending home money to buy land, initiate businesses, and support families and village projects by remittances was understood as a typical aspect of migration. Workers migrated into regions in which there was industrial development and returned home or went elsewhere when times were bad. England, Germany, Switzerland, France, the United States, Brazil, and Argentina built industrialized economies with the help of millions of labor migrants who worked in factories, fields, mills, and mines. In general, during that era of globalization and imperial penetration, most European countries abolished the passport and visa system they had installed in the first half of the 19th century. France took the lead in eliminating such barriers to the free movement of labor in 1861. By 1914 all such documents for entry into another country had

been virtually eliminated in Europe (Torpey 2000). The United States did not restrict migration from Europe and required neither passports nor visas.[4]

During the period between the 1880s and World War I, the world experienced increased economic integration and flows of capital, goods, ideas, information, and people. Also, in ways similar to today, the growth of finance capital through international investment including the development of military technologies and control of natural resources affected the globe unevenly. The power of finance capital allowed the domination of certain states over the economies of others, intensified disparities of wealth and power, and forced individual and families to migrate.

During that period of unequal globalization, many states were locked in fierce competition for control of far-reaching transnational commercial networks: colonial projects that were the basis of the accumulation of nationally-based capital. The wealth of nations, as well as much of the workforce of many nations, was produced elsewhere.

This was the context within which governmental regimes increasingly deployed the concept of nation, national unity, and national economy in ways that obscured the transnational basis of their nation-state building projects. The people who lived in these states faced novel pressures to use a single national language, identify with a national history, understand their practices and beliefs as part of national culture, and be willing to sacrifice their lives for the national honour. This was a period in which national institutions including schools, railroads, militaries, banking, and postal services were being developed or refined and nation-states were being marketed and celebrated through national and international expositions.

Faced with the contradictory experience of their uneven insertion in transnational social fields of wealth and power and the growing rhetorical power of blood and nation, both international migrants and citizens of migrant-receiving states sought explanations for the rapid changes they were experiencing. Explanations and social movements that could speak to global transformations flourished, including international socialism, anarchism, feminism, nationalism, scientific racism, and anti-imperialism (Bodnar 1985; Gabaccia and Ottanelli 2001; Potts 1990; van Holthoon and van der Linden 1988). However, state officials, politicians, and intellectuals supported nationalist ideologies that portrayed individuals as having only one country and one identity. In so doing, they contributed to the view that

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[4] The restrictions on entry of persons from China beginning in 1882 were the precursors of efforts at broader restrictive legislation, but the gate was not shut against most migration until the 1920s. The 1917 law not only continued the Chinese exclusion but kept most people from Asia from entering. The bulk of the restrictive legislation that followed was based on nationality until 1965. Migrants were categorized by country of origin; tens of thousands of some nationalities were admitted while no more than 100 of other "national origins" including Greek, Bulgarian, Palestinian, and Australian. Most public discussions of migrants from the 1920s identified migrants by their "nationality," popularizing the dividing line between Americans and those identified by other national origins.

immigrants embodied cultural, physical, and moral differences that merited study. It was at that moment, and in conjunction with the mounting pressure to delineate national borders more firmly by closing them, that a scholarship of immigrant settlement became delineated. Within this literature, the transnational social fields of migrants and their engagement in internationalism and other forms of non-state based social movements increasingly were seen as problematic and finally disappeared from view. Current scholarship on migrant incorporation and transnational connection is haunted by its founding conceptual moment.

By the 1920s, two related sets of discursive moves contributed to a migration scholarship that essentialized natives and foreigners and created the nation-state and its international migrants as the two units of analysis that were fundamental to migration studies. In the first place, disciplinary divides were instituted. Given the heritage of these disciplinary divides and their scholarship, it is easy to forget that not only did nation-state building and the advent of migration studies occur simultaneously, but also that they were part of the same process. Historians recounted the unfolding of discrete and organic national destinies within which national, labor, and ethnic histories were each constituted as discrete fields of study. International relations became the study of formal political relationships between nation-states. Scholars of migration differentiated between populations of differing "national origin" (Schermerhorn 1949).[5] Secondly, within the specific literatures on migration – which itself became divided between demographers and geographers who studied movement between nation-states and sociologists who studied settlement and assimilation – several complementary but differentiated logics were deployed: a) migration research was situated exclusively within national territories; (b) concepts of national origin were racialized as national stocks – an approach which incorporated and legitimated the "scientific racism" of migration studies; (c) assimilationist theory was developed within the hegemonic narrative of race and nation; and (d) the ethnic lens developed as national stocks came to be seen as differentiated by culture.

(a) Migration research as projects situated in national territories

Incorporating their commitment to the nation-state into their developing social science of migration at the beginning of the 20th century, scholars began to view migrants as threatening the state's national cultural and religious homogeneity. Demographers tracked, collected, and compared statistics for the population of each state, concerned with delineating the

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[5] This tradition in history continues despite a vibrant counter-narrative that can be found in the seminal work of Thistleworth (1990) and is represented in the scholarship of Bodnar (1985), Cinel (1991) Gabaccia and Ottanelli (2001), and Montgomery (1987). In main stream political science an effort to think about transnational forces was initiated by Joseph Nye (1976) and an alternative political sociology building on Marx and Lenin developed world systems theory and dependency theory. But these did little to disturb nation-state based analysis of the disciplines until the growth of the globalization literature of the 1990s.

"natural" population growth through birth and death. They differentiated such changes from those brought about because people immigrated into the state from "foreign parts" or emigrated out of the state. In popularizing the "natural" growth of population within the borders of a nation-state and comparing it to growth by migration that required explanation because it was not organic to the state, these scholars helped develop and popularize the sharp division between native and foreigner and the nation-state as the unit of analysis.[6]

Meanwhile, despite detailed studies of migrants' local settlement and their transnational family ties, scholars of the city contributed to a theoretical framework that situates migrants as social problems within the terrain of nation-states. For example, William Thomas and Florian Zanecki began their 1918 book, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, which actually describes the transnational settlement strategy of four Polish families, with the following concern:

"Among the questions included in the relatively unformulated field of social science…are immigration; race prejudice; cultural assimilation; the comparative mental and moral worth of races and nationalities; crime, alcoholism, vagabondage, and other forms of anti-social behaviour; nationalism and internationalism, class-hierarchization;…the rate of individualization without social disorganization; the unreflective social cohesion brought about by traditions as compared to reflective social co-operation brought about by the rational selection of common ends and means; the introduction of new and desirable attitudes and values without recourse to the way of revolution…We are convinced of the necessity of approaching these and other social problems by isolating given societies and studying them, first, in the totality of their objective complexity, and then comparatively." (p8)

Here we can see the call to study national terrains as "societies," the concern for the social cohesions of these "societies", and the situating of immigrants as problematic elements that must be studied within the domains of this sociality. In the period between the world wars – an era of revolution, depression, and social upheaval in both Europe and the Americas – anti-immigrant legislation was bolstered by casting foreigners as threatening to national unity and colonial stability because they imported ideologies of communism, anarchism, or national liberation.

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[6] Friedrich Ratzell (1897), the same German geographer whose initial approach to migration had stressed the significance of resources rather then borders, went on fifteen years after his initial theory to publish a political geography that positioned states as natural units of demographic growth.

(b) From national origins to national stocks – developing the "scientific essentialism" of migration studies

By confining the subject of study to those migrants who crossed national borders, rather than studying all human movement, migration scholars contribute to the classification of migrants by national origin. There has been insufficient examination of the fact that theorization about migrant settlement globally has been shaped by the early 20th century US discourse where racial difference was used to justify a significant restriction of migration. Ironically, during that period the United States, now often referred to as the paradigmatic immigrant state, closed its doors more rapidly and more completely than most of Europe. The scientific racism that had been developing for several decades as part of a global dialogue about natural selection and states dominated discussions of immigration in the United States. Certain nationalities were held to be so racially inferior to the "native stock" of Anglo-Americans that they should be denied entry. By the 1920s-30s, when the study of immigrant settlement in a new locality began to emerge as an important focus of the newly developing US sociology, the easy equation of nations with races had become embedded in both sociological theorization and political rhetoric (Dillingham Commission 1909-1911).[7] Each nation could be ranked in terms of its degree of civilization and desirable characteristics. This new scientifically credentialed essentialism contributed to the efforts to define nation-states as essentially racially and culturally homogenous.

Migrants' cultural background was conflated with their religious affiliation so that individuals classified as Italian or Polish, for example, were thought of as sharing with their compatriots common cultural values in which their Catholicism played an important role. The national cultures of the migrants were understood by many during this period to be a product of different racial stocks. While men such as Robert Park, William Thomas, and Louis Wirth were in no way racists, their scholarship none the less lent credence to the new "scientific racism" of the times since they used the terms nationalities and races interchangeably in their writings (Persons 1987).

(c) National stocks, national territories, and the development of assimilationist theory

The US discourse and its conflation of race and nationality comfortably echoed the racial distinctions drawn by colonial powers between the national cultures of the imperial mother countries and the colonized (Qinjano 2003; Balibar 1991). The language of race simultaneously justified imperial adventures abroad while contributing to the cross-class political unity of the population of the nation-states that were centres of imperialism

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[7] The "national quotas" written into US immigration law at that time remained in place until 1965.

(Horsman 1981; Takaki 1990). Projections of colonized racialized others, for example, contributed to the construction of the "British Race" (Miles 1993; Stoller 1989).[8] The scholarship that documented racial difference between nations was the product of a transnational conversation that involved European, US scholars, and Latin American intellectuals from several emerging fields including medicine, eugenics, psychiatry, anthropology, and sociology.

The popularity of the essentialism of the pre-World War II social science confronted scholars of immigrant settlement with the need to resolve the contradiction between the projection of racialized difference between native and foreigner and the mandate of assimilation. Clearly, if culture was biologically based, assimilation was not possible. Different countries that had been or were experiencing large scale migrations dealt with these contradictory ideologies in somewhat different ways. In countries in Latin America, for example, which experienced large scale migration from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, "race mixing" was advocated. The intellectuals and political leaders accepted the idea that nations were biologically different, that some were superior, and that assimilation was necessary. Their answer was to call for the emergence of new national races in Latin America in which the Spanish "stock" of the original colonists mixed with and improved the nature and culture of the newcomers.

Scholars in the United States, particularly those who consciously developed a new urban sociology, took a different path. Although they tended to use the language of race, they countered the public rhetoric of immutable racial difference and consequent undesirability of certain nationalities and argued for social and cultural assimilation as an inevitable, natural, and desirable process. However, they posited that it would be easier for some nationalities than others to become "American" (Commons 1907)[9]. Their approach reinforced the conception that national populations were uniform in their culture. Class tended to disappear as a topic of inquiry.

Those social scientists who were supportive of immigrants framed their settlement in terms of a gradual but inevitable assimilation, assessing the "progress" of their settlement in terms of the attenuation of separate migrant institutions. This analytical framework posited migrant institutions as indicators of an incomplete or inadequate integration into the mainstream social and cultural life of the societies of settlement. By deploying this framework, migration scholars constructed a literature on US "nationalities" and immigrant communities that

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[8] Perhaps the earliest efforts on the part of Europeans to define themselves nationally in counter-distinction to a racialized colonized "other" are found in the English colonization of Ireland (Smedley 1999; Allen 1994). The racial differences that came to be seen as separating the Irish from the English legitimated the oppression of the people of Ireland; the dynamics of oppression simultaneously created the conceptions of the Irish and the English races and fundamentally linked notions of race and nationality.
[9] For an analysis of the initial US sociological conception of assimilation see Kivisto (2004) and Persons (1987).

minimized simultaneity: the fact that pathways of social and cultural incorporation and migrant religious and cultural institutions and practices could be developed together rather than in opposition to each other. Meanwhile, the mainstream remained unproblematized.

(d) The Ethnic Lens [10]

Post-World War II social science, in forms ranging from Parsonian social systems theory to modernization theory, continued to legitimate and popularize the conflation of the concept of society with the nation state. This mode of analysis was encapsulated in Milton Gordon's 1964 description of *Assimilation in American Life" The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins,* a text which is currently being rediscovered and celebrated. Gordon, an American sociologist whose assimilationist model was one of the most carefully worked out and sophisticated of its day, posited for the purpose of theory building a completely homogenous host society.

Much of the assimilationist approach was apparently set aside when the national liberation struggles and the struggles of people of colour for political and cultural recognition of the 1960s popularized a new identity politics. Debates, which resonate today, began between scholars such as Issacs, (1975) who argued for the inherent and inherited nature of ethnicity and those who took a constructionist position. While even the first wave of assimilationists had noted that ethnic identities and institutions were often formed as part of the initial settlement process, the second wave of US migration scholars accepted this cultural pluralism as a constitutive element of the national society (Glazer and Mohnihan; Glick Schiller 1977).

The pluralists, as did their assimilationist predecessors and the multiculturalists of the 1980s, assumed that there were immigrant communities – now designated ethnic groups – and that these were the obvious unit of analysis for the study and analysis of migration and settlement.[11] In so doing, they reinforced the division between the nation-state and its others that was embedded in the historic nation-state building process. The goal of multicultural scholars has been to broaden the national narrative to include diverse histories; they have not critiqued the restraints that a nation-state building project imposes on a researchers' ability to describe and analyze important social processes. The multiculturalists' portrayal of communal homogeneity was paralleled by an assumption that the receiving nation-state also

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[10] Sections of this paper build on papers I have co-authored with Ayse Caglar. See Schiller and Caglar (2006; forthcoming).
[11] Until the 1960s the term nationality was more widely known and more precisely reflected the methodological nationalist bias of migration research. Reference to migrant groups as nationalities in contrast to indigenous culturally differentiated groups that have been designated national minorities is still part of European migration discourse. The transformation in the US migration literature of nationalities to ethnic groups was a discursive move that placed populations defined by cultural difference completely within US national space without reference to their transnational connections.

constituted a homogeneous cultural and social unit (Kymlicka and Norman 2000). Migration scholars and those who address issues of migrant cultural diversity, whether defending or critiquing the development of ethnic institutions, generally have remained within a national narrative (Takaki 1993; Vertovec 2005; Castles and Davidson 2000).

Today, the ethnic group as the primary unit of analysis with which to study and describe migration settlement, transnational migration, and diaspora remains in place. This remains true despite a voluminous historical and ethnographic literature that details the constructed nature of ethnic identities and ethnic group boundaries, detailed ethnographies of institutional processes through which ethnic categories and identities are constructed and naturalized by local and transnational actors, and copious descriptions of divisions based on class, religion, region of origin, or politics among the members of the supposedly "same" group (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2004; Çaglar 1990, 1997; Glick Schiller 1977, 1999; Glick Schiller et al. 1987a, 1987b; Gonzalez 1988; Hill 1989; Kastoryano 2002; Rath and Kloosterman 2000; Sollors 1989).

Studies of what researchers often call ethnic "communities" document divisions based on class, gender, generation, religion, region of origin, or politics among members of the "same" group. The divisions and different identities within a population assumed to share a common national origin and identity are sharp, emotionally laden, and often persistent or recurring. Many decades of research on immigrant settlement demonstrate that communities are ideologies of connection that develop only in particular times and places. Yet persistent use of the word community as synonymous with the term ethnic group compounds the problem because it contributes to defining a particular mode of settlement and identification before the research has been conducted. The possibility of assessing the actual degree of heterogeneity in migrants' identities, practices, and social ties is at best made more difficult and at worst forestalled. Identities, practices, and social ties that migrants establish with natives and other migrants are excluded because of the unit of analysis. Even those scholars, who begin their study by critiquing the ethnic group as a unit of analysis or demonstrating the constructed nature of ethnic boundaries, present their data as the study of a population identified ethnically as Turks, Moroccans, Kurds, Haitians, Brazilians (Glick Schiller 1977; Glick Schiller et al 1987a;b; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999; Ostergaard-Nielson 2001; Salih 2003). [12]

The multicultural moment in the US and Britain and the fears about integration in Germany and France all have served to conflate discussions of migration processes and concerns about ethnic segregation, isolation, or ghettoization. Some scholars such as Stephen Castles

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[12] Some of the scholarship on migrant youth /popular culture in gateway cities is an exception to this ethnic and diasporic research design (Caglar 1998; Sencher 2000; Soysal 2001; Nedim 2004).

(Castles and Miller 1993; Castles and Davidson 2000) moved from an initial concern with the migration process as a globally shared migrant experience to discussions of "ethnic mobilization", "ethnic politics", and "ethnic minorities." The use of ethnic groups as units of analysis is a logical but unacceptable consequence of the methodological nationalism of mainstream migration studies.

Among the deficits of confining migration studies to a study of ethnic group settlement is the loss of crucial insights about the role of the sending and receiving localities in the formulation of migrant pathways of settlement and the shaping of migrant identities. Even though many studies of migrant settlement and transnational connection are actually studies of particular localities, because the ethnic group remains the unit of analysis the data is transmogrified from a study of specific city to a study of a culture (Mandell 1990; White: 1999; Çağlar 1995; Werbner 1990; 2002). Because of the problematic framing of the study in ethnic terms, the significance of the urban structure and its transformations in shaping migrant pathways of incorporation is disregarded, although urban restructuring is clearly a critical element of the description and analysis in both classic US studies or more recent descriptions of migrant pathways of settlement and connection based in New York, Boston, Manchester or Berlin (Caglar 1997; Gans 1965; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Levitt 2001a; Smith 1998; Werbner 1990).

Moreover, not necessarily because it was the intention of the researcher but because of the way in which migration research is framed and discussed, data on an immigrant population in a particular city – "the Irish" or "Mexicans" in New York City, the "Dominicans" or "Italians" in Boston, "Pakistanis" in Manchester, or "Russians" in Berlin – have become metonymic of a specific ethnic group in an entire nation-state. The global scalar positioning and subsequent rescaling of New York, Boston, Manchester, or Berlin, as it shapes local actors – migrant and non-migrant – is not addressed. Locality of settlement is neither problematized nor researched.

The research on migrant economic incorporation through small business ownership or employment provides a case of point in the ways in which using the ethnic group as a unit of analysis hinders the development of a global power perspective on migrant local and transnational pathways of incorporation. There is a rich and valuable literature on migrant economy, migrant business, and entrepreneurialism (Bonacich and Modell 1980; Light 1972; Waldinger 1986; 1996; Wilson and Portes 1980; JEMS 2007). Having reduced the study of the relationship of the migrant in the city to the ethnic community, researchers have debated the centrality of the ethno-cultural characteristics of the migrant groups in the analysis of their economic activity and incorporation. In the ethno-cultural characteristics perspective, researchers emphasized factors such as the historical business experience of each ethnic group settling in the city and the cultural resources they can bring to bear in their

entrepreneurial activities. Such an approach has led to investigations of the compatibility of migrants' religious beliefs and practices to entrepreneurial activities, as well as their ability to organize themselves on the basis of social networks and trust relations particularly suitable for small business. The contextual and historical structuring of the city that shape the dynamics of business growth and expansion have been assessed only in terms of their contributions to the growth of ethnic enclaves, the relations between ethnic groups, or the discrimination faced by an ethnic group. The research has been circumscribed by the exclusion of the larger political economic forces that continually restructure every locality and all entrepreneurial activities within it. While many scholars have made potent critiques of the concepts of the ethnic enclave economy and ethnic businesses, they have continued to use the ethnic group and the national economy as units of analysis (Waldinger 1986, 1996).[13]

2. Transnational community studies: haunted by the spirit of methodological nationalism

Beginning in the 1990s, several bodies of literature that addressed migration attempted to shed the construct of methodological nationalism. These included transnational, diaspora, and global cities studies. Those of us who sought to develop transnational migration research a conceptual foundation for the study of migrant social fields that extends across international borders sought to move beyond the container theory and the assimilationist biases it generated (Rouse; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). The goal was not merely to describe patterns of living across borders but to develop social theory that did not use the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis. Linda Basch, Christian Szanton Blanc, and I proposed tracing transnational social fields as they were constructed within relationships of uneven power that could extend globally. We defined social field as a network of networks without specifying a particular set of cultural practices or identities contained within them. This represented a departure from the wide-spread tendency in ethnic studies to conflate social identities with social relations. Instead we consistently separated out the social practice, which I have called *ways of being*, from identity politics. Identity politics can be thought of as *ways of becoming* (Glick Schiller 2003). We thought that by tracing specific transnational fields of migrants that linked them to economic, political, social, religious, and cultural institutions of more than one nation-state we were making an analytical leap and moving beyond a bounded view of social relations that conflated the nation state with society. The concept of simultaneous incorporation, as I fleshed it out with Peggy Levitt,

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[13] See a similar concern in Rath and Kloosterman (2000). Despite the relevant questions about the ownership and control in migrant business activities and the critique of the criteria used to differentiate the ethnic and the non-ethnic bases of business activity in particular places, these scholars have not developed a theory of locality. Their discussions have remained at the level of nation-states and the opportunities states provide to migrant business and entrepreneurs.

was an attempt to move further in that direction, as were related concepts of transnational space and community (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Kearney 1991, Faist 2000, Pries 2001; 2007; Vertovec 1999).

At first it seemed that this new wave of research which documented how migrants lived their lives across borders so that they were incorporated in two or more nation-states at the same time would provide a whole new perspective on migration. But instead bounded thinking shaped by the nation-state as a unit of analysis reasserted itself. The first wave of transnational migration studies actually opened the way by only examining the social fields of populations identified by national origin or cultural difference. Frequently their studies compounded this ethnic lens by confining the research to the nation-state building projects of either the nation-state of settlement or a homeland. Diaspora studies perpetuated the foundation essentials of migration studies by defining the unit of study as people who share an ancestry and whose unity persists despite dispersal (Karim 2007).[14]

Much of the transnational migration literature suffers from a related myopia, despite its focus on cross border processes. Transnational migration scholars tend to explore the ties or identifications that connect migrants to home, rather than analyze broader global processes and interconnections. Transnational migration theory has been both shaped by and reflected the contradictions of contemporary uneven globalization and its concomitant rebirths of nationalism. Some scholars reified this approach and began to talk of transnational community, assuming rather than problematizing the process of building transnational identities. The term transnational community soon was understood as a gloss for a transborder linkage of people who shared national ancestry, despite the fact that initial studies that deployed the term were concerned with specific translocal ties. These studies focused on social fields that stretched between a specific village in a homeland and a particular city of settlement (Levitt 2001a; Smith 1998). Hometown associations formed to connect migrants settled in a new locality with their village of origin. This work had the potential to open up new explorations of the role of specific localities in shaping the nature and degree of transnational ties. It could have provided the basis for theories of locality as well as translocality rather than a new form of identity studies.[15] Unfortunately, scholars of transnational migration did not build on contemporary urban geography that was reconstituting their study of cities to consider their restructuring in relationship to global forces. Consequently most have not responded to the challenge to examine a specific locality of departure and settlement within transborder processes and globe spanning fields

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[14] For a similar critique see Floya Anthias (1998)
[15] Carolyn Brettel (2003) stressed the significance of local urban context in the study of migrant incorporation.

of power.[16] Few researchers have noted the significance of locality in shaping migrants' transnational social and economic fields. Much of the richness of local studies in the transnational literature, as in the ethnic group literature, has been lost by a facile use of local data as representative of national patterns of immigrant settlement. Levitt's villagers in Boston, for example, enter the transnational literature as representative of Dominicans in the United States. Whether researchers began with the concept transnational social field, space, or community, if they situated their analysis only within a sending and receiving state and privileged ethnicity as the basis of transnational connection, they left no conceptual space for studying non-ethnic incorporation, the differential structuring of locality, or social fields of power not based on state institutions.

In contrast to this general failure of transnational migration scholars to theorize locality, Michael Peter's Smith (2001) has developed a concept of transnational urbanism. However, although Smith's work builds on a careful analysis of specific transnational actors engaged in political projects in a Mexican state and in specific localities in southern California, the theoretical focus of the work is to generate a new category of urbanism. The strength of this approach is that it recognizes that localities, rather than being confined to their geography, are built within transnational fields of power. The weakness of the concept is that the category of transnational urbanism readily becomes an ideal type, rather than an analytical tool through which to study specific localities and their various positioning as a result of regional history and global restructuring.

