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# Diaspora and Transnationalism

*Concepts, Theories and Methods*

RAINER BAUBÖCK & THOMAS FAIST (EDS.)



AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods

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*edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist*

IMISCOE Research

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## Preface

The success of concepts in the social sciences is often measured by the number of academic publications referring to them, by their capacity to cross the boundaries of disciplines and by their penetration into mass media and wider public discourses. If, however, we take qualitative criteria such as the explanatory power of a concept and its precision in distinguishing different social phenomena as indicators for its usefulness in social theory and research, then successful proliferation may diminish academic value. This diagnosis seems to apply to the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora. Both have become extremely popular since the 1990s and are today applied to much broader classes of phenomena. This widening of empirical scope has also led to increasing conceptual overlap so that diaspora and transnationalism have become increasingly difficult to distinguish from each other. Yet even in their multifaceted contemporary meanings, each concept still shows the birthmarks of distinct imaginaries, research puzzles and disciplinary styles of reasoning. The danger is that the broadening of conceptual scope will not only result in conceptual inflation, but also in conceptual flattening in the sense that concepts lose their capacity to drill deeper and connect the multiple layers of socially constructed realities in ways that enhance our understanding.

The goal of this book is not to settle once and for all the conceptual debate by proposing coherent and authoritative definitions. We have instead come to the Wittgensteinian conclusion that the meaning of transnationalism and diaspora must be inferred from their actual uses. This pragmatic attitude suggests also that the best test for the present academic value of these concepts lies in their capacity to trigger new research perspectives and questions. This is the test that we wanted to apply in this volume. And we think that the result is positive.

The chapters of this book are grouped loosely into three sections. In the first part, the emphasis is on the variety of interpretations of the two concepts (chapters 2 – 5). The second part deals with new theoretical approaches and research questions (chapters 6 – 10). And the third part addresses methodological problems and innovations with respect to the study of boundary-crossing activities and affiliations (chapters 11 – 14). The book is framed by an introductory essay that connects the



strands of the debate (chapter 1) and concluding reflections on how empirical research perspectives may enhance our understanding of the evolution of transnational membership norms in democratic polities (chapter 15).

A multidisciplinary book project like this one always risks ending up as a compilation of disconnected essays. We have attempted to reduce this danger by engaging all authors in an intensive process of debate during an initial conference as well as in subsequent rounds of elaboration and revision of the chapters. The project started with an IMISCOE theory conference hosted at and co-organised by the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence from 10-12 April 2008. A call for papers was launched within the IMISCOE network and the EUI, and was eventually also circulated within other networks. Altogether 40 extended outlines of papers were submitted. A programme committee involving seven IMISCOE members invited 28 scholars to submit full versions of their papers at the conference. Apart from Nina Glick Schiller's chapter 6, all contributions in this book were presented in initial draft versions at the conference. And all essays, apart from Valentina Mazzucato's chapter 11, are original contributions that have not been published before. A full draft version of the book was reviewed by three anonymous peer reviewers, whose detailed suggestions were extremely helpful for the last round of extensive revisions. This project has also resulted in an IMISCOE policy brief 'Ties across borders: the growing salience of transnationalism and diaspora politics' by Rainer Bauböck, which is available at [www.imiscoe.org/publications/policybriefs](http://www.imiscoe.org/publications/policybriefs).

Apart from the authors and editors, several other persons have been involved in this project and have contributed to its successful conclusion. Listing them and their locations shows how producing this book on transnationalism was itself a transnational process. Wiebke Sievers, based at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and long-term administrator of the IMISCOE thematic cluster on migration and citizenship, was pivotal in the administration of the conference and its follow-up. At the EUI in Florence, Eva Breivik provided secretarial support and Eduardo Romanos' editorial assistance was crucial for preparing the book publication. In Toronto, Edith Klein carefully edited the manuscript for book publication. The IMISCOE Network Office in Amsterdam and the IMISCOE Editorial Committee, spread across Europe, have consistently supported the project. Karina Hof's patient assistance and professional advice deserve to be specially mentioned here. The Amsterdam University Press team (Erik van Aert, Jaap Wagenaar and Christine Waslander) has also been very supportive. We are grateful to all of them.

*Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist*

# Chapter 1

## Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?

*Thomas Faist*<sup>I</sup>

### 1.1 Introduction: Diaspora and transnationalism as awkward dance partners

Over the past decades, the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism have served as prominent research lenses through which to view the aftermath of international migration and the shifting of state borders across populations. The research has focused on delineating the genesis and reproduction of transnational social formations, as well as the particular macro-societal contexts in which these cross-border social formations have operated, such as ‘globalisation’ and ‘multiculturalism’. Although both terms refer to cross-border processes, *diaspora* has been often used to denote religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland, whereas *transnationalism* is often used both more narrowly – to refer to migrants’ durable ties across countries – and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organisations. Moreover, while diaspora and transnationalism are sometimes used interchangeably, the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies. The revival of the notion of diaspora and the advent of transnational approaches can be used productively to study central questions of social and political change and transformation.

The goal of this volume is to bring together these two awkward dance partners, which talk about similar categories of persons involving forms of forced and voluntary migrations. In contrasting and comparing these two concepts across a range of social science disciplines – sociology, political science, geography and anthropology – the book is meant to be theoretical in the wide sense of the term. The aim is not to develop a comprehensive theory or a synthesis of a theory, nor to apply a distinct set of theories to cross-border social phenomena. The term ‘theory’ here relates to theoretically guided empirical propositions, ranging from thick descriptions aiming at particular events and sites, on one end of the continuum, to grand general theory at the other end. Neither is this

an effort to develop an integrated theory of diaspora and transnationalism. To avoid conceptual confusion and talking past one another across academic disciplines, the chapters contained herein are organised according to three clear-cut tasks, and the volume is accordingly structured in three sections.

#### Part 1 Concepts

We need to study the history and evolution of the two concepts and attempt to clarify their uses for theoretical purposes across different disciplines and research traditions. This part of the volume explores whether and, if so, in what ways diaspora and transnationalism are useful concepts guiding systematic empirical analysis in order to avoid the danger of conceptually rich but proposition-poor research.

#### Part 2 Theory

We need to compare how different social, cultural and political theories explain the formation of diasporas and the emergence of transnationalism and what weight these phenomena are given in broader theoretical accounts of change in contemporary society. This part of the volume develops theoretically informed propositions that can be used to explain certain phenomena, or identify the causal mechanisms and processes that can be seen in their effects.

#### Part 3 Methods

We need to develop methodological toolboxes and innovations for studying transnational and diasporic phenomena empirically, without falling into the traps of methodological nationalism or essentialising groupism. This part of the volume engages in reflections on how to conduct research and assess evidence. Our endeavour here also includes discussion and application of relevant research techniques.

Before embarking on a more detailed description of these three tasks, it is necessary to sketch the public and academic relevance of the debates in which the terms ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ are used.

### 1.2 The state of the debate(s)

Diaspora and transnationalism are important concepts in both political and policy debates and academic research – diaspora even more so than transnationalism. Diaspora has become a politicised notion while

transnational approaches have not yet found entry into public debates to the same degree. While diaspora is a very old concept, transnationalism is relatively new. Not only in public debates but also in academic analysis, the terms have fuzzy boundaries and often overlap. This immediately raises the question of why we should be interested in studying these concepts.

Quite strikingly, over the last decade, the term 'diaspora' has become popular in both academic literature and public discourses. Nationalist groups or governments often use the concept of diaspora to pursue agendas of nation-state-building or controlling populations abroad. The concept is invoked to mobilise support for a group identity or some political project, sometimes in the service of an external homeland, such as the protection of ethnic minorities living in another state (i.e. kin state protection). Recently, even source countries of migration have used 'diaspora' to encourage financial investments and promote political loyalty among economically successful expatriates. Because it has been politicised in multiple ways, scholars have argued that the term should be used with care and not regarded as an innocuous analytical concept (Brubaker 2005). Yet, simply doing away with the term altogether would be throwing the baby out with the bath-water. It is important to study how diasporas are constituted, with which consequences for the various agents and institutions involved and how the boundaries of the concept have changed.

Does 'transnationalism' offer more analytical purchase than diaspora? The former term – and its derivatives, such as transnational social spaces, fields and formations – have been used to connote everyday practices of migrants engaged in various activities. These include, to give only a few examples, reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks, political participation not only in the country of emigration but also of immigration, small-scale entrepreneurship of migrants across borders and the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practices. Though not used as widely as diaspora, nor as politicised, the concept is hardly devoid of political connotations. After all, the pioneers of the transnational turn in the early 1990s coined it as a concept with an approach that brought migrants 'back in' as important social agents (Glick Schiller, Basch & Szanton-Blanc 1995) – in contrast to large organisations such as multinational companies and political parties that had been the object of earlier research of a transnational vein (Faist 2009a). An agenda prioritising the empowerment of migrants is reflected in titles such as *Transnationalism from Below* (Smith & Guarnizo 1998). And indeed, the '-ism' in transnationalism suggests an ideology. Yet, it is not clear who would adhere to such an ideology: researchers, migrants or other political agents. Above all, since its introduction to migration studies in the early 1990s, transnationalism has sparked discussions on

the integration of immigrants. Are migrants' transnational orientations at odds with their social integration in societies of settlement? Or is there complementarity – and, if so, in what circumstances?

These brief references already suggest that diaspora and transnationalism are both at the cross-roads of academic research and public debates. It is therefore of great importance to get a better sense of the uses of the terms, their similarities and differences. As the contributions to this volume make clear, the two concepts cannot be separated in any meaningful way. To do so would be to neglect the rich panoply of definitions and meanings that constantly overlap. Nonetheless, since Wittgenstein (2009), we have known that meanings of concepts can be inferred from how they are used. In a Wittgensteinian spirit that does not rely too much on definitions, this introductory chapter poses the following questions: what do the two concepts have in common? What distinguishes them thus from other branches of globalisation studies, and what distinguishes transnationalism from diaspora studies? And to what ends can they be fruitfully used?

Diaspora is an old concept whose uses and meanings have recently undergone dramatic change. Originally, the concept referred only to the historic experience of particular groups, specifically Jews and Armenians. Later, it was extended to religious minorities in Europe. Since the late 1970s, 'diaspora' has experienced a veritable inflation of applications and interpretations. Most definitions can be summed up by three characteristics. Each of these can be subdivided into older and newer usages. The first characteristic relates to the causes of migration or dispersal. Older notions refer to forced dispersal, and this is rooted in the experience of Jews, but also – more recently – of Palestinians. Newer notions of diaspora often refer simply to any kind of dispersal, thus including trade diasporas such as that of the Chinese, or labour migration diasporas such as those of the Turkish and the Mexicans (Cohen 1997). The second characteristic links cross-border experiences of homeland with destination. Older notions clearly imply a return to an (imagined) homeland (Safran 1991): an example is homeland-oriented projects meant to shape a country's future by influencing it from abroad or by encouraging return there. By contrast, newer uses often replace return with dense and continuous linkages across borders, as in the migration-development nexus (Faist 2008). Such newer meanings do not remain bound in the imagery of origin and destination but include countries of onward migration, and thus emphasise lateral ties. Even wider uses speak of a diasporic experience of all mobile persons as 'trans-nation' (Appadurai 1996). In some cases, the imagined homeland can also be a non-territorial one, such as a global Islamic umma. This latter interpretation highlights the fact that, even in its earliest historic uses, diaspora refers not only to ethnic but also to religious groups

or communities. The third characteristic concerns the incorporation or integration of migrants and/or minorities into the countries of settlement. Older notions of diaspora implied that its members do not fully integrate socially – that is, politically, economically, culturally – into the country of settlement, making and maintaining boundaries vis-à-vis the majority group(s). This notion of diaspora is also often associated with boundary maintenance by a dominant majority through discrimination against diaspora groups. Assimilation would mean the end of diaspora, whether ethnically or religiously defined. Newer notions of diaspora emphasise cultural hybridity in the wake of ‘dissemi-nation’ (Bhabha 1994). In line with older notions, it seems that diaspora implies some sort of cultural distinctiveness of the diaspora vis-à-vis other groups.

Clearly, the older and newer usages of diaspora are not always compatible. Yet, this tension may also constitute an opportunity to raise questions for further analysis. First, newer usages refer to any kind of dispersal and thus blur the distinctions between various kinds of cross-border mobility. For example, for analytical and political reasons, differences between more voluntary and more forced forms of migration may be crucial. Second, the emphasis on return has been replaced by circular exchange and transnational mobility. This development raises important questions about changing forms of migrant membership in communities of origin and destination. Third, while both older and newer usages emphasise the fact that diasporic groups do not assimilate in regions of immigration, more recent discussions go beyond the idea of cultural distinctiveness and focus upon processes of cultural innovation. This raises the question of whether migrant integration, on the one hand, and cultural distinctions, on the other hand, may coexist. In sum, the questions raised are also to be found in discussions about the second term central to this book, ‘transnationalism’: changing forms of cross-border mobility, membership and citizenship and the compatibility – or incompatibility – of migrant integration and cultural distinctions.

While the term ‘diaspora’ always refers to a community or group and has been heavily used in history and literary studies, concepts such as transnationalism – and transnational spaces, fields and formations – refer to *processes* that transcend international borders and therefore appear to describe more abstract phenomena in a social science language. By transnational spaces we mean relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across borders of sovereign states. Transnational spaces comprise combinations of ties and their substance, positions within networks and organisations and networks of organisations that cut across the borders of at least two national states (Faist 2000b). In migration research, the concept of transnationalism was coined to focus on the grassroots activities of international migrants across borders as being something distinct from the dense and

continuous relations of macro-agents such as multinational or transnational companies. In this sense, the term ‘transnationalism’ builds upon – yet is distinct from – transnational relations in the political science sub-discipline of international relations, and differs from that usage in its focus on non-state actors (Portes 1996). In transnationalism, non-state agents, among them prominently but not exclusively migrants, are defined as crucial agents. Country of origin, country of destination and migrants (plus their significant others who are relatively immobile) thus create a triangular social structure, which can be expanded through the inclusion of countries of onward migration. In this multi-angular structure, the element of migrant formations covers a host of organisations and groups, including migrant associations, such as hometown associations, religious communities and employer organisations.

### 1.3 Part 1 – Concepts: Defining diaspora and transnationalism

Striving for exact definitions of terms such as ‘diaspora’ and ‘transnationalism’ may seem a futile exercise. Diaspora, in particular, has become an all-purpose word. It may therefore be more meaningful to look at its uses. As the uses of these terms often overlap and are sometimes even interchangeable, no clear separation is to be expected. Nonetheless, a close conceptual comparison is an opportunity to bring to light crucial questions about cross-border processes. Towards this end, it is useful to compare the two concepts first to globalisation studies. While the impact of globalisation is often assumed to be universal and worldwide, approaches linked to the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism refer to phenomena that occur within the limited social and geographic spaces of a particular set of regions or states. Globalisation approaches and world theories differ from diasporic and transnationalist approaches in at least three respects.

First, all cross-border concepts refer to the importance of cross-border or even ‘deterritorialised’ politics, economics and culture. Yet, diaspora and transnational approaches emphasise intense connections to national or local territories, especially in the case of migrants. For example, the lobbying that Kurdish migrant organisations do may take place at the European Parliament in Brussels, but its focus is on ‘local’ issues, such as Kurdish autonomy in Turkey or the right to organise in European Union member states. In this way, cross-border social phenomena have a clear territorial reference and are thus also local or national in their focus and goals (see Lyons 2006).

Second, there is also no claim that a global or world consciousness is evolving in a linear way. The broad definition of transnational spaces,

fields and formations as sets of dense and continuous social and symbolic ties encompasses all kinds of social phenomena. These definitions apply across the board, from the cross-border activities of non-governmental organisations and social protest movements, through the migration flows that link specific sending and receiving countries, to the ongoing ties migrants retain with their countries of origin. However, in diaspora and transnational approaches, the intensified cross-border transactions are not necessarily connected to a global consciousness, a global horizon of world society, global justice and cosmopolitanism (Beck 2006) or the growing importance of universal norms in the world polity approach (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez 1997). In particular, migration is a case where there is no neat coincidence of 'globalisation from below' (Portes 1996), no growing awareness of 'one-worldness', on the one hand, and universal ideas, on the other. Moreover, diaspora and transnationalism – as concepts and observable phenomena – are not necessarily coterminous with what is called global or transnational civil society in the form of 'transnational advocacy networks' (Keck & Sikkink 1998). Transnational advocacy networks are often portrayed as promoting universal values, such as human rights, democracy and gender equity. Similarly, transnational social movements are studied as an instance of globalisation and the universalisation of practices and rights from below (Della Porta, Andretta, Mosca & Reiter 2006). By contrast, diaspora and transnational concepts often relate to the observation that, when it comes to understandings of the political, human mobility may reinforce and recreate all kinds of beliefs and – isms, including nationalism, patriarchy, sexism, sectarianism and ethno-nationalism.

Third, terms such as 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' or 'transnationalisation' do not suggest a (linear) progression of the universalisation of rights, as world approaches do. For example, post-national approaches posit that migrants' 'right to have rights' (Arendt 1973 [1959]) has led to the evolution of post-national membership, which – in liberal democracies – guards essential social and civil rights of migrants, though falls short of full political rights and citizenship (Soysal 1994). According to this view, the ultimate source of this tendency is to be found in a diffusion of Western norms of human rights into the regulations and constitutions of national states. While considerations attached to terms such as 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' do not provide comprehensive theories on rights and citizenship, there are no clear-cut assumptions about the global spread of norms. Instead, the focus is usually on contentious struggles around issues such as rights in both national and transnational arenas (Faist 2010). Diaspora and transnational concepts, in contrast to global and world theory concepts, often start from the observation that, while there is less of a requirement of



physical or geographical proximity for social life, there is still no clear tendency towards universalisation. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the co-presence of universalising and particularising processes. Thus, universal norms – such as collective self-determination, democracy and human rights – may enable local or national claims. For example, demands for political autonomy or multicultural rights of cultural groups often refer to global norms such as the right to collective self-determination. In this way, the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are closely related to ‘glocalisation’, which combines the notions of globalisation and localisation (Robertson 1995).

While the conceptual differences between globalisation, on the one hand, and diaspora and transnationalisation, on the other hand, may seem rather straightforward, it appears more difficult to distinguish the latter set of terms. The extent to which the literature on diaspora and transnational studies overlaps and intersects can be discerned from Tölölyan’s (1991: 5) memorable remark that contemporary diasporas are ‘the exemplary communities of the transnational moment’. Diaspora mixes, and overlaps with, meanings of words like ‘expatriate’, ‘migrancy’ and ‘exile’ to form ‘an unruly crowd of descriptive/interpretative terms’ that ‘jostle and converse’ in the modern lexicon of migration studies (Clifford 1994a: 303).

The contributions to the conceptual part of this volume focus on the origins of the two concepts, their expanding interpretation and applications to novel phenomena and the links between academic and wider public discourses. Some of the contributions focus on the history of the concepts and discourse analyses of their present uses, while others propose definitions of the two concepts and identify their various dimensions and contextual specifications. The general perspective of the contributions in this section is interdisciplinary in that the authors draw on insights from a variety of social science disciplines to advance their analysis. Nonetheless, the authors of the chapters are firmly rooted in specific disciplines: Bruneau in human geography, Dahinden in sociology, Weinar in political science and Paerregaard in cultural anthropology. The concepts of diaspora and transnationalism can be usefully grouped into three realms of meaning: descriptive-analytical notions, references to the social constitution of diasporic and transnationalist phenomena and references to a socio-cultural condition.