There has been an increasing effort to move the study of transnational migrant networks beyond the ethnic lens. Some scholars focused on transnational family ties but generally they too identified the population they were tracing in terms of ethnic or national origins (Bryceson and Vuorela 2005; Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004; Salih 2003). The growing study of transnational religion offers promise to moving beyond the ethnic lens (Glick Schiller 2006). Christian and Muslim migrants in specific contexts of settlement develop social fields built on religious rather than ethnic concepts of identity. However to develop this analysis, researchers need to identify the actors in other than ethno-religious terms.

3. Global cities literature: speaking global and reinforcing the national

As is the case with transnational migration research, studies on global cities have the potential to help migration scholars step out of the essentialism and methodological nationalism of migration studies, but this potential has yet to be realized. This is because

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[16] Ayse Caglar's (2006) study of hometown association is an exception to this general trend. By examining the restructuring of a specific Turkish city in response to global flows of capital, Caglar was able to explain the situations in which hometown associations may develop and flourish.

rather than directing our attention to the ways in which all localities are global but in different way, scholars working described only a small set of cities as global. In the end, rather than opening a global perspective on migration, the global cities literature leads those who are not studying global cities back to the national frame of reference rather to an exploration of global processes.

Those who adopt the term global cities argue that a small set of cities are in significant ways unmoored from the nation-states in which they are geographically located (Sassen 2000). Global cities theorists maintain that the repositioning of cities in relationship to nation-states reflects the processes of restructuring of capitalism in the context of contemporary globalization, the mobility of labor and the dynamics of global capital flows. Global cities scholars hypothesize that the growing disjuncture between geographical and social spaces and the changing landscape of social, economic, and cultural proximities were all outcomes of the uneven spatiality of globalization (Friedmann and Wolf 1982; Friedmann 1986; Sassen 1991; King 1991, 1996; Knox and Taylor 1995). They emphasized that global forces take particular forms in particular places and affect the dynamic configuration of specific localities, including processes of migrant settlement and transnational connection. They note the growth of an hour glass urban economy with an affluent set of businesses based on the facilitation of knowledge, fashion, culture, marketing, and financial industries and a low wage sector of non-unionized service workers and small sweat-shops. Migrants enter this paradigm as low wage; migrants are said to be attracted to and to maintain the low-wage sector that is a vital component of global cities.

The global perspective provided by global cities scholarship is vital in understanding how the migrant experience is shaped by the positioning of their localities of departure and settlement within global economic restructuring. Yet migration has generally not been studied from this perspective. Mesmerized by global cities, researchers failed to study the participation of migrants in the dynamics of other cities, whose economies, governance, and cultural life were also being affected by global reconstitution of capital.

Consequently, many researchers exploring cities that were not classified as global continue to frame their findings only within the parameters of national policies. The global forces that are restructuring all localities were ignored. Only occasionally do researchers working in cities of smaller scale examine variations in local opportunity structures as they affect migrant incorporation (Bommes and Radtke 1996). In the few cases in which the opportunity structures of different cities were examined in efforts to link different structures to different pathways of migrant incorporation, the cities compared are situated within a single nation-state (Ellis 2001).

4. The resurgence of methodological nationalism of the old type: the new integrationism

Meanwhile, in the midst of intensive globalization, which is once again accompanied by massive migrations, prominent US scholars have revived notions of assimilation, and in Europe researchers have begun an intensive scholarship of integration. In their writing the new assimilationists and integrationists distinguish themselves from the old by updating what they mean by immigrants becoming an integral part of their new society (Joppke and Morawska; 2002; Heckmann 2003; Sackmann et al. 2003).[17] The US analysts often imply that previous generations of assimilationists called for immigrants to accept completely the dominant culture and language of the country of settlement and to discard their heritage (Alba and Nee 2003). In contrast, their assimilationism allows for an acceptance of multiple cultural practices, ethnic identities, and institutions within an acceptance of the dominant language and institutional fabric of the host nation-state. Some of these new formulations of assimilation even allow for the persistence of home ties and transnational networks.[18]

This new scholarship can be critiqued from many angles. As Peter Kivisto (2005) has pointed out, the "new assimilationists" actually are not that different from the old. The classic assimilationists such Robert Park and Milton Gordon did not predict an inevitable melting away of cultural difference within the American crucible. They noted the impact of racial and ethnic discrimination and included the possibility of ethnic persistence as part of their assimilationist theory. The new integrationists posit that "migration can be taken as part of a process that erodes the classical arrangement by which welfare states provide an ordered life course for the members of the national community, i.e. for their citizens in exchange for political loyalty" (Bommes and Geddes 2000:6). Basically, all the domains of activities are assessed in terms of whether or not they serve to incorporate newcomers into the nation-state of settlement. The social cohesion of the nation-state – analyzed as a social whole discrete from global economic, political, and cultural forces – remains the central concern. Such a stance precludes a framework that can position nation-states in relationship to globe-spanning imperial activities, neo-liberal restructuring, and processes of capital accumulation.

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[17] See Brubaker (2004) for a commentary on the similarities of this scholarship despite different national traditions.

[18] Because of the widespread effort to redefine the term assimilation and its adoption out of a concern to argue that immigrants should become firmly socially and culturally embedded in their new nation-state and loyal to it, it would make more sense for US scholars to use the term integration rather than assimilation. But part and parcel of the methodological nationalism of migration studies is a persistence of distinct national vocabularies, despite the fact that they impede comparative and global perspectives, which refer to the entire trend as integrationist, with the understanding that the scholars who are contributing to this literature pose migrants as the problematic element who are or can disrupt the national social fabric (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004; Waldinger 2006)

Instead, once again foreigners are seen source of national destabilization in a process that once again projects the nation as a source of social cohesion.

In arguing their case for the new integration or attacking immigrants for their supposed failure to integrate, these scholars generally compare statistics on level of education, work force integration, and criminality that continue the divide between native and foreigner and sometimes compare different "ethnic groups" (Huntington 2000). The defining and essential act for the new assimilationists continues to be the crossing of the border. Through this logic, migration scholarship functions today, as it did almost a century ago, to teach citizens that the fundamental social division in society is between natives, who are assumed to uniformly share common social norms, and foreigners who bear some essential form of difference. Increasingly in the United States, racialization is made more prominent by clustering foreign difference into the large racialized categories of Hispanic, African, Asian, and natives. In Europe, native identities are assumed to be Christian, so that the problematic foreign other is Muslim. But in these contrasts, there is a simultaneous construction of Christian Europe and persistent different national identities because the act of contrastive difference and homogenization contributes to the notion of both European territory and culture. This is because the various European national territories and cultures are posed as standing in contrast to and under threat from those of the radically different foreigners. In this paradigm, wherever they go within Europe, migrants are intruders in the shared and homogenous cultural and social space contained within the borders of the nation-state in which they are settling.

A central problem of the new integrationists' framework is their very clear identification with their own nation-state. This identification hampers migration theory because it reduces the scholarship of settlement to the question of whether or not migrants have come to identify with their nation-state of settlement and precludes global perspectives. It is far more productive for theory building to study a multiplicity of processes and possibilities that link individuals to institutions through ongoing processes of social relationships. I have argued elsewhere that phenomena such as simultaneous incorporation, transnational social fields, and unequal globalization require developing new notions of society that recognize the continuing power of certain nation-states, but do not confine social analysis to state boundaries (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Glick Schiller 2003; 2005). It is likely that future scholars will demonstrate that the revival of assimilationist theory, rather than being an advance in social science, reflected the moment in which nation-states, restructured in their relationship to regional and global reorganizations of economic and political power, are once again building their national identities at the expense of immigrants.

5. Scalar perspectives on locality

As I have argued, migration scholarship's binary division of foreigner and natives, which are legitimated through the adoption of the nation-state as the unit both of study and of analysis, leaves no conceptual space to address questions of the global structuring of region and locality. Except for global cities theory, the insightful and powerful social theorizing of locality and scale produced by urban geographers has not entered into migration theory (Brenner 1998; 1999a, 1999b; 2004; Brenner, Jessop, Jones, and Gordon MacLeod 2003; Brenner and Theodore 2003; Smith 1995; Swyngedouw 1992; 1997).To note that migrant departure, settlement, and transnational connections are shaped by the positioning of localities and regions within globally structured hierarchies of economic and political power would disrupt the homogenization of the national terrain imposed by migration theory and disrupt the continuing equation of nation-state with concepts of society.

Scholars of urban scale have documented that currently cities everywhere are participants in the same global trends delineated in the global cities literature. No city is delimited only by the regulatory regime and economic actions of the state in which it is based. The state itself is rescaled to play new roles by channeling flows of relatively unregulated capital and participating in the constitution of global regulatory regimes enforced by the World Trade Organization and international financial institutions.

Building on the seminal work of Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), these researchers – primarily geographers and political economists – began to develop a scalar perspective on restructuring (Brenner 1999a, 1999b; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Brenner et al. 2003; Brenner 2004; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; Smith 1992, 1995; Swyngedouw 1992). The scale theorists focused on the differential impacts of global processes on different localities. That is to say, they began with the premise that all cities are global but differentially positioned in terms of globe spanning hierarchies of economic and political power. They also examined the role of states within global economic restructuring and identified new ways that states – together with other actors – had a differentiated impact on particular localities. These theorists draw attention to fact that the hierarchies and structural positioning of cities could not be assumed to be nested in interstate or national-regional hierarchies but are situated within a global frame. Hence the scalar positioning of cities reflects their relationship to global, national, and regional circuits of capital. Although the scale theorists said nothing about migrant incorporation, it is evident that this perspective provides important theoretical openings through which to approach the significance of locality in migrant incorporation.

The relative positioning of a city within hierarchical fields of power may well lay the ground for the life-chances and incorporation opportunities of migrants locally and transnationally. In

order to understand the different modes and dynamics of migrant incorporation and transnationalism, we need to address the broader rescaling processes affecting the cities in which migrants are settling. A scalar perspective can bring into the analysis of migrant incorporation the missing spatial aspects of socio-economic power, which is exercised differently in different localities. The concept of scale introduces the missing socio-spatial parameters into the analysis of' 'locality' in migration scholarship.

A scalar perspective allows us to analyze the dynamics of locality in interaction with power hierarchies. For this reason it enables us to incorporate the uneven character of globalization and its dynamics into our analysis. The concept of scale offers us a frame and grammar with which to analyze the structures and processes of cities or urban zones in close relations to processes and dynamics of capital accumulation that are not necessarily confined within the states, yet interact with states controlling very different degrees of wealth and power.

More specifically, this scholarship highlights the various mechanisms that require all cities to compete for investments in new economies. Rather than just categorizing cities as "post-industrial" "global" or "non-global", these scholars examine the implications of the global restructuring of urban economies for the composition of labor forces and housing stocks, as well as for entrepreneurial strategies, infrastructure development, and tax policies. Scale theorists note that to develop and sustain their growth, cities now market themselves globally in an effort to attract flows of investment and a mix of "new economy" industries and their clients and customers. "New economy" industries are ones that produce services demanded within the global economy including the very consumption of locality in the form of tourism. To attract these new industries, such as computer related technologies, requires that the city offer a certain mix of human capital, higher education facilities, and cultural and recreational facilities. While in the age of city development through heavy industry, cities faired differently through locational differences such as access to harbours or the provision of railroads or highways, now life style facilities capable of attracting and maintaining a highly skilled workforce became an issue. Boulder and Berlin have benefited while Liverpool and Cleveland have declined within a globally restructuring of locality.

Scholars arguing for a scalar approach underlined not only the changing relationship between localities in the context of globalization, but also between localities and states. According to theorists advocating a scalar approach to state policies (Brenner et al. 2003; Jessop 2003), state activity is rescaled in the context of emergent neo-liberal market-oriented restructuring projects. State intervention and activity are institutionally and geographically differentiated. Thus, it is not possible to assume that intervention is equal and homogenous throughout the state (Brenner et al. 2003). However, this does not mean that states lose their role as active players; on the contrary, they contribute actively to the development of uneven geographies of urbanization and territorial inequalities within the national territory. They

shape this restructuring process through their spatially selective interventions. States re-concentrate their socio-economic activity to increase the competitiveness of certain cities and zones. Through the provision of state subsidies or contracts and support for key infrastructural facilities and public services in particular zones – such as airports or research facilities – they remain important actors in shaping the new patterns of uneven spatial development. Of course, the organization of state subsidies has historically differed between the European states, with their range of welfare and public interventions, and the United States, where intervention has been more indirect in the form of military and police expenditures, contracts, and urban block grants.[19] In this context, the competition among the cities to attract global capital is entangled with their competition to attract forms of state support.

Unfortunately, the richness of the perspective on locality that scalar theorists have developed is marred by their failure to address migration. Migrants simply are not on the horizon of scale theorists. With the exception to some extent of Garbaye (2006) and Patrick Legales (2002), migrants, who shape the texture of many cities in the world, have received almost no attention within the scale scholarship. Scale theorists have yet to investigate the contribution to urban restructuring of migrant practices, networks, and pathways of incorporation. They have not explored the ways in which migrants become part of the restructuring of the urban social fabric and the new forms of urban governance. Of course, migrants' roles in each city are themselves shaped in the context of rescaling processes themselves.

Scalar politics also includes the changing representations of cities as each city markets itself as a brand and produces its own image based on its mix of resources including cultural diversity. These public discourses need to be addressed in placing migrant incorporation within scale theory. All the resources cities have, including their human resources – which encompasses the migrants and their skills and qualities – acquire a new value and become assets in this competition. The "cultural diversity" of migrants is an important factor in the competitive struggle between the cities. Migrants are not only part of the new just-in-time sweat shop industries that accompany the restructuring of some cities. They provide highly skilled labor that also contributes to the human capital profile of various cities. And they become marketable assets for the cultural industries of the cities in which they are settling (Çağlar 2005a;b; Scott 2004; Zukin 1995).

It is important to note that it is not only the so-called global cities that compete on a global terrain. All cities, including those that are failing, engage in this competition, and those that are marginalized globally are also part of the same process. The place and role of migrants

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[19] The US does have a history of federal intervention in the form of block grants to cities, grants for research and development of research facilities, and transportation subsidies. However, much government support has been channeled through military investment.

in this competition might differ depending on the scalar positioning of these cities. Drawing from the scale literature, I argue that we can differentiate and understand the dynamics of migrant incorporation and transnationalism in different cities better if we relate them to the rescaling processes of political and economic space taking place within the context of the neo-liberal regulatory systems (Peck 1998). Yet studies of development and migration tend to ignore both the specificities of localities that migrants connect through their networks of social relations and the insertion of these localities within broader structural disparities of wealth and power. Migrants who send remittances make their investment in social relations that are being reconfigured by the rescaling of their localities of departure and settlement. Their decisions to remit and their ability to do so are configured by the ways in which their labor, cultural and social capital, and roles as social actors contribute to the positioning of localities within unequal transnational relationships of power.

6. Transnational fields of power

Contemporary transnational fields of power, defined as networks of networks through which capital of various kinds are organized and transmitted, are rarely studied from a global perspective that brings together corporate, military, political, and cultural institutions that span borders. For example, the discussion of neo-liberal rescaling of cities, while highlighting issues of governance as well as political economy, rarely addresses the question of globe spanning military power. On the other hand, theorists on the right and left have recently returned to the concept of imperialism and stressed the significance of warfare but often ignore the relationship between neo-liberal restructuring, migration, and the construction of images of the foreigner as enemy and terrorist (Chalmers 2004, Cooper 2003, Harvey 2003; Mann; Haas 2000; Ikenberry 2002; Reyna 2005). And migration studies with its rooting in the concerns of nation-state building projects have not only failed to address global political economy but also have not examined its relationship to several kinds of power including that which racializes and subordinates regions, populations, and localities.

As a means of addressing these concerns, Ramon Grosfoguel (2006) and Aníbal Quijano (2000) have argued for an analytical framework they call the "colonial power matrix." They develop a scholarship that analyses the role of repressive force and discursive power and speaks to the North/South divide. Grosfoguel (2006) speaks of the coloniality of power as an "entanglement" or "intersectionality" of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies ("heterarchies") of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures.

He emphasizes that the concepts of racial and gender differences and the hierarchies they substantiate are central to the legitimization of the dominance of finance capital and its base of Northern states and institutions. The coloniality of power framework addresses the disparities of wealth and power which link together the lack of development, the root causes of migration flows, and the motivation for remittances by bringing together in a single analytical framework the processes of capital accumulation, restructuring of place, and nation-state building and the categorization of labor by race and gender. However, more needs to be said about how US and European imperialist ventures are currently being justified through the construction of racial, religious, and gendered difference that project migrants as the chief threat to national security. In the face of intense global economic, political, social, and cultural interconnections, growing inequality and continuing gender hierarchies, the popularization of the notion of the migrant as the outside rehabilitates earlier myths that nation states contain homogenous cultures shared by native populations. Once again the migrant is constructed to reinforce and validate the nationalism that continues to socialize individuals to identify with their nation-sate and conceive of the world as divided into autonomous nation-states.

I have noted that states are still important within the globe spanning economic processes that mark our contemporary world, but, of course, not all states are equal. Unequal globalization rests on a framework of imperial states that serve as base areas for institutions which control capital, the productions of arms, and military power. These powerful states claim and obtain rights and privileges in states around the world and define the institutional limits of less powerful states. The core imperial states also are the key players in institutions that claim to be global, including the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations Security Council.

7. Conclusions

The paper has explored the way in which much of migration research, because it is founded upon the dichotomy of the nation-state and its others, depicts migrant difference as threatening to the stability and unity of a fixed national ethos. The native-foreigner divide is so fundamental to the entire enterprise of migration research that its conceptual underpinnings are rarely confronted. Yet the concept of migrants as the other of the nation state reflects the particular and peculiar political optic of both past and contemporary processes of nation-state building. It is part and parcel of the intellectual orientation of methodological nationalism. When, delimitated by their methodological nationalism, migration theorists confine their units of analysis to the nation-state and the migrant, they are unable to track structures and processes of unequal capital flow which influence the experience of people who reside in particular localities. Migration scholars often fail to look at relationships

of migrants and natives who are not framed by concepts of cultural or ancestral difference. Furthermore, they ignore the way in which local institutions that incorporate residents of states in a variety of ways are configured by power hierarchies that interpenetrate into states and regions. To counter the effects of methodological nationalism on migration research, I have suggested that scholars and citizens develop a global power-imbricated perspective for migration studies in order to access units of analysis that take migration research beyond the nation/migrant divide.

Migration theorists must acknowledge the systemic structuring of power by imperial power states and the financial and military institutions they control. And we need a way to theorize fields of unequal power, which extend globally, in order to sufficiently apprehend the contradictions that led the World Bank, other global financial institutions, and many migrant sending states to celebrate the role of migrant remittances in sustaining economically struggling states, at the very moment of anti-immigrant fence building and border closing. Development discussions that celebrate migrants as global actors contributing to the schools, markets, and industries of home localities through remittance flows and home town associations complement and reinforce methodological nationalism. They do this by reinforcing older ideologies of modernization with the migrant rather than the nation-state as the force for independent national development. Development discussions that do not address transnational fields of unequal power serve to obfuscate rather than promote analysis. Many states dominated by imperial power and its new regulatory architecture are struggling because a sizeable proportion of their gross national product is channeled into debt service, leaving migrants to sustain the national economy through their contributions. Migrants provide exploitable labor – which whether unskilled or highly skilled – is kept vulnerable to the extent that migrants are defined as foreign and not given the protection of full citizenship rights. Meanwhile, remittances and the flow of migrant capital across borders contribute to the profitability of banks and other financial institutions.

Migration studies are at a crucial juncture. We can follow the pattern of the past, let our research be shaped by the public mood and the political moment, and revive old binaries, fears, and categories. Or we can engage in research that clarifies this moment by developing new frameworks for analysis. In short, we need a new scholarship that can build on our understanding of global processes, and highlight them so that we can actually document how migrants live their lives as constitutive actors in multiple social settings. This scholarship will reconstitute migration theory so that it explains current observations and facilitates new ones. To do this we need units of analysis that do not obscure the presence as well as internal contradictions of imperial globe-spanning power, its inability to provide consistent development, and its dependence on migrant labor.

In arguing that current migration theory has an internal politics, I am arguing for an explication of political positions within social theory, not for a notion of a value-free social science. A global perspective on imperial power can also facilitate our ability as socially engaged scholars to theorize the contradictions of imperial dilemmas and find ways in which they can contribute to progressive social transformation. The increasing rejection in Latin America of the Washington Consensus, the rising opposition in the US to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the planned war in Iran, the rejection of new war plans by public opinion in Europe, provide openings for movements that allow us to critique the global system of imperial power. But we can only do this if we set aside born-again assimilationism and other forms of integrationist theory that posit migrants as disruptive of national communities. It is necessary for migrants and natives of countries around the world who find their lives diminished by unequal globalization to understand what the problem is and is not. It is not putative hordes of illegal aliens that are threatening the majority of people in the imperial core countries. Most people would prefer to stay home and most people do stay home. It is not the insistence of migrants that they maintain ethnic community rather than integrating or assimilating. It is the global fragility of contemporary capitalism that causes disruptions in social fabrics that are woven together in global systems of exchange, consumption, and profit.

The future of migration studies should be based on learning from the past, but not repeating it. We need research that responds to popular fears, but is not shaped by it. Migration needs to build on the global perspective that has been emerging from various disciplines and theorists. This perspective (1) puts aside the ethnic group as a primary unit of analysis and critique and sets aside all forms of methodological nationalism; (2) links local wars and internal displacement to global processes of capital accumulation; (3) highlights the human costs and need for asylum in manner that ends separation between our problems and theirs; and (4) identifies migrants as a legitimate and necessary actor of movements for progressive social transformation. We need to study and popularize concepts of the migration process that is part of global forces experienced by people who move and who do not move. This means migration scholars must enter into the public debate about social cohesion by identifying the forces of globalization that are restructuring lives of migrants and non-migrants alike and speaking to the common struggle of most of the people of the world for social and economic justice and equality.

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How Can we Measure Migration in Europe?
Results of the Project "Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration"

Nicolas Perrin and Michel Poulain

Abstract

International migration statistics are among the least reliable. This paper will present a brief statement on current conditions in terms of the availability, reliability and comparability of migration statistics in Europe. Several international institutions have initiated programmes aimed at improving the situation. The European Commission decided to propose an EU regulation on international migration and asylum statistics. The THESIM Project (Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration) was selected for funding by DG Research in order to lend scientific support in the implementation at national level of the Regulation on Migration statistics. The paper presents the main recommendations of the THESIM group.

Contents

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Introduction

The issue of migration has become a priority for European policy. As a consequence, the EU is facing an urgent need for better statistics on migration and asylum in order to support the development of a common EU migration policy. Nevertheless, at the same time, international migration statistics are among the least reliable statistics: they are difficult to find; they are « often » unreliable; they are barely comparable at an international level. Therefore several international institutions (the Statistics Division of the United Nations in New York, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, Eurostat in Luxembourg) initiated programmes aiming at improving the situation, but the goal of producing a set of data with sufficient reliability, adequate harmonisation and comparability is far from being reached (Poulain and Perrin, 2003).

Recently, the European Commission decided to propose an EU regulation on international migration and asylum statistics in order to foster this process. The THESIM Project (Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration) was selected for funding by DG Research aiming to support scientifically the implementation at national level of the Regulation on Migration statistics[1]. In this framework, an investigation was carried out in each EU member state[2] to identify: the availability, the reliability, and the international comparability of data and how these might be improved in order to compile Community statistics focusing on five types of indicators (statistical data requested in the proposed statistical regulation): 1/ immigration and emigration flows 2/ population stocks 3/ residence permits 4/ asylum procedure 5/ data on refusals, apprehensions and removal of undocumented migrants. This report was published as a book in February 2006 (Poulain, Perrin and Singleton, 2006)[3].