### *1.3.1 Diaspora and transnationalism as descriptive analytical notions*

The use of diaspora as a descriptive and analytical category has a strong tradition. Examples in this volume include Safran’s and Cohen’s taxonomies of diaspora and Sheffer’s effort to systematically analyse diaspora politics (Sheffer 2006). Making frequent references to family

trees, roots, replanting and ancestral soil, such taxonomies often use agrarian or gardening tropes – a trend Cohen (1997: 177-178) has noted in diaspora studies overall. Sometimes these definitions border on essentialist notions of organic social development. By contrast, conceptualisations of transnationalism are more rooted in geographic and sociological images such as ‘space’ and ‘field’, which are often either used heuristically, or associated with claims towards applying key notions of social theory (Khagram & Levitt 2008). On the whole, while diaspora studies have mainly spoken to issues of cultural distinctiveness and its relevance for religious communities, nationhood and also social practices such as entrepreneurship, transnational studies have come to focus on issues of mobility and networks. In short, the former term takes broad concepts such as ‘community’ and ‘dispersal’ as a point of departure, and the latter term is related to social science ideas. Bruneau and Dahinden in this volume use typologies of diaspora and transnationalism, respectively, as broad categories to discuss questions regarding mobility and social integration.

### 1.3.2 *Diaspora and transnationalism as socially constituted formations*

Bruneau’s contribution attests to overlap in diaspora and transnational approaches. Bruneau distinguishes among different types of diasporas, which refer to entrepreneurship, politics, religion and ethnicity or race. He goes beyond notions of community and a categorisation of diasporic groups through firmly embedding his inquiry in a categorisation of spaces. Hence, his juxtaposition of ‘transnational communities’ and ‘territories of movement’. While the former consist mostly of labour migrants who establish groups in the immigration region, the latter are composed of mobile traders who connect emigration and immigration states. And while transnational communities have their focus on the emigration country, territories of movement are characterised by an emphasis on the regions of origin (see also the notion of ‘trading diasporas’ in Rauch 2001). Bruneau’s approach raises important questions for further conceptual work: how is ‘de-territorialisation going with or followed by re-territorialisation’? One may surmise that re-territorialisation brings the local rootedness of most diasporists and migrants’ agency back into the picture.

Through her conceptual and empirical analysis on transnationalism, Dahinden also distinguishes between more sedentary and more nomadic forms of cross-border movements and ties. She looks at ‘diasporic transnationalism’ and ‘transnationalism through mobility’, using the example of cabaret dancers. Departing from Bruneau, Dahinden does not contrast diaspora with transnationalism, but builds on the sedentary/nomadic distinction within transnational studies. In her approach,

diasporic transnationalism refers to the ties of migrants and their collectives who entertain sustained social formations across borders while being settled in countries of immigration, thereby forming transnational fields or spaces. Transnationalism through mobility, by contrast, is characterised by circulation and thus perpendicular movement across borders.

Comparing Dahinden's and Bruneau's contributions shows how the transnationalist literature seeks to incorporate issues raised by diaspora approaches, such as incorporation or the lack thereof, but also tries to speak to concerns raised by time-space compressions, such as distinct forms of geographic mobility. Diaspora studies, moreover, have also moved beyond traditional concerns in looking at social forms such as 'mobile traders'. One of the interesting research questions emerging out of Bruneau's and Dahinden's analyses is to what extent diaspora and migrant transnationalism are characterised by a distinctive set of identities and practices vis-à-vis their country of settlement, and to what extent incorporation is required in order to engage in certain transnational practices, such as involvement in democratisation (Koinova in this volume) and nation-building (Waterbury in this volume).

Bruneau's and Dahinden's analyses are fine examples of how the formations of the terms 'diaspora' and 'transnational' can be used fruitfully to think about mobilities in the contemporary world. Nonetheless, it is also obvious that diaspora is an opalescent concept, especially given its ubiquitous politicisation. Yet, even if we reject 'diaspora' as an analytical term, it does not follow that we should give it up wholesale. At the very least, we need to look into the making and unmaking of diasporas. Waterbury's chapter in this book argues that while using the term 'diaspora' for defining a population beyond the border may be problematic, adopting the phrase 'diaspora politics' to describe state action and the contention around those policies may be useful. More generally, in the contemporary world, diasporas are constantly under production, thus creating 'new diasporas'. They may also undergo new phases of scattering or 'rediasporisation', as was the case with the Jewish and Greek diasporas. Van Hear (1998: 6) notes that if diasporic formation has accelerated in recent times so, too, has the 'unmaking of diasporas, seen in the regrouping or ingathering of migrant communities'. Examples include the 'return' of ethnic Germans to unified Germany from the USSR, Poland and Romania after 1989, the large-scale influx of Russian Jews to Israel in the 1990s and the 'return' of the Pontic Greeks from various parts of the USSR in the same time period.

Here, the making of new diasporas and their efforts to be recognised as diasporas are at the centre. Two contributions look into the constitution of a diaspora's boundaries through the diasporas themselves and external agents, and into how those calling themselves diasporas

negotiate their ways. To this end, Weinar's contribution looks into the constitution of diaspora in policy discourses within international and supranational organisations, and Paerregaard follows with an analysis of how political elites negotiate and constitute what one may call 'diasporaness'.

Weinar is mainly concerned with understanding how diaspora is construed as a migration policy agent. Looking at the EU and the debate on a European comprehensive immigration policy, Weinar finds that the term 'diaspora' figures prominently in officially issued EU documents and that the concept has evolved along with efforts at migration control. In EU documents, diasporas are portrayed as networks of migrants with various legal links to the home country. By contrast, the language of UN documents revolves around 'transnational communities' as main actors in development policy. Yet, oddly enough, when referring to transnational communities, UN documents speak of individuals (as an unconnected bunch), not of collectives. In the EU, diasporas, as proverbial 'seeds in the wind', are thought to contribute to development in the countries of origin, without being burdened by the experience of traumatic dispersal. Attributing 'groupness' (Brubaker 2004) to diasporas enables them to form a body eligible for projects. In all the policy documents analysed by Weinar, diasporas and migrant communities are discussed as emerging agents of development in their own right – pointing to the increased significance of migrant categories and collectives for cross-border policymaking. In sum, the analysis suggests that policy debates often conflate terms such as 'diaspora' and 'transnational community'.

### 1.3.3 *Diaspora and transnationalism as socio-cultural conditions*

A social constructivist perspective implies a shift from focusing on transnational communities to transnational practices in order to avoid essentialised conceptions of migrant groups as being, for example, inherently national or transnational. In his interrogation of diaspora, Paerregaard focuses on the political constitution of diaspora using the case of Peruvian migration and efforts to establish diasporas in the United States, Argentina and Spain. His is an inquiry into the question of how diasporic political mobilisation and solidarity are created and maintained and thus how the boundaries of diaspora are constructed or constituted. Paerregaard integrates elements of older, more traditional definitions emphasising communal autonomy and a distinctive collective identity with more recent research on transnational ties, which highlights sustained cross-border mobility and continuous exchange of ideas and goods as a defining criterion (see also Bruneau). Both aspects are summed up succinctly in Clifford's (1994a) metaphor of 'roots and

routes'. Using Clifford's metaphor, Paerregaard takes care to look at both bilateral ties between emigration and immigration states and lateral ties between groups in immigration countries. Within this conceptual apparatus, he focuses on the 'negotiation of diaspora' in the three fields – politics, solidarity and social class. He identifies members and groups of the Peruvian upper classes as the main movers and mobilisers of the Peruvian diaspora. This finding opens up diaspora studies for interesting comparisons with the role of key groups in nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism when intellectuals prepared the way for the legitimisation of nationalist ideologies (e.g. Greenfield 1992). The implication is that we should avoid peremptorily attributing a single shared or dominant identity to all members of a group. In political practices, identities must be constructed discursively and mobilised by elites to become salient for larger groups of persons.

### *1.3.4 Diaspora and transnationalism: Differences and similarities*

The contributions to this volume and the literature overall reveal similarities as well as differences between the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. A crucial similarity is that both are extremely elastic terms and, in one way or another, usually concern sustained cross-border ties including regions of origin, destination and lateral ties to other regions in which migrants reside. Both diaspora and transnationalism deal with homeland ties and the incorporation of persons living 'abroad' into the regions of destination. Diaspora approaches usually focus on the relationship between homelands ('referent-origin') and dispersed people (Dufoix 2008), but also on destination countries. For example, according to Safran, diasporas exist in a triangular socio-cultural relationship with the host society and the homeland (1991: 372). In postmodern approaches, it is above all the ties among dispersed people with each other that have significance. Empirical research in a transnational vein places somewhat more emphasis than does the diaspora literature on issues of incorporation and integration in immigration countries (e.g. Morawska 2003b on assimilation and transnationalism). The diaspora literature usually emphasises the cultural distinctiveness of diaspora groups, while parts of the transnational literature have started to look more extensively into migrant incorporation and transnational practices. This is perhaps related to the fact that most scholars following a transnational approach are situated in immigration countries and frequently also take their cues from public policy debates characterised by keywords such as 'integration' and 'social cohesion'. Overall, the link between integration and cross-border engagement has been pried open by transnational studies. Similarly, diaspora studies have posed questions about the link between the cultural autonomy of minority groups and integration. The

jury is still out on what the operative social mechanisms are. Both set of approaches need to take seriously 'community without propinquity', that is, the genesis of sociality not tied to geographical but mainly rooted in social proximity (see Faist 2009b).

There are also three noteworthy distinctions that merit mention although, as will become apparent, they differ in emphasis, not in theory.

First, 'transnationalism' is a broader term than 'diaspora' in two respects. One concerns the scope of groups. Diaspora relates most often to religious, ethnic and national groups and communities, whereas transnational approaches connect to all sorts of social formations, including the ones already mentioned, as well as to phenomena such as networks of businesspersons and social movements. The other respect concerns the even narrower term 'transnational community'. Postmodern conceptualisations aside, 'diaspora' most often relates to a form of transnational organisation spanning a specific country of origin and a set of host countries. In contrast, 'transnational community' encompasses a broader range of phenomena, such as cross-border village communities or borderland communities. Thus, transnational communities encompass diasporas, but not all transnational communities are diasporas.

The second dimension concerns identity and mobility. Diaspora approaches focus on aspects of collective identity, while transnational approaches take their cue from cross-border mobility. Although both diaspora and transnational approaches use both concepts, there are sometimes differences in emphasis. This difference is clearly borne out by the contributions by Bruneau and Dahinden in this volume. While the former starts from questions of identity and later brings in mobility, the latter contrasts diasporic and circular transnationalism. In general, concepts of diaspora deal with dispersal, whether traumatic or not, and the resulting emergence and reproduction of some sort of collective identity, with varying intensities of ties to the country of emigration and the countries of immigration. In those cases when dispersal occurred not because of persons who migrated but because of borders migrating over people (as in many parts of Eastern Europe), the focus of the term is on common identity despite dispersal (see Waterbury in this volume). Sometimes the 'construction of shared imagination' (Kissau & Hunger in this volume) is intricately connected to nation-building projects of so-called 'stateless diasporas'. Issues of collective identity do also matter from a transnational perspective; for example, many analyses of cultural aspects of transnationalism build upon notions of *mélange*, hybridity or cultural 'translations' in which mobile persons are engaged. From a transnational perspective, however, these identity changes are regarded as being derived from cross-border mobility of persons, which is in

itself always embedded in other flows of ideas and goods. The transnationalist concern with mobility is also reflected in the concept of network – though often more strictly applied metaphorically rather than methodologically. In this way, the transnationalism literature links up with the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ that posits geographical mobility as a ubiquitous phenomenon of general societal importance (Sheller & Urry 2006).

A third difference in emphasis between the use of the diaspora and transnationalism approaches concerns the time dimension. Scholars using the term ‘diaspora’ often refer to a multi-generational pattern, while transnational analysts deal with recent migrant flows. Diasporas have often been defined as formations reaching across generations, if not a generational *longue durée*. The prototypical examples of the Jewish and Armenian diasporas, and even newer examples such as the Palestinian one, speak to this proposition. As King and Christou argue in this volume, the long time horizon distinguishes diaspora from transmigration but also from transnational communities. Indeed, transnational approaches have dealt only very sparsely with aspects of historical continuity since most of the empirical research has focused on more recent migration flows (for an exception see Foner 2001) and on one generation only. As to the generational issue, there are a few counterexamples, such as explorations of ‘second-generation transnationalism’ (e.g. Levitt & Waters 2006).

#### **1.4 Part 2 – Theories: Explaining the emergence and reproduction of transnational formations and diasporas**

Where the literature on diasporas and transnational social formations has dealt with the politics, economics and culture of cross-border life, it has tended to either reflect national container framings, on one extreme, or rely on theories altogether occluding the role of national states, on the other extreme. And while early transnational writings have largely neglected the role of national states, later studies have acknowledged their crucial role in regulating not only international migration, but also flows within transnational social formations (Kivisto & Faist 2010: ch. 5). Analysis along diasporic and transnational perspectives has become more sophisticated so as to navigate a course through the manifold collective actors involved in transnational formations. Both diaspora and transnational perspectives acknowledge that social processes are spread among multiple localities across the borders of national states. And while the agendas and goals of the agents involved – be they international organisations, non-governmental organisations or national governments – are still often defined in national terms, the

modes of organisation and activism defy rigid concepts of state containers. The world polity or world society approach has served as a useful lens. Examples include the spread of transnational linkages of organisations (Boli & Thomas 1997) and the importance of meta-values such as democratisation in legitimating cross-border engagements.

While the world polity approach looks at the national state as one element in the diffusion of Western-style norms, other approaches either discuss diaspora exclusively as a nation-state phenomenon or dichotomise the nation-state and diaspora. Many studies with a diaspora or transnational approach are clearly using a national lens. The focus then is on diaspora and immigrant communities that lobby host states to adopt particular stances and policies towards political conflicts in the homeland. This approach centres on the role of national states as intermediary agents between diaspora or transnational communities, on the one hand, and the various political groups in the 'home country', on the other (Shain 2007). By contrast, postmodern approaches that conceive of diaspora as 'ethnoscapes' (Appadurai 1996) often verge on an oppositional juxtaposition between national states and more post-national projects. Leaving aside these simplistic notions, one may usefully start with the observation that diasporas and transnational societal structures can be cast as formations *sui generis*. These formations cannot be thought of as independent from states and non-state actors. To the contrary, they are constituted by these agents. This move opens up venues for analysing different realms, such as the political one, and questions relating to the architecture of transnational political engagement (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c), as well as an often neglected question about the relationship between political institutions and migrant transnational practices in crucial fields such as citizenship (Bauböck 2003).

The contributions in this book that provide theoretically guided description and explanation are grounded in a variety of social science disciplines: Glick Schiller in social anthropology, Waterbury in political science/comparative politics, Koinova in political science/international relations, King and Christou in cultural anthropology and Boccagni in sociology. Moreover, the contributions deal with social structures (Glick Schiller), large actors such as states and diaspora organisations (Waterbury and Koinova) and small groups (King & Christou and Boccagni).

Glick Schiller's contribution starts with the observation that the field of migration studies is often unconnected to broader developments in social theory, most notably reflections on the boundaries of social formations. She illustrates this curious disconnect with the empirical puzzle that transnational migrants are depicted both as criminals and as saviours in the form of agents who develop their regions of origin. She starts by taking a critical stance with respect to methodological



nationalism, which posits national borders as borders of society, a presumption that is reflected in the tendency of migration scholars to conflate a nation-state with a concept of society. Methodological nationalism is thus connected to essentialising migrants as the 'other', being perceived as not fitting in and threatening social solidarity. The trend towards essentialisation, according to Glick Schiller, is visible in much of the research on 'transnational community', which has reified national state borders by focusing on national or ethnic categories. Glick Schiller offers an alternative to methodological nationalism, something she calls 'global power perspective'. She claims that this perspective helps elucidate the mutual constitution of the local, national and global, and to analyse both the efforts of agents to implement more circulatory migration regimes and the role migrants play as challengers or re-enforcers of neo-liberal restructuring. An interesting question compelling further research then is how migrants themselves – beyond the interests of states of immigration and emigration and powerful lobby groups – negotiate their ways within and across the boundaries of nation-states and groups.

The studies by Waterbury and Koinova that follow are examples of politics under conditions of the increasingly blurring distinction between internal and external affairs of states. In general, the literature on diaspora and transnationalist practices almost exclusively defines a diaspora by its migrant origins or the far-reaching dispersal of an ethnic community to multiple points, reflecting classic cases of diaspora such as the Jewish or Armenian ones. This type of definition tends to exclude cases of trans-border ethnic groups created from the shifting of borders or the dissolution of states and empires. A case in point is ethnic Hungarians in East Central Europe. Waterbury considers the relations of states to populations abroad regarding both migrants and kin (ethnic, national) minorities. This broader comparative framework is geared to overcome the prevalent analytical separation between studies of 'kin state' and 'migrant-sending state' politics and policies towards external national populations. Waterbury argues how, specifically, the kin state literature can help those focused on emigration policies analyse the 'dark side' of trans-state activity, such as the instrumental use of ties to those abroad to justify irredentist ambitions and exclusionary, nationalist politics. Conversely, an engagement with migrant-sending cases helps kin state analysts find a framework for understanding action on behalf of co-ethnics that goes beyond irredentism and assumptions of ethnic affiliation as deterministic and conflict-producing factors, and may even consider multicultural rights as an alternative to secession. In particular, Waterbury strives to understand the conditions under which states engage populations abroad and the impact on national institutions such as citizenship. She finds that while diasporic states utilise the rhetoric of

engaging the 'global nation', their policies are often targeted to specific populations abroad, depending on what these populations can offer the homeland state. This finding confirms the utility of the third way offered by diaspora studies in between national and globalist approaches. Waterbury's analysis offers a fruitful venue for further questions about, above all, which particular policies are chosen in what circumstances.

While Waterbury focuses on the state side, be it emigration or kin state, and on the conditions under which diaspora politics emerges, Koinova focuses on the diaspora side and its impacts on domestic politics and democratisation, in particular. She inquires about diasporas as being 'agents of democratisation'. This is not to disregard the observation that, in some contexts, we find that it is the diaspora that decides to 'go political' and seek some intervention in homeland politics, whereas, in other situations, the homeland state reaches out to pull distant constituents into its political affairs and agendas. Her main question is why some diasporas engage in pro-democratisation behaviour related to their homelands – some embracing merely a thin procedural conception of democracy, others more substantive liberal features – against the backdrop of existing nationalist practices. From an international relations perspective, she aims towards a comparative explanatory framework for under-researched cases linked to the post-communist world in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, namely the Ukrainian, Serbian, Albanian and Armenian diasporas. Koinova argues that the political power of diasporas lies in challenging the sovereignty of their homelands. Overall, she finds that the diasporas analysed did not act in exclusively nationalist ways, for they were also involved with efforts on behalf of democratisation. In particular, if diasporas are linked to (newly established) states that enjoy both international legal and domestic sovereignty, they have a chance to focus on substantive elements of democracy, such as the liberal values of substantive political equality. If they are not, they will be prone to engage with only the procedural aspects of democracy, such as institutionalising voting rights. In this latter case, procedural aspects go in tandem with a focus on nationalist projects. Koinova adds a caveat: although diasporas are not the most likely agents of democratisation in the post-communist world, they do contribute. Her findings also indicate that beyond a close analysis of home or kin state and diasporas, we need to pay attention to international politics. Like Waterbury, she also contributes to the methodology of diaspora and transnational approaches. In a field dominated by single-case studies or sweeping guesswork, comparative studies can be helpful as a first step towards more systematic theorising.

The contributions by Waterbury and Koinova mean that the rise of transnational practices has implications for nation-building and democratisation and, though yet to be explored, for the international system

of states. Migrant or diaspora organisations certainly are influenced by global meta-norms and yet remain embedded in local discourses. All of this also raises the question of how consequential diaspora politics and extraterritorial voting and the extension of citizenship rights across borders of national states actually are, and in what way they may contribute to the ongoing transformation of national citizenship (see Fitzgerald 2006a).

The next two contributions, by King and Christou on second-generation return and by Boccagni on the distinction between private and public transnationalism, take the meso- and micro-levels of the 'private' as a point of departure. King and Christou's chapter explores the notion of return, even physical return, to a homeland whose returnees were not born there. Again, as in the conceptual discussions on the difference and similarity between diaspora and transnational approaches, this issue brings together aspects of both identity and mobility as well as their combinations under conditions of 'time-space compression'. King and Christou start by contrasting short-term mobility, which separates work and family life and which does not question identity, with the seemingly opposite case of second-generation returnees. They characterise the latter case as an instance of 'counter-diasporic migration'. Questions of 'home', 'place', 'belonging' and 'identity' generate perspectives on how they are constituted. One remarkable question they raise is whether the cases they study – Japanese Brazilians, British-born Caribbeans and Greek-Americans – constitute mainly an issue of hypermobility or the very essence of diaspora, thus fulfilling a prominent criterion often mentioned by diaspora theorists, namely eventual return to the ancestral homeland. King and Christou refuse to choose between these two options, arguing that their cases are neither instances of global mobility nor the simple fulfilment of parental wishes but 'rather ... an act of resistance against hypermobility and dislocation'. In a way, it is mobility not as shuttling back and forth but as exploiting knowledge and ties in order to settle or resettle for a meaningful period in life. The second generation can be seen to have accrued a better preparation for moving to the 'homeland'. First, most of the persons involved have high educational credentials, including many with university degrees. Second, they are bilingual – their knowledge of the language of the ancestral country having been nurtured within the close-knit family circle and at special after-school classes. King and Christou see identity in migration as relational, processual and situational. Their study opens up intriguing questions about how generational, gender and class differences figure into these and other types of 'return'. Seen in this way, this research line is a potential future contribution to the literature on the intersection of categories such as class, race, gender and other forms of heterogeneity (see Collins & Andersen 2007).

Boccagni's chapter can be read as a supplement to analyses of transnationalism and diasporic activities focusing on formal organisations, which partake in the public spheres of the immigration and/or emigration states. Boccagni consciously focuses on family, kinship and friendship ties among Ecuadorian migrants in Italy. They are mostly recent migrants and are thus expected to have stronger active transnational ties centring on families. This ethnographic study reflects on 'private transnationalism', in this case the ongoing kinship-based relationships reaching into the migrants' country of origin. In the public sphere, in contrast, the immigrants' life is increasingly rooted in the local Italian receiving contexts. What we encounter in the case of recent Ecuadorian migrants in Italy is, according to Boccagni, an instance of private transnationalism and public localism. The two forms of transnational social ties – private or public – are distinct in terms of their extent, sustainability and impact. Of broader interest here is less the fact that one does not find public transnationalism in this case: after all, one could argue that the case selection committed sampling on the dependent variable. Instead, the case study alerts us to avoid a frequent conceptual conflation in studying private and public aspects in transnational formations.

In sum, these contributions offer a rich variety of different approaches. A systems-oriented approach to the political economy of capitalist relations can be found in Glick Schiller's analysis. Institutional and variable-oriented small-N studies are characteristics of the chapters by Waterbury and Koinova. While all these studies are macro-oriented, the contributions by King and Christou and Boccagni not only focus on the meso-level of family groups and the micro-levels of persons, but also engage in a processual approach. King and Christou, for example, analyse the social constitution of identity in mobility processes. For future research, it may seem worthwhile to attempt analyses that pay attention to both the socio-cultural constitution of schemas and routines, on the one hand, and the use of resources, material or otherwise, by the individual and collective actors involved, on the other. In this way, diaspora and transnationalism studies could profit from more general approaches in the social sciences that call for a link between agency and structure (e.g. structuration theory in Giddens 1984).

### **1.5 Part 3 – Methodology and methods: How to study transnational phenomena**

The key question raised in the methodological part of this volume is how transnational perspectives can overcome methodological nationalism in the social sciences. Methodological nationalism in the social sciences marks the tendency to treat the container of the nation-state as

a quasi-natural social and political configuration (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2003 based on Martins 1974). Going beyond container studies may be easier in some disciplines – for example, social and cultural anthropology – than in others – for example, comparative political science where the sovereign national state is defined as the basic unit of analysis. Within transnational studies, an alternative methodological trap of ‘groupism’ (Brubaker & Cooper 2001) may arise. This charge refers to studies that treat diasporic and transnational communities as units that are stable over time, and are held to be of overriding importance for the individual identities and social practices of their members. How do we take into account the fluidity and malleability of transnational structures, relations and identities in empirical research and in the theories that guide such research? Can we study transnational phenomena while avoiding the traps of both methodological nationalism and groupism? The contributions introduced so far have self-consciously started to address these challenges: as seen, for example, in King and Christou’s discussion of the relationship between global mobility and non-essentialised identity, Boccagni’s analysis of the difference between private and public transnationalism and Glick Schiller’s analysis of methodological nationalism.

The contributors to the section on methodology are again rooted in various disciplinary traditions: Glick Schiller in social anthropology, Mazzucato in social geography, Jonkers in biotechnology and political science, Kissau and Hunger in communication studies and political science, respectively, and Morales and Jorba in political science and sociology. The chapters connect methodological considerations to specific methods addressing as well as using systematic multi-sitedness, the use of network methodology, the value of internet research (as a potential complement to fieldwork) and quantitative surveys as a means to gauge the relation between local and transnational political engagement of migrant associations. The contributions come from very different disciplinary traditions – multi-sitedness from geography and anthropology, network analysis from sociology, internet research from communication studies and survey research from, among others, political science and sociology. While the methodological approaches and methods presented do not constitute an exclusive domain of any single social science discipline, there are certain proclivities to be observed. Generally, a central question raised concerns the potentials of indicators, quantitative and qualitative, for measuring and evaluating migrant transnational and diasporic activities.

Multi-sited research has been somewhat hampered by the fact that individual researchers usually cannot capture the simultaneity of transactions. To overcome this obstacle, Mazzucato suggests a simultaneous matched-sample methodology (SMS), used in a study of two-way flows

between Amsterdam and various sites in Ghana. In essence, this methodological tool covers transnational flows across localities. Mazzucato insists that studies need not measure financial remittances in only one direction – sent by migrants to people back home – and the kind of developments following out of this flow. She highlights flows engendered by migration as being two-way: they also involve flows, especially of services, from so-called developing countries to developed countries. Resources from sending regions are instrumental in setting up migrants abroad, for example, by obtaining a legal status. Mazzucato's contribution constitutes an insightful application to the micro- and meso-levels of what world systems theory described on a macro-level: asymmetric two-way flows between different regions of the world (see Wallerstein 1983).

The idea of two-way flows, albeit asymmetric regarding the types of resources exchanged and power applied, is also helpful in understanding networks among scientists. In his analysis of ego-centred networks among individual overseas Chinese scientists, Jonkers considers ties between ethnic Chinese scientists working outside China and their partners in mainland China. This is a reference category different from associations of scientists, such as 'scientific diasporas' (Meyer 2001). Jonkers raises the question of whether and, if so, to what extent the motivations for the formation of such ties, the barriers and stimuli affecting their formation and intensity, as well as the distribution of the material and cognitive resources, are grounded in specific forms of reciprocity. In order to shed light on this question, he uses a network approach that is built on selecting the scientists involved by their surnames. While this method may be peculiar to his case and would not work to uncover similar phenomena such as European scientists in the US, he can show that there is clear evidence for a specific phenomenon he calls 'transnational research collaboration'. As in many fields of transnational studies, including diaspora studies, the next step would be to unearth not only the existence of such cross-border networks, the kinds of resources exchanged and the direction of flows, but also the social mechanisms operative in the functioning of scientists' networks (Faist 2009c).

Following the lines of network analysis, Kissau and Hunger address the question of how the internet can be used to study developments in migrants' networks and thus differentiate between transnational online communities, virtual diasporas and ethnic online public spheres. They define transnational communities as being characterised by particular sets of reciprocal ties. For diaspora groups, the internet is a significant instrument, if not *the* central instrument, used in what the authors call the 'construction of shared imagination'. The constitution of shared imagination is also crucial to sustaining ethnic communities.

Kissau and Hunger categorise the cases analysed according to three distinct types: Russian migrants as transnational online communities, Kurds as virtual diasporas and Turks as ethnic online public spheres. The clearest case seems to be Kurdish websites that espouse – much more than Russian and Turkish websites – images of a common and yet-to-be-realised state-based homeland, origin, tradition and history. These images portray messages to define Kurdishness in contrast to other migrant groups in Germany, most prominently Turks. The lateral links of this virtual diaspora are evidenced by the fact that many web-pages are multilingual, being in French, German, Kurdish, Turkish and English. By contrast, the Turkish online spaces constitute a ‘national public sphere with an ethnic imprint’. It is not Turkey that most comments are focused on, but Germany. However, Turkish migrants using these websites prefer to discuss political topics within their differentiated sphere. Such a sphere is not to be mistaken for an ethnic enclave that severs all connections with the general public sphere. The focus of Russian websites can be characterised as somewhere in between: the contributors are politically involved online both in immigration and emigration regions. Connecting their findings to issues of migrant collective social integration, Kissau and Hunger argue that ethnic, diasporic or transnational internet spaces cannot serve as a substitute for full inclusion into national public spheres. A future research question to be tackled then is the potential linkages between these three types of spheres and national spheres, also perhaps including transnational spheres in the EU (Eder & Trenz 2004). Here, their methodological caveat needs to be taken seriously: Kissau and Hunger add that online analysis does not replace fieldwork. After all, online and offline worlds interact, not being independent of one another.

The study by Kissau and Hunger raises the crucial question of how to conceptualise what is called the integration or incorporation of migrants and minorities into social and political structures. Clearly, the notion of diaspora as an intergenerational social formation implies that assimilation in a national state would be the end of cultural distinctiveness. Transnational approaches, by contrast, do not call for such clear-cut distinctions. This can also be seen in the case study on transnational ties of migrant organisations. Morales and Jorba deal with the relationship between transnational ties and the political incorporation of migrant organisations and groups, seeking to apply quantitative indicators. In broader terms, theirs is a contribution to a methodologically sophisticated understanding of ‘organisational transnationalism’. Several scholars in the past have argued that migrants’ organisations are crucial in fostering migrants’ political incorporation into the host society (Rex, Joly & Wilpert 1987). Yet, few studies have systematically analysed the role of migrants’ organisations in promoting that dual process of

sustaining political action 'here and there' as a simultaneous venture – simultaneity being one of the main characteristics of transnational approaches. According to Morales and Jorba, shortcomings in the existing literature are due to the methodological approach, which usually tends to either concentrate on the associations exclusively engaged in transnational activities ('sampling on the dependent variable'), or study a limited number of organisations with ethnographic methods that do not lend themselves to generalisable conclusions (see Portes 2003). Representativeness is the goal of this study. The empirical questions posed concern the number of organisations engaged in transnational fields, the prevailing practices and the impact of the settlement context on migrants' transnationality. The findings from a study of migrant associations in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia suggest that transnational engagement is by no means universal among migrant organisations in Spanish cities. Yet, a majority of them is engaged in some form of transnational links. The authors touch upon the important linkage of transnational ties to immigrant incorporation: transnational activities do seem to foster overall political incorporation into the Spanish body politic, and this is especially the case for the more politically oriented form of transnational links – that is, engagement in the homeland electoral arena. A question for future research then is to define the conditions and mechanisms under which this occurs. Again, as in Kissau and Hunger's study, the relationship between transnational ties and integration into national structures comes to the fore. The two orientations – integration into immigration states and engagement in emigration regions – are not found to constitute a zero-sum game but could even mutually reinforce each other.

Overall, the methodological part of this book opens at least three windows for further explorations. First, all chapters speak indirectly to the different theoretical conceptions of the relationship between territorial and social space and the methodological implications of these conceptions. From the work presented here, it is clearly evident that the respective societal spaces cannot be regarded as equivalent to territorial spaces. Examples are plentiful, ranging from virtual diasporas over scientific networks to transnationally active migrant organisations. The next question to be addressed then is: how do territorial and social spaces connect with each other? Future work could profit by distinguishing the transnational answer from other approaches, such as the cosmopolitan one. In general, the transnational approach emphasises a constructivist view on territorial space. In this regard, transnational social formations – i.e. transnational networks, kinship groups, migrant organisations and diasporas – cross and overlap territories of national states without necessarily achieving a global reach. By contrast, the cosmopolitan approach (Beck 2006) a priori presupposes the existence of a



global societal space and thus a global horizon of observation by agents and researchers, described as a 'global cosmopolitan condition', which is primarily organised in national states and constantly criss-crossed by transnational networks. Thus, a crucial difference between transnational and cosmopolitan methodologies is a global horizon of observation and the relevance thereof for cross-border exchange. Nonetheless, despite this crucial difference regarding a cosmopolitan outlook, there are also important similarities. The methodological consequence of both the transnational and the cosmopolitan approach is a distinction between multi-level modes of observation – transnational or global, national and local – and actors' strategies that are calibrated along multiple scales.

Second, the methodology of cross-border analysis, whether steeped in transnational studies or diaspora studies, needs to be distinguishable from comparative research that focuses on entities such as national states as exclusive and bounded units of analysis. One of the currently most prominent answers is 'multi-sited ethnography', that is, carrying out research in the sites of agents' practices in various countries (Marcus 1995). It has been touted as a panacea. As Mazzucato (in this volume) suggests, the challenges of capturing simultaneity through other multi-sited research methods are tremendous but manageable. The chapters presented here also offer additional methods appropriate to transnationally informed methodology, such as online analysis or an application of representative survey research. It stands to reason that more work is needed to systematically develop various forms of multi-sited research.

Third, diaspora and transnationalism studies can learn a lot from each other regarding historical contextualisation and the effects of transnational ties and processes. As to historical contexts, diaspora studies are much more oriented towards the long term than are transnationalist analyses (e.g. Dufoix 2008). Diaspora studies may therefore offer cues to transnational studies. Diaspora studies easily connect to the historiography of nations (via stateless and state-sponsored diasporas) to borderlands and even to intercivilisational studies (on the latter see Eisenstadt 2006). These transnational effects are not only conditioned by conflicts between nation-states and economic and political cooperation between states or organisations, but also by waves of international migration (see Chakrabarty 2000). Looking to the other direction, transnational studies may inform diaspora studies by pointing to research methods beyond historical narrations. Taken together, the methodological reflexivity inherent in both diaspora and transnational studies could be useful for the wide-ranging literature on 'globalisation'. Posing methodological questions guided by historical sociological insights may contribute to overcoming a generalising momentum within theoretical and methodological discourses on globalisation and open ways for processual approaches that pay attention to both agency and structure.

## 1.6 Conclusions: Diaspora and transnationalism as dance partners

One may debate endlessly about the exact status of diaspora and transnationalism as so-called dance partners. In a very fundamental way, are they useful paradigms or optics, or primarily politicised terms that describe claims? They are certainly part of a growing array of concepts that strive to deal with time-space compression across the borders of states. The meanings of diaspora and transnationalism overlap (e.g. 'second-generation return'), espouse similarities (e.g. 'diasporic transnationalism') or sometimes even refer to divergent perspectives (e.g. diaspora as simply one form of transnational social formation). While the usages of the terms often overlap, diasporic phenomena can be conceived as a subset of transnational social formations that have broader scope. In a crucial similarity, uses of the two supple terms in the social sciences have in common an agency-oriented, processual view of cross-border social phenomena. The challenge that all the contributions to this volume take up is to account for the impact of states, migrant organisations and other organisations and small groups such as kinship groups, on societal processes, institutions and structures of migrant incorporation in immigration as well as emigration contexts.

As such, diaspora and transnationalism are clearly distinct from the broad category of globalisation studies. Diaspora and transnationalism pay more attention to agency and processes within global structures and thus are less prone to sweeping generalisations. It is also essential to study the boundaries of groups, communities and organisations that are labelled by members or external observers by attributing transnational or diasporic characteristics to them. Diaspora and transnationalism are also lenses not antithetical to, yet also different from, 'methodological cosmopolitanism' in that they do not presume the 'global' as a horizon of perception, interpretation, analysis or moral evaluation. Nevertheless, transnationalism in the field of migration, in particular, may link up to broader concerns of transnational studies, such as transnational organisations (e.g. multinational companies), transnational protest movements, transnational expert circuits and global macro-fields of economy, politics and wealth. In this way, diaspora and transnationalism are crucial elements for questioning and redefining essential terms of the social sciences, for example, 'community', 'social space' and 'boundaries'.

Yet, what constitutes one of the great strengths of diaspora studies and migrant transnationalism, namely its reflexivity of agency and processes, also needs to be brought to bear upon the understanding of broader issues of social change and transformation. Take the changing landscape of organisational and institutional structures guiding societal

change. A transnational or diaspora perspective should be able to deal with both new social formations *sui generis*, such as transnational social spaces, and how 'old' national, international and local institutions such as citizenship or local policies acquire 'new' meanings and functions in the process of cross-border transactions. Moreover, such an approach should be able to address the life-world implications of emerging supranational structures such as the EU. By now, there is voluminous literature dealing with the emergence and forms of transnational activities of migrants and their consequences for the social integration of immigrants. If cross-border social formations are consequential for social processes, we also need to examine indications about changing institutions in the national, international and local realms of transnational spaces.

Finally, we need to go beyond purely variable-oriented analysis and probe into the social mechanisms operative in transnational social formations, such as social closure, exploitation or opportunity hoarding (see Tilly 2004). From this perspective, it is essential to look not only at transnational ties and formations across the borders of national states – with various types, such as diffusion, families, associations, (issue) networks, organisations and communities, such as diasporas – but also the repercussions for national and local institutions. While transnational or diasporic ties and structures may not be the sole or most important causes of transformation, they constitute strategic research sites. For example, while the toleration of dual citizenship in both emigration and immigration states is ascendant, its spread is not primarily attributable to collective action by emigrants and immigrants (Faist & Kivisto 2008). Nonetheless, it has repercussions for the continuous flows of resources across borders, e.g. financial investments and knowledge transfer. The contributions to this volume are a small but decisive step in the direction of setting an agenda that strives for a processual and mechanistic understanding of transnationalisation.

## Note

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## Chapter 2

# Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities

*Michel Bruneau*

The term 'diaspora', long used only to describe the dispersion of Jewish people throughout the world, has in the last 30 years elicited unprecedented interest, attracting the attention not only of the academic world but also of the media. In everyday language, the term is now applied to all forms of migration and dispersion of a people, even where no migration is involved; this corresponds not only to the development and generalisation of international migrations throughout the world, but also to a weakening, or at least a limitation, of the role played by nation-states at a time when globalisation has become a dominant process. I have chosen here to address the concept of diaspora from a geographical standpoint, taking into account its materiality in terms of space, place and territory.

In this chapter I shall try first to differentiate the concept of diaspora from that of others such as migration, minority, transnational community and territory of movement, and then complement the resulting definition with a typology of diasporas. My hypothesis is that the related concepts of diaspora and transnational community could be applied to different types of trans-border or transnational societies and thus help improve our understanding of the different spatial and temporal processes involved.

### 2.1 The concept of diaspora

A community diaspora first comes into being and then lives on owing to whatsoever in a given place forges a bond between those who want to group together and maintain, from afar, relations with other groups which, although settled elsewhere, invoke a common identity. This bond can come in different forms, such as family, community, religious, socio-political and economic ties or the shared memory of a catastrophe or trauma suffered by the members of the diaspora or their forebears. A diaspora has a symbolic and 'iconographic' capital that enables it to reproduce and overcome the – often considerable – obstacle

of distance separating its communities (Bruneau 2004: 7-43). Members of a diaspora coalesce in their present place of settlement the whole set of micro-places (e.g. city neighbourhoods or villages) occupied or crossed by those whom they recognise as their own. Each of these places acts as a centre in a territory where social proximities suppress spatial and temporal distances (Prévélakis 1996). All diasporas are socio-spatial networks necessarily undergoing territorial expansion because they aggregate both places of memory and places of presence (Offner & Pumain 1996: 163).

Diaspora areas and territories must be assessed in steps: first in the host country, where the community bond plays the essential role; then in the country or territory of origin – a pole of attraction – via memory; and, finally, through the system of relations within the networked space that connects these different poles. It should, however, be borne in mind that the term ‘diaspora’ often plays more of a metaphorical than an instrumental role. The different criteria suggested by most authors (Cohen 1997; Sheffer 2003) can be narrowed down to six essential ones focused around dispersion under pressure, choice of destination, identity awareness, networked space, duration of transnational ties and relative autonomy from host and origin societies as indicated below.