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[1] The work involved scientific teams based in seven EU countries:
- Belgium: GéDAP (Groupe d'étude de démographie appliquée) – Michel Poulain and Nicolas Perrin
- Austria: ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development) – Michael Jandl, Albert Kraler, Martin Hofmann and Veronika Bilger
- Estonia: Anne Herm
- France: INED – Xavier Thierry and Yves Breem
- Italy: ICstat (International Cooperation Center for statistics "Luigi Bodio") – Giambattista Cantisani and Valeria Greco
- Netherlands: NIDI – Rob van der Erf, Liesbeth Heering and Ernst Spaan
- Poland: CEFMR – Dorota Kupiszewska, Beata Nowok and Marek Kupiszewski
+ Ann Singleton (University of Bristol), as additional editor of the final publication.

[2] At the time of the project all 25 EU countries were covered. However, the study was recently extended in order to include Bulgaria, Romania (Kupiszewska, Perrin and Poulain, 2007a and b) and a further extension should soon include the non-EU states of the Balkans.

[3] Several previous reports on the same or similar topics have to be acknowledged: Poulain, Debuisson and Eggerickx (1990), Krekels and Poulain (1998), Poulain and Gisser (1992), Salt, Singleton and Hogarth (1994), Haug, Courbage and Compton (1998 and 2002).

This paper will try to summarize the findings of the project in order to:

- Present a brief statement on current conditions in terms of availability, reliability and comparability of migration statistics
- Present the main recommendations of the THESIM group
- Discuss the possible use of migration statistics
- Discuss the possible improvements of migration statistics

Due to its statistical point of view and its intention to cover each EU member state in detail, the extent of this study is limited. It only offers a statistical point of view. More precisely, it focuses mainly on demographical indicators[4]. Migration being a complex phenomenon, this should be the first step of a multi-disciplinary approach. Furthermore, since there is still limited harmonisation and often quite different systems in each country, we may have misunderstood some details.

1. Migration statistics in Europe: the state of the art in brief

1.1. Limited availability

The first main conclusion emerging from the investigation is that the level of availability of migration statistics is very limited.

The simplest indicator and the one more directly linked to migration, namely the numbers of immigrants/emigrants per year ("migration flow statistics"), is often unknown (EE, GR and BG)[5]. Additionally, available figures are often only very partial or indirect estimations (FR, IE, MT, PL, PT and RO) whose level of reliability or comparability may be relatively low.

The second more common indicator related to migration is the number of foreigners residing in a given country at a given time ("stock data"). In contrast to migration flows, this indicator is available in most of the countries. However, in many countries, only a rough estimation can be produced between censuses (GR, EE, FR, IE, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, CY, BG and RO), which is often not acceptable regarding a rapidly-changing phenomenon like migration.

Concerning asylum data, they are more often available and the level of detail is usually more important, even if the definition of the provided indicators may be questionable (van der Erf, 1998; van der Erf, Heering and Spaan, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Data on refusals, apprehensions, and removals of undocumented migrants (the so-called "CIREFI data") often exist, but they may not be publicly accessible for non-governmental organisations. In

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[4] Because of the low level of availability and reliability currently observed, it was logically decided to focus on the simplest indicators.
[5] See the list of abbreviations/acronyms of the 27 EU MS in appendix.

addition, due to a lack of transparency in this field, the applied definitions may be unknown, and the resulting contents of the provided statistics may be questionable. As concerns residence permits, even if data are normally registered, they are not published and often only produced on request.

1.2. Main data sources and availability

The main statistical sources regarding migration are censuses, administrative registers (mainly population registers or aliens' register, but also more specific databases focusing on residence permits, asylum procedure, or police databases dedicated to the registration of refusals, apprehensions, or removals of undocumented migrants), and surveys.

The importance of each source has recently changed. Traditional censuses are disappearing due to their cost, the need for more frequently updated statistics, the emergence of the "privacy"-problem, and the opposition to census in several countries. In terms of migration statistics, the decline of the use of census data is particularly important due to the impossibility of providing flow as well as frequent data. Their use is now often limited to the correction of stock figures. At the same time, one can distinctly note the development towards an extensive use of administrative registers due to their cost (data are derived from the usual administrative activity), their frequent updating, and the possibility to capture flow. Most EU member states (AT, BE, CZ, DE, ES, HU, IT, FI, DK, NL, RO, SK, SW (+CH, IS, N)) produce flow data using a population register. The same countries use their population register to update stock data (in combination with census or aliens' registers in several cases). When population registers (or aliens' registers) do not exist, migration flows are often derived from another type of administrative register, a residence permit database (FR, GR, PT, + soon RO and presumably BG[6]).

As a consequence, most migration statistics are nowadays produced through administrative databases. Three countries (IE, UK and CY) still rely on surveys to produce migration statistics. The UK produces migration flow statistics through a border survey (the International Passenger Survey) and estimates the number of foreigners residing in the country through a traditional large-scale survey, the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Ireland produces migration flow statistics through the same type of Quarterly National Household Survey. The use of surveys similar to LFS will in the future certainly remain limited to

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[6] In Bulgaria and Romania migration flow data are currently based on population registers. These registers include only foreigners holding a permanent residence permit. In the future, in order to produce a more realistic estimation of the number of foreigners, these two countries will most probably produce migration statistics by using their residence permits' databases which also includes registered foreigners holding a temporary residence permit.

producing stock data. Actually, in order to provide a precise picture of the population (by citizenship), the size of the sample is not sufficient in most of the EU member states, and it is often only representative of the total foreign population or the main groups of foreigners. In addition, this type of general survey is not well-suited to capture in-flows and should not be used to capture out-flows.

The development of new border surveys will also certainly remain limited. Firstly, it is expensive, difficult to organise and hardly reaches a sufficient level of representation. Secondly, it requires a strict control of border crossing, which is not compatible with the currently developing freedom of movement, excepting the case of islands like Britain or Ireland. Finally, one state, Bulgaria, tried to produce migration flow data through border control statistics before the accession to the EU and the suppression of strict border controls. It will have to find a new solution (presumably using the residence permits' database of the Authority of Aliens).

This current trend towards an extensive use of administrative databases is partially positive. This type of data is often more reliable. It can capture flow and stock data. Estimates are more frequently updated. The use of these types of databases is less expensive than traditional censuses or surveys. However, having said that, administrative databases and population registers are still unreliable in some countries of Eastern and Southern Europe. The development of this type of data source may create a problem in terms of protection of individual data. Last but not least, important categories may be excluded from the covered population: short-term immigrants, undocumented or irregular migrants, asylum seekers. As a consequence of the coverage or reliability, it may be difficult to interpret the data. The Belgian immigration statistics are certainly one of the best examples. As a matter of fact, after 1995, asylum seekers were excluded from official statistics. As a consequence, the large increase in immigration around 1999 due to the simultaneous crises in Congo, Kosovo, and Chechnya was completely erased from statistics whereas the huge number of new asylum seekers was one of the main centres of interests for political parties and journalists during that period (the asylum law was rapidly changed in order to face the inflow) (Perrin, 2006).

Figure 1. Immigration flows in Belgium:
official figures excluding asylum seekers after 1995 and estimation including asylum seekers
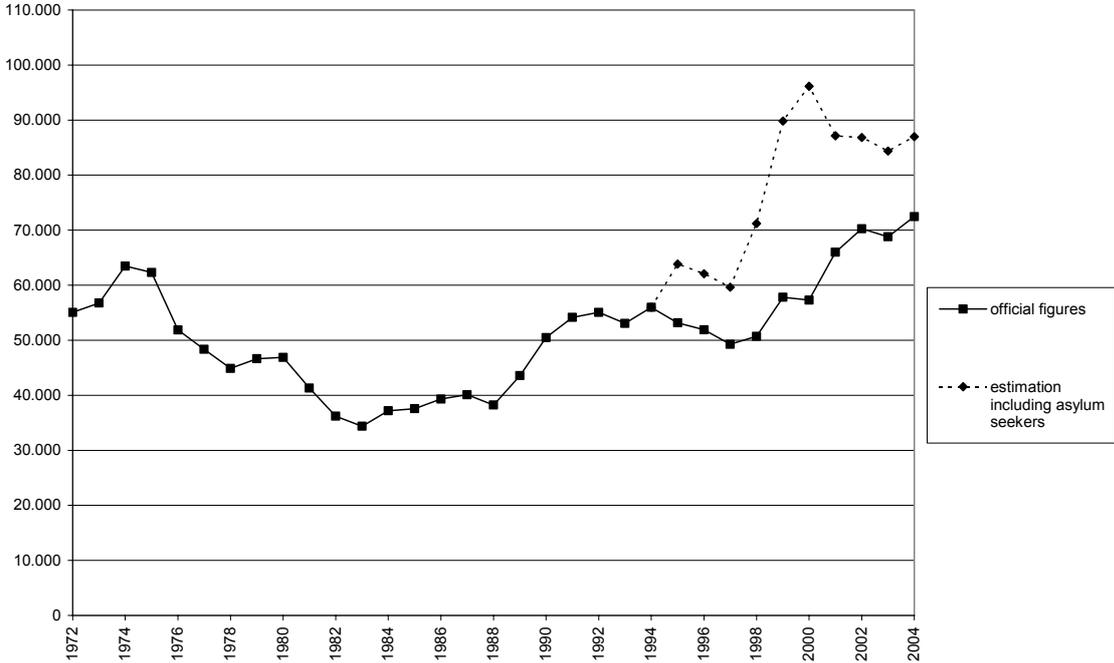
Source: National Statistical Office - National Register – Aliens' Office /
Calculation: Nicolas Perrin

To begin, the selection of a database is already a determining choice because of the coverage/undercoverage of the source. The covered population may be difficult to interpret, or the interpretation may be misleading. In all cases, the coverage of the data source should be clearly linked to results in terms of reliability and comparability (Perrin, 2005).

1.3. Reliable data?

Even if availability is the more direct problem faced by users, reliability is certainly the main element needing improvement.

Indeed, data on illegal migration represent the least reliable statistics of the field. In practice it is difficult (nearly impossible) to capture illegal migration directly. Three main indicators are currently collected to understand the phenomenon, through the police activity linked to repression of illegal migration/undocumented migrants: statistics on refusals, apprehensions, and removals of undocumented migrants. But the question is: are those data reliable? As was highlighted by Michael Jandl (Jandl and Kraler, 2006; Jandl, 2007), the evolution of

these indicators is questionable in many countries (fig. 2, 3 and 4)[7]. Furthermore, existing data are inconsistent. Jandl (Jandl and Kraler, 2006; Jandl, 2007) also pointed out that the number of removals should not be higher than the number of apprehensions of undocumented migrants (the police must apprehend an undocumented migrant in order to remove him/her). Nevertheless, the number of removals is often higher than the number of apprehensions (fig. 5).

Figure 2. Evolution of refusal statistics in Spain, 1997-2003
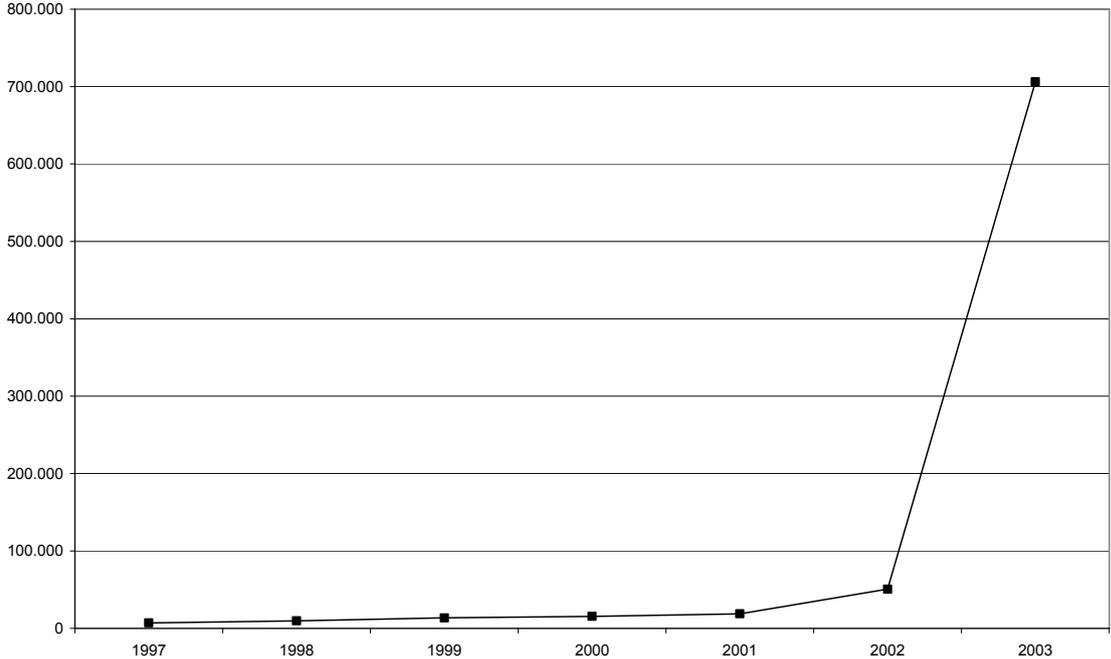
Source: CIREFI (Jandl, 2007)

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[7] The chosen countries in the different figures are not exceptionally non-reliable countries. They are, to the contrary, representative of the situation at EU level.

Figure 3. Evolution of apprehension statistics in Greece, 1997-2003
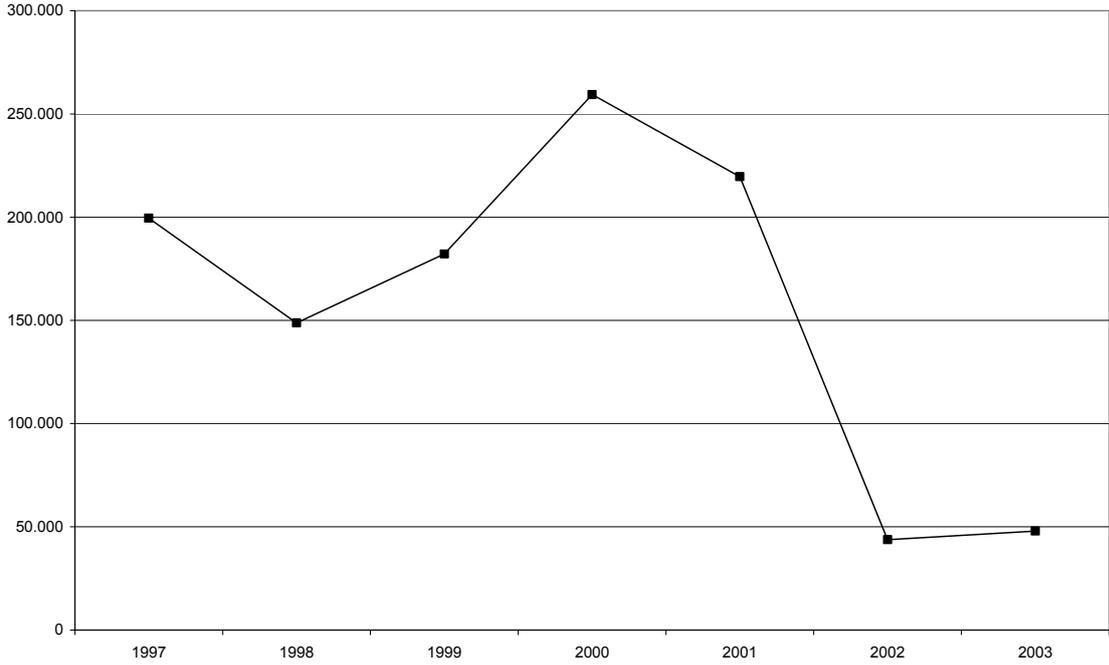
Source: CIREFI (Jandl, 2007)

Figure 4. Evolution of removal statistics in Bulgaria, 2000-2003
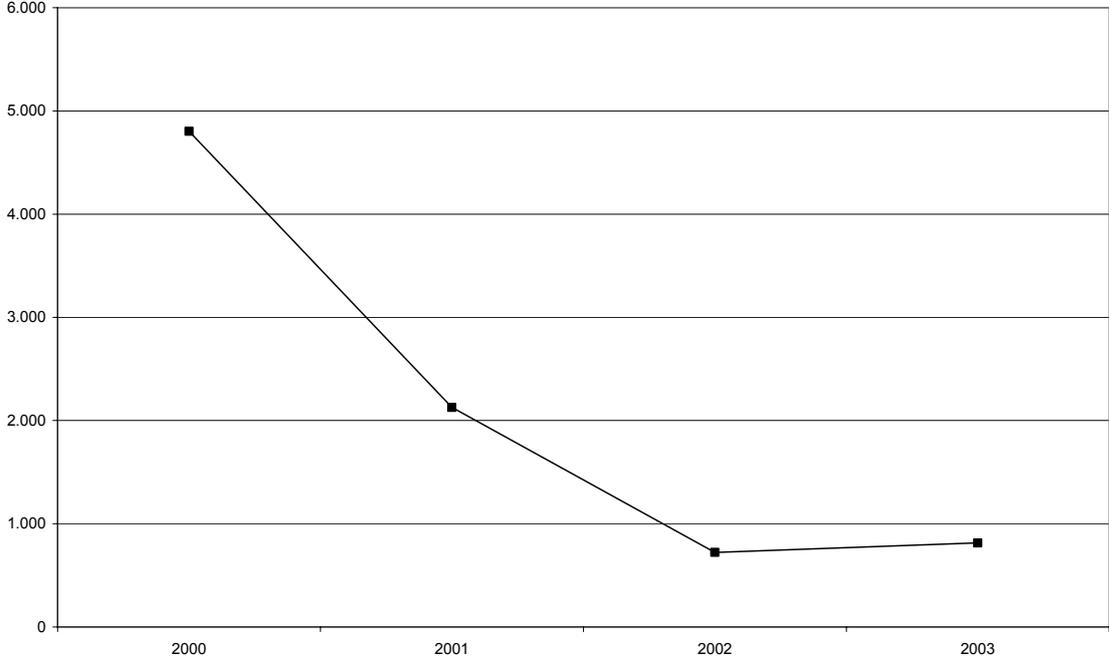
Source: CIREFI (Jandl, 2007)

Figure 5. Apprehensions and removals of illegal immigrants in European countries, 2003
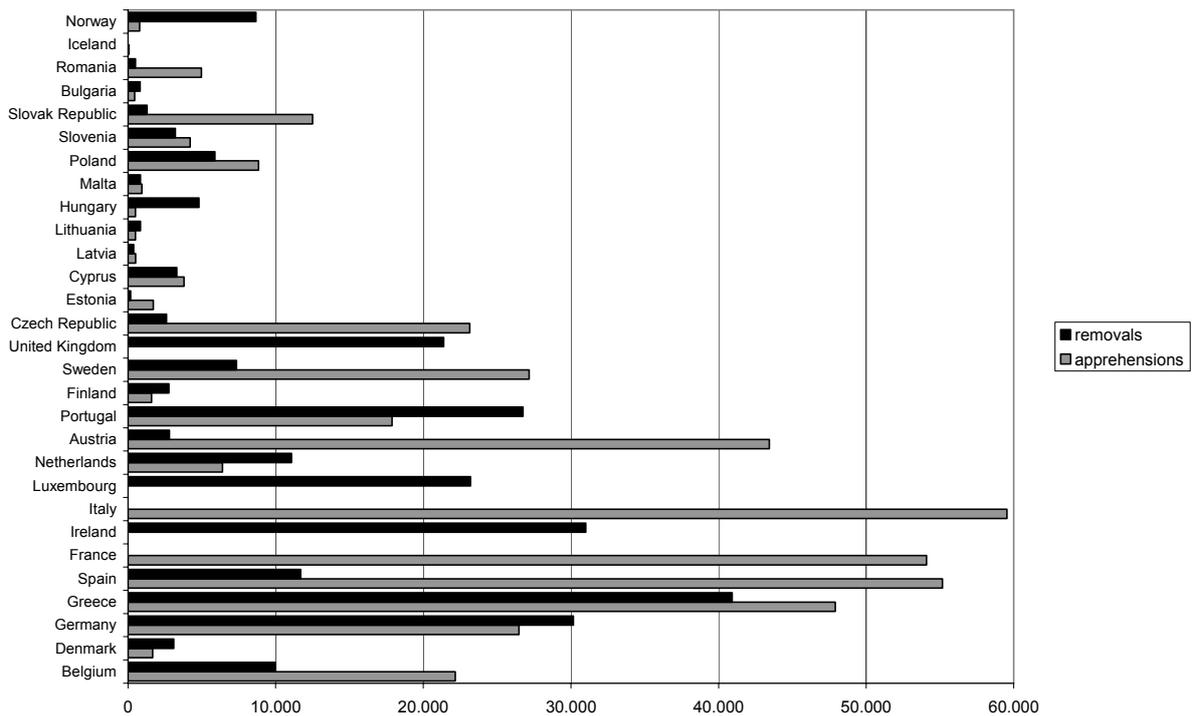
Source: CIREFI (Jandl, 2007)

Although producing data on legal migration flows is easier from a methodological point of view, the reliability of these data is also problematic in many countries. This point can be quite convincingly illustrated by comparing legal emigration statistics produced by the country of origin and the immigration statistics produced by the country of destination[8] (Nowok, Kupiszewska and Poulain, 2006). The two types of statistics refer to the same flow, and therefore the estimations should be consistent. However, few data are indeed consistent, with the exception of the Inter-Nordic flows which are registered based upon the Inter-Nordic agreement (fig. 6A). In most of the cases, the immigration figures are higher than the emigration figures, but above all the difference is large in most countries providing this type of data (fig. 6B and 6C)[9]. The difference exceeds a factor of 2 in 61% of the cases observed by Nowok, Kupiszewska and Poulain for 2002 data (Nowok, Kupiszewska and Poulain, 2006). The observed differences arise particularly from two problems: the unreliability of some databases and the divergence of the applied definitions in each country.

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[8] Using a so-called "double matrix" popularised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Herm, 2006)
[9] Due to the low reliability, some countries, such as Belgium, have decided not to publish data by country of origin and destination.

Figure 6. Comparison of in-flows and out-flows by country of origin and destination in selected countries, 2002

A. Migration from Finland to Sweden

According to Finland
3.532

According to Sweden
3.591
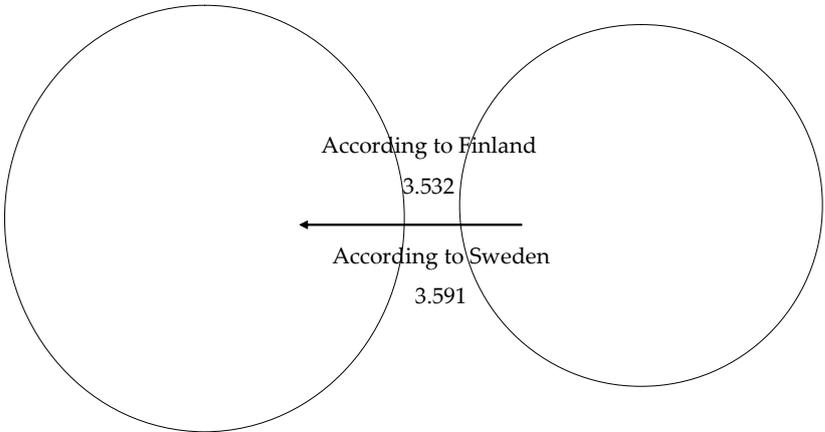
B. Migration from Austria to Germany

According to
Germany 14.401

According to Austria
3.605
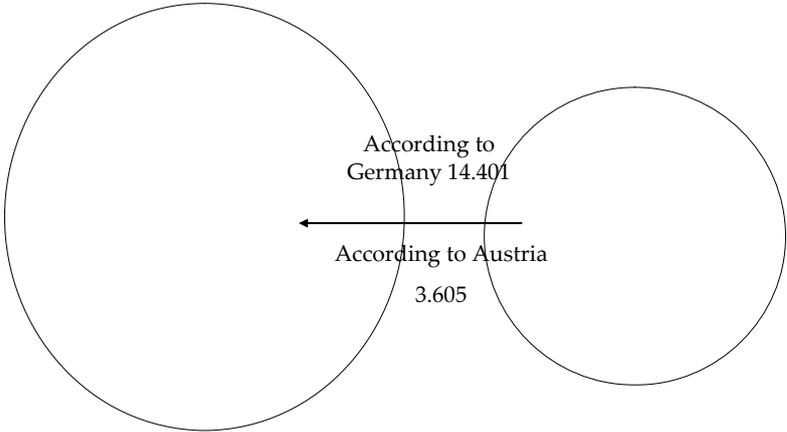
C. Migration from Czech Republic to Germany

According to
Germany 11.150

According to CZ
1.087
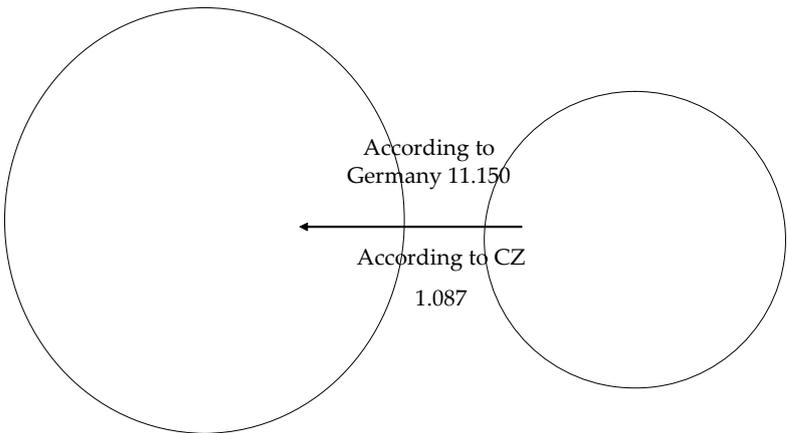
Source: Eurostat (Nowok, Kupiszewska and Poulain, 2006)

The situation concerning stock data is considerably better. Although discrepancies are frequently observed between census and intercensal estimates (for instance in France, Ireland, United Kingdom), the differences are negligible compared to the differences observed by migration flow estimates.

To conclude, the reliability of migration statistics concerning flow data and data relating to illegal migration is very low in many EU states. This may explain why experts sometimes consider migration statistics as « the less reliable social statistics ».

1.4. Comparability

It is difficult, nowadays, to dare to produce comparative quantitative tables on international migrations in Europe. To begin with, data are often not available. Secondly, they often fail to show the desired reliability, the consequence of which is that the levels of reliability vary considerably from country to country. Finally, each state still uses very specific national definitions for each indicator and international recommendations are not applied (United Nations, 1998). Several international organisations (UNECE, Eurostat, ILO etc.) launched initiatives aiming at harmonising the main definitions during the last decades (e.g. What is the resident population? What is an immigrant? What is an emigrant?)[10]. Recent improvements were noticed, but the results are still limited and fundamental questions remain.

As regards stock data (the number of foreigners), these are certainly more reliable and often available (at least at census intervals). Conversely, there is an obvious link between citizenship law and size of the foreign population by country in the EU (fig. 7). There are more foreigners in small EU countries (such as Luxembourg), but also in countries with specific citizenship law such as Latvia and Estonia[11] or more restrictive citizenship law such as Germany or Austria. At the same time, there are fewer foreigners in traditional countries of immigration with more liberal citizenship law such as France or the United Kingdom. Even if data are available and reliable and the statistical definitions are comparable, it may be difficult (nearly impossible) to compare a basic indicator at EU level on account of the wide divergence with regard to basic concepts such as citizenship obtaining in different countries (Bauböck et al., 2006; Perrin, Dal and Poulain, to be published).

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[10] Herm, 2006.
[11] After the independence of these countries, an important part of the population was excluded from Estonian and Latvian citizenship, including persons who were not citizens of another country, i.e. mainly members of the Russian minority.

Figure 7. Number of foreigners in the EU25, 2004
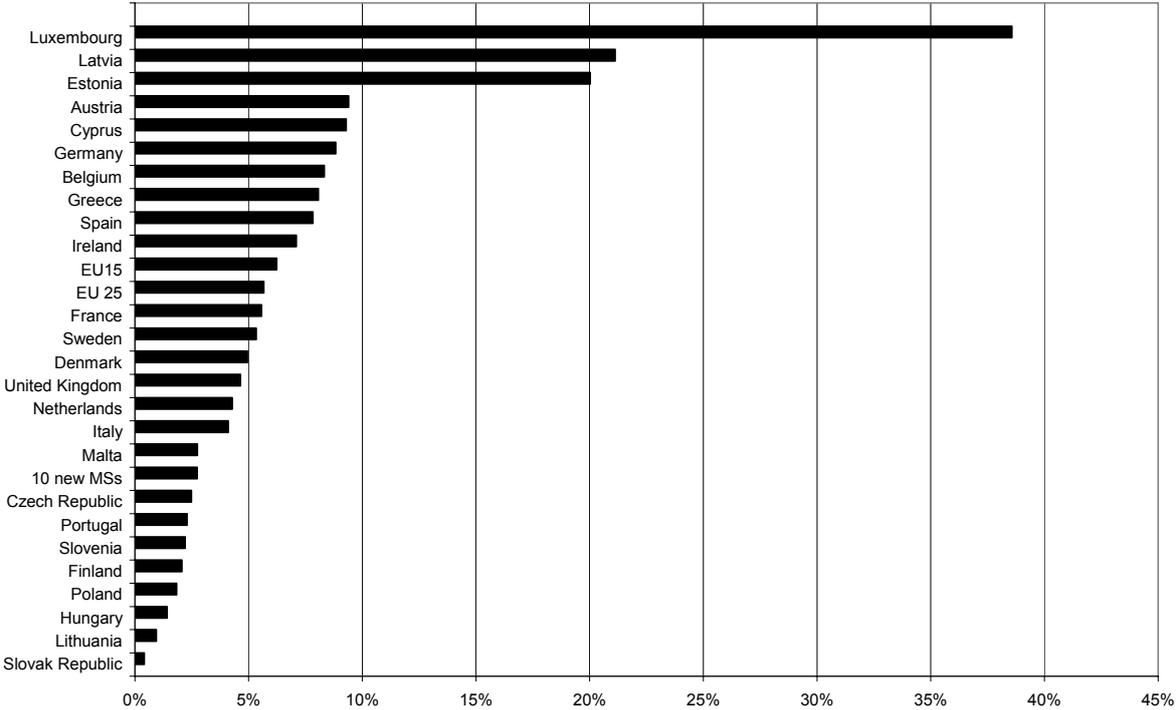
Source: Eurostat

Regarding flow data, two main problems were identified. To start with, as we have indicated in the first part of this paper, the statistical databases often cover different populations (some countries exclude asylum seekers, some countries include illegal migrants, some countries include only foreigners with a permanent residence permit etc.). In addition, a persistent problem is very weak harmonisation in terms of the time criterion used to define a migration (tab. 1).

Table 1. Time criteria for immigration statistics

BE	3 months	LU	no time criteria
BG	permanent	HU	3 months / 1year (EEA/non-EEA)
CZ	1 year	MT	permanent
DK	3 or 6 months	NL	4 out of the forthcoming 6 months
DE	no time criteria	AT	1 year
EE	3 months	PL	permanent
EL	1 year	PT	one year
ES	no time criteria	RO	permanent
FR	one year	SI	3 months
IE	no time criteria	SK	permanent / 3 months
IT	no time criteria / one year (EEA/EEA)	FI	one year
CY	one year	SE	one year
LV	one year	UK	one year
LT	one year		

Source: Nowok, Kupiszewska and Poulain (2006)/Kupiszewska, Perrin et Poulain (2007a and 2007b)

The same difficulties arise from asylum statistics and statistics on illegal migration. As for asylum, statistics on decisions occurring within different types of procedures should be compared cautiously. Concerning statistics on illegal migration, different definitions seem to be applied, but it is difficult to assess the extent of the non-comparability since the underlying definition is often not accessible.

2. How can we measure migration in Europe?

2.1. Recommendations emerging from the THESIM report

First of all, the main recommendation of the THESIM group is certainly that efforts should not only be focused on the improvement of the availability of data. From a statistical point of view, but also from a political point of view, it would be nonsense to provide/compare data at the international level without sufficient information to prove that they are adequately reliable. For the same reason, adopting the same definition and time criterion is a valuable target; however, improving the reliability and improving the coverage of each data source in each country are the most important tasks to be achieved in the short term.

Since the improvement of reliability is the more difficult task, in a first phase, each country should be able to evaluate the reliability of the data extracted from each source, in order to provide the best estimate of the requested statistical figures. In addition, the requested meta-

data should include complete information on each data source used in order to understand its actual coverage or undercoverage.

Concerning coverage, special attention should be paid to nationals leaving for abroad on a temporary basis. The self-declaration of departure should be encouraged as well as the registration in consular registers abroad. A special effort should also be made to avoid double-counting of EU citizens by stimulating bilateral agreements and the exchange of data between EU member states. All asylum seekers with pending requests should be counted as international immigrants after one year of stay in the country.

When certain data are missing, the use of different and complementary data sources is recommended; however, the resulting figures have to be strictly harmonised. For third-country nationals living in the country, the residence permit database may be used for counting immigrations while emigrations may be collected through expiry of the permit or border crossings.

With regard to comparability, the impact of the choice of a particular definition should be investigated. For instance, migration statistics based on intended duration of stay and on ex post duration of stay without an explicit time criterion should be compared from a methodological point of view.

2.2. Can we use migration statistics?

From a pessimistic point of view, three main problems remain and should not be concealed:

- There are no data for certain non-negligible parts of Europe (particularly flow data)
- In many countries there are no reliable data on important topics (again particularly flow data)
- The level of harmonisation usually remains limited.

However, we should highlight non-negligible positive improvements:

- Recent improvements were noticed in several countries (harmonisation of definitions/registration based upon the Inter-Nordic agreement in Nordic countries; extension of the population covered by official statistics and use of international definitions in Czech Republic; use of the newly-established central population register in order to produce more reliable data in Austria etc.)
- Potential improvement could be achieved in most of EU countries by
  - extending the covered populations (e.g. Belgium could include asylum seekers in migration statistics; Slovakia and Romania (in the future maybe Bulgaria as

well) should be able to find a solution to include long-term immigrants after one year of stay using their residence permits' databases etc.)

- o developing new methodologies or new databases to produce better estimates (as France did by developing a rolling census allowing the production of more frequent estimates or as Ireland did by using the Central Records System (CRS) held within the Department of Social and Family Affairs)
- o interconnecting registers (e.g. NL, Nordic countries)

As a conclusion, in spite of the severe problems underlined, the situation is evolving positively.

2.3. Can we improve migration statistics?

From our point of view, the improvement of migration statistics is necessary in order to create an objective basis for a new migration policy. As a matter of fact, it should be considered as an element of good governance in terms of efficiency, accountability, and transparency.

The recent proposal for a regulation on Community statistics on international migration and international protection could accelerate the process (European Commission, 2005). Until now, European migration statistics were collected on the basis of a gentleman's agreement. As a consequence, member states were invited to provide data. They were invited to follow the proposed definitions and EU standards in terms of reliability. As a result, data were provided irregularly. They used to follow national definitions. It was nearly impossible to check the reliability of the provided figures. If the regulation is adopted, member states will *have to* provide data. They will *have to* follow definitions. They will *have to* provide reliable data.

This reform of data collection at the EU level only concerns basic indicators (number of foreigners, number of immigrants, number of asylum seekers, number of apprehended undocumented migrants etc. by citizenship, country of birth, sex, etc.). However, it is certainly ambitious in terms of the decision making process, the implications, the possible improvements, the subjects, the level of detail, the reliability, and the periodicity. It will force member states to abandon some national specificities, to adapt their national statistical system, and to create and to improve specific tools.

3. Conclusion

Statistical data are undoubtedly necessary in order to understand more precisely and objectively the evolution of migration trends, but they may be difficult to use or easily misused. As a matter of fact, availability is still limited, reliability is often very low, and comparability is still a remote goal at the EU level. Even if data relating to stocks are reliable and easily available, the poor situation concerning flow data and data related to undocumented migrants should not be concealed and underestimated.

Nevertheless, we were able to identify several areas indicating an opportunity for future improvements. Firstly, potentially available data or databases could be more efficiently used in order to provide more indicators that can be regarded as reliable and comparable. Secondly, some recent improvements were noticed or are foreseen. Finally, the above mentioned proposal for a European regulation on migration statistics may be a decisive step towards harmonised migration statistics in Europe.

The present study was limited to the 25 EU member states until 2006. It was extended to Bulgaria and Romania during March 2007. Additionally, similar studies will be undertaken in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia during the spring and summer of 2007. This should allow a more comprehensive overview of the European statistical situation. Furthermore, it should be followed by in-depth research on more complex indicators focusing on integration or discrimination[12].

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[12] One interesting project of this kind, the PROMINSTAT project, will be launched by ICMPD and 16 research centres in 2007 (see www.icmpd.org).

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Appendix

List of abbreviations/acronyms of the 27 EU MS

BE Belgium

BG Bulgaria

CZ Czech Republic

DK Denmark

DE Germany

EE Estonia

EL Greece

ES Spain

FR France

IE Ireland

IT Italy

CY Cyprus

LV Latvia

LT Lithuania

LU Luxembourg

HU Hungary

MT Malta

NL Netherlands

AT Austria

PL Poland

PT Portugal

RO Romania

SI Slovenia

SK Slovak Republic

FI Finland

SE Sweden

UK United Kingdom

Harmonisation of Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables
in Cross-National Comparison

Jürgen H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik

Abstract

The following remarks demonstrate how to harmonise demographic and socio-economic variables in cross-national comparative survey research. After a short introduction discussing the difference between translation and harmonisation, the path from a national concept and a national structure to an internationally-applicable measurement instrument is presented. As an example to clarify this path, the variable "education" is used. In a second part it is shown how "ethnicity" is measured in different national instruments and which elements of these national measures are meaningful as elements for an internationally-comparable measurement instrument. The last section deals with the accurate wording of questions necessary in order to obtain migration background information of respondents who are citizens.

Contents

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1. Difference between translation and harmonisation in cross-national survey research

In the beginning of the 1970s after more and more cross-national survey research had taken place, Przeworski and Teune (1970: 96-97) remarked: "Direct measurement requires that the language of measurement be common to all observations, reflect relationships among the phenomena observed, and be consistently applied." These are the problems of cross-national survey research up until today.

"Cross-system comparisons of single variables will be dependent upon the units and the scale of measurement within each social system." (Przeworski and Teune, 1970: 42). Therefore, the first step towards establishing comparability in cross-national survey research was to overcome language barriers. The second step was to harmonise demographic and socio-economic variables. Demographic and socio-economic variables describe the context in which a person acts. Context variables or background variables are variables that "contain information necessary to define homogeneous subgroups, to establish causal relations between attitudes and societal facts, and to define differences between scores on scales." (Braun and Mohler, 2002: 112). Context variables are integrated in national cultures and depict national structures.

1.1. Translation

Translation, as opposed to harmonisation, is a transfer process from a source language text into an optimally equivalent target language text. Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. This equivalence should be established in terms of functional equivalence according to Przeworski and Teune (1970). Functional equivalence points out the importance of focusing on transferring the meaning over a literal translation and highlights that a process of repeated translations enhances the face validity in intercultural use of measurements. Face validity is achieved when a test appears valid to examinees who take it, personnel who administer it and other untrained observers (Duquesne University, 2005). "Face validity requires that your measure appears relevant to your construct to an innocent bystander, or more specifically, to those you wish to measure" (Rymarchyk, 2005).

Functional equivalence refers to the role or function that behaviour plays in different cultures. The wider the context, the more information is available to guide translation. If the translation of specific categories from a particular culture (like certificates from a national educational system) does not make sense without an explanation given by a specialist of this culture,

then translation is no longer a suitable means. In this situation the technique of harmonisation should be applied.

Translation in cross-national research normally starts with the agreement that one language (commonly English) be the reference language. Then a drafting group is established to formulate the questions of the questionnaire. Often native speakers of the reference language are called in as a guarantee for the accuracy of the English. These native speakers do not only serve as experts in their language, but they are also experts in the cultural background of their country. Next, bilingual but "unicultural" members of the national project teams translate the questionnaire. The translators have always lived in one culture. They will interpret the questions from the vantage point of their own culture. Thus, cultural differences are ignored in the translation from one language to another. Problems often go unnoticed before the data are analysed. Therefore, there are some strategies to improve the translation of questions:

The European Social Survey gives some instructions on how to conduct these translations. In each country the procedure should adhere to the following guidelines:

- national co-ordinators are required to find suitable individuals to fulfil the three key roles in the approach: *translator, reviewer*, and *adjudicator*.
- translators should be skilled practitioners who have received training in translating questionnaires. A minimum of two translators should translate the source questionnaire. It is a one-direction-translation, without back-translation.
- each reviewer must have translation skills at least as good as those of the translators, but should also be familiar with principles of questionnaire design, as well as the study design and topic. One reviewing person with linguistic expertise, experience in translating, and survey knowledge will control the translators' work.
- the adjudicator is responsible for the final decisions about which translation options to adopt, preferably in co-operation with reviewer and translators, but at least after discussion with a reviewer. Adjudicators must a) understand the research subject, b) know about the survey design, and c) be proficient in the languages involved.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census is also working with translators, translation reviewers and translation adjudicators (2004). After the process of translation (in one direction) a pre-test follows as an integral and necessary part of the translation process. Once the pre-test results are available, the revisions in both directions can be discussed: regarding the source language and the target language (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004). Here (and in Europe this should be insisted upon) the revision is done by bi-lingual and bi-cultural reviewers.

1.2. Harmonisation

Harmonisation is not a linguistic transfer of words or sentences from one language to another. Harmonisation is a sociological procedure transferring socio-demographic indicators from one culture or nation to another.

International data collection programmes use different techniques of harmonisation, but they all share a high level of methodological consciousness:

- output harmonisation is normally ex-post harmonisation, retroactively done. Output harmonisation starts from a common, internationally-agreed definition for a variable representing a common indicator. The goal or the target value to be surveyed is determined. The selection of suitable survey methods is left to the participating researchers and is accomplished by a national measurement instrument using national categories. Here the national researchers should aim at the best operationalisation of the common indicator.

  If the measurement procedure is valid for the national as well as for the international concept, then the approach is called ex-ante output harmonisation. This ideal case is rare because normally national indicators are not culture-free.

  Examples for output harmonisation:

  official statistics (Eurostat): EU-Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC);

  academic social survey research: International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

- Input harmonisation takes as a starting point internationally-agreed standards – such as definitions, concepts, aggregations, classifications – and then uses harmonised survey methods for implementing these standards. "All survey countries use precisely the same survey procedures in an ideal case. Country-specific particularities are only permissible where they are indispensable" (Information Society Technologies, 1999: 1).

  The final international categories are defined before data collection is started.

  Input harmonisation is always ex-ante harmonisation. To realise input harmonisation, a project needs a methodology group constructing a set of key indicators for some socio-demographic/socio-economic core variables – as was done by the "European Community Household Panel" and by the "European Social Survey".

  Examples of input harmonisation:

  official statistics (Eurostat): European Community Household Panel (ECHP);

  academic social survey research: European Social Survey (ESS)

There is a variety of widely accepted harmonised instruments for measuring socio-economic status variables. The most established of these are developed to measure "occupation":

- the International Labour Organisation (ILO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, first started with an "International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO" in 1958. The actual instrument is called ISCO-88 (ILO, 1990). The revision was announced for 2008 (ILO, 2005). The "International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO" was developed for comparative UN statistics.
- ISCO-88 COM (Elias & Birch, 1994), the European Union variant of ISCO-88 contains small modifications.

Sociologists very soon started to use the ISCO classification scheme as a starting point to develop

- a prestige-score: "Standard International Occupational Prestige, SIOPS" (Treiman, 1977; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996),
- a socio-economic index of occupational status: "International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status, ISEI" (Ganzeboom, de Graaf, Treiman & de Leeuw, 1992; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996),
- nominal class categories: "EGP Class Categories" (Erikson, Goldthorpe & Portocarero, 1979; Ganzeboom, de Graaf, Treiman & de Leeuw, 1992).

These three indices, genuinely sociological instruments for comparative research, based on ISCO-88, are documented for comparative research by Ganzeboom and Treiman (2003).

Other instruments by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) can also be found for official statistics and survey research, such as

- the "International Classification of Status in Employment, ICSE-93" (Hoffmann, 2003) and amongst other guidelines,
- the "guideline concerning the implications of employment promotion schemes on the measurement of employment and unemployment" (ILO, 1987);
- the "guideline concerning treatment in employment and unemployment statistics of persons on extended absences from work" (ILO, 1998).

To measure "education" the following instruments are available:

- the "International Standard Classification of Education" from 1997, ISCED-1997 (UNESCO, 1997/2003). It contains a minimal consensus on the definition of education.

Therefore, for these variables, we can find various competing instruments for international comparative research based on combinations of different variables:

- an index of general and vocational education: the CASMIN (Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations) Educational Classification (Brauns, Scherer & Steinmann, 2003),
- an index of general and vocational education combined with a mean of occupational prestige one can reach by a specific education: the "Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik Educational Index" (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, 2003a) and the "Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Warner Matrix of Education" (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik & Warner, 2005),
- school leaving certificates combined with earned income, or
- years of schooling, questions concerning grades, years in the educational system, or life-time learning.

Preparatory work for the measurement of income was done to a great extent by a UN specialised group: the "Canberra Group. Expert Group on Household Income Statistics" (2001). The "Canberra Group" was formed with the aim of improving national statistics on household income distribution and inequality as well as with the desire to improve the quality of international comparisons in this area. Their income concept "seeks to establish conceptual ground rules for defining and measuring household income" (Canberra Group, 2001: pp. xiii-xiv).

2. From national concepts and structures to international measurement instruments

Harmonisation starts with the researchers working out a common definition of the socio-economic variable they want to harmonise. In a second step, each national research team analyses the national or cultural background of the variable. These resulting "concepts" reflect the processes of cultural development that took place within the historical context of the respective countries. Since these concepts are formed by history and cultural experiences of the people, they are always culture or nation specific.

The researchers have to find out about the national conceptualisations behind their variables. National conceptualisations result in national structures. These structures are given by law and tradition. In a third step, the national research-teams have to elaborate the different national structures. Once they have found the common structure over all national concepts and structures, the measurement instrument can be harmonised. This can happen in a fourth step if input harmonisation is possible. Usually, however, the fourth step consists of data collection by means of commonly used national measurement instruments. Data collection is done with those extracted "indicators" for measuring the variable the researchers found in all countries involved. In a fifth step, harmonisation is achieved as output harmonisation.

Therefore, the researchers have to extract the common elements of the structure of the variable. In the end there should be an internationally-applicable system of categorisation.

2.1. The harmonisation of the variable "education"

To begin with, what is needed is a common definition of the concept for which "education" should be an indicator. On the one hand education is an indicator for social status, but on the other hand social status is combined with economic status. The link between social and economic status is occupation. Therefore, education as a skill-level is a prerequisite for reaching a specific job level. Because of this, in theory what we need is information on skills and knowledge to identify the specific skill level required to obtain a job with a certain prestige. But skills and knowledge cannot be measured as background variables in survey research. Instead, what is measured are diplomas, certificates and degrees as indicators for skill level.

Secondly, researchers of the different national research-teams have to check the concepts underlying the national educational systems.