- 1) The population considered has been dispersed under pressure (e.g. disaster, catastrophe, famine, abject poverty) to several places and territories beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the territory of origin.
- 2) ‘The choice of countries and cities of destination is carried out in accordance with the structure of migratory chains which, beyond the oceans, link migrants with those already installed in the host countries, the latter thought of as conveyors towards the host society and the labour market, and guardians of the ethnic or national culture’ (Dufoix 2000: 325). Such a choice may, however, also be determined by the conditions of traumatic dispersal, in which case, even though there may be far less choice, previous migratory routes can be used.
- 3) The population, integrated without being assimilated into the host countries, retains a rather strong identity awareness – which is linked to the memory of its territory and the society of origin – with its history. This implies the existence of a strong sense of community and community life. As in the case of a nation, it is an ‘imagined community’, relying on a collective narrative that links it to a territory and to a memory

(Anderson 1983). Intergenerational transmission of identities is also at work.

- 4) These dispersed groups of migrants (or groups stemming from migration) preserve and develop among themselves and with the society of origin, if one still exists, multiple exchange relations (people, goods of various natures, information, etc.) organised through networks. In this networked space, which connects essentially non-hierarchical poles – even if some are more important than others – relations among groups dispersed over several destinations tend to be horizontal rather than vertical.
- 5) These diasporic migrants have an experience of dispersion including several generations after the first migration. They have transmitted their identity from one generation to the other in the *longue durée*.
- 6) A diaspora tends to be an autonomous social formation from the host and the origin societies thanks to its numerous cultural, political, religious, professional associations. Lobbying in favour of their origin society is not uncommon among diasporas, but neither is resistance against instrumentalisation by the homeland.

Against this concept of a ‘community’ diaspora (Jewish, Greek, Armenian or Chinese diasporas, for example), Chivallon (2004) posits a ‘hybrid’ diaspora, distinguished very clearly from any ‘centred model’. This ‘hybrid’ model has been defined by Anglo-American authors on the basis of the black diaspora of the Americas, using the approaches of post-modernist cultural studies. These authors, Hall and Gilroy especially, refer to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and to the image of the rhizome as opposed to that of the root – i.e. to a world of dissemination and hybridisation, as opposed to a world of filiation and heritage. There is no hard core of identity – nor continuity nor tradition – as in the community model, but a variety of formations. This hybrid diaspora rejects all reference to the nation and to nationalist ideologies. However, albeit for a relatively limited period of time (1919-1945), a minority of intellectuals gravitating around Garvey and Du Bois did promote a pan-African nationalist ideology.

For a diaspora to be able to live on by transmitting its identity from one generation to the next, it must as much as possible have places for periodic gatherings of a religious, cultural or political nature, in which it can concentrate on the main elements of its ‘iconography’. The

concept of iconography, introduced in the 1950s by Gottmann (1952: 219-221), shows the importance of visible and palpable symbols, such as the monasteries that the Greeks of Pontos (the Black Sea region in Turkey) reconstructed in Northern Greece. Such symbols contribute to consolidating social networks and to preserving them during the hard times of exile. The symbols that make up an iconography are akin to three main fields, religion, political past (memory) and social organisation: 'Religion, great historical recollections, the flag, social taboos, invested and well grounded/ anchored interests are all part of what is called iconography' (Gottmann 1952: 136). Those symbols are the object of a virtual faith that singularises a people as different from its neighbours, who are attached to other symbols. The rooting of national iconography in the minds of citizens is all the deeper as it is transmitted to children very early by the family and the school. It unquestionably constitutes the main factor of socio-political partitioning in space. It is also what allows a diaspora not to become diluted into the host society and to keep its distinct identity. This concept particularly applies to 'nations' or, more exactly, to nationalities within great multi-ethnic empires, such as the Ottoman or the Russian. Their territorial inscription is neither continuous nor homogeneous, unlike what is implied by the ideal territory of a contemporary European nation-state. The case appears very close to that of the diasporas, to which it can apply with equal relevance.

These 'places', where we can find the main components of the iconography, include sanctuaries (churches, synagogues, mosques), community premises (conference rooms, theatres, libraries, sports clubs) and monuments that perpetuate memory. They also include restaurants and grocery shops, newsagents and the media (newspapers, community magazines, local radio and television stations, websites). These various places may be concentrated in the same 'ethnic' neighbourhood, the same locality, or be dispersed throughout a city or some bigger territory.

Since 'iconography' – in the Gottmannian sense – is the material and symbolic condensation of the intricate web of linkages between the members of a community and their territory, a perfect reproduction of its elements (e.g. reconstructing the Pontic monasteries in mainland Greece) is simply not possible: territory cannot be moved from one location to another. The material aspects of social networks depending on locations, territories, landscapes or monuments that are usually associated with rootedness, immobility and autochthoneity have, in the course of time, become mobile. The fact that members of a diaspora create 'places of memory' in the host country gathering the icons make it possible.

By introducing the spatial and temporal dimensions of territoriality into the concept of diaspora, it can be shown how the reproduction of

memory goes hand in hand with the construction of monuments and other symbolic and sometimes also functional places that constitute the instruments for a re-rooting in the host country.

## 2.2 Four major types of diasporas

Different diasporas are distributed unequally throughout the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with a generally confirmed tendency for them to be found on one or several continents. In every diaspora, culture in the widest sense – folklore, cuisine, language, literature, cinema, music, the press as well as community life and family bonds – plays a fundamental role. Family bonds, in fact, constitute the very fabric of the diaspora, particularly in the case of diasporas stemming from Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, with their well-known extended family nature; similarly, the community link is always present in, and constitutive of, all types of diasporas. What distinguishes diasporas, however, is the unequal density of their organisational structure, and the greater or lesser influence exerted by, if it still exists, their nation of origin. Religion, enterprise, politics and a combination of race and culture are the four major domains in which these two discriminating features manifest themselves. The combination of these criteria allows a typology of diasporas to be sketched out here, as four types, and illustrated with a few examples.

- 1) A first set of diasporas is structured around an entrepreneurial pole; everything else is subordinated to it or plays only a secondary role: the Chinese, Indian and Lebanese diasporas are the best examples of this. Religion here does not play a structuring role, essentially because of its very diversity: Christians, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists. Nor does the nation-state of origin exercise any decisive influence, for a variety of reasons: there may be several such states instead of one homeland clearly defined (Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, South-East Asia for the Chinese); it may be deliberately disengaged and intervene only in case of extreme difficulties (India); it may be too weak and divided (Lebanon). Entrepreneurship constitutes the central element of the reproduction strategy of these diasporas, most of them emerging from a colonial context in which the ruler assigned their various commercial and enterprise activities (Indians and the Lebanese in Africa, the Chinese in South-East Asia).



- 2) Another set of diasporas is that in which religion, often associated with a particular language, is the main structuring element: this is the case of the Jewish, Greek, Armenian and Assyro-Chaldean diasporas. In these cases the religion is monotheistic, and the language of a holy script or a liturgy may itself be regarded as essential. Greek and Armenian are taught alongside religion in diaspora schools. Synagogue and church, each with their pronounced ethnic hue, are constitutive places for these diaspora communities. Where nation-states have been formed, they have exercised an increasingly stronger influence on these diasporas. Nevertheless, even where this influence is greatest, as is the case for the Greek diaspora whose cohesion is secured by the Orthodox Church, the diaspora has managed to preserve relative independence. When the Holy Synod of the Athens Church (1908-1922) tried to take over control of the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States, strong resistance led to restoring the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- 3) A third set of more recent diasporas is organised chiefly around a political pole. This is particularly so when the territory of origin is dominated by a foreign power, and the main aspiration of the diaspora population is the creation of a nation-state. An example of this is the Palestinian diaspora: having succeeded in setting up a real state-in-exile, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), whose objective of establishing a nation-state next to the state of Israel has already been partially achieved by the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which has been endowed with territories that it has administered since 1994. The Palestinian diaspora's collective memory is rooted in the historical events that mark the trauma of dispersal and occupation, especially the catastrophe (*nakba*) of 1948. This is 'the core event of their imagined community, the criterion of its alterity and the main founder of the diaspora' (Kodmani-Darwish 1997: 194).
- 4) A fourth set is organised round a racial and cultural pole. This is the case, for example, of the black diaspora, which has been shaped by several attempts at defining a shared identity. Centred on the 'negro race', what separates it from the other types is, first, the fact that this diaspora has no direct reference to definite societies or territories of origin. The black diaspora is defined first and foremost by socially constructed 'race', and only subsequently by culture. Whereas the

definition of race is, of course, contested and subject to various debates and interpretations, as is the very conception of African Americans as a diaspora, collective memories refer to the traumatic experiences under which this diaspora formed: the slave trade and the slave economy of the plantations. Few contemporary African Americans define their identity in relation to ancestral African homelands. We can also include the European Roma in this category, as they share many of the same characteristics. One commonality with the black diaspora is a decentred community structure, not unified by the transmission of a codified tradition or by political organisation, but characterised by the non-hierarchical proliferation of community segments, that is, small groups not organised as a structured society. The logic of cultural hybridisation, which implies borrowing from the host society, comes into full play in both cases amidst highly diverse host societies, even if Roma society is characterised by high degrees of endogamy and very low rates of mixed marriages. Racial discrimination and a strong tendency towards ghettoisation are also common features, as is the great difficulty of upward social mobility to escape poverty (Cortiade, Djuric & Williams 1993).

The concept of diaspora cannot be used to describe all types of scattered populations issued from a migration process: other types of social formations were to emerge in the post-colonial period and societies within migration fields. Concepts other than that of diaspora – like those of transnational communities and territories of movement – can be invoked; although they do share some characteristics with diasporas, they also have their own, specific features.

### **2.3 From migration field to transnational space: The Turkish example**

An international migration field results from the ‘structured coupling of the places produced by the flows between the different points of the migration system’ (Faret 2003: 283). Such a field comprises places of departure, route, settlement, re-settlement and even places of return. This concept applies particularly well to Turkish migration in Central and Western Europe.

In the second half of the twentieth century (1957-2000), more than three million Turks migrated to Western Europe, with two thirds going to Germany (De Tapia 1995: 187). This was essentially an international labour migration, often the subject of agreements between states.

Nevertheless, further analysis reveals this field to be relatively complex, because the subsequent migration of shopkeepers, carriers and various investors – not to mention social migrations such as family reunifications, second- and third-generation marriages as well as collective solidarities – all superimpose themselves on labour migrations. In a subsequent phase, political migrations by asylum seekers – for example, Kurds, Assyro-Chaldeans, Armenians and Alevis as well as refugees of leftist parties – have acquired ever increasing importance. There is, consequently, great diversity in the reasons for, and causes of, Turkish migration. The migration movement inside this field is intense, owing to the road, sea-going and air network forms of transport that Turks themselves use and run, largely based within their own travel agencies, transport companies and communication satellites.

In the case of Turks, the diaspora does not precede the emergence of the nation-state, but comes after it. Is it therefore a diaspora or, rather, a transnational migration field that favours the emergence of a transnational community? The Turkish nation-state is recent (1923); it has not completely succeeded in unifying the national identity of the different segments of society round a Sunni and Kemalist hard core. The high segmentation and internal disparities of Turkish society appear more in dispersion and migration than they do in the national territory where the minorities are not fully recognised and are hidden by an apparent national homogeneity. This society is a community composed of different socio-cultural milieux that, though they do interact, have also acquired their own organisational and social networks. The divisions are not only ethno-cultural, but also religious or ideological. The Kurds, whose migrations – owing to the repression directed against them since the 1980s – are increasingly political in the current period, find themselves increasingly distinguished from other Turks and it is they, more than other Turkish-speaking Muslims, who come under the heading of diaspora (Wahlbeck 2002).

It is therefore difficult to differentiate a diaspora from the economic and political migration of a people stemming from a socially segmented society and comprising notable differences of identity. The recent character of migration (since 1957) and the segmented type of society constitute obstacles to the recognition of a real diaspora. To take better account of these phenomena, researchers such as Vertovec (1999) and Kastoryano (2000) have suggested the concept of transnational community.

## 2.4 Transnational communities

In the 1990s, a new concept emerged in academic discourse: 'transnational community'. Countries at the edge of the industrialised and tertiarised world of the North's major powers (the US, Canada, Western Europe, Japan), often former colonies or old countries of the Third World, send more and more migrants in search of employment and remittances to their families in the 'place of origin'. These rural, mostly unskilled economic migrants set off from a village, a basic rural community to which the migrants remain strongly attached and to which they return periodically. The family structure, more than the village community of origin, is essential in explaining the cohesion of these networks. Those from a rural community in a Latin American country or the Philippines, for instance, increasingly migrate to urban centres of various sizes in the US, with a migration movement being established between the place of origin and the places of settlement and work. The migration territory also comprises relay places, most often a large city, which serve as hubs for a migratory route network: for example, Dallas and Chicago for Mexicans from Ocampo (Faret 2003) and Buenos Aires for Bolivians from the Cochabamba region (Cortes 1998). The strong association with these different places, based upon the movement of the population of one village, where the dominant activity is migration in a variety of forms, constitutes a transnational migration territory.

A transnational community is based on specific mobility know-how, 'migration expertise'; the inhabitants of these places, so strongly marked by migration, have made it their essential activity. Some mobility may be based on the experience of mountain husbandry, which has always had to adapt to the seasons – whether for transhumance in certain cases or, in the case of Andean peasants, because several distinct ecological mountain levels are concerned. Peoples with a long nomadic tradition, like the Turks or Mongols, can also be moulded more easily in these transnational spaces (De Tapia 1995). A transnational community links the global to the whole range of greatly different local, networking places, without hierarchy between these different hubs. The role of the border is very much curtailed by a migrant population whose essential element of identity is knowing how to first cross the border itself, pass through the border area and then live outside it, whilst avoiding expulsion.

These migrants come from a nation-state, where they have lived for a relatively long time, returning periodically, and then investing part of their income in their village of origin, which they, or at least part of their family, do not plan to quit for good. The members of a transnational community seek to acquire the citizenship of their host country,

while retaining that of their country of origin. This double affiliation is not only a question of facility, but also a chosen way of life. However, there is no uprooting from the territory and society of origin, nor trauma, as in the case of diasporas. There is no strong desire to return, because transmigrants never actually leave their place of origin, with which they retain family and community ties that are greatly simplified thanks to the growth, regularity and safety of communications.

As Foner (1997) has shown for immigrants in New York, both today and at the turn of the twentieth century, modern-day transnationalism is not altogether new but instead has a long history. Russian Jews and Italians maintained family, economic, political and cultural links to their home societies at the same time as they developed ties within their host land. Expecting to return home one day, they sent their savings and remittances homeward and kept up their ethnic allegiances. A transnational social space already existed but it may have been harder than it is now to maintain contacts across the ocean. Today technological changes have made it possible for immigrants to maintain closer and more frequent contact with their home societies. International business operations in the new global economy are much more common. Telephones, emails and internet-based telecom allow immigrants to keep in close touch with the family members, friends and business partners they left behind in the home country. With greater US tolerance for ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism, maintaining multiple identities and loyalties is now seen as a normal feature of immigrant life. Nowadays, too, a much higher proportion of these immigrants (e.g. Indians and Chinese) arrive with advanced education, professional skills and sometimes substantial amounts of financial capital that facilitate these transnational connections (Foner 1997: 362-369).

The concept of transnational community is also used by researchers who have studied transnational nationalism. According to Kastoryano (2006), for example, Turkish transnational communities live in a four-dimensional space: that of the immigration country, the country of origin, the immigrant communities themselves and the transnational space of the European Union. The concept of 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1998) refers to the nation-state of departure, Turkey, which acts on its exiled population by way of language, religion and dual nationality. This nation-state tries to reinforce as much as possible the loyalty of its nationals residing outside its frontiers. But the transnational networks of migrant associations can bypass the states by acting directly on transnational European institutions. We can observe the emergence of a transnational space, characterised by the dense interaction of actors belonging to different traditions (e.g. Islamist and secular Turks, Alevis, Kurds, Lazes). It is a new space of political socialisation, one of identification beyond that of national societies. The EU has

created a transnational civilian society in which national, provincial, religious and professional networks compete and interact among themselves, thereby promoting the logic of supranationality.

For Kastoryano (2006: 90), the concept of diaspora is more aptly applied to populations scattered prior to the making of their nation-state, such as Jews and Armenians, for whom nationalism refers to a mythical place, a territory to be recovered, a future state-building project. This more restricted meaning takes into account the extended history of diasporas who may have built their own nation-state after a lengthy period without a state, which is exactly the case of the Jews, Greeks and Armenians. Nation-states emerged only in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, and these diasporas were already in existence a long time before that. Migrations occurred often after this state-building within the former reticular space of their diaspora. But diasporas may also have emerged from the forced exile of religious or national minorities of a nation-state after its creation (e.g. the Tutsis of Rwanda, Assyro-Chaldeans or Kurds of Turkey, Tamil of Sri-Lanka, Tibetans of China). Such diasporas are organised around an unsettled nation-state problem; this is not the case of transnational communities that do not contest the home or host nation-state. A transnational community is economically oriented, and its political interest is restricted to the migration policies of both its home and host country. There is, equally, another form of transnational community in which cross-border migrants, using a network of acquaintances, are continually circulating between their home place and a variety of host places to sell goods; this kind of quasi-nomadism requires the use of another concept, as discussed below.

## 2.5 Territories of movement

In the name of an anthropology of movement, Tarrus works in the tradition of analysing the emergence and development of new migratory forms in Europe, which have been studied by researchers since the 1980s. Marseille is the observation site for the construction of these underground international economies dealing with licit or illicit products. A world of 'small migrants' – i.e. 'merchandise/goods conveyers' – is devoted to the transportation and trade of goods imported outside official EU quotas of forgeries and smuggled goods, between the North African countries and France via Spain. They take advantage of the spatial, economic and social closeness that exists between the south and the north of these Mediterranean countries due to the colonial and migratory past of those spaces. Localist analysis must be overcome to study those migrant societies that generate 'new cosmopolitanisms',

which are now invisible or hidden or displayed in mixity. They result in encounters between mobile, more or less steady and enduring groups. New forms of identities then occur, founded on the capacity of multiple belonging.

'Territories of movement' (Tarrius 2001) link the place where goods for consumption are shipped out (for instance, in the Maghreb) to the places they are delivered in Western Europe, within which there are further underground economy networks. They may seem to resemble transnational communities, in so far as they link the formerly colonised country where the migrants' community of origin is situated with the migrants' current residence. They are, however, actually very different. The transnational community essentially moves people who are going to 'sell' their labour and send part of their wages back to their community of origin in the form of remittances. Conversely, in the territory of movement, the cross-border entrepreneurs and nomads move with goods they loaded up on in their place of origin to sell in different cities of the host country that they are familiar with. Having in some cases lived in the latter for a lengthy period, they have been able to establish a helping network of acquaintances and support – the 'informal notaries' of Tarrius (2001: 52-56).

These intermediaries take commercial advantage of the wealth differential between their place of origin and their host place, circulating goods between poor and rich countries. Their expertise in moving – in moving goods especially – by crossing borders and circumventing taxation mechanisms of the states is as important for them as the expertise of a Mexican or Bolivian is within the migration field of a transnational community. Their host places are only points of passage or way stations, not places of settlement and integration. The only essential place for them is the one of their origin, whence they leave with their goods; they return regularly, and invest their earnings there. They never actually leave: it is their only base. Their identity is not a diasporic one: it is a 'nomadic identity' based on 'partial and short-lived hybridisation [*métissage*]' acquired in the course of the selling activity through which they socialise. In their place of origin, the link is based on family and community ties, whereas in the host and transit places, well-established local intermediaries – informal notaries (Tarrius 2001) with diaspora experience – are needed:

Those informal notaries are interlocutors who are very much valorised by regional and local, political and police authorities who actively take part in the life in emerging mosques in large Southern cities. They contribute to institutionalising uncontrolled areas, of land's ends within Schengen space, such as

those identified by Italian researchers around Trieste, or Bari, Sicily, in Naples and in Milan's suburbs. (Tarrius 2001: 55)

Without their intermediation nothing is possible and the smuggler cannot maintain his activity and presence on the selling places. These brokers maintain relationships with local, political and police powers, with official representatives of the migrants' home states as well as with their religious representatives, open trading and various underground networks. They sit astride numerous borders of norms and interests.