These concepts define, for instance, compulsory education for age groups and for educational levels, the level of basic education, the differentiation of school types in lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary education, the definition of educational elite, and the involvement of public regimentation or control in general and vocational education.

The third step is to analyse the structure of the national educational systems. The structure is determined by:
- an obligation for pre-school or the absence of it;
- the age of starting primary education;
- the age of passing from primary to secondary education;
- the age of completing the different forms of secondary education;
- the organisational form of lower secondary education in one or more types of schools;
- the differentiation of lower or upper secondary education in a "tiered school system" with different parallel types of schools;
- the possibility of repeating a class or the absence of this possibility;
- minimum years of schooling until reaching a basic degree;
- combination of years of schooling and certificates awarded;
- the existence of a publicly organised or controlled system of vocational school; and so on.

The fourth step is to find an indicator to measure "education". Normally, this is done with indicators constructed for national social surveys. These indicators are usually valid for

national surveys only. To measure national education, there are several measurement instruments based on the following indicators:

- assessment of skills and knowledge (not suitable as background variable);
- sectors of education: comparable definition, comparable structure;
- national levels in a hierarchy from basic level to entrance into university;
- a description of different levels of schooling required for vocational training and occupations;
- skill level in combination with social class structure;
- years of schooling: in a system not allowing repetition of a class;
- age of the respondent when finishing school: possible in systems with fixed age of school entrance and not permitting repetition of a class;

For input harmonisation only the "sectors of education" and those instruments measuring time of education are valid. All other indicators require national data collection and, hence, output harmonisation.

The resulting product is a recoding of national instruments to a common scale. Because of this, a system of categorisation valid for different countries is needed. One of these instruments is the International Standard Classification of Education (1997) from UNESCO. However, this instrument should be valid for all existing educational systems. Therefore while it must be created on a minimal consensus, it is however very complex in use. Due to this complexity of the instrument research groups often fail to handle the classification correctly.

2.2. Problems of misclassification

A misclassification is probable if existing international instruments are used without thorough knowledge of these instruments by the research group(s) (see table 1). But not only insufficient knowledge is problematic. Problems also arise if the categories of the given instrument do not fit the reality in a specific country. In the following the first case – deficient knowledge of an instrument – shall be demonstrated.

Table 1: ISCED classification by ESS-data, round 1, for four countries as done by the national ESS research group (column a) and Eurostat (column b)

		Country (in % of respondents)						
		A		DK		E		F	
ISCED category		a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b
0	pre-primary	02 : 00		00 : 01		18 : 02		09 : 01	
1	primary	00 : 00		01 : 00		18 : 31		16 : 18	
2	lower secondary	29 : 23		23 : 19		21 : 25		26 : 19	
3	upper secondary	34 : 51		47 : 51		21 : 19		05 : 40	
4	post secondary								
	non tertiary	23 : 09		11 : 00		08 : 00		17 : 00	
5	first stage of tertiary	00 : 16		17 : 28		14 : 23		11 : 21	
6	second stage of tertiary	12 : 00		01 : 00		00 : 00		15 : 00	

Data from European Social Survey (ESS), round 1, for Austria (A), Denmark (DK), Spain (E), and France (F). Respondents were aged 15 years and older.

Table 1 shows that national research groups of the European Social Survey use a different definition for classification than Eurostat, the official statistical office for all countries of the European Union. While column a shows the classifications as done by the national research groups, column b presents the classification according to Eurostat's definition of the categories. The respondents of the European Social Survey are adult persons aged 15 and older. ISCED category 0 describes persons who have never attended a school. This is very rare in Western European countries. Is it plausible that 18% of all Spanish and 9% of all French respondents should belong to that group? What happened here is that the research groups placed persons who had not finished general education by the age of 15 and older in this category. These persons attend lower secondary school. In Spain, respondents who have finished primary school are also placed in this category. Apparently, the research groups also had problems defining the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary, see Austria (29 : 23), Denmark (23 : 19) and France (26 : 19) where the research groups found more respondents finishing lower secondary level than Eurostat.

"Post secondary non tertiary" describes a small group of persons finishing upper secondary school without attending a school or university in the tertiary sector. These are persons doing voluntary service or practical training before attending university. The other group in category 4 is the small group of master craftsmen. 23% of the Austrian people or 17% of the French people is too much. According to Eurostat's definition of category 4 in Austria 9% of respondents could be assigned to this group, while in France (just like in Denmark and

Spain) 0% of the respondents were allocated in category 4 by Eurostat's allocation. And ISCED category 6 contains only those persons who have reached at least a Ph.D.-diploma. However, 12% of the Austrian and 15% of the French people are unrealistic figures.

2.3. An alternative instrument for measuring education in cross-national research

If education is the prerequisite for an occupational level, and if it is not possible to measure skills and knowledge in a three minute questionnaire, then a combination of general and vocational education is the best national measurement instrument. The information about educational attainment in general and vocational education is necessary in order to use different harmonised categorical systems such as ISCED-97, the CASMIN educational classification (Brauns, Scherer, Steinmann, 2003), the Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik educational system (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, 2003a), or even the categorisation in educational sectors. If general education is measured in grades, and if vocational education is measured as skill level geared with ISCO-major groups, then education can be combined with job-prestige and can be depicted in a scale from 1 ("low") to 10 ("high"). This scale is the core of the Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Warner matrix of education and is valid for all educational systems, both cross nationally and over time (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik and Warner, 2005: 235-239).

Table 2: Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Warner Matrix of Education

		general education – grades, no certificates				
vocational education	**ISCO skill level**	**none**	**basic level**	**second level**	**third level**	**university entrance diploma**
none	9,8	1	2	3	6	7
school/workplace	8,7	4	4	5	5	5
vocational school	4,5	4	4	5	5	5
vocational college	3,4	0	5	5	8	8
college of higher education	2,3	0	0	9	9	9
university	2	0	0	0	10	10

For the sake of comparison, the definitions of the different scale points are very important: "None" refers to leaving the educational system before reaching accepted basics in general or vocational education. If "none" is marked in both categories the lowest level (1) is assigned.

General education is measured by grades. The lowest national grade is the "basic level", defined as the first point of exit from general education which allows starting a vocational education.

Germany, Luxembourg, France, and Denmark represent the four different types of European school system. In Germany, the lower secondary sector is diversified in many different school types. Each leads to a separate type of the upper secondary sector with a specific continuation in the tertiary sector. In Luxembourg, the lower secondary sector is divided into two different school types. In the upper secondary sector a duplication of these educational types follows with two vocational schools. The diversification of school types occurs in the tertiary sector. In France, the different educational sectors follow one on top of the other starting with pre-primary and ending with one type of upper secondary. Diversification takes place in the tertiary sector. In Denmark, there is no differentiation between primary and lower secondary sector. The diversification takes place when reaching the upper secondary sector and decreases when reaching the tertiary sector.

Depending on the national school system and geared with the grades the "basic level" can be in position two (as in Germany and Luxembourg) or in position three (as in Denmark or France) in place of "second level". If "basic level" is on position three, then second level (if existent as in Denmark) is on position three. In the current French school system "general education" includes only "basic level" (on position three) and "university entrance diploma" (on the last position of the scale). The "highest level" at the scale for "general education" is the "university entrance diploma", normally reached at the age of 18 or 19 years. Owing to the different school systems, the "university entrance diploma" can be the second (in France), the third (in Denmark and Luxembourg) or the fourth level (in Germany).

The steps of "vocational education" are geared to "ISCO skill levels". The hierarchy starts with apprenticeship in the form of combined in-firm training and school, followed by vocational school, vocational college, college of higher education and university. If necessary the scale can be enlarged in order to regard university degrees in a more differentiated way. Categories 4 to 10 represent steps qualifying for an occupation – from low to high. The categories 2, 3, 6, and 7 represent grades of general education without vocational qualification.

2.4. Check list for harmonisation

To verify that all steps have been taken to ensure a proper harmonisation of socio-demographic variables, the following check list is suitable:
-     search for a common definition of what should be measured;

- guarantee that this common definition works in each country which is involved;

- identify the similarities of the national concepts and structures underlying the variables;

- locate a valid indicator or a set of indicators (depending on the variable of interest as well as on national specifics);

- decide if the variable of interest should be measured by input or by output harmonisation;

- test whether the chosen instrument reflects the empirical structures found;

- verify that the measurement instrument is understood and can be answered sensibly by all respondents

3. Measuring "ethnicity" cross-nationally

There is no commonly accepted instrument to measure "ethnicity" cross-nationally. The definitions of the national concepts differ considerably. Very often they are based on concepts of "citizenship". However, the spectrum of the definition of "citizenship" reaches from one extreme position to another. On one end of the spectrum citizenship is defined as the cultural descent of a person. With this definition the state strives for ethnic homogeneity of the population and the nation conceives itself as a community of ancestry ("Abstammungsgemeinschaft", see Heckmann, 1992: 212) with a common culture and history. This means that citizenship cannot be achieved by place of birth alone. On the opposite end of the spectrum, however, a nation is defined by people with common interests, common values, common institutions and common political creed. Here, citizenship, based on the idea of one common state establishing standardisation and assimilation, is open for immigration and naturalisation.

Researchers working on comparative analyses define "ethnicity" as "a shared racial, linguistic, or national identity of a social group" (Jary & Jary, 1991: 151). This definition contains all the important elements of definitions in the different countries: race in the sense of biological difference, language in the sense of mother tongue and in the sense of culture, national identity in the sense of identification with a country or a group.

3.1. Concepts and structures behind "ethnicity"

In Germany, the terms "race" and/or "ethnicity" are not used in social science research because they have historically been abused to select and eliminate negatively defined ethnic groups such as Jews and Gypsies. The consequence is: if the variable "ethnicity" is used at all, the question is directed at citizenship. However, citizenship is more or less defined by

ancestry, by common cultural roots. Within the big heterogeneous group of German respondents with German citizenship researchers do not differentiate between ethnic or cultural units. For example, the so called "Aussiedler" – people who were moved from Germany to eastern or south-eastern regions (Romania, Russia, Kazakhstan, etc.) between the 13th and 17th century and have returned to Germany during the last 30 years – often live in a specific subculture – they are German by very old common roots, but not by culture and today often not even by mother tongue. Entering Germany they have received the German passport and are now German by citizenship. Three years ago, the German micro-census has started collecting data on migration background.

In contrast to Germany, the question about "race" in the United States of America's surveys mixes three things: colour, national descent and cultural or linguistic descent. For example, respondents are asked to describe themselves in answering categories like:

1. "White", "Black", and "Other: specify" (GSS, 1996: question 24) or
2. "White", "Black", "Hispanic", "Asian/Pacific", "Native American" (Current Population Survey, March 1997).

The structure behind the different concepts reaching from common cultural roots on one hand to common interests and common institutions on the other hand is based on the following:

- the rules for naturalisation (How to get citizenship?);
- the legal position of ethnic minorities and immigrants;
- the history of immigration
- the origin of the different ethnic groups of the population
- composition of population: with and without citizenship

3.2. Indicators and national measurement instruments

National concepts and structures behind "ethnicity" lead to a list of different indicators to measure "ethnicity":
- nationality
- citizenship by birth/by naturalisation
- country of birth
- country/(sub-)continent of origin
- language (mother tongue), culture
- skin colour
- self-identification by respondents according to the race or races with which they most closely identify

In surveys, academic as well as those from official statistics, these indicators are implemented or operationalised in different ways – depending on different national conditions behind the definitions of citizenship.

In the United Kingdom, respondents are divided into groups with different cultural history. Thus, the Eurobarometer 1999 asks:

"Above all, do you see yourself as being ...?"

- British
- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Irish
- other, answer spontaneously

In Belgium, some surveys divide respondents and citizens into groups with different cultural history and therefore *different cultural background* as well as different mother tongue:

- the Flemish and
- the Walloon groups.

In Germany, in the national standards published by the umbrella associations of official statistics, academic survey research and market research (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2004: 9) as well as in the micro-censuses (before 2004) respondents are divided according to *citizenship*. However, citizenship in Germany is defined by cultural roots.

In Latin countries, the basic indicator of the measurement is *language*: "Language usually spoken at home....If more than one language is spoken at home, indicate the language spoken most of the time."

- "What Language do the members of this family normally speak at home?"

Spoken language is defined as an indicator of culture (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, 2003b: 272).

In Finland, the assessment of ethnic origin or race is prohibited by law. The Labour Force Survey 1990 assesses:

- spoken language
- nationality
- country of birth

In the United States the respondents categorise themselves according to self-perception.

How does the respondent perceive him-/herself?

Measurement in the American General Social Survey 1996 is:

- Asian

- Black

- Hispanic

- White

- or something else

or:
- White

- Black

- other: specify

If the respondents' answer was "Black" they were asked: "Which would you most like to be called, 'Black', 'Negro', 'Colored', or 'Afro-American', or does it make any difference?"

Measurement in the U.S. Census 2000 is different (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000: questions 5 and 6):

5: "Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?"

6: "What is this person's race? Mark one or more races."

- White

- Black or African American

- American Indian and Alaska Native

- Asian

- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

- some other race

The last two categories can be more diversified:

- Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian;

- Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander

Self-perception also allows combining different categories with each other. Altogether 52 categories or combinations of categories are possible.

Likewise, in Norway self-perceptions are assessed by Eurobarometer:

"Do see yourself as ...

- Norwegian

- Scandinavian

- European

- World Citizen

There are at least six criteria of differentiation:

1. differentiation by legal status, assessed by question regarding citizenship,

2. differentiation by country of birth

3. differentiation by visibility, assessed by asking for skin colour or country (or sub-continent) of descent,

4. differentiation by mother tongue

5. differentiation by cultural customs, assessed by asking for religion or by asking for central values, and

6. differentiation by self-perception of respondents

For international comparison the researchers need a set of indicators, so that for each national concept (of all included nations) the right indicator can be used. However, this poses an as yet unsolved problem: until today no possibility has been developed which would allow a comparison of the different concepts of ethnicity with each other.

4. How to measure migration background of citizens

Measuring migration background is somewhat less difficult than measuring ethnicity. For the former a small set of information is necessary: wherefrom; whereto; with what citizenship, obtained by birth or by naturalisation; cultural background measured by religion and/or mother tongue. If this information is available for at least the respondent and his/her parents, then a migration background can be proven.

4.1. Question wording in different censuses

Different focal points are visible when looking at different censuses. The German micro-census (blueprint from 2004, Statistisches Bundesamt, 2005: 75-79) asks:

1. Since when have you lived in the FRG?

    - born in Germany

    - since 1949 or earlier

    - since 1950 or later: year of entrance ---

2. Which non-German citizenship do you hold?

3. If you are German citizen:

    - citizen by birth

    - citizen by naturalisation

4. In which year were you naturalised?

5. Which citizenship did you hold before?

6. Did your parents move to the FRG in 1960 or later?

    - year of entrance

7. Does your father/mother hold (if deceased: did he/she hold) German citizenship?

       - citizen by birth

       - citizen by naturalisation

8. Which non-German citizenship does your father/mother hold (if deceased: did he/she hold)?

The German micro-census (1%-sample) inquires about citizenship, about how respondents got the German citizenship, and in which year they immigrated.

The Swiss census 2000 (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, 2000: Frage 4a-d) asks for each person in the household:

1. Since when do you hold Swiss citizenship

       - from birth

       - since (year)

2. Aside from Swiss citizenship do you have another citizenship?

       - if yes: Which citizenship?

3. (For non-Swiss:) Which citizenship do you hold?

4. Which type of residence permit status do you have?

The query of the Swiss census is very close to that of the German micro–census in that the core variable is "citizenship".

The Canadian census (Statistics Canada, 2006) surveyed the ethnic origin as follows:

In 1971: "To what ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors (on the father's side) belong on coming to this continent?"

In 1981: "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?"

In 1986: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or your ancestors belong?"

In 1991, 1996, 2001: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?"

The Canadian census in 1971 began edging towards the migration background. In the questionnaire of 1986 migration background is no longer questioned. Instead of this the respondents were asked to classify their ancestor's culture – providing a self-perception of the respondents' own cultural roots.

In 2011 the Scottish census will put to its respondents the following questions (General Register Office for Scotland, 2005: questions P12 to P16):

1. What is your country of birth?

2. What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?
   (for non Christian religions: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh)
3. What is your ethnic group?
4. Can you understand, speak, read, or write Scottish Gaelic?

Thus, the Scottish census will inquire about country of origin and culture. Here, culture is defined by religion, ethnic group and specific skills in the language of the natives.

The U.S. Census 2000 (question wording for question 5 and 6 see above) asked about self-perception of "race". In doing so, combinations of up to four categories are possible. In six additional questions (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000: questions 10 to 14), however, other information was sought:

10: What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?
11a: Does this person speak a language other than English at home?
11b: How well does this person speak English?
12: Where was this person born?
13: Is this person a citizen of the United States?
14: When did this person come to live in the United States?

Also in the U.S. census the ethnic origin of the ancestry, the language, the place (country) of birth, time of immigration, and citizenship is asked.

4.2. Elements of an internationally-comparable measurement instrument

According to existing surveys and censuses the main elements of the questions inquiring about migration background of respondents are:

- country of birth
- current citizenship
- citizen by birth

If all three answers lead to the country where the respondent lives now, then it is possible to ask for:

- cultural group, or ethnic group/ethnic origin, self-defined
- religion
- language, spoken at home (or "used for counting")
- mother tongue

If "country of birth", "current citizenship", "citizen by birth" do not lead to the "country where the interview is done", then additional information have to be used:

- citizen by naturalisation, since when
- citizenship: current, parallel, former

- residence permit status

Ultimately, the researcher needs information about three generations to define a migration background. Information is needed on:

- respondent (an adult person)
- respondent's father/mother
- respondent's father's father/mother
- respondent's mother's father/mother

All this information is necessary in order to compare "ethnicity" and "migration background" cross-nationally.

5. Conclusion

Harmonisation, and not merely a translation by functional equivalence, is necessary if socio-demographic variables are to be compared cross-nationally. Harmonisation has to regard national concepts given by historical development and by national law. Therefore, if culture specifications are not comparable cross-nationally, the variables defining these specifications are not comparable cross-nationally either.

For the variable "education" elements of a common (cross-national) structure are apparent. Education should be a cross-national value because persons with a certificate from one country are allowed to continue education in another country (e.g. university entrance diploma, bachelor, and master). Here equivalence in qualification is necessary.

The definition of "ethnicity" follows a different logic. "Ethnicity" is defined in a national context by criteria such as legal status, country of origin, visibility, mother tongue, cultural customs, and ancestry. In cross-national comparison the following main indicators should be used to operationalise these criteria: citizenship, country of birth, cultural practices (e.g. religion, cultural activity), language spoken at home in addition to self-perception.

For a cross-national comparison of "ethnicity" no accepted measurement instrument is available. Yet a migration background can be described by the indicators listed above.

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Case-Oriented Comparative Approaches: the Biographical Perspective as Opportunity and Challenge in Migration Research

Roswitha Breckner

Abstract

Case-orientated approaches in migration research can be traced back to the Chicago School. The research of Isaac W. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki on the 'Polish Peasant' in the late 1920s was based primarily on biographical material. Thomas and Znaniecki tried to understand from a comparative perspective how processes of personal and societal change were connected to migration, how they were dealt with, and how the changes on the personal and societal levels were interrelated. This procedure nearly disappeared in post-war sociological research but was revived in the 70s and 80s. Meanwhile, a variety of biographical approaches was applied to diverse social phenomena. The paper presents the characteristics of biographical research within the field of qualitative and case-orientated approaches, the methodological assumptions, and the specific perspective gained when applied in migration research.

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Introduction

Case-oriented comparative approaches in migration research can be traced back to the research of Isaac W. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki on the 'Polish Peasant' in the late 1920s (Thomas & Znaniecki 1928). The inquiry of Thomas and Znaniecki was based primarily on biographical material, which for them was a means to understand how the changes brought about by migration processes lead to a different organisation of the 'self' as well as to a reorganisation of family structures in connection with reorganising institutional settings of immigrant communities. These processes were compared and contextualised with changes in the Polish society. In other words, by examining biographies Thomas and Znaniecki tried to understand in a comparative perspective how processes of personal and societal change were connected to migration, how they were dealt with, and, even more important from a scholarly point of view, how the changes on the personal and societal level were interrelated, in the society of departure and to the place of arrival. They tried to reconstruct how new patterns of creating the 'individual' in relation to the 'community' and vice versa emerged in Poland as well as the USA, initiated or supported by migration processes.

This approach nearly disappeared in post-war sociological research. Since that time, the dominant approach has been to describe social structures by statistical observations rather than by processes of creating meaning in everyday life contexts. Discussion on the use of biographical approaches was revived in the 70s and 80s.[1] Specific approaches developing in Germany, on which this paper focuses, were embedded in international transfer processes of knowledge and discussion (Apitzsch and Inowlocki 2000). They are characterised by reconnecting with the traditions of interpretive sociology, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, critical theory, and language and narration theories, together with references to the broader field of qualitative and case-oriented research[2]. More recent sociological theories of individualisation (e.g. Giddens), the life course (e.g. Kohli), and

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[1] At that time different approaches were developing in the international context. The first prominent reader edited by Daniel Bertaux on "Biography and Society" appeared 1981. The volume included 'life history approaches' from different countries and subject areas, and made the variety of these research activities internationally visible. A recent compilation of four volumes, edited by Robert Miller (2005), shows in a broad overview the development of biographical approaches from the 1920ies up to today, its different strands and controversies.

[2] The relevant literature in this field is impossible to cover within the framework of this paper. Some references should only mark the field(s) of methodological and methodical discussion (see for example Kohler Riessman 1993, Silverman 1994, 1997, Denzin 1995, Hallway and Jefferson 2000, Wengraf 2001; for the German speaking area Matthes et al. 1981, Schütze 1981, Oevermann 1983, Kohli/Robert 1984, Fischer/Kohli 1987, Riemann/Schütze 1990, Rosenthal 1995, 2004, 2005, Flick et al. 1995, Bohnsack 1999, Völter et al. 2005).

modernity or post-modernity (e.g. Bauman) also serve as bases for biographical concepts. A variety of approaches was applied to diverse social phenomena.[3]

In a first chapter, I would like briefly to present the characteristics of biographical approaches within the field of qualitative and case-oriented approaches, the methodological assumptions, and the specific perspective gained when applied in migration research (1). In chapter two, case studies are presented in order to illustrate the dimensions and levels of migration processes revealed by a biographical perspective (2). In chapter (3), I will discuss considerations concerning the link between migration and biography which may show the conceptual potential of a biographical perspective in migration research.

1. Characteristics of case-oriented biographical approaches

… in the field of qualitative research

Qualitative biographical approaches share with qualitative research that they are case-oriented. The emergence, constitution, and construction principles of social phenomena are analysed by empirically and theoretically focusing on single cases. Various entities can be defined as single cases: the action pattern, trajectory, or life course of a person; the pattern of interaction and discourse within a group; structuring orientations within a larger collective such as a society or even the 'occident' (Oevermann 1983, Lewin 1930/31, Hahn/Knapp 1987, Weber 1920/1981). Entities that are defined as (single) cases are regarded as embedded in, representing, *and* structuring a social field. The general subject matter of case-oriented research thus are processes of *making sense* in which patterns of action, orientation and interpretation emerge. The aim of research is to reconstruct from the complexity of empirical processes patterns which can be theorised as 'general' concerning their relevance in a specific social field. In contrast to quantitative approaches, the relevance of a pattern does not depend on its numeric distribution within a field but on its structuring impact, or its representational potential for the formation of a social field, which does not necessarily depend on the pattern's frequency of occurrence. Case-based patterns also illustrate how members of society specifically react to social problems in their authentic life contexts.