The territories of movement and transnational communities are produced by globalisation and result from socioeconomic inequalities, which tend to increase, such as differences in the price of goods and wages between countries of the North and of the South. They lock nation-states into an asymmetrical situation, one of dominating and being dominated. The base in the host country, although weak for territories of movement (in the transit place), can, on the contrary, be strong for transnational communities (in the host place); in both cases, however, the rooting in the community of origin remains very significant and may prevail over that in the country of settlement or transit.

## **2.6 Originality and value of the concepts of diaspora and transnational community**

The value of the diaspora concept is that it shows sedimentation over time, often a long period of time, of communities dispersed throughout the world, which vary considerably from one diaspora to another. These diasporas are characterised by the search for a certain cultural or religious – at times even political – unity. They have been formed, over the course of time, by several waves of migration, each of which could have different or several causes at once. It is this long-term sedimentation that makes a diaspora. This is not the case either for transnational communities, which have been formed recently in response to a call for labour, or for smugglers depending on an underground economy. Each diaspora member, wherever he or she may be, adjusts his or her own cultural and social unity to the local and national features, with integration characterising intergenerational trajectories: he or she produces *métissages*. For instance, Greek-Americans are different from those living in Canada or Australia because their various migration trajectories combine with the integration policies of these different states. The first, second or third generations, in turn, produce their own different types of 'mixities' within each of these host countries. There are several ways to keep one's identity in exile and dispersion, as diasporas firmly rooted in their various places of settlement have taught us. They have an



exceptional symbolic and 'iconographic' capital that enables them to reproduce and then overcome the obstacle of the – often considerable – distance that separates their communities. This symbolic capital lives on, particularly in shared memory.

So the relationships between diasporas and space or territories have their own specificities. Belonging to a diaspora implies being able to live simultaneously on the transnational world scale, the local scale of the community and the scale of the host or home country, thereby combining the three scales whilst privileging one or two of these. This combination differs from one individual to another, according to their position in the genealogy of generations. For instance, the first generation, those who were born and have lived in the society of origin, tend to privilege the local scale of the host country and the national scale of the home country where they lived before their migration. The second generation takes into account more often the local and national scales of the host country, where they were born and have lived and, sometimes, the transnational scale; the third generation, in search of its origins, moves on two or three of these scales.

A diaspora is a patchwork of families, communities and religious networks integrated in a territory by a nation-state, within its borders. These patchworks of families, clans, villages, cities, etc., are contained inside the borders of this nation-state where circulation, and exchanges are easier inside than with the outside. The nation-state creates an arbitrary limit between the networks inside it and those that are outside. Diasporas, however, cannot benefit from this extraordinary tool of integration. They function, as previously mentioned, as a hinge between different spaces and different geographical scales. Their networks belong to each of the host countries as well as to a trans-state diasporic network. Their global network, with its economic, cultural, social and political functions, can play the stabilising role that nation-states cover less and less.

Through migration, diaspora members have lost their material relationship to the territory of origin, but they can still preserve their cultural or spiritual relationship through memory. Territory or, more precisely, territoriality – in the sense of adapting oneself to a place in the host country – continues to play an essential role. Memory preserves part of territoriality, whilst the trauma of uprooting creates conditions of mobilisation that can play a substantial role in integrating and unifying various family, religious or community sub-networks into a real diaspora. The construction of commemorative monuments, sanctuaries, monasteries and other symbolic (and sometimes functional) places is an essential means, for the members of a diaspora, of a re-rooting in the host country.

Unlike people of the diaspora, transmigrants and cross-border entrepreneurs or smugglers do not seek to establish a social network destined to last or a transnational social group based on the richness of a symbolic capital and a memory transmitted from one generation to the next. They seek first and foremost to build a house in their home village and climb the social ladder there, and then to do so in their place of settlement if such a place exists. Transmigrants are far too dependent on their community of origin and on their host country to become as independent as people of the diaspora are. The social group to which they belong often does not exceed the community of origin and the network of its migrants, whereas the people of the diaspora have the feeling of belonging to a nation-in-exile, dispersed throughout the world, bearing an ideal. But transnational communities, like the Turkish one, are sometimes the bearers of a transnational nationalism, which appears with the interactions of their different actors and tries to influence the nation-state of their origin and that of their settlement. Dual nationality and migratory circulation within the framework of a transnational region like the EU favour the emergence of new trans-border communities differing from the long-term diasporas.

It is, in my view, this relationship to places and territories that enables us to distinguish between diasporism and transnationalism. Diaspora implies a very strong anchoring in the host country and sometimes, when the home country is lost or is not accessible (as with the Greeks of Asia Minor, Armenians or Tibetans), a clear-cut break with it. This is compensated, in the host country, by the creation of territorial markers, places of memory, favoured by an 'iconography' fixing the link with the home country. That gives some kind of autonomy from host and origin societies to the diasporic social formation compared to the transnational community. In transnational spaces and territories of mobility, this break does not take place, nor is there the need to be re-rooted elsewhere on the host territory. Any particular family has two parallel lives in two or more nation-states: the home country is dominated and the host countries, where the family has migrated, are dominant. In the autochthonous model, the fact of having 'always been there', on which the nation-state is based, means that identity is constructed in close connection with place over a greater or lesser period of time. On the contrary, in a diaspora, identity pre-exists place and tries to re-create it, to remodel it, in order to reproduce itself. Individuals or communities in diasporas live in places that they have not themselves laid out and that are suffused with other identities. As such, they will try to set up their very own place, one that is redolent of their home place within the bosom of which their identity, that of their kinfolk, of their ancestors, has been formed. De-territorialisation goes with, or is followed by, re-territorialisation.



## Chapter 3

# The dynamics of migrants' transnational formations: Between mobility and locality

*Janine Dahinden*

### 3.1 Mobility and its effects: Different forms of transnational formations

Since the early 1990s, studies on transnationalism have proliferated and transnationalism has become one of the fundamental ways of understanding contemporary practices taking place across national borders, especially when speaking of migrants. There are a number of ways to classify or systematise the vast body of work discussing the transnational practices or belongings of migrants (for an excellent recent overview see Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). Following Vertovec and others, one can systematise this body of knowledge as a function of dimensions or domains of transnationalism, such as the economy, politics, culture or religion (see e.g. Vertovec 1999). One can also distinguish between occasional and durable transnational practices, or between different generations of migrants (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999). Or again, one can differentiate the various types of transnational social spaces developed by migrants (Faist 1999; Pries 2008).

For the purpose of this chapter, I propose another way to look at transnational formations: migrants' transnational practices, spaces and ways of being will be analysed by taking into account *mobility* and *locality*. My central argument is that transnational formations result from a combination of *transnational mobility*, on the one hand, and *locality in the sending or/and receiving country*, on the other. *Mobility* is to be understood here as the physical movement of people in transnational space. *Locality* means being rooted or anchored – socially, economically or politically – in the country of immigration and/or in the sending country; it means developing/having a set of social relations at specific places. Looking at transnational formations as the effect of the combination of these two dimensions – mobility and locality – provides interesting insights into the multiplicities of forms of existence.

To date, social scientists have not, I maintain, sufficiently incorporated the concepts of mobility and locality into their analyses of

transnational arrangements. Degrees of mobility have an important impact on the different ways in which one can be a transnational migrant: migrants settled in their new country develop forms of transnational space that are different from those of migrants engaged in continuous transnational circulation. However, transnational practices are also linked to the constraints and opportunities of the contexts, the localities in which they find themselves. The contextual conditions that influence the emergence of specific transnational spaces depend on social, political and legal factors, and this at both ends of the chain – in the immigration as well as the emigration context (see e.g. Al-Ali, Black & Koser 2001). Cultural, socio-economic and political constraints block certain possibilities for transnational action and foster others.

I further maintain that aspects of locality *in* mobility – or mobility *in* locality – have not been sufficiently theorised. In fact, we might be faced here with a kind of paradox: in order to be able to *stay* mobile it is necessary for migrants to develop some local ties and to be embedded in specific localities. That is an important element of what Tarrus (2002) calls '*savoir bouger*'. Circulating business persons as well as so-called 'suitcase traders', for example, need to know where to buy and sell their products; they need to establish local links in order to be able to circulate again in the future. In a similar vein, sedentarisation does not mean that migrants stop moving altogether, as they might go back regularly for holidays or family obligations. Thus, transnational arrangements are maintained or even enforced through mobility. In this sense, 'roots and routes' (Clifford 1994b) are both present in different transnational formations, but they may appear in different combinations. Finally, it is important to note that migrants can and often do change their transnational ways of being over the course of time: mobile migrants can settle down or vice versa, and these changes affect the ways in which they are transnational.

Clearly, the appearance of transnational formations depends not only on the *physical* mobility of the migrants. People who are not physically mobile can develop transnational practices as well, as with the example of transnational social movements (Della Porta, Andretta, Mosca & Reiter 2006). And we know that the mobility – or better, circulation – of representations, ideas, goods and services across and within national boundaries is of great importance for the production and reproduction of transnational spaces. These forms of mobility are of special interest when we analyse the type of, and motivations for, transnational actions and subjectivities.

This chapter starts with a discussion of ideal types of transnational practices as a function of the combination of different forms of physical mobility and locality. I then take three concrete examples from Switzerland – cabaret dancers, Albanian-speaking migrants and

Armenians – to analyse how different transnational formations have changed and evolved over the years and to illustrate the ways mobility and locality play a crucial role. In the final section, I present conclusions of a more general nature.

### 3.2 Mobility and locality: Investigating the articulations

Using the dimensions of mobility and locality, four different ideal types of the transnational are identifiable. Following Weber (1991 [1904]), I understand them as a means for both grasping and conceptualising social phenomena. An ideal type here is thus intended as an abstract model, constructed for the purpose of theory-building. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the differences between the ideal types are gradual. The first type I will call *localised diasporic transnational formations*: it is characterised by low physical mobility and a high degree of local ties. The second type is called *localised mobile transnational formations*, combining high physical mobility and high locality. My third type I will call *transnational mobiles*, concerning people who are highly mobile but have a low degree of local anchorage. Finally, I will call *transnational outsiders* that group of migrants who display both low mobility and low degree of local anchorage. The main features of these ideal types are illustrated in Table 3.1.

It is necessary to add some words about this typology. Other scholars have developed ideal types of transnational formations, too. Faist (1999, 2000a), for instance, presented three types of transnational social spaces and distinguished between *transnational kinship groups*, *transnational circuits* and *transnational communities*. His typology provides interesting insights into the production of transnational spaces by focusing on primary resources embedded in social ties (such as reciprocity, exchange or solidarity) and by showing their different outcomes. Faist did not, however, consider *mobility* and *locality* and their impact on the appearance of transnational social spaces. Furthermore, it is one of the main arguments of this chapter that the *dynamics* of transnational formations merit more attention. For our purposes, we will concentrate on the *processual dimensions* of transnational pattern. And again, we focus on mobility and locality, dimensions of high relevance in these processes.

#### 3.2.1 *Localised diasporic transnational formations*

This first type combines low levels of transnational mobility with high levels of local anchorage in the receiving and low levels of local anchorage in the sending country. Groups of people who develop this kind of

transnationality have experienced one-way migration in their family from a place of origin to a new country, and perhaps also a secondary migration to a third or fourth country. However, they do not circulate between the new country and the homeland; they – and their offspring – are settled in the new host country and may have been there for generations. They have become citizens (with all the rights attached to this) and they are socially and economically integrated in the new country. For this reason, I will call them ‘localised’.

Furthermore, this ideal type is labelled ‘diasporic’ because it incorporates different core elements identified in the literature on diasporic transnational formations (Brubaker 2005; Clifford 1994b; Cohen 1997; Dufoix 2005; Tölölyan 1996). First, ‘diasporic’ can be used to signal one of the possible ways of feeling transnational and acting as such. Second, one can use the term ‘diasporic’ when actors consciously perceive and define themselves subjectively as a group of spatially dispersed persons. They speak of themselves as ‘diasporas’, meaning that they have developed a ‘diasporic subjectivity’ or a ‘diasporic way of belonging’, and are characterised by an orientation to a real or imagined homeland, while maintaining their ethnic, national or religious boundaries over generations.

The time factor is important here; we are talking about *longue durée* boundary maintenance. The idea of ‘boundaries’ has come to play a key role in important new lines of scholarship across the social sciences and has been theoretically elaborated and empirically tested in relation to different categorical groups: class, gender or ethnicity, for example (see Lamont & Molnár 2002). For our purposes, it is important to note that the result of physical mobility might be dispersion, but that this does not automatically lead to the formation of so-called transnational ethnic or religious communities with a homeland orientation, nor to boundary maintenance (Barth 1969) involving the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society and a subjective belief in a common origin (Weber 1996 [1922]). Migrants can be transnational without participating in ethnic or religious boundary-making or maintenance. ‘Bounded’ groups or ‘groupness’ (Brubaker 2004) come into being through conscious and organised efforts by generations and networks of people, and especially by their cultural, social and political elites. Such efforts involve an attachment to place and a grounding in place: they also require necessary resources in terms of linguistic, financial and other forms of capital.

In order to develop and maintain such diasporic ‘groupness’, the main actors of the diaspora must interact closely with institutions, governments, networks and key persons in the host country. Sometimes they also build up networks with international or transnational institutions in order to lobby and do other political work. Everyday networks

may be much diversified in terms of ethnicity or religion, as they are integrated into the local social structures. This does not, however, prevent them from being transnationally active through the mobilisation of collective representations based upon symbolic ethnicity (Gans 1979) or religion, thereby embedding themselves within institutionalised transnational networks. As contemporary examples we could cite the Armenian diaspora, but also Kurds in Germany, Tamils in Europe and Palestinians.<sup>1</sup>

At this point in my argument, it might make sense to distinguish between symbolic and social boundary-making, as Lamont and Molnàr (2002: 168) have proposed. *Symbolic* boundaries are categorisations made by social actors to distinguish objects, people and practices. They are tools that individuals and groups struggle over and use to agree upon definitions of reality. *Social* boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to, and unequal distribution of, resources (material and non-material) and social opportunities. While transnational formations of diasporic character imply symbolic boundary-making and maintenance on the basis of ethnicity or religion, they do not involve social boundary-making. Everyday networks are not characterised by ethnic or religious social boundaries. As we will see, this is an important difference between this and the next ideal type.

### 3.2.2 *Localised mobile transnational formations*

The second ideal type is characterised by more elements of mobility, although the sedentary aspects remain highly relevant. We are faced with simultaneously high levels of mobility and high levels of local anchorage in receiving and sending countries. Migrants representing this ideal type have themselves experienced migration or may be second-generation migrants. They move regularly back and forth between the new country and the place of origin: for holidays, family obligations, business and so on. In the European context, we can think of the so-called guest workers who arrived after World War II. Generally speaking, they are immigrants who maintain ties with their countries of origin, making home and host society a single arena for social action by moving back and forth across international borders. These migrants participate in, and create a specific type of, transnationality by exploiting social capital (Bourdieu 1980) based mainly on the principle of family – or, to a lesser extent, ethnic – solidarity and reciprocity.

This moving back and forth is one of the criteria that distinguish this ideal type from the previous one. Often the migrants have a house or land (or both) in the country of origin. Unlike in the first ideal type, these transnational activities have a distinct family character. Yet, these transnationals are locally anchored in the immigration country, as they



have their principal residence mainly in the new country. Often they are naturalised in the new country, they earn their money there and their children grow up with them in the new place. Locality is an important resource for building up a transnational project; in order to do business in transnational spaces one needs resources, so resources are a sign of being 'rooted' in the new country (as important as financial start-up capital). Their locality, however, compared to the first type, is less long-lived. Their transnational patterns are built upon the simultaneity of mobility and sedentariness in two different geographical spaces. We could also say that they are integrated in networks within both sending and receiving countries. However, here transnational actions are less conditioned by collective representation of ethnicity or religion, and conducted mainly through the family networks: remittances, but also other goods and services circulate through these social networks between the receiving and sending countries. Sometimes we can find collective ethno-nationalist boundary-making, for instance, through participation in migrant associations. But while symbolic boundary-making based on ethnicity may be present, social boundaries are almost always evident: domestic networks are often constrained by ethnic and/or class boundaries. This is a phenomenon that is sometimes referred to in the literature as 'ethnic stratification', meaning that specific ethnic groups are placed in the lowest strata in the new society.

### 3.2.3 *Transnational mobiles*

With our third ideal type, we have people who are more or less permanently on the move, with low levels of local anchorage in the receiving country. In this case, we are no longer dealing with long-term, settled migrants in the Simmelian tradition (1908) – 'The stranger who comes today and stays tomorrow' – but a constant and continuous form of circular mobility. The central element here is that mobility becomes an integral part of migrants' life strategies. This type of migrant does not leave his or her country with the aim of settling in another country, but tends to stay mobile in order to maintain or improve his or her quality of life. One may think here, first of all, of highly skilled professionals – executives, international officials, managers in multinational companies, the 'transnational elite' (Sklair 2001) for whom the willingness to move frequently can be viewed as a professional asset. But this type of mobility is also widespread among people who are by no means highly skilled and do not hold highly skilled jobs. Tarrius (2002) speaks of the new nomads who, by creating circular territories, can simultaneously belong here and there. He describes, for example, how Algerians contribute to a thriving economic exchange between Marseille, France, and Belgium, Italy and Spain, involving a wide variety of goods, notably

household electrical appliances or electronic equipment. They are not ethnic entrepreneurs in the sense of transnational sedentarised migrants, but nomadic entrepreneurs. They are not aiming for success away from their native town, nor do they want to settle in France, Italy, Switzerland or anywhere else. Mobility is precisely the capital that is needed for transnationalism of this kind to develop. Practices of 'shuttle migration' among Polish women (Morokvasic 2003), or 'suitcase trading' (*commerce à valise*) of Tunisian women (Schmoll 2005) follow the same principle: a commercial activity that basically depends on these women's mobility skills and physical movement. To take another example, Moroccan women (Peraldi 2007) cross the Ceuta enclave to Morocco in order to sell garments made in China, while also carrying cosmetics, household goods and food items, and selling them elsewhere.

The distinctive thing about this model of transnationalism is the importance of what we can call 'mobility capital' for the people involved. Notably, their social capital is not based on strong family or ethnic relations but on weak relations (Granovetter 1973): trust and solidarity are built up with friends and acquaintances rather than close relatives. To stay mobile, however, the migrants have to develop networks with local actors or institutions within their circulatory spaces. In this way, mobile and circulating migrants also need to create local footholds to some extent. Some develop a collective ethno-nationalist consciousness, as with some 'traditional' nomadic groups, such as the Roma (who could be classified within this ideal type). Others, however, do not participate in ethnic or religious boundary-making. Here we find orientations that are marked by the professional activities conducted in transnational space, with any boundary-making (symbolic or social) taking place more along professional lines.