Biographical approaches have developed as specific methodology and methods within this broader field. They focus on processes of making sense within the frame of the lifetime of a social agent. The concept of lifetime is regarded as linked with the social time of a group and

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[3] In the international field, see for example Chamberlayne et al. 2000, Breckner et al. 2000, Humphrey et al. 2003. For German speaking regions (including publications in English), the webpage of the section 'Biographical Research' from the German Sociological Association (DGS) offers a broad overview: http://www.soziologie.de/sektionen/b02/literatur_neuere.htm.

the historical time of a society (Luckmann 1986, Fischer 1986). To reconstruct orientations and patterns of action as constitutive parts of familial, generational, and societal (milieu) contexts and trajectories is the general aim of biographical research.

… concerning basic theoretical and methodological assumptions

Since processes of differentiation and diversification are strong in social sciences, there is not just a *single* biographical approach in Germany, but a variety focusing on different aspects (life courses, biographical trajectories, overall biographical constructions, gender aspects of biographical constructions, and many more). The common ground of different approaches is the assumption that *making sense* in order to get oriented in our actions in the modern era increasingly refers to the construction of biographies and institutionalised life courses. People are more and more organising their experiences and general patterns of orientation in a biographical framework, since other institutional contexts based on strong normative patterns such as 'family', 'nation', 'class' and their interrelation have been changing more or less profoundly (Kohli 1985, Hahn/Knapp 1987, Fischer-Rosenthal 1995, 2000). This means that in modern societies 'biography' is regarded as a social concept which developed as a relevant field of interference between societal reality and the experiential world of individuals. Institutions as well as individuals increasingly relate to 'careers' as temporally structured sequences of activities (Kohli 1988) which serve the functions of organising participation in society and helping us make sense of what we have experienced (Fischer/Kohli 1987). Thus, we can assume that the construction of biographies is – apart from other social concepts of *making sense* on an individual as well as a societal level – a social practice in which orientation and patterns of action emerge and are institutionalised. The 'social' and the 'personal' in this view are conceptualised as closely interrelated. To detect their relation in different social fields is the general purpose of analysis.

In summary, 'biographies' in modern (or post-modern) societies function:

– to provide members of society with a frame of orientation in which they can interpret and understand their experiences in constantly changing social contexts in order to become oriented in their past and present as well as for the future. These processes of *making sense* are especially intense in periods of radical social change, when institutionalised ways of interpreting social situations and developments are called into question, and new ones must be built. In general, 'biography' is regarded as a field in which processes of continuation and transformation constantly take place.

– to let others know how we have become who we are and to communicate one's self, specifically in social contexts in which one's 'being' can not be derived from a fixed social position that makes us definable for others.

- to provide societal institutions and contexts with flexible life courses in which processes of change and transformation are organised and lived through individually. From the institutional perspective, the costs and risks of societal change are hereby diminished.

In addition, there are general principles by which biographies are constructed, which are methodologically relevant (Schütze 1987, Rosenthal 1995). Life stories are constructed and presented as a narration, telling someone else what has happened in one's life. The narrative form itself is a means to organise experiences in a temporal and thematic order which 'makes sense' of what we have lived through (Schütze 1983, Rosenthal 1995), allows us to communicate our experiences and let ourselves and others know who we are (Fischer-Rosenthal 1995). Biographies, therefore, are not a mirror of lived lives but 'texts' produced in a present situation. Each biographical text refers to different but interrelated time levels: the lived through past (we can change our concept of our past, but we cannot change what has actually happened); the present of narration (every narration is also structured by present perspectives, serving present interests and functions); and the horizon of future expectations (it makes a difference whether we narrate our life with the reasonable expectation of several decades yet to live or a shorter span of years or even months).

The methodological principles and methodical procedures of analysing biographical texts seek to reconstruct the interrelations in past, present and future perspectives from which a biography is formed (Schütze 1983, Rosenthal 1995, Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997). During in-depth analyses of single cases, the generating principles along which orientations and patterns of action develop and change in specific social contexts can be found (Schütze 1976, Oevermann et al 1979, Rosenthal 1993, Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997). In the context of biographical research, case analyses can focus on specific experiences, on certain life spheres, periods, or trajectories. Research can focus on the overall biographical construction based on the lived through life and the narrated life story (Schütze 1981, Rosenthal 1995) as well. The analysis can address the interaction and discourse of a group in generational or milieu contexts (Mansel et.al. 1997, Bohnsack/Marotzki 1998) or an even broader collective entity like a society in a specific epoch (Fischer-Rosenthal/Alheit 1995). In general, the purpose of analysis is to reconstruct 1) the structural processes in which orientations and action patterns develop and change, and 2) the variety of typical 'answers' to a specific 'problem' in a specific social and historical context. As a result, a typology is constructed by comparing and contrasting different cases as proposed by the grounded theory (Glaser/Strauss 1967). Depending on the level of theoretical generalisation, the typology can analytically describe social fields of different extension and on different levels of abstraction.

… in migration research

Biographical approaches in migration research are located in this field of theorising, methodological assumptions, and procedures. In Germany, they began to become re-established as remarkable scholarly activity within migration research beginning during the 1980s and continuing to the present.[4] With these approaches, specific aspects and dimensions of the complex field of migration can be grasped. I would like to point out some of those relevant from my perspective.

– With case-oriented approaches, migration can be reconstructed as a process with an open beginning and an open end. Hereby the concrete social contexts in which migration is embedded and experienced by those involved become visible.

– The perspective of migrants which develops from their experiences in the contexts of both departure and arrival is part of the subject matter.

– The extent to which migration implies or requires changes of orientations and action patterns and the extent to which it allows or supports the continuation of orientations is revealed. General aspects and dynamic structures of social processes of continuation and transformation can be analysed in this field.

– With a biographical perspective addressing an entire lifetime and the interrelations between different life spheres it can be shown:

   o how experiences of migration and trajectories are connected with dynamics and trajectories in other life spheres (e.g. the professional or the family sphere).

   o how migration experiences interact with specific life phases, careers, or status passages.

   o how the meaning of migration can change over the course of time and in relation to different biographical and societal contexts.

   o how members of the same immigrant community experience migration differently. Immigrant communities no longer appear as homogeneous or even monolithic 'otherness', but as a space of interactive negotiation about experiences connected to life in the societies which were left and present positions of being migrants in a receiving society.

Meanwhile, a remarkable variety of case-oriented biographical approaches has developed as a result of researching different fields of migration. Apart from sharing common ground regarding the focus on aspects and dimensions of migration mentioned, differences arise from the extent and the manner in which biographical material, (e.g. entire life stories or

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[4] The anthology "Migration und Traditionsbildung" (1999) edited by Ursula Apitzsch is the first to collect a broad array of biographically oriented studies devoted to migration phenomena in Germany. For an overview of the literature in the field with commentary see Breckner 2005: 43ff.

thematically or temporally focused narrations of experiences), is elicited and analysed. The applied methodological principles as well as the theoretical background used as heuristic source for interpretation and generalisation of the empirical observations differ more or less profoundly within the field. In some approaches, the results are based on a theoretical framework, using the empirical material primarily as illustration of what has been conceptualised theoretically. Other approaches try to generate new theoretical concepts from their material using methodological principles from the 'grounded theory', from hermeneutics, narration theories, or thematically focused sociological theories.

With regard to the theoretical background, the methodological decisions, and the methods of eliciting and analysing material, different 'images' of migration arise. Without attempting to construct a systematic overview, four perspectives can be identified (Breckner 2005: 43-58).

- Migration as experience of suffering, especially as loss of orientation and existential security (e.g. Maurenbrecher 1985)
- Migration as experience of transition between traditionality and modernity (e.g. Schiffauer 1991)
- Migration as experience of intercultural learning (e.g. Apitzsch 1990 and Lutz 1991)
- Migration as experience of transcending (national) borders – that is, of transnationality (e.g. Kreutzer/Roth 2006).

Another difference emerges from the research process's focus on specific context-areas of migration phenomena. Differing perspectives arise if local, national, or global contexts are researched in detail. The consideration of historical and time linked dimensions, biographical or life course dimensions, and discursive practices in which a specific type of migration is created, also shapes the academically produced picture of migration. It is impossible to grasp all relevant aspects of the complex field of migration from all perspectives at once using one research process.[5] Therefore, we must deal with various approaches, which can each shed specific light on migration. In this situation, it is necessary to reflect one's own assumptions, pre-conceptualisations, and normative perspectives on the researched phenomena. This is what qualitative approaches in general do as part of their methodological principles.

My research has focused on migration from Eastern Europe to the West, specifically from Romania to West Germany during the Cold War.[6] I endeavoured to elucidate in which social

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[5] Thomas and Znaniecki's study might have reached its limitations when they tried to grasp the entire picture.

[6] I conducted interviews with men and women coming from Hungary, Russia, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, having different 'national' or 'ethnic' backgrounds, and moving to East respectively West Germany in the period between 1960 and 1989. In the later stage of the research, I focused on men and women coming from Romania with other than a German background, and moving to West Germany in the mentioned period (see Breckner 2005). In a second research field I analysed

processes and contexts migration-related experiences take shape and in what way or under which circumstances these experiences gain biographical significance. I was interested in the way biographies were shaped by migration experiences and, vice versa, in the way biographical constructions (Schütze 1981) shape the meaning of migration. The peculiarities of the field of migration (East-West-migration during the Cold War), biographical references to the framework of family, milieu, and one's own life time, as well as generational contexts, have proven to be central aspects in the construction process of the analysed migration-related biographies (for the detailed results see Breckner 2005). The results of a comparative analysis of two case studies are presented in the following to illuminate this research. The focus is on the biographical significance of crossing the specific border between the 'East' and the 'West' during the Cold War, and how the meaning of this experience changed after 1989 during the border's transformation processes.

2. The biographical meaning of crossing social borders: two case examples in a comparative perspective[7]

Romica Braşovean: An Irreversible Flight

Romica Braşovean, then a 17-year-old Romanian adolescent, had the opportunity to participate in a sports event in West Germany in 1970. On his way home, but before leaving West Germany, he escaped surveillance of the secret service escort, risked "stealing" his passport when it was momentarily left unguarded, and fled. When he first arrived at the reception office for East European refugees, he was refused recognition and threatened with deportation. As a child of a Romanian family without an ethnic German background, Romica did not have the *ius sanguinis*, the most readily accepted justification for Eastern Europeans applying for immigration to West Germany.[8] Only after declaring that he would commit suicide if deported to Romania did authorities relent and accept him as an applicant for asylum. For Romica, defecting to West Germany meant risking his liberty and even his life, since he knew he would have been in danger in Romania had he been repatriated. His

migration biographies in the context of an EU-project on 'Social Strategies in Risk Societies' (SOSTRIS) (Breckner 2002a). In this project, 42 migration biographies connected with different countries and continents were elicited in seven European countries and discussed in the meetings and publications of the project. This material has built a rich background for generating comparisons and formulating results. In addition, case-analyses from colleagues have helped to prepare a foundation and have inspired these considerations.

[7] The following comparative case study has already been discussed in Breckner 2000: 371-385.

[8] Ius sanguinis accords citizenship on the basis of ethnicity. All those who are able to demonstrate German ancestry are automatically granted German citizenship. Interestingly, this law, which dates from 1913, has been applied only to ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, not to those coming from Switzerland, for example. The use of this law may thus be influenced by the specific historical relations with ethnic German communities in Eastern Europe, especially during World War II.

decision to move to the other side was made with little hope of returning or even establishing a connection to the life he left behind.

Romica's decision to flee was prompted by the desire he had developed as a youth to become a German and to live in the West. Still, at the beginning of our first interview in 1993[9] he described his first experiences in Germany after the flight in the following way.

"It was interesting, because in Romania never, I had no idea of folklore and traditional dances, I refused that sort of thing, it was overdone. And here, at the beginning, it was interesting, you found your origins then a little bit—so I learned more about Romania here than in Romania. Because in Romania you always got, from official quarters, only this ideology. And here you had the opportunity to get other books, some of which were banned in Romania, and to see it differently. And suddenly the whole picture that we had had in Romania was turned upside down." (Romica Braşovean I, 1993: 1)

Paradoxically, the crossing of the border had made Romica a Romanian by choice.[10] As soon as he felt protected from ideological attack, his curiosity about his cultural heritage emerged. But this involved confrontation not only with more knowledge related to his origins, but also with conflicting knowledge. Contradictory images and opposing views concerning the history and culture of his country turned his earlier conception upside down.

Moreover, for Romica the border turned out to be an impermeable one, swallowing up all that he had left behind, to the point of making him an "orphan", as he puts it in the interview.[11] Thus, it is also likely that Romica now identified himself as a Romanian to preserve a link to his family and his past.[12] Inspired by a priest who became a kind of surrogate father during this period, Romica joined a Romanian exile group,[13] which formed the basis for the re-formation of his "we" relations in terms of ethnic identification (Weinreich 1989). In this group, Romica found support to locate an affordable apartment and a job. He also learned

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[9] This interview lasted four hours and was followed by another one a year later, in 1994, also lasting four hours. The case analysis (following Rosenthal 1993, 1995; Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997) is based on the transcriptions of these two interviews.

[10] Basic ideas concerning the biographical meaning of changing relations to particular traditions in migration processes have been inspired and reinforced by the work of Lena Inowlocki (2000). For a broader discussion of this issue see the papers published in Apitzsch 1999.

[11] Romica was now blacklisted by the secret service, so it was impossible for him to meet relatives or friends even in another Soviet-block country.

[12] Processes of separation from significant "objects" and their replacement in migration processes during adolescence are described by Amia Lieblich (1993) and by Julia Mirsky and Frieda Kaushinsky (1989).

[13] This framework was set up after 1944 mainly through the activities of Romanian officers who had refused orders to cease collaboration with the German Army and to join the Soviet troops. They had decided instead to remain with the German army and thus came to Germany in the last year of the war or shortly thereafter. Most of them remained loyal to the former dictator Antonescu, strongly opposed the establishment of a state socialist regime, and tried to preserve hopes for a regime change until the late 1970s (Dumitrescu 1997). This group organized the reception of all ethnic Romanian refugees in West Germany during the Cold War, and recruited as many of them as possible, not least by providing considerable help in coping with their immigration situation.

traditional Romanian dances which he performed in a public setting, and he dealt with religion in the context of his new perspectives on Romanian history.

But Romica's identification as Romanian was also due to a third influence, namely the typical experience of immigrants who feel a lack of recognition for their particular culture within a new context.

"When people asked me, 'Where is Romania? What is Romania?' I must admit I was a bit nonplussed when I had to explain where Romania is. People either confused it with Bulgaria, or Bucharest with Budapest. (…) At these points I was a bit, well, not shocked but a bit astonished, you know, that Romania in fact was an unknown country in Germany, culturally as well. (…) And then in my case, I identified with Romania during the first four years in Germany." (Romica Braşovean II, 1994: 20f)

However, Romica's strong identification as Romanian was, as indicated in the quote, a temporary reaction. After four years, he escaped from this Romanian emigrant milieu as well. He moved to an international commune and lost all contact with Romanians. His objective was to become a 'hippie', which was how he perceived the Western lifestyle of the youth generation of the 1960s: the "young communists of the West", as he puts it. After three years in this setting, he embarked on a new phase, working as a freelance camera operator for a local broadcasting company until 1989. During this period, the dramatic experiences of his migration faded into the background, and his dream of a life in the West became reality, although he still refused to establish his new life entirely within West German society. During these years, Romica resided in either an apartment in Italy or near his workplace in West Germany.

Stefan Georgescu: Divisions within a Family before the Move

For *Stefan Georgescu*, a talented and promising young artist of 19 at the time of his departure from Romania to Lebanon in 1970 and then to the USA, the border crossing had become a part of his family life long before the actual move. His Armenian parents had pursued emigration plans, applying repeatedly for passports[14] over an eight year period beginning in 1962 when Stefan was 12 years old. Stefan was not included in the decision to emigrate and was only partially informed about these matters. His parents kept their plans secret as far as was possible, since aspiring emigrants risked social exclusion, and also so Stefan could continue his artistic secondary education without interruption. That their fears were well founded became apparent when Stefan's uncle, an official in the government

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[14] As travelling outside the country was restricted, a tourist or emigration passport and visa had to be issued for every journey.

administration, blocked their emigration at a stage when the parents had already received their passports and sold their valuables. The uncle would have risked job demotion if he had relatives in the West; therefore, he betrayed his own family. Stefan and his parents' plans were delayed for another two years, but then, in complete secrecy, they left. Thus for Stefan the move across the border involved the creation of two opposing worlds within his family. His parents identified with the minority Armenian milieu in Romania on one side, and his uncle was a loyal functionary of the communist state on the other. As a child and adolescent, Stefan represented the smooth integration and assimilation of the family on a high cultural level in Romanian society, which he personally felt no strong desire to leave. The move meant leaving his training in the most prestigious Romanian art institute, to which he had just been accepted, and leaving Bucharest, a city he enjoyed greatly and considered "his" city.

Unlike Romica, for Stefan crossing the border was an ambiguous process. He had no real choice whether to go or to stay, nor was this a crucial question for him, since his intense identification with modern performing arts had already imparted a sense of a shared European culture of modernity, culture which was present in Romania as well. Thus, he did not feel thwarted, cut off from something he desired that was available exclusively on the western side of the border. Indeed he was keen to explore the other side, where artists he considered great masters were working and living. Hence, he did not object to emigrating, and even shared the meaning it had for his parents, during the long journey to America.

I: "What was the situation like at your departure?

G: Like getting out of prison. Everything was controlled; we were not allowed to take anything with us, no money, no dollars, nothing. Like getting out of prison, we were examined like public enemies. Actually, it was somehow unreal, as if I were on the moon, you know—I had seen the first landing on the moon, I remember, it was in August, and we arrived in Lebanon in November at the time of the second landing, and they showed it on TV, but nobody really watched it (…) We had followed the first landing the whole night, and I remember that I had the feeling, America to me is like Mars, like another planet."

The experience placed Stefan in an indeterminate process of transition to something completely unknown, which had the feeling of liberation, but other connotations as well.

I: "Can you tell me more about the journey to Lebanon?

G: My mother started to sing because her brother in law didn't know we had left, we were gloating. We hadn't told anybody we were leaving, and we had a wonderful journey, with a stopover in Istanbul. For the first time in my life I saw, in the airport—this was capitalism, I was completely—people could buy and simply went in and out. And then we arrived in Beirut and I felt like a refugee. Up to this point I had been a free person and then I was no longer free, had no documents, no money (…) [cassette is changed]. I was able to do my exercises at the home of a

Lebanese family, but it was a strange time, we were up in the air." (Stefan Georgescu I, 1994: 62f)

The ambivalence of his "liberation" becomes even more pronounced when Stefan describes his first experiences in America, where the feeling of having been placed in a drastically different world took shape:

"I came to America and my first reaction was, actually we come from, we descended from a more civilized country. (…) In America I have experienced the images of capitalism that we had learned in school: how bad capitalism is, the boss smoking a havana, just like the cliché. My teacher smoked havanas and I smelled a havana for the first time in my life. It smelled terrible, I didn't like it at all—these uncivilized habits, this coarseness, this rudeness (…) the whole mentality was strange. (…) America was kafkaesque to me. It was an emigration that had gone wrong." (Stefan Georgescu I, 1994: 66)

Stefan's strong identification with European culture in Romania gave him, as it did most artists and intellectuals of his generation, a sense of being part of the Western world. This proved at odds with and even contradictory to his later experiences. Thus for Stefan as for Romica a conception was turned upside down by his move across the border. In Stefan's case, however, it was not his image of Romania but of the West that was challenged. To his surprise, even the clichés he had been taught in school about the world beyond the border proved somewhat plausible. At that time the line which organised Stefan's perception of different and contradictory worlds was clearly defined as one between capitalism and Romanian society, along which he explored many other dissimilarities. Among these were the lower qualities of his teachers, the fact that his stipend did not cover the costs of his education, forcing his parents to make financial sacrifices, and in general the greater connection of money with religion. Moreover, Stefan 'located' the border between the different worlds as one between America and Europe. This was probably also a result of the fact that he could not leave the USA during the two years required to complete immigration procedures and obtain a green card.

After Stefan had completed his artistic education, he left for Europe in 1974 and settled there, while his parents remained in America. Moving freely throughout Western Europe, he now pursued his professional career in the way he had dreamed, assisting the masters who had been his role models since childhood. His life during this period was that of a cosmopolitan artist, dividing his time between France and Germany for almost ten years. Stefan identified with this world, in which migration was viewed as a normal condition, and not as an impediment related to the Iron Curtain as a separating line between capitalism and socialism creating disturbing experiences of difference.

Crossing the Iron Curtain in a Biographical Perspective: Turning Points in Past and Present

In the long-term biographical perspective, emigration from the communist state of Romania to the West had a structuring relevance in the biographies of both Romica and Stefan, albeit in different ways. [15]

A Radical Separation with Shifting Perspectives

In Romica's case the move across the border constituted a biographical turning point which divided his life into two parts, one before migration and one after, which until recently have not been easy to reconnect. On the one hand, we can see this as a result of the conditions of his "flight" which made it impossible for him to return, even as a tourist, for nineteen years. At the same time, considering the period before the move, it becomes apparent that Romica used the border to create a radical separation from his home context in order to escape an adolescent conflict with his father. His father had forced him to attend a Romanian boarding school in an exclusively Romanian town, thus cutting off Romica's contact with the ethnic German peer group and the athletic club in his home town. That his father's intent was to sever Romica's connections with the Germans in his home town, who represented the Western world, is obvious in numerous incidents in their escalating conflict, which eventually reached the point of physical violence. Thus, Romica's flight to the "other side" freed him from his father's authority. The border protected him and guaranteed him the autonomy he had longed for.

But this separation, initially an adolescent act of rebellion, was not easy for Romica to deal with, as his action scheme immediately after the move shows. This difficulty is also apparent in the way he tells his story (Breckner 2005: 222ff).

The second period, in which the experiences of his border crossing gained greater significance, constituting another biographical turning point, began in December 1989, when Romica first took the opportunity to travel to Romania. He was sent as a professional observer by a film company making a documentary on the "Revolution," and although he maintained this position and perspective, an additional point of view imposed itself as well. Romica vividly recounts his first crossing of the border, the encounter with the border officer, and his reaction upon first seeing the Romanian flag from which the emblem of the communist state had been cut out, leaving a hole. He summarises his feelings as "like being pregnant". Then he talks about the following significant situation:

[15] For an example where this was not the case among those interviewed see Breckner 2005: 340-356.

"That is also interesting, the first time we drove into a village just across the border, (…) for me that was really like Columbus discovering America and the first natives approaching, that's how we looked at each other. For me too, Romania, you are in Romania now, now you see Romania, and we looked at each other like that. First they asked, 'Are you German?' [laughs]. 'Well', I said, 'you can talk Romanian with me, I am Romanian.' 'Oh, really, you speak Romanian?' I said, 'Yes, I am Romanian.' And then, at that moment I really felt like Columbus, I looked really greedily at people, what kind of people they are, what country I come from." (Romica Braşovean I, 1993: 20–21)

For Romica it was not clear from which side, from what position in relation to the border, he was looking at the country he came from: from 'outside', like Columbus, or as someone not only 'speaking' but also 'being' Romanian, and thus a participant in what was going on 'inside'. Thus, it is revealed that different angles and viewpoints had developed with respect to his "doing 'being a Romanian'" (Inowlocki 2000), viewpoints which, until then, had remained separate. Suddenly these viewpoints appeared simultaneously: the distanced yet greedy view of Columbus seeing strange people, and the feeling of being one of them at the same time. In general, we can say that before 1989 Romica's identifications, including his nationality (Weinreich 1989), were organised sequentially in separate life periods and milieus. After 1989, however, his different and partly contradictory orientations suddenly became concurrent, compelling him to again face the questions of where to situate himself, in the symbolic sense and the literal sense.