#### 3.2.4 *Transnational outsiders*

The last ideal type is characterised by low transnational mobility and, at the same time, a low degree of local anchorage. Typically in Europe, asylum seekers, recently arrived migrants from non-EU countries and sometimes even legal refugees represent this type. These migrants do not circulate between their country of origin and the immigration country, often because circulation is cut off due to persecution in the home country and, more generally, because they do not have the right to travel due to their legal status as asylum seekers. Simultaneously – and again because of their legal status – their often limited access to jobs or other resources in the immigration country forms an obstacle to local embeddedness. Studies from Switzerland, for instance, show that asylum seekers are often not integrated within Swiss society, even though they

Table 3.1 *Mobility and locality in transnational formations*

	Localised diasporic transnational formations	Localised mobile transnational formations	Transnational mobiles	Transnational outsiders
<i>Transnational physical mobility</i>	<b>low</b> occasional returns to sending country	<b>high</b> regular movement between countries	<b>high</b> continuous mobility, circulation between different countries	<b>low</b> no rights and/or resources for transnational mobility
<i>Local ties in...</i>	<b>high</b> settled, naturalised children, integration within local structures, domestic networks diversified in terms of ethnicity/religion	<b>high</b> one-way migration followed by sedentarisation, domestic networks characterised by class and ethnic boundaries	<b>low</b> occasional links created in order to circulate, weak relations	<b>low</b> legal insecurity, no/limited integration, social and economic exclusion, domestic networks mainly with individuals in same situation
<i>Transnational action through the mobilisation of...</i>	<b>low</b> ...through diasporic institutions and institutionalised networks collective representations based upon (symbolic) ethnicity/religion-bounded solidarity of destiny	<b>high</b> house and/or landowners, extended family relations family (strong) ties based upon reciprocity	<b>high</b> frequent returns, core family relations professional networks (and, to a lesser extent, trading family networks)	<b>low</b> family relations, low economic integration/political problems no resources for transnational action, family ties
<i>Type of transnational action</i>	diasporic projects embedded in institutionalised networks (associations, NGOs, governments, etc.)	remittances, participation in ethnic/religious associations, circulation of goods and services	trading networks, professional networks, family ties	limited transnational action
<i>Examples</i>	Tamil diaspora Armenians, Jews, Kurds, governments, etc.)	first-generation post-war labour migrants in Europe, Italians, Portuguese, Kosovo Albanians	cabaret dancers, female 'suitcase traders', seasonal workers, highly skilled workers	asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, migrants in situations of social and economic marginalisation

have lived there for years. At the same time, they are also cut off from their transnational families (Kamm, Efonayi-Mäder, Neubauer, Wanner & Zannol 2003), with their daily networks consisting mainly of people living in the same legal situation or of local ethnic or family relations. Transnational ethnic and family relations are important; however, people characterised by this type of weak transnationalism cannot build up stable transnational fields between the country of origin and the new country, as they have neither the resources nor the capital to do so, and sometimes they are not even in a position to send remittances.

Other groups that could be included in this ideal type are some undocumented migrants, at least those who live in an immigration country and are integrated into its (informal) labour market. We can think, for instance, of domestic workers, who possess low degrees of local anchorage because they do not hold a residence permit. They might circulate more often between their country of origin and the immigration country than the asylum seekers – with spouses and children often staying behind – but circulation is not a form of capital they can rely on, as it is in the case of the third ideal type discussed above. We might speak in this case of weak transnational arrangements, mainly related to the fact that the migrants either have no legal right to reside in the immigration country or else only a precarious one. This highlights an important difference with regard to the other ideal types considered in this chapter and reminds us that the dynamics of transnationality are always intimately related to the migration policies of European states.

### 3.3 The dynamics of transnationalisms

Having introduced the typology, it can now be illustrated by means of three case studies. The first involves a professional group, cabaret dancers, while the second concerns Albanian-speaking migrants from former Yugoslavia and the third, Armenians in Switzerland. The aim is to bring to light the *processual* dimensions of transnationality by asking the following: how does each ideal type evolve and which factors influence the emergence, installation and disappearance of the populations under study? Also of interest here is how mobility and locality shape these different transnational formations.

#### 3.3.1 *Cabaret dancers in Switzerland*

In Switzerland today, we can find virtually no Swiss citizens dancing in any of the 350 cabarets throughout the country; cabaret dancers are exclusively migrant women. Around 6,000 cabaret dancers enter (and leave) the country each year. Whereas in the 1980s, half the dancers

came from countries in Western Europe, by 2005 this figure had declined to 2 per cent. Today, about three quarters of the young women come from Eastern Europe and the rest from Central and South America and Asia. These dancers represent a heterogeneous group and embody a particular form of female mobility that corresponds in our typology to the *transnational mobiles*. However, as we will see, there are some women who could be considered *transnational outsiders*, and others who could be viewed as moving towards other transnational forms.<sup>2</sup>

Let us first turn to the question of how the dancers become – and stay – mobile. Three elements can be highlighted: the dancers' economic motivations, specific characteristics of the transnational sex industry and dancers' legal situations in Switzerland. I would like to discuss each of these factors in detail.

The reasons motivating dancers to become mobile are without exception economic, and their mobility can be considered as an economic strategy. These women's economic aspirations can be put into practice and implemented thanks to transnational networks and people already involved in the transnational sex industry. The women who come to work as nightclub dancers in Switzerland are mainly recruited by friends or acquaintances who already have some experience in the sex industry; in migration terminology, we are talking about a kind of chain migration (Fawcett 1989). Acquaintances play an important role as go-betweens to the agencies that find jobs for the dancers. No dancer is directly engaged by a cabaret in Switzerland; the cabarets work through agencies that present them with photos and short descriptions of the prospective dancers. Cabaret owners then choose the women they want to hire and it is the agencies that arrange the papers and contracts, also taking care of visas for the women.

Placement agents – the second link in the chain after acquaintances – are embedded in transnational networks of nightclubs (and perhaps other services within the sex industry), and can therefore place the women in different countries. We should note that this explains how some of the dancers become transnational players through mobility. A good third of the women interviewed had already worked as dancers in another country – many in Japan, others in Lebanon, South Korea, Bulgaria, Italy or Australia – so they are, in a sense, 'world travellers'. It should be further noted that it is not only the networks of placement agencies that give the sex industry its transnational character, but also the local demand for migrant sex workers. In our interviews, nightclub owners mentioned that there was a specific demand by clients for women from Eastern Europe because they are well educated,<sup>3</sup> tall and blonde. They are regarded as the 'upper class' among sex workers. Ethnicised and 'racialised' gender representations circulate worldwide

and create a demand for women with specific 'looks', and these ethnic and racial imaginaries make up part of the transnational character of this industry.

Finally, the legislation in Switzerland with regard to permits for these types of dancers forces the women to be continuously on the move and thereby contributes to the mobile character of their transnationality. These dancers receive specific short-term residence permits, commonly known as a 'dancer's permit'. At present, this permit is granted for a maximum of eight months a year, after which time the dancer has to leave Switzerland for four months before she can come back to work in a cabaret. Often women come to Switzerland for several years, returning home or travelling elsewhere for a few months, thus circulating around the globe. In addition to this global circulation, these women move every month to a different cabaret within Switzerland as the contract tying them to one particular cabaret generally lasts for only one month.

An in-depth analysis reveals how, in order to be able to continue to move, the dancers develop local footholds, at least sporadically, in the Swiss context. Dancers are in very precarious situations because of their migratory trajectories – limitations imposed by their residence status, lack of knowledge of the national languages and of their rights – and the entrepreneurial transnational operating space available to them is restricted; this leaves them constantly on the boundary between legality and illegal exploitation. After various cases of exploitation were publicly exposed in Switzerland, regulations were put into place to spell out the employment and residence conditions for cabaret dancers, aimed at protecting these women from illegalities and exploitation. These regulations notwithstanding, however, almost all cabaret dancers engage, at least from time to time, in activities that do not appear in their work contract, or that are explicitly forbidden. They work longer hours and more frequently than their contract allows; they break the rules by encouraging customers to drink alcohol (chiefly champagne), as they are often given a percentage of the café owner's margin on alcohol sales; and they offer sexual services both during working hours and in their free time, something they are also not allowed to do. The dancers thus find themselves in a legal vacuum that places them beyond the reach of controls or legal protection and in the informal sector of the economy. It is important to note, however, that dancers make their principal financial gains through the additional services that they offer illegally.<sup>4</sup> In short, this is where these women's economic incentives often lie, for in fact these activities are undertaken to some extent on their own initiative, demonstrating the economic nature of their mobility and their entrepreneurial ethos.

We should bear in mind, however, that the story is more subtle than it may seem. The discrepancy between law and practice in the dancers'

work may also be the result of coercion – whether stemming from outside pressures or a situation of dependency or exploitation in relation to cabaret managers, placement agencies or even clients. When this is the case, the dancers find themselves in an inextricable situation and these conditions are a serious barrier to their mobility. Most of the dancers are, so to speak, walking a tightrope. This is particularly true for women who come to Switzerland for the first time. A considerable portion of the dancers come to Switzerland just once and never return. These women do not develop along the *transnational mobiles* type, but rather, intersect with the fourth type: transnational outsiders. Finally, some of them simply fall outside the transnationalism paradigm: they move once, they stay once, return and then stop circulating.

We might ask, then, what are the conditions that enable some women to profit from a situation that we could label ‘opportunistic capitalism’? In order to be able to exploit these opportunities in this legal grey area, women must establish a whole series of vertical, locally anchored relations. The women who are able to exploit the uncertainties of their situations and achieve their economic ambitions are the ones who, in the course of their stay in Switzerland, manage to create and build up social capital consisting mainly of weak ties with (good) agencies, (decent) cabaret owners, clients, non-government organisations and other dancers. This allows them to access a wide range of important information, and their various contacts help them increase their income and deal with the precarious nature of their situations. They can avoid exploitation and stay mobile, and they get to know where they can earn the most money with the fewest risks. These dancers come back again and again to Switzerland, while also leaving to go dance in other countries. In other words, this kind of local anchorage is a condition for staying mobile; their *‘savoir bouger’* is conditioned on getting to know the right people in the immigration country.

As we have noted, however, not all women circulate and none of them circulates forever, as cabaret dancing is a job that can be done only by younger women. While some women go back, others try to settle in Switzerland through marriage (the only way open to them). Some of those interviewed in our study were married in Switzerland, and may well have been in the course of developing different relations to the country of immigration that would place them within another transnational pattern.

In further specifying the *transnational mobile type*, it is important to state that while they establish local footholds in Switzerland, they must at the same time maintain transnational ties in order to be able to continue to circulate. Dancers return home on a regular basis, and some dancers regularly send remittances to their children or to their families at home. We could speak in this case of transnational families dispersed

in space, emphasising the fact that this ideal type, like type number two, can and usually will include transnational kinship obligations. Other dancers with more individualised projects also send their money home, but they intend to invest it later in their country of origin, mostly with the idea of building up a small business. Again, what counts is that mobility is used here in order to improve lifestyle and social standing at home.

Finally, it is important to note that we did not find any kind of ethnic group formation processes taking place among the women interviewed. Ethnicity can be important for these women, but it is expressed on an individual level and there was no collective ethnic group-making among the Russians or the Ukrainians or other dancers on nationalist grounds. Daily contact in Switzerland was essentially professional in nature and took place with other dancers, clients and so on. Transnational networks, on the other hand, were either of a family character or established with other actors embedded in the transnational sex industry.

### 3.3.2 *Albanian-speaking migrants in Switzerland*

Taking a historical perspective on the migration processes of Albanian-speaking migrants from former Yugoslavia, it is interesting to note that we can observe different types of transnationality that have developed over the course of this group's migration to Switzerland. In fact, we can identify several of the ideal types discussed above. In a first phase, Albanians arrived as temporary and seasonal workers, circulating between Switzerland and their places of origin, as in the third ideal type discussed above. Later on, they settled down, brought their families to Switzerland and developed a *localised mobile transnational type*. Finally, over the last few years, we have witnessed the emergence of elements of *localised diasporic transnational formations*.

Until the 1980s, Albanians who arrived in Switzerland from former Yugoslavia as seasonal workers were mostly young men. They came from rural and poor regions, worked mainly in unskilled jobs and often lived in barracks with other foreign workers. Their objective was to earn money to overcome economic hardship at home and to return after a few years to their families. At that time, their transnational way of being was marked by mobility in many ways. First of all, they had a seasonal permit that forced them – like the dancers – to circulate between Switzerland and their homeland; after nine months of work in Switzerland, they had to leave the country for at least three months. Second, the migrants often did not migrate only to Switzerland, but worked in other countries as well (e.g. Germany) or in the northern republics of former Yugoslavia (e.g. Slovenia). Their radius of circulation included thus different regions and/or countries (Schierup 1995; Mesic



1992). Third, they arrived in Switzerland mainly through acquaintances, neighbours or other family members who arranged jobs for them. Again, as in the case of the dancers, they often came back to work for the same enterprise the following year, having established local footholds that allowed them to stay mobile while maintaining the epicentre of their life in Kosovo. Fourth, we are dealing here with transnational families, as the wives or the children of the workers stayed behind (Dahinden 2005a, 2005b; Von Aarburg 2002).

A fifth and final element deserves special attention. In the first phase of migration, no strong Albanian ethnic or national group formation could be identified, nor were these workers categorised by the Swiss population as 'Albanians'; they were seen simply as Yugoslavs. This is mirrored, for instance, in the fact that it was not until 1979 that the first Albanian association, Perparimi, was founded as a section and its meetings were held in the already existing premises of the Yugoslav Association in Zurich.

Soon, however, the transnational formations of the group in question started to change. From the 1980s on, the political and economic situation in former Yugoslavia overall, and specifically in Kosovo, deteriorated drastically. In the aftermath of Tito's death in 1981 and the abolition of Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989, the ensuing political unrest directly increased emigration pressures. At the same time, with the shift in immigration policies in Switzerland, and specifically with the implementation of the 'three circles' model in 1991,<sup>5</sup> the recruitment of workers from former Yugoslavia was no longer possible. These immigrants were now categorised as members of the third circle and had no right to obtain work permits. As of that moment, immigration to Switzerland from former Yugoslavia was possible only through seeking asylum or through family reunification. Confronted not only with economic hardship, but also with increasing political unrest at home, the Albanian workers slowly abandoned their plans for returning and decided instead, whenever possible, to bring their families to Switzerland. Meanwhile, many of these workers had experienced a kind of 'permit career'; after a few years as seasonal workers, they received an annual permit that entitled them to bring their wives and children to Switzerland and, later on, a residence permit, a mechanism that has been very accurately labelled '*the seasonal "open sesame"*' (Leuenberger & Maillard 1999: 22). As a consequence, since 1989 there has been a steady increase in the Albanian population from former Yugoslavia in Switzerland through chain migration, and a feminisation of the migration flow has been observed (Piguet 2005).

This was thus the first sign of the development of a *localised mobile transnationality*. Albanians did not stop circulating between their place of origin and Switzerland; such movements were interrupted only by

the outbreak of the war later on. Indeed, Albanian migrants built their houses in Kosovo, sent remittances and went there regularly on holidays and to fulfil family obligations towards their parents and siblings. This transnational field relied mainly on family relations and mutual support and reciprocity. This support turned into an obligation as the situation in Kosovo increasingly deteriorated after 1995. In addition, from 1980 onward, politically motivated immigration could be observed. Members of the nationalist elite among Albanian students were increasingly persecuted and forced to leave Kosovo (Malcolm 1999). Europe, and especially Switzerland with its already established Albanian workers, witnessed the first asylum seekers arriving from former Yugoslavia. Civil wars within the different republics of former Yugoslavia and the outbreak of the war in Kosovo in 1998 led to a phase of mass emigration.<sup>6</sup>

The developments in the 1990s triggered new (symbolic and social) boundary-making processes among the former Yugoslav migrants along ethnic lines and we saw the appearance of a strong Albanian nationalism (as well as a strong Serbian one). Ethnicity was now the language, currency and category used to legitimate action by the migrants with regard to their lives in Switzerland, but also with regard to the events in their homeland. A new form of solidarity based on ethnic criteria – a bounded solidarity of destiny – developed and culminated in the mass mobilisation of Albanian migrants in hometown association projects, collective remittances and humanitarian projects, long-term nationalist actions as well as lobbying and political work. During this time, a part of Ibrahim Rugova's LDK was exiled and resided in Switzerland, and the political actors worked between Switzerland and Kosovo through networks of the Albanian associations.

In short, over this period, two elements that are part of a *localised diasporic transnational formation* clearly emerged. First, we witnessed the rise of ethnic consciousness (which was dialectic, in the sense that the Kosovo Albanians were now also identified by the Swiss as 'Albanians'), along with the appearance of ethno-politics and nationalism and the development of an ethnic 'groupness'. Second, these processes were accompanied by an institutionalisation of transnational networks, also an important feature of diasporic transnational arrangements. The Kosovo Albanians formed local and international networks with humanitarian institutions, development agencies and so on (Iseni 2008). A decisive moment in the crystallisation of the 'diasporic' aspect was without a doubt the lobbying of Swiss and international organisations for the independence of Kosovo. A further illustration is to be found in a ceremony to which I was recently invited by the 'Kosovar Diaspora' – as they identified themselves in their invitation letter. This ceremony was organised by the elite representatives of the Kosovo Albanian population in Switzerland and the Republic of Kosovo, who wished to express their

thanks to the city of Zurich for supporting the independence of the Republic of Kosovo. During this event, Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu presented the Zurich city council and the Swiss minister for foreign affairs with a memorial tablet in the name of the Kosovar Diaspora.

We should note, however, that while ‘diasporic’ elements can be identified in the discourse of Kosovars, particularly in regard to political transnational practices, in other realms we observe fewer transnational practices. Many of the Kosovo Albanians in Switzerland are affected by economic marginalisation as well as discrimination. Despite an increasing number of targeted integration measures, this migrant population and their children are affected by strong discrimination in the labour market (Fibbi, Kaya & Piguet 2003). Some live in precarious circumstances and many are unemployed, especially women. Furthermore, although more and more Albanians from former Yugoslavia are being given citizenship, a large segment still lacks Swiss nationality. In this sense, we could speak of the absence of ‘sedentarising’ capital that might be responsible for the fact that transnational fields are being somewhat hesitantly developed in only a few domains by Albanians. For instance, in the economic realm, aside from remittances, we find only a very few specifically transnational and ethnic businesses, whether in the Swiss or in transnational contexts. These immigrants often do not have the resources (financial, rights, etc.), locally or transnationally, to build up such transnational fields (Dahinden 2005b). We might even say that the most marginalised of them have developed no more than a form of *weak localised mobile transnationality*. They are neither well integrated into the local structures nor, most importantly, do they circulate between the two countries. They are transnational kinship groups as described by Faist (2000a), but they do not build up stable transnational fields, and lack local anchorage that could explain the ‘absent transnationalism’ in, for instance, the economic realm.

In sum, this example points to the possibility that different ideal types can coexist simultaneously or can, over the course of time, replace each other. What the future will bring – assimilation, long-term boundary maintenance or something in between – is not yet known. Furthermore, the example of Kosovo Albanians in Switzerland shows that persons do not ‘naturally’ form a ‘group’ in a sociological sense just because they come from the same country of origin. This case study also highlights the fact that it is not only the context of immigration that shapes transnational formations, but also the locality of the country of origin. For instance, so-called ethnic conflicts in Kosovo had their effects in the Albanian community in Switzerland and contributed to the development of diasporic elements in the transnational arrangements.

### 3.3.3 *The Armenian diaspora and new Armenian migrants in Switzerland*

The third example highlights another aspect of the processual character of transnational formation, an aspect that is related to a time dimension and questions of mobility and locality. Migrants arriving consecutively from one and the same region develop different kinds of transnational formations, which can cause tensions within these same groups.

In the case of Armenians, migration is far from being a new phenomenon. The events that took place during World War I not only led to the tragic death of approximately 1.5 million Armenians, but also resulted in the formation of a global Armenian diaspora, which today enjoys 'classic' diaspora status. Ironically, the most recent migration movements from Armenia have coincided with the creation of an independent Armenian state in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Since the independence of Armenia, approximately a quarter of its population has left the country (Bachmann, Dahinden, Kamm, Neubauer & Perrin 2004).

In Switzerland, a significant group of Armenians also arrived from Turkey during the 1920s, seeking to escape the brutal events of the war. A second group of Armenian migrants arrived over the course of the 1960s and 1970s. This group was part of the flow of Turkish migrant workers looking for employment in Europe. The third movement of Armenian migrants to Switzerland is composed primarily of citizens from the newly independent Republic of Armenia. Unlike the Armenians who reached Switzerland as Turkish guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, the most recent or 'new' Armenian migrants were confronted with the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of European countries. Switzerland replaced its relatively liberal admission policy in 1989, as mentioned earlier, and the new policy offered educational and work opportunities almost exclusively to highly qualified foreigners. Consequently, since 1989, Armenian immigrants have been either members of a professional elite or a quite dissimilar type of migrant: asylum seekers who live under very different conditions in Switzerland. It is now possible to distinguish three groups of Armenians living in Switzerland, mirroring three different types of transnationality: Armenians belonging to and identifying themselves with the Armenian diaspora; a group of highly qualified professionals working or studying in Switzerland – IT specialists, musicians, artists, biologists – and a group who arrived as asylum seekers (Dahinden 2008).

In the case of Armenian asylum seekers, the first element to be noted is the type of permit with which they are admitted to Swiss territory. This has important effects on the activities they are allowed to undertake in Switzerland as well as on their transnational way of being and

acting. The Armenian asylum seekers we spoke to in a study conducted in 2003 (Bachmann et al. 2004) suffered from the uncertainty of their situation, which in some cases had lasted for years. They often expressed a feeling of shame, inferiority and isolation. It was not because of their 'Armenianness' that they felt inferior and uneasy, however, but because of their legal status as asylum seekers. They had no professional or other prospects in Switzerland, they were not locally anchored, they could not circulate or be internationally mobile and, at the same time, they did not develop stable transnational relations with their country of origin. We might speak in this case of *transnational outsiders*.

The type of transnational pattern developed among young, highly skilled Armenians was different. They defined themselves first as professionals and it was their professional networks that were of relevance for their daily activities, as well as for their identity classifications and symbolic boundary work. They spoke several languages, had well-paid jobs and, should the job require it, were willing to move to other countries – as some had already done. They worked on multinational teams and could be called highly skilled globetrotters. Their aspirations for staying in Switzerland were professional in nature and based on a desire for professional qualifications and self-realisation. The capital in question here is educational, but also the potential for being mobile. We could say that they represent the *transnational mobile* type.

Finally, we have the so-called Armenian diaspora that in our typology represents the localised diasporic transnational type. These Armenians make considerable ideological efforts in order to conceive of their communities as ideally continuous with the populations of diasporas in other nation-states and with the homeland. They lobby the Swiss government on behalf of their homeland (for instance, for official recognition of the genocide), and they devote funds and human resources to assist or influence the economy, culture and politics of the homeland. The actors of this diaspora are embedded in an institutional network that is very different from the one in which the highly skilled are involved. Not unlike the dancers and their placement agencies, the latter rely on different sources for recruitment and placement, whereas the institutional network of the diasporic actors is more governmental in character. In other words, they actively engage in symbolic boundary work based on ethnicity, despite the fact that their daily networks are not characterised by ethnic homogeneity. They are locally integrated into the social structure; mostly they are Swiss citizens or second- or third-generation migrants.

This example thus not only shows the possibility of different transnational morphologies existing simultaneously within one and the same group of citizens, but also how these forms can become contradictory. First of all, as Björklund (2003) has written, Armenians in the diaspora

(like many other diasporic people) are tempted to think of their dispersion as acceptable in the short run but untenable in the long run. Only an Armenian Armenia will be able to guarantee the survival of the Armenians. 'Emigrant Armenians' arouse therefore mixed feelings, as Armenians are not 'supposed' to be emigrants. Second, it can be stated that the established diaspora has but little in common with the new Armenian migrants, both historically and with regard to their contemporary life abroad. Few close contacts exist between the diaspora and the new immigrants from Armenia. What Ishkanian (2002) points out for major cities with huge Armenian communities, such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, also applies to Switzerland. Although new Armenian migrants live in places hosting established diaspora communities and, at times, benefit from established diaspora institutions and organisations, they generally remain on the margins of these communities as genuine outsiders rarely, if ever, participating in communal life. The ones who are new to the host country are sometimes disappointed to have to admit that cultural distance from contemporary Armenia is even higher among members of the diaspora than among new immigrant communities. As the Republic of Armenia was part of the USSR prior to becoming independent, those who lived in Armenia experienced more than 70 years of communist rule, whereas Armenians living in the diaspora were not exposed to Soviet influence. Armenians subjectively perceive this factor to be one of the causes for the difference in 'culture' or 'mentality'.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter's attempt to establish four ideal types of transnational formations based on the dimension of mobility and locality is intended to address what strikes me as a pressing problem in contemporary migration and mobility studies. Migration studies too often focus either on mobility or on locality, but forget to look at both dimensions simultaneously and at their articulations. The typology I propose here might allow us to think through 'mobility lenses', in line with the ideas of Urry (2007) and his new mobility paradigm emphasising the complex relations between different mobilities. However, we also need constantly to bear in mind that locality is as important in analysing these transnational formations as is mobility. Mobility ends in the development of specific transnational forms after or during migration, but in order to become 'transnational', migrants must touch down somewhere. From the case studies, it appears that transnational practices and formations cannot develop separately but are linked to the constraints and opportunities imposed by specific contexts. Not having a residence permit, for

example, might allow an ethnic group consciousness to develop, but could hinder the development of stable transnational fields in other realms. Transnational migrants are, so to speak, unable to escape their local contexts.

By reminding us to track mobility and locality simultaneously, the typology can provide concrete ideas about the articulation between transnationality and integration. For example, in the current debate over how processes of migrant incorporation in the host country and the establishment of transnational spaces are related, transnationality is often seen either as an alternative to integration or as the condition of being 'integrated' in the host country and the country of origin at the same time (e.g. Dahinden 2009; Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). The typology reveals that we are in fact not dealing here with a zero-sum game: the best-anchored social actors in our analysis – for instance, 'diasporic' Armenians – provide evidence of a high transnational engagement even while they are themselves not particularly mobile at all. Another telling example is the case of localised mobile transnational formations that display a contemporaneous and double integration within two contexts simultaneously.

My final remark concerns the regulatory power of the state. The case studies reveal that the state is a principal actor for all of the ideal types examined. The conditions attached to the 'dancer's permit' are not only a result of Switzerland's ethnicised and gendered migration policy; they are simultaneously crucial for the formation of the specific transnational arrangements of the dancers. The same can be said of Armenian asylum seekers, but also of the Albanians. While I do not mean this result to be interpreted as confirmation of romantic primordialism, or as a sign of long-lasting or dormant ethnic or national feelings, it is important to note that the state and related ethnic and 'racial' categories (still) possess considerable power to inflect hetero- and auto-identification processes in the modern globalised world and to produce processes of exclusion and inclusion. States may be losing sovereignty with regard to their ability to regulate socio-economic realities or social networks, but when it comes to membership and identification (and access to territories as well as the rights that go with this), they remain determinant. Likewise, nation-state and ethnic categories are not things of the past, but play a major role in shaping the contemporary world, even under contemporary conditions of globalisation. This means that we have to take the 'nation' in transnationalism very seriously indeed.

## Notes

- 1 There is another type that arises from a combination of low transnational mobility and high levels of local anchorage in the receiving country. However, it is not related to a strong collective ethnic and/or religious consciousness, but to a low or altogether absent one – or to identification with ethnic categories of the new country. This case could be considered as the ideal typical form of assimilation according to the dimensions developed by Gordon (1964). Here we do not speak of a 'transnational formation'.
- 2 This section is based on a study carried out in Switzerland in 2005 (Dahinden & Stants 2006), in which we conducted 70 interviews with cabaret dancers and twenty with key persons from federal and cantonal authorities, employment agencies and nightclubs. The dancers came from eleven different countries, with 49 being from Eastern Europe.
- 3 The interviews did in fact reveal that, in contrast to the dancers from Latin America and Thailand, dancers from Eastern European countries have an above-average level of education; some even had a university degree. This means that most of the Eastern European women working in cabarets in Switzerland come from a middle-class background, i.e. from families with high cultural capital.
- 4 Our interviews reveal that through these services, they earn an extra CHF 1,000 a month on average (approximately € 600).
- 5 The three circles model established regional priorities in the admission of immigrants as follows: from EU and EFTA states as the 'first circle', from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as the 'second circle' and from all other countries of origin as the 'third circle'.
- 6 It should be noted that after the war and in the context of return programmes, a significant number of Kosovo-Albanian asylum seekers did return home.





## Chapter 4

# Instrumentalising diasporas for development: International and European policy discourses

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### 4.1 Introduction

In recent years, politicians from many countries have seized upon diasporas as a migration policy actor. The recent upsurge of research evidence showing the policy relevance of the nexus between migration and development has contributed to this trend. A growing body of official documents of United Nations agencies, policy recommendations of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Bank studies on remittances, OECD work and research conducted by numerous academic institutes has turned the attention of policymakers to the role that migrant and ethnic communities and individual migrants play in the development of countries of origin.

The High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006 allowed the UN to play the role of facilitator between home and host countries. Discussions were then moved forward by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (2007 in Brussels, 2008 in Manila). This, in turn, has generated a world process for regularly discussing the ways and means to maximise migration's development benefits and minimise its negative impacts. Diaspora actors perceived as organised entities are partners in this debate, although their representation and legitimate definition still pose a challenge.

A recent IOM survey (IOM 2006) meant to help governments of developing countries identify weak points in their diaspora policy demonstrated how the governments often had difficulties determining who 'their' diasporas were, and were thus unable to put successful targeted policies in place. From a policy perspective, there is no homogenous definition that could be translated into a statistical toolbox and support the creation of a socioeconomic profile of a diaspora. Unfortunately, in the policy realm, diasporas tend to be identified with ancestry, without regard to existing academic definitions. Moreover, it seems that diaspora has gradually come to be identified with transnational community. The discussion about the blurred borders between transnationalism and

diaspora is addressed in several other contributions to this book (for summaries see the chapters by Faist and Bauböck), yet lies beyond the scope of the present chapter. It is important, however, to refer to the place these concepts hold in the discourse on migration and development policies and to observe the complex interests that lead to the prevalence of one over the other.

To grasp its full meaning we need to see the concept of diaspora as a category of practice (see Brubaker 2005). The perspective often applied – i.e. the practice of the given group creating itself through practices – needs to be reversed here, however. International and supranational organisations have offered themselves as entrepreneurs framing ‘diaspora’ in several ways that challenge the academic discourse. They have been shaping the image of migrant and ethnic groups as actors of development policy. This creative input of international and supranational organisations is inscribed in their perceived role as producers and guardians of a norm in various areas of public policy (see Barnett & Finnemore 2004).

In this chapter I will analyse the emerging functional definitions of diaspora against the policy-based indicators that help set its boundaries within the field of policy practice. My objective is to understand how diaspora is framed as a migration policy actor, and the EU case serves as an example. The migration and development agendas have been only recently drawn together in the European policy context. The new components of the comprehensive European immigration policy, traditionally associated with restrictive measures, include a number of elements linked to the development agenda, such as mobility partnerships and circular migration, in which diaspora plays an important role. It remains to be determined, however, which policy actors are needed to meet the policy ends, and thus how diaspora is defined.

As such, this chapter will look into exemplary documents produced by international and supranational organisations to see how they frame the actors of development policy. My discussion will focus on different uses of the terms ‘transnational community’ and ‘diaspora’. I will also examine several European Community documents pertaining to the subject and analyse the role that diasporas have in the European comprehensive migration policy.

## 4.2 Diaspora as the emerging policy actor

For many decades, diaspora was typically defined as something of a *context* in which a people lived ‘scattered as a result of a traumatic historical event’ (Cohen 1993: 5). The notion of violence as a traumatic collective experience was an inescapable element of the definition (and

exemplified by the Jewish and Armenian diasporas), as were the sentimental and emotional links to the home country and a strong sense of belonging. Most definitions also suggested that populations were dispersed between two or more host countries. When discussed in this traditional sense, diaspora refers to all extreme cases of dispersion, e.g. Palestinians, Tamils and Kurds, but does not include other forms of the contemporary migratory experience, such as economic migrants or students.

Despite the impressive broadening of this definition over the last twenty years – from the particular paradigmatic experience of a few ethnic groups to an expanded and more flexible understanding of the term (see Brubaker 2005; Faist in this volume; Bruneau in this volume) – none of the existing definitions could meaningfully inform public policymaking to help define the functional boundaries of diaspora. The indicators proposed by many scholars are not easily translatable into policy terms. The classic definition of diaspora rests basically on Sheffer's (1986) three proposed criteria: the dispersed group must hold a distinctive collective identity across international locations; the group must have some internal organisation of its own; the group in dispersion must keep ties with the homeland, be it symbolic or real. Adjustment to changing realities allowed for modifications of this understanding of diaspora, first, by introducing a notion of voluntary migration as in the case of Sheffer's *ethno-national* diasporas (1995: 9) or Cohen's *diasporic communities* (1997); and, second, by easing the requirement of internal organisation, as proposed by Cohen, for whom it is a collective identity that keeps diasporas together in contemporary times. It was still unclear, however, whether migrants involved in transnational practices can be seen as members of diasporas. Safran (1991) defined diasporas as *ethnic minority communities*, as opposed to *migrant communities*, focusing thereby more on the degree of settlement of the group. He proposed a number of indicators to define diaspora including the triadic relationship of the communities to a homeland, a host country or other countries of diaspora settlement (see also Vertovec 1999) as well as a shared memory/vision/myth of the homeland, alienation from the host country and permanence of the 'myth of return'.

Recently, however, a growing body of literature succeeded in reformulating the definition, framing diaspora as almost any *population* on the move and no longer referring to the specific *context* of their existence (see Schnapper 1999; Vertovec & Cohen 1999; Castles & Miller 2003). There is thus less reference to, for example, the *Chinese in the diaspora*, yet we can read more often about the *Chinese diaspora*. Van Hear, Pieke and Vertovec (2004: 3) provide an all-encompassing definition of diaspora:

populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries, and among destination countries.

This formulation makes diaspora hardly distinguishable from a transnational view of migrant communities (see Vertovec 1999; Faist in this volume). Following the observations of Glick Schiller (1999), transnational community can be seen as a migrant community whose members engage freely in real networks linking them to their home country. This relationship is neither mythical nor visionary; it is lived through practices of everyday life.

In the field of political science, it is the term 'diaspora' that has been used often to refer to the political engagement of certain groups and the process of their re-identification (see Koinova this volume). In the sphere of political practices, diaspora is presented as an overarching cognitive frame of sometimes very diverse groups (see Brubaker 1996, 2005). It seems that 'diaspora' has moved out of the realm of abstract nouns and become a *mot-clé* to indicate quite concrete, albeit diverse, concepts, such as diasporic communities, diaspora organisations and individual members of diasporas – possibly all at the same time (see Brubaker 2005; De Haas 2006).

This personified diaspora can act as an agent of development policy. The personification brings to the forefront people who have a migration history or memory thereof, as they constitute the basic link between development and migration policy. In the logic of migration policy, it is only the inflow of foreigners that matters, and thus only non-nationals can create the nexus between the two policies. Nationals of ethnic origin are subject to the same policies as non-ethnic nationals but none of these groups can be the object of a migration policy. Consequently, the nexus between migration and development policies might not be necessarily defined as a diaspora. The fine line between transnational communities and diaspora is thus again blurred by addressing as diasporas the very same groups of first-generation migrants who have been identified as transnational in much of the academic literature.

Current policymaking calls for functional and mostly under-theorised ideas that are elaborated in many competing discourses by international organisations. The recent rise of diaspora as an actor within migration policy is a prime example of this trend. There is thus a practical question to ask: what are the boundaries of this instrumentalised diaspora?

### 4.3 Method of research and analysis

The methodology followed in my research involved a combination of approaches. The main focus was on qualitative analysis of documents<sup>2</sup> pertaining to the European migration policy. The material consisted of the relevant preparatory documents from the years 2000-2007 (i.e. European Commission proposals and opinions, initiatives by member states, EU Council common positions, legislative resolutions of the European Parliament, opinions of committees, other opinions and recommendations) and relevant EU Council conclusions. Supporting documents include decisions issued by the Executive Council of the African Union, UN resolutions on international migration and development, UNDP project descriptions and IOM policy recommendations. The analysis is based on the assumption that the 'migration and development nexus' really means that migrants or people with migrant origins participate in implementing development policy. This participation makes them actors of development policy. I was interested to see, first, how these actors were defined in migration policy terms, and I thus looked for indicators based on the standard migration policy categories: legal status, citizenship, ethnic or national origins, duration of stay in the host country, access to legal employment, level of skills, remittances. Second, I assessed the extent to which the above-mentioned documents respected the classic academic definitions. In the texts I thus looked for specific indicators, such as membership in a diasporic organisation, subjective feeling of belonging and 'triadic' relations.

The basic research material was supplemented with information on EU assistance to migration and development (e.g. an AENEAS report, Thematic Programme on Migration and Asylum official guidelines). To get a better understanding of the institutional and social context of diaspora engagement in the framework of the European migration policy, several targeted expert interviews were conducted<sup>3</sup> and supported by additional questionnaires.

#### 4.3.1 *The definition of diaspora for public policy purposes in the international arena*

It is difficult to agree upon who first used the term 'diaspora' in relation to the development agenda, especially given that international migration and development have been joined in the discourse of international organisations for well over a decade now. There is no doubt that the UN, in particular, made an effort to intensify debates on these issues. In their numerous resolutions,<sup>4</sup> international migration has been consistently linked to the development agenda.

Surprisingly, and contrary to expectations raised by public discourse, the language of UN documents revolves around 'transnational communities' as the main development policy actors, not diasporas.<sup>5</sup> The Report of the Secretary General 60/871 of 18 May 2006 on international migration and development devotes several sections to 'transnational communities', which are referred to as the actors for development policy with an important impact on the home countries. The report does not provide any straightforward definition of the term. Nevertheless, by giving examples of successful members of transnational communities, it describes a development policy actor as a long-term legal resident of the host country, with ethnic and/or national ties to the home country, who is employed legally and possesses funds or skills to offer for its development. The actor's citizenship or membership in a diasporic organisation or subjective feelings of belonging are not mentioned.

If the UN has been prudent in avoiding multiple terminology in its official texts, other organisations have used the terms 'transnational communities' or 'migrant communities' and 'diaspora' interchangeably and abundantly in their policy documents.<sup>6</sup>

The IOM has been the most vocal advocate of widening the definition of diaspora. Ionescu (2006) offers an exhaustive discussion of the term based on the IOM report 'Survey on engaging diasporas for development' completed in 2006. When delineating the concept, Ionescu uses several indicators based on the migration policy statistical toolbox. She argues ultimately for the utilitarian criterion: diaspora is a resource and thus the ultimate defining indicator is whether the actors engage in development policy. Diaspora includes practically anybody with a migrant background who contributes to the development of the home country. Such a person can be included regardless of his or her legal status and country of birth,<sup>7</sup> does not need to be established in the host country as a permanent resident, does not need to have citizenship of the country of origin, does not need to be involved in any migrant association (although it helps, as collective bodies can be most easily be engaged as partners for policy projects), but should maintain primarily economic, not necessarily political or sentimental, ties with the home country. Consequently, she defines diaspora as 'members of ethnic and national communities, who have left, but maintain links with, their homelands' (Ionescu 2006: 13).

It is noteworthy that the UN and IOM approaches define actors in development policy as individuals – the notion of collective identity is less important, a community member acts on a voluntary basis, following his or her own values. Both see these individuals as linked no longer by traumatic experience or symbolic ties, but by a pure and positive readiness to act in economic terms.

These deliberations on the level of international organisations had an impact on national governments, e.g. the Philippines and India, which have become increasingly interested in the link between migration and development. However, it is the African Union (AU) that offers arguably the best example of an organised response to the issue of definition.

Sub-Saharan African countries, the major target of development policies, responded to UN calls for a migration and development nexus by launching a process to define an African diaspora. In its decision,<sup>8</sup> the AU Executive Council called for an elaboration of the definition by experts from the AU member states and 'Diaspora' (the AU always capitalises the word in this context). The definition was then elaborated during a series of expert meetings and consultations, and eventually officially adopted.<sup>9</sup>

The debates were focused on four principles: African diaspora must be defined by bloodline or heritage (African, not country-specific), must be linked to the processes of migration and must be historically inclusive but exclusive of people not committed to the development goals. The definition finally agreed upon states the following:

The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.<sup>10</sup> The definition is very broad, in the spirit of the one proposed by international organisations. Moreover, it dismantles another classic element of academic definitions – the link to a nation or ethnicity. A pan-African approach is a basic feature of the diaspora with which the AU would like to work.