A Retrospective Turning Point in a Situation of Biographical Crisis

For Stefan, his move across the border had not created a biographical turning point at the time, as it had in Romica's case. Stefan, unlike Romica, did not experience the migration across the Iron Curtain as a way of solving a problem, but rather as a problem in itself. However, the experience did not immediately represent a rupture in his biographical path and self-definition. This was due largely to the fact that he could continue the career he had begun, and thus continue defining himself primarily as a working modern artist. Furthermore, as a legal resident of the USA, Stefan could travel throughout Eastern Europe even before 1989, which he occasionally did when invited to present his art.

Nonetheless, Stefan's emigration from Romania eventually did become a biographically structuring experience, but only in *retrospect,* in light of developments in his life after 1989. A biographical crisis arose in the early 90s when Stefan's international career failed to continue at the high level he had formerly enjoyed. It became clear that Stefan's cosmopolitan self-definition had depended on his ability to maintain a successful career. Furthermore, this self-definition had allowed him to overcome the fragility of his situation during periods when he tried to settle in one location more steadily, first in France where he had applied for

naturalisation, then, in late 1988, in Germany. After 1989, however, with his career in limbo, Stefan's "coming from Romania" became a seriously challenging biographical issue.

"In the twentieth century it is taken for granted that artists are emigrants. (…)[16] *Why do I say this? Well, because of the syndrome of being an emigrant. It was not easy for me as a young man to be in such different countries, especially in America. Then I remembered all these great names and said to myself, as an artist you are at home everywhere, and that helped me somehow. And then later, when I was over thirty, I felt like a citizen of the world. I said, I am at home in any country; there is no problem. But then I realized finally that someone who is born in France or in Germany or elsewhere can say—regardless of where he lives—I am German. But what will you say you are? I no longer had the self-determination to say, I am Romanian, that doesn't work [draws in air]. And then I said, maybe a part of me is as if handicapped, so that I don't have this ethnic-national function [sniffs], and then I said, you must be happy with being what you are, but now I am ambivalent again. Now I think it was a bad joke of nature that I was born in Romania, when I know how my mother was born,*[17] *all these coincidences with my father who wanted to emigrate in the 1950s. I said to my mother, "You are Armenian, there are Armenians all over the world, why did you give birth to me in Romania? Couldn't you have stayed in Odessa or where you were born?" And now I think, at this juncture, I wish I had not been born in Romania, I really do." (Stefan Georgescu I, 1994: 17f)*

Although Stefan tries to dissociate himself from Romania as a biographically relevant context, his arguments show that his birthplace still has meaning for him. Similarly to Romica, (and to the typical experiences of the returning emigrant as described by Alfred Schütz 1964), he had rediscovered Romania during extended travels in the early 90s after having lived in the West for twenty years. This formed his perspective on the country he "came from." Romania now appeared changed to him, though not to Romica, mainly in terms of its material decline, but also in terms of political and intellectual crises. Nonetheless, when in Germany Stefan defends Romania against the media's predominantly negative representation, achieved mainly by biased reporting that seeks to portray Romania as part of the "barbaric Balkans".[18] Stefan remains attached to Romania as a context with which he had identified positively in his youth, but which now appears demoralised.

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[16] Here he lists the "great names", which are omitted here for the sake of Stefan's anonymity.

[17] Stefan's grandparents had fled to Odessa after the German invasion of Romania in 1916, but then returned because of the Russian Revolution in 1917. His mother was born near the border between Romania and Russia on the return journey.

[18] See also Lindlau (1990), who describes reporting on Romania in this period as "trend journalism" which corroborated set views rather than testing information. As it turned out, the numbers of casualties reported in the incidents called the "Romanian revolution" had to be corrected from 4,300 to 130.

Thus, Stefan's emigration and subsequent relocation on the other side of the border created ambivalent biographical positions and perspectives. Seen from the bleak perspective of his stagnant professional life in the West, his emigration *retrospectively* constitutes a turning point which separated him from an easier life, including the prospect of a splendid career in Romania's modern urban milieu. But seen from the perspective of a struggling country with a severely diminished cultural life in comparison to its more fertile period when Stefan had lived there, his timely emigration may have saved him many hardships. Torn between these two perspectives, Stefan has difficulty detaching himself from Romania as the context which formed his past.

Discovering Family Histories and Linkages between Romanian and German Histories

In both Romica's and Stefan's lives the dissolution of the Iron Curtain which began in 1989 and brought the possibility of their return to Romania, marked the beginning of a new confrontation with this border and the question of where to situate themselves. This confrontation was fuelled by a strong interest in their respective family histories before 1945, and in the ways those family histories were interwoven not only with Romania's national history but also with German history.[19] From this perspective, the Iron Curtain is seen, at the moment of its disintegration, to have been not only a border in space but also a border in time. This border had blocked out history, especially the interconnection of different national histories involved in the two world wars and their impact on family lives, generational perspectives, and the dynamics of biographies in the period after 1945. With the dissolution of the border, this layer came to the fore, and became *biographically* relevant for the first time in both Romica's and Stefan's lives.

Reconnecting with a Contradictory Family History: Transcending Divisions from a position of being 'uprooted'

As we have seen, Romica's life had already been visibly affected by questions of history, mainly while a member of the Romanian exile group which he joined after his move, but also in the subsequent period, when living in an international commune. During that time, he struggled to understand issues of Germany's Nazi past. Romica's questions, however, had remained somewhat abstract. It was only in the process of defining his position after 1989

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[19] One might speculate that the topic "relations with Germans" emerged so strongly due to the interaction in the interview with me as a German interviewer. Since my interviewees all knew that I too was born in Romania, however, the interaction was structured not so much as a relation to a German, but rather as one with a member of Romania's German minority, which can also vary depending on where my interviewees positioned themselves in the ethnic landscape of Romania.

that "history with a capital H" became relevant in connection with Romica's family history, and thus explicitly took on biographical significance. He became especially interested in the family history of his father, who had died four years before Romica's first return to Romania. In particular, events and developments during World War II, which had remained unmentioned in communist Romania, now came to the surface. Romica learned and also began to recall that his father, an officer in the Romanian army, had strongly admired "the Germans", especially the German *Wehrmacht* during the Nazi period.[20]

In response to a request to tell a bit more about his family, a request which did not focus on any specific aspect, since family had hardly been mentioned in the preceding interview, Romica replied:

"My father was, that's also interesting, an admirer of the Germans, he had—he was a pilot in the Second World War, he studied mechanical engineering, and he was—therefore he always admired the Germans. So when he told stories they were about airplanes, Messerschmitt M 104s or something, that were the famous airplanes [of the German air force] in the Second World War, and for—for him the Germans were the great masters."
(Romica Braşovean I, 1993: 106)

From here Romica goes on to tell more of his father's life history, trying to determine why his father found the Germans, who at that time represented a fascist regime and waged a murderous war, so fascinating. Romica's grandfather, who had returned from work migration to the USA in the 1920s, had raised the status of the family not least by allowing his oldest son, Romica's father, to study engineering. Thus, Romica's father formed part of the first generation that had to cope with the tension between agrarian and industrial ways of life, which predictably arises in industrialising countries. Romica introduces this background to make it understandable that his father, as a mechanical engineer, was fascinated by Germany's advanced war machinery, and that at the same time the fascist regime had allowed him to remain close to his agrarian origins through its 'blood and soil' nationalist ideology.

Moreover, once equipped with this knowledge and perspective Romica reassesses his adolescent conflict with his father. He recounts that his father had entered the Communist Party in 1964 after a long period of 'political' difficulties in order to get a steady job as an engineer, thus breaking with his past by entering into a new commitment to the communist state. It now appears likely that Romica's involvement with Germans affected his father's

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[20] During the whole period of military collaboration and even afterwards, Germany was admired as a model, especially with regard to the power, wealth and "civilization" perceived in its army's technical equipment and organization. Even its use of power and force was perceived as more "civilized". Conversely, Romanians were despised by Germans as underdeveloped and uncivilized, even if they were ideologically idealized as an archaic peasant people. At the same time, Romanians resisted German power and arrogance by strategies developed over centuries under foreign rule.

own difficulty dealing with his past relationship to the Germans. The conflict appears to be a struggle between a father and his oldest son triggered by the father's unresolved collaboration with the Germans during the war, an issue which had been made invisible in communist Romania since the West Germans as the successors of Nazi Germany were now situated on the other side of the border. At the same time, the meaning of "the Germans" for Romica and his generation was different than it had been for his father's generation, which probably added to the tension in their relationship. In view of these tensions, Romica's flight can be understood as an attempt to escape from the complex of 'traditions' affected by fascism and communism, which he had felt were imposed on him.

Having worked through these layers, Romica refuses to identify with either of these backgrounds today. Instead, he imagines himself as having been uprooted his entire life. In this way, he can distance himself from the difficult historical constellations which have become significant in his family history without denying them. At the same time, his self-construction as an uprooted person creates a biographical frame in which he can include both periods of his life, (i.e. before and after his flight), which had remained largely separate until 1989.

"The bad thing is, for me it was like this: you live in a country [i.e. West Germany] and you assume you belong there. In my case it was like this because I'd lived with Germans in my hometown, so the change was not so radical. You're always looking for contexts where you are accepted. But sometimes you just get a little idea and then you don't belong in this place. I often thought, basically, I always was uprooted, but I'm happy to be uprooted because you look at things differently. Although you sometimes feel lonely and have your doubts, I am, I always was happy to be uprooted." (Romica Braşovean I, 1993: 37)

This solution, however, with its opportunity to "look at things differently", is not reciprocated in all social relations in which Romica is involved, either in Germany or in Romania. Moreover, since Romica is perceived to a certain extent as German in Romania and as Romanian in Germany, he still represents the 'other side' in either context. In Germany, this becomes significant in situations in which Romica experiences discrimination or stigmatisation due to his Romanian origins. In Romania, he is confronted with the fears his relatives and friends have that he could become a target of violent xenophobic attacks, which have increased throughout Germany during the 90s. Romica concludes:

"You are confronted with fascism all the time, everywhere, no matter whether you are Romanian or German, but if you are confronted with chauvinism there [i.e. in Romania] and nationalism here [in Germany]…." (Romica Braşovean I, 1993: 34)

… then it makes no difference whether you define yourself as Romanian or German, and it makes no difference where you live, one might add. Thus, Romica has put an end to the

mapping of disturbing aspects of a common history to the respective 'other side' of the border, but his position is challenged. It is not surprising that he intends to keep the passport that identifies him as "stateless", which he considers the most appropriate position for him.

Discovering a Remote Family History: The Precarious Normality of Ambivalence

After 1989, Stefan began struggling for the first time in his life with his family background and its interconnection with Romanian and German history. In contrast to Romica, Stefan's main issue was not a hidden collaboration with Nazi Germany during World War II, but the unspoken threat to his family as Armenians during World War I. In his present life, Stefan contextualises this layer in questioning his decision to settle in Germany. He feels reminded of his parents' and grandparents' history, and he has begun to explore that history in greater detail and to see it in the context of the Armenian genocide, in which the German state was involved.[21] This point of view is fostered by public discussion of the Holocaust in Germany, which challenges Stefan to deal with his family and community history as one marked by persecution and even extermination.

From the beginning of the narrative-biographical interview with Stefan, the extent to which new knowledge and perspective have reshaped his view of his life becomes evident. Asked to tell his life story from the beginning up to the present with everything that has been important for him,[22] Stefan answered:

"The most important thing is what happened before. I mean, I only discovered it at the age of forty, after forty years, when I was over forty. And then I understood some connections, especially with regard to Germany, which of course were more or less coincidence, but not only coincidence." *(Interview Georgescu I, 1994: 1)*

He speaks at length about the death of his paternal grandfather after a German army attack in World War I;[23] the emigration of his maternal grandfather from Turkey to Romania in 1912 as a reason why he was not affected by the Armenian genocide in 1915; and the escape of nearly all Armenians from Bucharest during the German invasion in 1916. These stories tell of the threat of German persecution and even extermination that his family faced during World War I. Then Stefan goes on to speculate about the kind of relations that might have developed between German soldiers and his family during World War II, when soldiers were customers in his grandfather's shop. This question had become important after 1989 when Stefan developed an interest in the history of Romania during World War II, and it had remained unanswered. However, the disclosure of Romania's pre-socialist national history had changed Stefan's perspective on Romania as well.

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[21] Germany supported the Turkish government which carried out the persecution and genocide against Armenians mainly in 1915.
[22] Concerning the opening question of narrative biographical interviews see Rosenthal (1995: 187).
[23] It is quite likely that the German army used chemical and biological weapons during this attack, spreading typhus in order to infect the enemy army (Pascu 1983: 248ff). Stefan's grandfather died of a typhus infection.

"Once I'd read this book by Cioran, it bowled me over, even though the book is a bit crazy, it completely smashed my judgment of Romania. (…) It's like half a century of amnesia. Half a century is hard to make up for." (Stefan Georgescu I, 1994: 18)

Seen in the context of his family history, with its connections to German and Romanian history, Stefan's own life with its manifold migration experiences now appeared much more fragile than it had during his professional period, when wide ranging travel had become normal. The family history added a historical and existential dimension to the biographical uncertainty and discontinuity which had first arisen during the emigration from Romania to the USA and which had become more severe during Stefan's professional crisis after 1989. The emigration from Romania now symbolises an expulsion from certainty and the beginning of permanent exile.

"I was very attached to my place [in Bucharest] and suddenly I was forced to become a professional emigrant in my life—reluctantly; I have no talent for that [laughs] … I wish I were no longer an emigrant" (Stefan Georgescu I, 1994: 70).

Whereas Romica has transcended his experiences of biographically significant divisions and separations due to the crossing of the Iron Curtain to voluntary 'rootlessness', Stefan still struggles with his attachment to and detachment from his former 'home context' and the ambivalence of perspectives related to it. In his present life, however, he has found a solution to this situation, which is to construe himself as a "professional emigrant", i.e. someone who has developed an expertise, though reluctantly, dealing with the biographical uncertainties, the fragile and ambivalent relations to different milieus, nationalities and histories, which have become significant in his life. To bridge periods of discontinuity and to construct and re-construct all kinds of different relations in different contexts has become a skill which Stefan uses to build continuity in his life story.

Conclusions from the Cases

The cases presented here have shown that the Iron Curtain could become a significant element in the life arrangements and experiences of those who crossed this border at a time when it was still tightly closed, even though it did not necessarily affect biographies in the same way. Furthermore, it became apparent that the experience of crossing this border acquired biographical significance on many levels according to the contexts in which it was and is shaped and that it has changed markedly in the course of the historical restructuring of Europe after 1989. In all these contexts and biographical dimensions, it is clear that both Romica and Stefan were faced with contrasting and contradictory perspectives and knowledge which shaped their experiences and biographies considerably.

The contradictions created between East and West on the level of state systems, including the rewriting of national histories, had an influence, even if only temporarily, on the

perception of the respective 'other' side. In the two cases presented here this was also due to the hierarchical structure of difference in which they found themselves in the receiving country. Their former sense of already being part of the 'western world' was rejected, placing them in the position of immigrants not (yet) belonging to this society and not recognising their background as part of a shared world. Both Stefan and Romica initially reacted by re-identifying with the context they had left behind, although only for a relatively brief period. Subsequently, they both worked against being excluded from the receiving context and established their lives in the West.

However, in a long-term biographical perspective the crossing of the border was seen to have constituted a turning point in both cases even if in a different way. In Romica's case, the turning point became manifest immediately after the move, and divided his life into two parts which, until 1989, were only remotely connected, while in Stefan's case the turning point was constructed retrospectively in a process of biographical restructuring after 1989. Thus the lives of both Romica and Stefan, like those of most of the emigrants I interviewed, were strongly influenced and even structured by the experience of crossing this border in accordance with profound changes in their life arrangements brought about by the circumstances of their crossing. At the same time, the biographical meaning and function of this experience varied. For Romica, it was a means of escaping a father-son adolescent conflict; for Stefan it was at the root of a professional crisis that became a biographical turning point in his present life.

In both cases, the dissolution of the Iron Curtain after 1989 opened a new historical dimension in their biographical perspectives, including the perception of their family history and the commonalities in Romanian and German history. In the process of considering how to situate themselves culturally and historically after the border that structured their previous lives re-opened virtually over night, both men show that the Iron Curtain had also formed a border in time for this generation, since pre-war history was blocked out by the conceptual construction of a universal dichotomy between socialism and capitalism. In particular, the interconnection between Romanian and German history during the two world wars had been made invisible, but came to light after 1989. For Romica this meant a confrontation with his father's involvement in Romania's collaboration with Nazi-Germany. For Stefan it was rather the discovery of his Armenian family history in the context of persecution and genocide in which Germany participated during World War I, and which had changed his biographical coordinates as well.

We can assume that "borders" always structure relations between two "sides" by constituting a difference. But what kind of relations and difference were created by the Iron Curtain as a specific historical border? Looking at theoretical examinations of relations to the 'other' as 'strangers' (Bauman 1996; Schäffter 1991; Waldenfels 1997) we can locate different modes

of experiencing and constructing difference. The relation can be structured as a conceptual dichotomy between two sides, in which each side denies having anything in common with the other and thus defines itself in contrast to the other. In this kind of relation, one's own side is dependent on the negative bond of such a distinction. In contrast, supplementary relations can be constructed, in which each side feels complete only in conjunction with the other. The complementary mode of relation then is defined as one where each side feels itself to be shaped by the other in a mutual creation of difference. We can also imagine relations in which borders (and differences created by them) are neglected by reference to a common ground or a common "origin" (Schäffter 1991: 11–28). These specific modes of relating to 'others' correspond to different ways of structuring social space, where we can imagine clear demarcations between different forms of social organisation, forming divided spaces in either geographical or local terms, but also overlapping and transitory regions or border areas, as well as conceptions of social space in which 'borders' are denied or transcended. Moreover, borders which create, structure, and organise social space can be conceived both as a part and a result of social processes (Simmel 1992: 698–702). Thus, borders change as social spaces undergo transformation, while these spaces themselves change in relation to shifting borders.

This example aimed to show the possible outcome of comparative biographical case-analyses. In the following chapter, I would like to present conceptual considerations on a more general level focussed on the question how migration experiences and biographical dynamics are interrelated. They are still based in the research at hand[24] but are formulated more abstract as relevant dimensions possibly applying also in other fields of migration. As such they are meant as a contribution for discussion and would need more comparative research, not least also including biographies of non-migrants, to get a clearer picture of the peculiarities of migration experiences in connection with biographical constructions and dynamics.

3. Migration and Biography: A Conceptional Discussion

In the course of my research it became apparent that experiences of strangeness and otherness were a relevant element of almost all migration experiences which were presented in the interviews. Therefore sociological concepts on the 'stranger' in modern societies (Schütz, Simmel, Elias & Scotson, Bauman, Nassehi, Hahn) and phenomenological concepts

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[24] Within this particular field of migration a variety of 'types' regarding the characteristics and relevance of migration experiences in biographical contexts could be detected (Breckner 2005) which very likely can also be found (with varying degrees of difference) in other fields of migration.

of experiencing strangeness (Waldenfels, Schäffter) were included in the research. As these were not part of the research agenda from the beginning, the relevance of this dimension turned out to be a conceptual result gained from the empirical research process. Since concepts of 'strangers', 'strangeness' and 'otherness' are currently highly debated, specifically in relation to (national) borders and identities, their use needs some clarifying remarks.

In the current public debate about matters of social, ethnical, religious, and finally personal identity, migration is normatively a highly charged subject. Academic discourse has sought and continues to seek ways to avoid stereotyping migrants as 'different' or as 'strangers'. Both the day-to-day and the academic processes of attribution that ought to be avoided refer, on one hand, to the personal level. Though often only implicitly, migrants are ascribed a certain identity or identity problem which is then used as a basis to construct and understand them as 'different' from the rest of their society of immigration. On the other hand, attributional processes also refer to the level of group and milieu formation or even to a 'different' form of (cultural) socialisation of migrants in general.[25] Academic approaches that oppose these attributions aim to expose them analytically and, thus, to deconstruct the processes through which members of a society are labelled as 'strangers' or 'foreigners' (see e.g. Hahn 1994, Nassehi 1995). The question remains unanswered, however, how the specific experiences and positionalities of migrants can be discussed without joining in social constructions that are making them 'strangers', 'others' or 'excluded'. Avoiding words such as 'strange', 'different', or even the mentioned sociologically and philosophically designed concepts does not strike me as an adequate solution to the dilemma.[26] This, it seems to me, only accepts the negative discursive connotations of 'strange' and 'different' and obscures many (positive) social phenomena associated with these features. I, on the contrary, advocate a search for ways with which phenomena of strangeness, otherness or difference can be made a subject of academic as well as public discourse with all their positive and problematic (usually though ambivalent) connotations. The desired state would be that this facilitates a dialogue about different as well as structurally shared frames of reference and

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[25] In recent years, migrant communities in Germany, for instance, have been problematised as „parallel societies".
[26] Bernhard Waldenfels, for instance, argues vehemently against the undoing of strangeness by appropriation, neglection or even destruction – tendencies he makes out in the logo- and ethnocentric constitution of modern societies. Instead, he advocates an engagement with strangers that grants them their strangeness (Waldenfels 1990). In his body of work he developed a differentiated topography of strangeness and of different relations between "the unfamiliar" and "the familiar", selfhood and otherness, which I consider a useful and stimulating contribution to the development of migration theories.

experience of migrants and non-migrants whereby rigid distinctions between 'them' and 'us' are dissolved without negating or blurring the particularity of the respective experiences.[27]

A biographical research conception seems to promise to escape from too strong normative conceptual implications inherent in discourses on migration. When looking at migration experiences in a concrete and processual fashion from a biographical perspective, a simple scheme of positive/negative evaluation becomes inappropriate. At the same time, the construction of a typology is confronted with a complexity that entails not only the diversity of references in which experiences of migration can take shape, but also the variety of possibilities in which processes of biographical construction can refer to (or ignore) experiences of migration. Reconstructing the genesis of biographical constructions also makes clear how ambivalences as well as the paradoxes of migration due to still prevailing structures of nation states are handled in many different ways (see also Breckner 2005a).

A biographical approach to research into migration processes is, however, no guarantee for the complete avoidance of the aforementioned theoretical-normative traps. Even biography analysis is affected by normative engagement; thus, for instance, when referring to institutionalised life courses. Action-orientated or action-structuring templates of institutionalised life courses and biographical trajectories, as well as the development of analytical concepts for the description of such processes and dimensions, are commonly related to a specific society and specific social contexts[28]. This applies, for example, to mutual references with regard to the inclusion or exclusion into or from the labour market, the health system, and the social security system in general. It also applies to the social processes of meaning attribution with regard to the role played, for instance, by "labour" or "gainful employment" as normative expectations in the "normal biography" in general or in relation to "family" in particular and in specific ways for men and women respectively. If this kind of social expectation of normality inherent in the concepts of 'normal biographies' and socially prescribed life courses enters the analysis unreflectedly, it can lead to (analytically cemented) attributions of, for example, 'successful' or 'failed' life courses, or of 'traditional' or 'modern' biographies. This means that the analytical concepts of 'biography' and 'normal life

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[27] Such a model of dialogue was developed by Bernhard Waldenfels and later referred to as ‚complementary otherness' by Ortfried Schäffter. According to this model, otherness is an experience reciprocally produced in interaction. The position of the other is not experienced as strange 'per se'; rather, a sensitivity for the 'mutual otherness' emerges from the 'radical appreciation of a mutual difference'. "The otherness becomes apparent in reciprocal interaction only as the result of a distinction practice, but it remains ultimately indeterminable." (translated, Schäffter 1991: 26). This mode of experiencing otherness requires, however, that all participants of the interaction apply it equally.
[28] This was critically remarked upon early on by Joachim Matthes with regard to the cultural connotation of narration analysis (Matthes 1985). More recently Heike Solga (2003) has pointed out the normative implications of institutionalised life courses.

course' need to be questioned in order to find out how their very application puts a normative spin on the interpretation of events, actions, and perceptive patterns of migrants.

In Western societies, 'institutionalised life courses' and 'biographies' (understood as specific forms of making sense) (Fischer/Kohli 1987) do not take effect as a homogeneous entity. However, they often, by means of differentiated factors such as milieu, group, gender, or age, form a system of reference which facilitates and necessitates certain types of institutionalised life courses and biographical patterns (e.g. the CV, medical history, romantic and marital history, etc.) while marginalising and even excluding others. These guiding templates have shifted emphasis from local bonds onto temporal structures of sequence (Kohli 1985, Fischer-Rosenthal 2000). This appears to allow the integration of virtually unlimited mobility, flexibility and change. However, in their function of creating expectation-security (on the institutional level) and continuity (on the biographical level) these templates still rest upon 'memberships', and temporally defined presences which are partially (e.g. in the instance of citizenship regulating the access to many subsystems of society) territorially fixed (Apitzsch 2002). Furthermore, the temporal structuring and sequencing with which they operate are typical for nation state societies, even though there is, of course, an increasing effort towards the development of conformity and transformation formulas beyond the borders of the nation state (e.g. regarding professional and particularly academic courses).

Thus, migrants still face the task of 'rewriting', 'transferring', and 'reproducing' their life courses, systematic engagements (for instance regarding health provision, pension claims, etc.), (implicit) stocks of knowledge and experience strongly tied to other societies. Furthermore, they are confronted with attributions of others which bring their self-images-so-far onto the agenda and provoke processes of biographical (re-)construction. Additionally, these transformation processes take place under specific conditions such as those defined by the residence permit or the freedom of movement and settlement.

This way, migration-specific contexts of experience and biographical orientation emerge, whose particularities, however, have not (yet) become established in the social construction of 'institutionalised life courses' (Kohli 2000). On the contrary, compared to dominant patterns of life courses in a society they still seem somewhat 'out of kilter'. The sense of one's life course and biography as 'out of kilter' also constitutes a migration-specific experience. External migration, thus, is still associated with a specific social positionality ('foreigner', 'refugee', 'guest worker', 'brain worker', 'expellee', etc.), a specific sphere of experience, and specific conditions for developing biographical orientations.

Although it is mainly the first migration generation which is affected by the transformation of knowledge systems and patterns of orientation, these experiences can remain relevant in the family and milieu context up until the second, third or even more generations (see exemplary

Apitzsch 1990, Juhasz and Mey 2003, Juhasz 2006). This applies both to those who have undergone a change of society as individuals staying abroad in the role of migrants in a majority society and to those who are functioning in collectively shared and collectively constituted milieu structures in the context of a network migration. When, as minority milieus, migration communities establish themselves in the framework of a majority society still a migration-specific context of life and experience arises due to the internal organisation and orientation as well as the external attributions.[29]

In summary, not only do the life courses of people with a migration background unfold with references to different milieus of *one* heterogeneous society, but also with reference to one or several differently structured societies with their (group-, milieu-, gender-, age-) specific expectations of 'life courses' or 'biographies' – if these concepts matter at all. Thus, the construction of biographies and life courses against the background of external migration is associated with various frames of reference between different, but at the same time interwoven societies, while also with the development of altogether new references. Whether and to what extent the diversity of references to societies which are at the same time diverging in specific ways and interwoven leads to genuinely migration-specific biographical orientations and concepts is, as far as I am concerned, an open questioned to be clarified empirically.[30]

This, however, does not allow the conclusion that 'migrants' are determined by 'other' life courses, identities, biographies, or processes of building groups or milieus. The way in which experiences of migration become relevant with regard to biography, family history, groups, or milieus is – empirically speaking – quite unpredictable. First of all, it remains open what kind of relevance experiences of migration assume for the life course and the biography, as well as how they evolve and change in the course of time. And second, migrants share with non-migrants (partly already in their country of origin) a variety of contexts and frames of reference from which similar experiences and (biographical) patterns of orientation, group formation, and collective references can arise. Therefore, firstly, it is an open question what

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[29] Further research might be of interest here regarding the different impact upon processes of biographical orientation when migration takes place in the contexts of network-milieus or as a single migrant (family).
[30] Research into transnational spaces is especially focused on the emergence of these new frames of reference which are no longer limited to the boundaries of the nation state, but which exceed both the country of origin and of immigration. At the same time the discussion about transnational migration also points out that, for instance, with regard to the phenomenon of European shuttle migration the reference to the country of origin remains the dominant one – despite the emergence of transnational ways of life (Morokvasic-Müller 2003). It seems to be an unresolved question whether transnational migration leads to a disappearance of frames of reference that are society-specific or in what way these are transformed into new frames and patterns of reference. Furthermore, we should not neglect to acknowledge that transnational migration represents only one type of migration. At the same time, forced and impelled migration has remained relevant and here the formation of transnational spaces is considerably more difficult if not entirely ruled out due to the limited freedom of movement.

is perceived from whom in which contexts as an experience, making a significant difference or a significant commonality between the respective lives. Secondly, the meaning of the differences and commonalities can vary. For some the difference is a means for creating individuality, for others one to create collectivity within or across group boundaries. Thus, migration-specific positionalities and experiences can be or become part of both processes of individuation and of collective sociation. In addition to that, their function in this nexus can also change (see also Breckner 2005a: 322ff and 331-337).

Against this background the question posed earlier of how the specific contexts and experiences of migration can be depicted without the simultaneous construction of 'different' biographies, needs to be reiterated. As a crucial conceptual outcome of my research I would like to suggest the analytical distinction between the reconstruction of the context of migration experience on the one hand – which in every case bears its own particular aspects, constellations, and courses – and the reconstruction of biographical structuring processes on the other hand – which also follow their own specific dynamic and are embedded in different contexts and frames of reference.[31] In my opinion, it is only thus that we can determine empirically and analytically the *interrelation* between migration experiences and biographies without transferring the structuring dynamic from one dimension to the other, such as is done when deducing from a problematic migration experience a problematic biography or vice versa. However, while the relation between migration and biography is to be conceived of as an interaction between the specific characteristics of the context of migration experience and the respective biographical construction, it needs to be seen as one that is changing and one that remains fundamentally open regarding its production of meaning.

One of the promising aspects of this distinction is that it may help to avoid or at least to reduce problematic discursive associations with regard to the interrelation of migration and biography.

- Migration-specific contexts of experience can be discussed without overstressing them as the dominant feature of certain biographies, groups or milieus.
- It is taken into account that the experience of migration may *potentially* but need *not necessarily* constitute a significant difference or even dividing line between migrants and members of the society who do not share this experience.
- Attention is drawn to the fact that seemingly innocuous migration experiences may have severe consequences for the life course, while apparently dramatic migration can, under

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[31] The focus of the study at hand was on the interrelation between migration and biography. It might be fruitful, however, to transfer, at least as a mental figure, the conceptual distinction between the reconstruction of the specific characteristics of migration milieus and communities on the one hand and their embedding in a specific society on the other. In so doing it would be possible to grasp the *interrelation* between the dimension of community-building under migration-specific circumstances and the specific societal context in which it takes place without deducing one from the other.

certain circumstances, be assimilated into the biographical continuum relatively easily. Thus, there is no causal link between the type of migration experience and its biographical significance and vice versa.

- By looking at biographies diachronically, it becomes clear that the relevance of migration experiences can change, even fundamentally.

In the section that follows the *elements* possibly constitutive of migration experience contexts are described by taking into account the distinction just described and by drawing on my empirical and theoretical analyses in a specific field of migration. Subsequently, I will discuss biographical dimensions and aspects for which this experience has turned out to become relevant.[32]

Typical elements of migration experiences

What, we may ask, distinguishes the experience of migration from other experiences? I would like to highlight two aspects with regard to the typicality of migration experience. First of all, migrations are processes subdivided into phases. However, these do not exhibit any externally determinable beginning or any externally definable end, nor are they linearly structured in their sequential progression. Secondly, we can find that processes of migration are determined by crisis experiences of different kinds and with varying consequences. Crisis experiences can be differentiated in experiences of discontinuity and strangeness, which are accompanied by changes in the social position in socially prescribed relations between *foreigners* and *natives.* We are going to look more closely at these aspects and interrelations in the following.

Open phase and process structure

Migration processes have been perceived and described as phase-structured in migration studies before (see especially Maurenbrecher 1985). In the case studies conducted within the scope of the work at hand, too, various phases could be observed (Breckner 2005: 380ff):
- the time of the initial contemplation of migration and decision-making processes
- the stage of 'leaving' as a process of separation from people and places and of termination of institutional, social, and local integration
- transitory phases
- the stage of 'arrival' in a new society and specific experiences during 'admission'
- processes of 'establishment' and beginning of participation in various function systems

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[32] An extended version of these considerations can be found in Breckner 2005: 399-420

- phases of restructuring of local references to the country of origin (e.g. by the 'transplantation' of symbolic artefacts to the country of immigration, by family members joining, and by journeys home) and finally

- phases of (re-) consideration of the migration with regard to return, permanent stay or further migration

These stages point to the sequential structure of migration experience in which – as in all experience – a temporal dimension is inherent. Empirical reconstruction shows a certain blurriness of the boundaries between individual phases. Also, the indicated order need not be adhered to. For instance, the decision to migrate in the sense of changing one's place of residence from one society to another may be taken only after the journey or upon arrival in another country. Alternatively, it may take many years for that decision to be made, or it may never be made, even after processes of establishment in the new society have been long under way. Furthermore, phases of restructuring of local references or (re-)consideration of migration can be determined neither temporally nor from the order in which they occur.

With respect to the process structure we also find that the experiences made in the individual phases mutually shape one another due to the referential nexus they are in, thus, creating a dynamic structure. However, the process of experience formation as a whole remains non-linear and non-causal in that earlier experiences do not determine subsequent ones and in that experiences in one phase per se may dominate over others. Rather, the migration experience is established – as is sense and meaning in general – by referring back to events from the present perspective. It gains its meaning in reference to the time of occurrence in conjunction with the respective present time of interpretation and in light of future expectations and horizons (see Rosenthal 1993 and 1995, on the concept of the constitution of experiences in changing time perspectives see Fischer 1986 and 1987). It is thus that the experience of migration can change during the course of time and in different contexts of its representation.

Crisis experiences in migration

As Alfred Schütz (1964) has already pointed out in detail, crisis experiences can be regarded as the shock to and the resultant alteration of stocks of knowledge needed for routine action and a smooth continuation of life.[33] Changing one's frame of reference involves a more or less extensive re-formation of the system of relevance. Thus, at its heart a crisis experience is an experience of discontinuity. The certainties up to that date are upset, even 'overthrown', when for instance typical patterns of action and day-to-day communications no longer run

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[33] Naturally, non-migrants also experience crises in the fashion theorised by Alfred Schütz. In the following, however, we are going to focus on migration-specific aspects.

automatically and without question. The new linguistic environment, too, as well as new forms of expression or unfamiliar physical sensations (such as temperature, spaces, odours, preparation of food, etc.) contribute to this upset. Inevitably thus, in the course of a shift of society life practices change although some of its feature will be 'retained' or 'restored'. The recontextualisation of elements central to the 'old' life practice itself leads to a change of the held-over components, because the totality of references change and, thus, too, the location and the meaning of the individual components. Thereby, experiences of discontinuity are not simply 'annulled' by processes of continuity. Rather, they repeatedly trigger crisis experiences on various levels and simultaneously call for the restoration of continuity.

Not only do experiences of discontinuity affect the immediate everyday, but they also touch areas which shape and secure everyday life, namely the participation in social function systems. What sets this experience apart as migration-specific is that participation in the labour and housing market, for instance, or the health system, the education system, the pension system, the system of personal and familial relationships needs to be disengaged and re-engaged in a well-coordinated fashion. This usually takes place under heteronomously determined conditions, namely the legal requirements for emigrants and different types of 'foreigners'.[34] For the most part it is impossible to maintain the system-specific social participation one was accustomed to. On the one hand, there are scarcely any exact equivalents to the respective function systems which would allow a simple adoption of claims (not even in the EU). And on the other hand, migration is usually accompanied by a loss of status – with the exception of a few privileged migration groups – which involves an entrance into the new function systems on a much lower level than that reached in the country of origin. This is because system-specific participation is determined dependent on citizenship, duration of residence, as well as the passage of certain system-specific careers (e.g. education).

Upon arrival in the new society a shift in social position takes place in which migrants become 'foreigners' in the interaction with 'natives' and are exposed to the typical attributions involved in this relationship. There is a limit to which these can be controlled autonomously (see also Weiß 2001). The subject matter that is basically concerned here revolves around social recognition and reciprocity in the horizon of relations of dominance, power, and hierarchy towards 'foreigners' and 'strangers' in general, and specific migration groups in particular. Whether one presents oneself as 'ethnic German' or 'Romanian', as 'Romanian' or 'Jewish', as 'Jewish' or 'Roma' has an impact on interaction and ultimately on the potential for social participation. Furthermore, the assignment of social positions between 'natives' and 'foreigners' is based upon socio-culturally produced relations between the country of origin

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[34] To give an example: In Germany, there were over 15 different residence permits in 1999, each defining a different status in various social function systems.

and the country of immigration. It makes a difference whether someone from England or the USA, from Turkey or Romania, from Eritrea or Senegal, from Thailand or China finds him- or herself in the position of the 'stranger' in England, France, Germany, or Italy. Experiences of cultural difference in lifestyle are commonly associated with social distinction from or affiliation with a certain social positioning.

By and large migration processes make for an intensification of experiences of alterity in various forms, directions, and in relations with others and with oneself.[35] It is to be assumed that various forms of experiences of alterity intersect, run parallel, and influence one another. While the situation of migration creates a particular experience, the intensity and characteristics this experience takes on is not determined by it.

Recognising the relevancy of crisis situations in migration processes, however, is not coupled with any normative judgment (are they good or bad, easy or hard) or even propositions about their long-term biographical consequences. Basically, a crisis may both initiate or conclude a productive or destructive course of development or be part of a continuing problem-solving or problem-generating process (Schütze 1981). By the same token, in everyday life practice crisis experiences may be perceived as either irksome restrictions and/or welcome extensions of the scope of action. Furthermore, their temporal extent is indeterminable, as are their long-term biographical repercussions. Hence, it is not accurate to deduce from migration-related crisis experiences certain problematic biographical courses.

Biographical relevance of migration experiences

After this tentative outlining of aspects possibly characterising experiences of migration systematically, we now want to approach the question of how these experiences can become

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[35] Waldenfels, for instance, differentiates between ‚everyday', 'structural', and 'radical' strangeness. He goes on to typify various relations between 'selfhood' and 'otherness'. 'Selfhood' can define itself as the negatively polarised dissociation from the 'Other' (we are not what you are). The 'strange' can be seen and appropriated as a complement of the 'self' (in the pizza parlour, on holiday, in the relationship between man and woman). 'Self' and 'other' can be ascribed to common origins ('we all originated from the same 'ultimate ground' – differences are mere variations of one and the same thing'). Finally, 'Selfhood' and 'otherness' can be perceived as a complementary mutual distinction ('I am strange to you the way you are strange to me') (see also Schäffter 1991). These experiences of alterity are not per se specific to migration, but they are experienced by everybody, since they are – from a phenomenological point of view – the fundamental principles of the constitution of experience and life world generally (for similar figures of argumentation with, in part, different theoretical references see Bauman 1996, Nassehi 1995, Hahn 1995). The migration-specific aspect of this experience enters when in the course of societal relocation experiences of alterity are intensified and become linked with experiences of crisis and discontinuity in processes of creation or refusal of inclusion. As experiences of strangeness and crises are shared by migrants and non-migrants, characteristics of migration-specific aspects of these experiences could be described more precisely if they were compared with non-migrants' experiences of strangeness connected to crises and discontinuity.

relevant in the structuring of biographies. What characterises the nexus between the overall biographical context and an experience which is fundamentally open with regard to its process structure and essentially determined by crisis experiences with respect to guiding stocks of knowledge? Is it even possible to make general assertions about the assimilation of migration experiences into biographies, considering the open-ended diversity of combinations of biographical background, constellations, and experiences and a wide range of migration processes?

In light of my empirical results together with theoretical concepts on the processes of biographical structuring (Fischer-Rosenthal 2000, Breckner 2005: 121-192) four aspects which seem particularly relevant to the impact of migration on biography can be proposed for conceptual discussions. This significance can be thought of being constituted:

- in conjunction with case and life-stage-specific events and experiences which precede, accompany, or succeed migration, but which are unrelated to the migration itself
- in the development of biographical temporal horizons under the condition of migration
- in processes of transformation of biographical experience-organising and self-presentational schemata under the condition of migration
- in the embedding into the biography of various social and milieu-specific continua of collective history.

As my empirical analyses have shown, a crucial factor for the biographical assimilation of migration experiences is how and to what extent migration is linked with other biographically relevant events, stages, courses of development, and strands. Preceding, accompanying, and succeeding events and developments relevant to the biography could potentially form a nexus of experience correlated with migration. This is the case, for instance, when there is a shared thematic field of biographical discontinuity (see Rosenthal 1995) in which migration-related crisis experiences and biographical crises combine, or when there is a field of biographical continuity in which migration is seen as a vehicle to produce and ensure long-term biographical projects. Biographical developments, however, can remain relatively unaffected by migration. While for some their migration experience becomes the symbol of their life, for others it represents a vehicle for the realisation of a very well-defined plan limited to a certain time in their lives, while for others again migration has no significance in their overall biography whatsoever (see Breckner 2003, 2005). The succeeding biographical development is capable of considerably modifying the meaning of migration, for instance, when the latter changes from a vaguely relevant to a key biographical event or from an experience of continuity to one of discontinuity by means of shifted perspective and engagement.

Another aspect that essentially affects the significance attached to the experience of migration is the development of biographical temporal horizons under the condition of migration. Long-term external migration requires, at least in adult age, the restructuring of various biographical strands. This entails not only the reorganisation of social inclusion (into the labour market or into the social security system), but also the restructuring of the whole of one's life course so far by fitting it into new sequence patterns. Again, this takes place under the migration-specific conditions of border crossing which define externally-determined rights of entry, residence, movement, and return and which stipulate the duration of the stay respective to the time of the return, as well as the freedom of movement across regional or national borders. This is also associated with specific validation processes regarding competencies (or their non-recognition) as well as the approval or dismissal of personal claims. Interacting biographical strands such as family life and professional developments need to be restructured and perhaps re-sequenced under these conditions. The context of migration thus constitutes specific temporal horizons which have the capacity to affect the biographical horizon as a whole. Not least because of this a context of biographical transformation which is specific to external migration processes is constituted which possibly distinguishes it from the biographical impact of internal migration, social change, or even upheaval. In the case of external migration the social reference system which shapes and structures biographies is *replaced*. In the case of internal social upheaval reference systems significant for biographies are *transformed*.

However, the connection between migration-specific and biographical temporal horizons can be quite different according to the individual case and type. For some the interruption of biographical strands, such as occur when the inclusion in former patterns of education and career and/or the return to the country of origin is not possible, is part of an autonomously instigated migration project, even if it might take place under highly restrictive conditions and be characterised by radical discontinuity, as for example in the presented case of Romica Braşovean. For others, though, migration, acting as a blockade of their entire life history, forces upon them a restructuring of professional and/or familial projects and developments. For others again the necessary biographical changes remain ambivalent in that they are sometimes seen as a resource and sometimes as a loss and obstacle, as in the presented case of Stefan Georgescu.

Another aspect which is significant for the meaning assumed by migration – at least on a latent level – concerns the modification of experience-organising and self-presentational schemata. These extend to specific forms of self-expression perceived as a part of one's personality. The culturally connoted presentational and expressive forms, which are subject to limited conscious control, make it apparent that situation-specific and sub-systemically relevant patterns of perception, experience and behaviour are society-specific. This includes forms of self-presentation extending into the structure of the (linguistically inarticulate) body. In situations of migration these come to the fore as subtly perceived and handled experiences of distinction which are capable of

eliciting (on both parts) sympathy as well as barely conceivable antipathy. In a receiving society immigrants thus encounter largely stipulated, yet implicit expectations with regard to specific forms of self-presentation and bodily expressions in nearly all social sub-spheres.

Finally, the biographical significance of migration experiences is determined by the way in which they are assimilated in social-historical contexts and transformations. The engagement with various, often heteronomously constituted or family- and milieu-history-related involvement in diverse continua of social history also represents a biographical challenge of migration. In the course of the increasing interrelation between diverse social and collective histories it can usually be assumed that these are, at least partially, organised in an interrelated fashion and are based on mutual attributions. The process of assimilating and shaping biographies in their historical dimension can be considerably influenced by the way in which diverging collective histories interact in the actual practice of migrants' lives, whether that be conflictual and antagonistic or amicable and cooperative. Issues of inclusion gain their significance not least in this area.

As a matter of course, analytically isolated components of biographical relevance of migration experiences are connected and influence one another in actual empirical processes. Not in every case do they need to be equally relevant, and their relevance can change during the course of time and in different social contexts. Furthermore, the requirements and efforts associated with the transformation from life before and after migration, as well as the involved transitional stages, can be quite different from case to case and according to type.

Migration experiences, biography and strangeness

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, during the research process it turned out that experiences of strangeness and otherness in the social position of being (made) 'stranger' or/and 'foreigner' had to be dealt with by all the interviewees I met during my research. These experiences, which were already theoretically described by Alfred Schütz, Georg Simmel, Norbert Elias & John Scotson, Zygmunt Bauman, Armin Nassehi, Alois Hahn and others from a sociological perspective, were characterising to a large extend the narrated migration experiences. However, the way and significance in which diverse experiences of strangeness became relevant in the migration process as well as in a biographical perspective was quite different. Whereas for some they meant a soon passing irritation, e.g. concerning stocks of knowledge orienting every-day-life contexts, for others they touched existential dimensions in letting become questionable social, professional, cultural, generational or historical self-locations quite profoundly. From this analytical observation the question aroused, if there might be a systematic link between socially constructed biographical concepts, migration processes, social positions and experiences of strangeness and otherness. This question could not be systematically answered on the basis of my research, but it generated hypotheses and additional questions which might be useful in further investigations.

First, it is a hypothesis that there is a systematic link between biographical concepts, migration experiences and social positions and experiences of strangeness. A theoretical concept concerning this link would have to be based in comparative empirical and theoretical investigation from different fields of migration. A leading question could be if and in what way biographically rooted patterns of handling strangeness, otherness and crisis experiences associated with those form a relevant background for handling migration experiences. In turn, one could ask, if the biographical relevance of migration experiences is essentially shaped by the assimilating, characterising, and management of the experiences of strangeness and otherness associated with them.

Additional questions arise from the assumption that the biographical genesis of experiences of otherness is itself embedded in pre-existing cultural patterns or templates for the formation and processing of experiences. These presumably are shaped by socially constituted structures of life courses, biographical or other concepts relating to ones lifetime in the context of a social, historical or other time, and producing meaning in a specific way. One could ask, if those facilitate, promote, impair or inhibit specific modes of and capacities for processing otherness. In other words: How the socially constituted structures of biographies and life courses present a relevant horizon to the modes and forms of experiencing strangeness and otherness as e.g. described by Bernhard Waldenfels and Ortfried Schäffter? In what way do these gain relevance and develop a specific shape in migration processes not least with regard to the social position of being (made) 'stranger' or 'foreigner'? Furthermore, how migration-related experiences constitute a horizon of experience diverging from that witnessed by non-migrants? What meaning is ascribed to this difference in diverse social fields? Under which circumstances experiences of otherness form dividing contradictory or connective complementary relations?

Finally, the hypothesis, that migratory social spaces are structured by distinctions such as locals – foreigners, established – outsiders, friends – enemies – strangers, natives – non-natives is theoretically already widely discussed. In contrast, in empirical research (at least in Germany) less attention has been paid so far to the question, how the historical relationships between the respective country of origin and country of immigration play a role in the formation of the social areas in which migration takes place. A relevant question from my point of view would be how specific boundaries drawn in the respective us/them-distinction take shape and change against a historical background, and what significance these distinctions gain in the migration experience and its biographical relevance.

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