This wide approach is not necessarily shared by members of diasporic organisations, who would prefer to see the pool of participants restricted – mostly to people who feel a genuinely strong link with their origins (they indicate a threshold up to the third generation) and who have a strong national or ethnic identity. Pan-Africanism is not always present in this discourse.

To debate these issues and also to determine further steps, the AU has held a regional consultative process in various parts of the world (including Europe). The AU's current efforts are focused on shaping the regional representation of the African diaspora. The search for an interlocutor who would fit the definition has proved to be challenging, yet necessary for progress on the migration and development agenda.<sup>11</sup> The AU has also concretely translated this commitment by having diaspora representatives elected as members of its Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

Interestingly enough, in the international arena, the distinction is made between, on the one hand, diaspora as an actor of development policy and, on the other, diaspora as a potentially destabilising factor or



element undermining peace in the country of origin, as studied by comparative political scientists and international relations scholars (see Collier 2000; Collier & Hoeffler 2000; Koinova in this volume). The instrumentalisation of diaspora as an actor of development policy ignores security issues and the historical record of diaporas engaging in conflicts in the home country. Such an approach is a consequence of the fact that the discourse has been framed mainly by development and migration specialists. Focusing on the positive side of diaspora intervention, they largely ignore its possible negative impact.

The discourse of international organisations has blurred the meaning of diaspora and merged it with the characteristics ascribed to transnational communities. The UN's initial attempt to use the term 'transnational community' to describe migration and development policy actors has not been taken up by the growing number of policy initiatives. Most interestingly, it is now quite accepted that the term 'diaspora' refers to both migrant and ethnic communities. Diaspora has thus become an all-encompassing concept, the boundaries of which are still being negotiated by various policy actors. International organisations acting as policy entrepreneurs favour a broadening of the scope of 'diaspora'.

#### *4.3.2 Diaspora as an actor in European comprehensive migration policy*

The EU entered the field of migration and development policy only recently. Its position has been influenced strongly by development discourse. The largest group of migrants from developing countries in the EU are from Africa; they also have the strongest visibility due to media focus on human trafficking via the Mediterranean Sea. The tragic events in Ceuta and Melilla in 2005<sup>12</sup> have opened up discussions with African countries on migration issues and, given the strong development context of the root causes of migration, have pushed the EU towards a policy approach that would acknowledge the importance of the migration and development nexus. Thus, the need to actively involve diasporas came to the forefront.

The problem with this engagement lies in a clear division within the European comprehensive migration policy between an internal and an external dimension. Both focus, to an important extent, on migrant and ethnic communities and involve them as European policy actors, but their scopes differ. Moreover, they use different terminology when addressing the respective target groups. This divide is especially visible in the relation between integration policy and the migration and development field of the so-called 'global approach to migration'.

Integration of admitted immigrants (though not refugees) has been the hallmark of more consolidated European responses to immigration,

in response to the acknowledged failure of integration of migrants in the EU, their social alienation and potential for radicalisation. In the early days, the non-integrated, discriminated and vulnerable groups of migrants and groups of migrant origin were seen as potential security threats (Huysmans 2000). The integration project, therefore, was a reaction to the perceived danger of disrupting allegedly stable and homogenous societies. Though not directly anchored in the Amsterdam Treaty or the Hague Programme,<sup>13</sup> two directives especially strengthen harmonisation in this area of intergovernmental policymaking: those on family reunification<sup>14</sup> and those on the rights of long-term residents.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, legislation prohibiting discrimination and promoting equality has also been high on the agenda.<sup>16</sup>

On 19 November 2004, on initiative of the Dutch presidency, the EU Council adopted its set of Common Basic Principles on Integration, which were later elaborated in the Common Agenda for Integration.<sup>17</sup> A number of practical tools, such as the network of National Contact Points on Integration and the Handbook on Integration, promote a consolidated agenda in this field, and the Integration Fund provides financial support for the implementing actions.

The Common Agenda for Integration addresses in many of its proposals the members of migrant communities, i.e. people with direct migrant experience. Ethnic communities made up of EU nationals of ethnic background are not included in this perspective. The most important feature of the EU approach is thus a distinction between EU citizens and non-EU citizens. The dividing line is the legal status of an individual in the host country, so that, as a result, migrants are defined as third-country nationals within this framework. The term 'migrant community' as used in this document is thus significantly narrower than an ethnic community (the former includes only migrants and their descendants who are non-EU citizens, while the latter includes both). The integration of EU nationals of immigrant origin is not a matter for EU immigration policy but for EU social policy (hence social cohesion policies). Thus, the public policy response to potentially threatening diasporic communities is distributed across different fields.

The documents pertaining to integration policy usually focus on individual rights and individual efforts to integrate. Migrant communities as collective units are not presented as the policy's principal addressees. In the recent Report on Integration,<sup>18</sup> which lists successful programmes on integration in the member states, immigrant communities are explicitly mentioned only twice.<sup>19</sup> They are, however, implicitly indicated as partners more often, e.g. with regard to initiatives concerning religious communities.

Since this policy targets internal actions, it does not deal with migrants as purely transnational individuals. There is no clear interest in a

diasporic potential, thus home country loyalties are not highlighted in this frame. The focus is on the cultural and racial distinctiveness that may precondition inclusion in the host society. Only the link between an individual or his family and the destination country is of importance. Where it exists, the community in which migrants participate can become an important interlocutor of integration policy, as integration is defined as a two-way process.

Diaspora emerges only in the context of the external dimension of European migration policy. It becomes a real policy actor in the Global Approach to Migration, defined as 'a balanced, global and coherent approach, covering policies to combat illegal immigration and, in cooperation with third countries, harnessing the benefits of legal migration'.<sup>20</sup> The policy, which has been developed since 2006, aims to formulate comprehensive and coherent mechanisms that address a broad range of migration-related issues, enriching the justice and security policies with a development and external relations angle to enhance dialogue and cooperation on migration with third countries. In the first stage, it focused on the countries of Africa and the Mediterranean. As of its July 2007 conclusions, the EU Council under the German presidency extended this policy approach to the eastern and south-eastern regions of Europe. The approach encompasses three dimensions: cooperation with third countries in migration management, supporting the fight against illegal migration and migration and development.<sup>21</sup>

Diaspora is perceived as a crucial element of the third dimension. Prior to 2002, in the EU documents, the term 'diaspora' was used in so-called Country Strategy Papers or specific country reports, primarily on economic subjects. There, diaspora was mentioned as a source of revenue and an important factor for stabilising local and regional growth.<sup>22</sup> The nexus with the development agenda, however, brought the notion of diaspora to European comprehensive migration policy. Diaspora became an important policy actor and its representation shifted from a mere mention to actual offers of involvement.

A mantra of EU-level documents for several years now has been to create a triple-win situation: the host country gains through labour, the home country gains through co-development and the migrant gains through support for individual initiatives.<sup>23</sup> A focus on the development agenda as a major innovation to the traditional restrictive approach has been further pursued in a communication on circular migration and mobility partnerships between the EU and third countries.<sup>24</sup>

The 2002 communication<sup>25</sup> mentions diaspora in the context of its possible role in development. But only in the September 2005 communication on migration and development<sup>26</sup> is diaspora fully present and its meaning circumscribed for European policy use.

The definition of diaspora given in footnote 17 of this communication is broad and is in the spirit of the ideas presented by Ionescu (2006). It focuses merely on the question of birthplace and nationality (although it also underlines the importance of an individual's emotional link to the homeland). It does not directly address questions of legal status, employment, skills, duration of stay or belonging to an organisation. Nevertheless, the actions proposed in the text to mobilise diaspora for development delineate the concept and give quite precise characteristics of the new policy actor.

First, the diaspora is seen as a transnational community, and it is this transnational character that guarantees the success of development initiatives. Such an approach echoes the traditional triadic relationship. Moreover, the transnational character of diasporic organisations is further accentuated when it is a matter of their political engagement in the development strategy of the home country at three levels: the country of origin, the EU country of destination and the EU. The members of such a diaspora need to be recognised in the EU legal system to be able to get through to the EU level. They would therefore generally have to be EU citizens or long-term residents, not temporary or circular migrants who are third-country nationals.

Second, according to the text, diaspora members are not necessarily migrants themselves. People with a migration history are framed as members of migrant communities; and people of ethnic background are labelled as members of ethnic communities. Still, it is not entirely clear in the text whether migrants are considered something truly different from diaspora members. In some parts of the communication, it is stated that currently active migrants and diaspora members could be considered as development policy actors so long as they are active.

Third, legal status and resident status, in particular, is introduced as an indicator of membership in a diaspora. Among other initiatives, the European Commission proposes mapping and mobilising diasporas. Thus, it must be understood that it refers only to those staying and working legally. The proposed data collection on diasporas implies actual counts rather than estimations. Interestingly enough, there is no discussion of how to define diaspora in order to gather the relevant data, or even from where the data can be gathered. When discussing 'migration profiles' (a proposed data gathering tool described in Annex 8), the communication does not put forward any proposal to this end either.

The fourth trait of diaspora is the organisational side. The constant use of the term 'member of diaspora' juxtaposes individual and atomised migrants with the diasporic community. This is an important aspect, as the European Commission invites member states to identify representative interlocutors in the diaspora to engage in development

projects. They must represent an organisation that is eligible, and has enough authority, to be a partner in the development policy of its country. Such organisations should be trustworthy and well established, for partnership in projects usually means managing funding.

Fifth, the diaspora members are seen as a source of contributions to their countries of origin. A substantial part of the text is devoted to financial remittances, associated with first generations (i.e. migrants), but also with the transfer of skills and productive investment, which applies to second and third generations as well. In this context, the European Commission promotes the idea of temporary return of qualified diaspora members. Although the communication points out the voluntary character of diaspora members' contributions, it is implied that the emotional link to the country of origin and the readiness to contribute are the key elements of diaspora identification.

In all other relevant EU documents, these characteristics of diaspora members are implicit, especially in discussions of the instruments of migration and development policy, i.e. circular migration and mobility partnerships.<sup>27</sup> In the case of circular migration, diaspora members (defined as long-term residents or members of ethnic communities) are supposed to work for the development of the country of origin through temporary outward migration from the EU, while temporary migrant workers (who are not seen as diaspora members) engage in inward migration. By contrast, mobility partnerships<sup>28</sup> propose to mobilise consolidated diasporas for development policies.

Still, it is not entirely clear who will be the final user and implementing actor of the policy. Rooted and established diasporas very often have nothing in common with newly arrived migrants, and subsequent waves of migration create distinct and closed communities. It seems the idea for the migration and development agenda is to overcome these differences, to have a less diverse set of interlocutors on the other side, united by a common goal.

The main problem with the way in which diaspora is conceived in these documents is that this ideal type applies to very few migrant and ethnic groups in the EU. The conditions of high levels of internal organisation and regularised legal work and residence status are probably met by only a few settled communities (e.g. the Turkish diaspora and also some well-established groups within the African diaspora). Restrictive immigration policies encourage undocumented migration from faraway countries or the pendular (shuttle) migration of legal visitors from neighbouring countries who engage in undocumented work. The real challenge lies in reaching out to these people to foster migration and development and to create an interlocutor (in a process similar to what the AU is pursuing). Another difficulty is the apparent focus on the nation-state as the unit of analysis, and consequently a necessary condition for

diaspora-building. This might pose a problem in the case of recent migrants from extremely weak or very new multinational states who do not necessarily see themselves as members of the national community associated with their home country (Schwartz 2007). EU support for diaspora within the boundaries circumscribed by the indicators discussed above could influence directly the self-identification of diasporas and their members. It is probable that as a result of this process there will be a proliferation of more or less standardised organisations competing for the financial support, as has happened in several other policy areas.

It remains to be seen how the availability of funding and the importance given to the role of diasporas can change the existing diaspora groupings into fully fledged actors of European migration policy who serve the migration and development goals. A recent EU-funded project implemented by UNDP focuses on strengthening diaspora as an actor of development in sixteen countries included in the European Neighbourhood Policy and in sub-Saharan Africa. Not many of them have clearly defined diaspora communities in the EU, and those who do have so far not engaged in a process of defining representatives and legitimate interlocutors. The incentive to organise can have positive impacts on many migrant communities that, to date, do not perceive themselves as diasporas and have weak internal structures.

Inevitably, the divisions not only between internal and external dimensions but also between migration policy and social policies are blurred, since diaspora as defined and used in the documents consists to a great extent of EU citizens. Most prominently, for policies within the external dimension, the same migrant or ethnic groups are no longer perceived as a security threat, but as a valuable asset. The 2005 communication on the external dimension of migration policy<sup>29</sup> stresses the importance of recognising the link between members of the diaspora and their country of origin. Similarly, the communication on migration and development<sup>30</sup> of the same year indicates integration as a part of a diaspora mobilisation policy.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the current use of the term 'diaspora' in EU documents in its most common public policy context: the development and migration agenda. This discourse shapes the understanding of the term by policymakers and average citizens alike. Diaspora is seen here a category of practice that can reorient existing self-identification of the relevant groups.

In the scholarly literature, the paradigm of diaspora as nation-in-exile went through several transformations. This has left us with a set of

ambiguous characteristics, including the dispersion of a group sharing a common national or ethnic origin across two or more places, the maintaining of a network linking all destinations, symbolic or real links to the home country and emotional identification with it. The common complaint of academics and researchers is that a definition encompassing all these aspects is too vague to be useful for theoretical purposes or for empirical operationalisation. It also overlaps too broadly with current approaches in the field of transnational studies.

Policy documents adopted at the international level have an impact on how the distinction between transnational community and diaspora is framed in public discourse. In fact, their impact seems to be the elimination of any such analytical distinction, as 'transnational community' is not a part of the discursive game. It is the 'diaspora' that has been assigned all transnational traits and characteristics. This conception of diaspora is inclusive and refers to migrant *and* ethnic communities. In general, it also establishes only three important conditions for becoming a diasporic actor of development policy: first, an ethnic or national origin; second, a capability to contribute to development in the country of origin; and, third, a readiness to do so. The most important dimension of diaspora is the economic one. The ties to the homeland can no longer be symbolic or purely political: they need to be beneficial, first of all, for the country of origin and, secondly, to the diaspora members themselves. Such an approach brings to light the importance of transnational networks and everyday transnational practices of individuals and groups. This treatment of diaspora as a resource may seem limiting, as the central values of cultural identity, symbolic belonging, sentimental ties, etc., are not accentuated.

In European migration policy, the migration and development nexus has been recently promoted as an important area of intervention. The tools of the Global Approach to Migration, including circular migration or mobility partnerships, focus on diaspora as a policy actor. In this context, diaspora is defined more narrowly than by international organisations: apart from the importance of national or ethnic origins, and the capability and readiness to contribute, membership in diaspora organisations is required. On this basis, European policymakers can define their target group and provide support for its activities. It is quite important to understand, though, that while diaspora is welcome as a European migration policy actor in its external dimension, in the context of cooperation with third countries, it remains marginal – or is perceived as a problem – in the European discourse on the integration of third-country nationals.

What must be stressed is that the division between migrant communities and diaspora that is present in some academic discourses, as well as in EU migration policy, has been blurred in the context of the

**Table 4.1** *Development policy actors as defined by the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration and the European Commission*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>UN</i>	<i>IOM</i>	<i>EC</i>
Legal status	relevant (residence in host country)	irrelevant	relevant (residence in host country)
Citizenship	unclear (if relevant, it is of the country of origin)	irrelevant	irrelevant
Ethnic or national origins	relevant	relevant	relevant
Duration of stay in host country	temporary migrants excluded	all included	temporary migrants excluded
Legal employment	relevant	irrelevant	relevant
Skills to offer	relevant	relevant	relevant
Funds to offer	relevant	relevant	relevant
Membership in an organisation	unclear	irrelevant	relevant for funding
Subjective feeling of belonging	unclear	relevant	irrelevant
Transnational characteristics	'triadic relationship' irrelevant	'triadic relationship' irrelevant	'triadic relationship' relevant for funding

migration and development agenda. Given the framing power of international organisations and their role in norm diffusion, the increasingly vague or unclear division between diaspora and transnational communities could soon overtaken by a process of essentialisation that is policy-driven. Governments eager to follow the highly political and subsidised migration and development agenda have recently embarked on identifying and delineating the target groups. More research is needed to see if the norms created at the policy level will have a real impact on the self-identification of diaspora organisations and their members.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist for their helpful criticism and constructive suggestions.
- 2 In this chapter, I present only the final results of the analysis. For a more detailed analysis and full list of secondary sources see Weinar (2008).
- 3 The interviewees comprised two representatives of international organisations, seven representatives of African diaspora and migrant organisations in Belgium and the Netherlands, two representatives of African diaspora organisations in the UK and one representative of an African migrant organisation in Italy.



- 4 For example, Resolutions 49/127 of 19 December 1994, 50/123 of 20 December 1995, 52/189 of 18 December 1997, 54/212 of 22 December 1999, 58/208 of 23 December 2003, 59/241 of 22 December 2004, 60/227 of 23 December 2005.
- 5 In the context of the UN initiative 'Digital diaspora network for Africa and the Caribbean in North America and Europe', 'diaspora' is used as synonymously with 'expatriate population'. This is the only place where the term appears in the official reports. See Report of the Secretary-General 60/318 of 31 August 2005 on human resources development.
- 6 See, for example, *Conclusions of Migration and Development Conference, Brussels 15-16 March 2006* (bodies involved were the government of Belgium, the IOM, the World Bank and the European Commission) and the Global Commission on International Migration report 'Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action', October 2005, available at [www.gcim.org](http://www.gcim.org).
- 7 A case in point, one way of counting diaspora is by including migrants who are registered through instruments such as Mexico's Matricula Consular, an ID card accessible to undocumented Mexican nationals in the US.
- 8 Decision Ext/EX/CL/Dec.6 (III) of Executive Council, Sun City, Republic of South Africa, 21-25 May 2003.
- 9 Decision of the Executive Council on the Definition of the Diaspora (EX/CL/221 (VII)).
- 10 'Report of the Meeting of Experts on the Definition of the African Diaspora', Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11-12 April 2005.
- 11 Often one condition for accessing migration and development projects is met by involving diaspora groups identified by the home country partners.
- 12 In September 2005, large numbers of African migrants tried to climb over fences separating the Spanish enclaves from Moroccan territory. At least six people died in clashes with security forces.
- 13 The Hague Programme: Strengthening freedom, security and justice in the European Union, Official Journal, 2005/c 53/01.
- 14 Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification, Official Journal L 251, 03/10/2003: 0012-0018.
- 15 Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents, Official Journal L 016, 23/01/2004:0044-0053.
- 16 Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, Official Journal L 303, 02/12/2000: 0016-0022. Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Official Journal L 180, 19/07/2000: 0022-0026.
- 17 Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, A Common Agenda for Integration – Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union, COM(2005)389.
- 18 Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration COM(2007)512.
- 19 Ibid: 17.
- 20 European Council Conclusions December 2005: 3.
- 21 Communication from the Commission to the European Council on the Global Approach to Migration, and Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – The global approach to migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy, COM(2006)0735.

- 22 For example, the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – European Agency for Reconstruction. Annual Report 2000, COM(2001); Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Implementation of Macro-Financial Assistance to Third Countries in 2001, Com (2002)352.
- 23 See, for example, Commission Communications: Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with third countries – COM(2002); Policy Coherence for Development – Accelerating progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals – COM(2005)134; Migration and Development: Some concrete orientations COM(2005)390.
- 24 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – On circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries, COM(2007)0248.
- 25 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Integrating migration issues in the European Union's relations with third countries, COM(2002)703.
- 26 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Migration and Development: Some concrete orientations COM(2005)390.
- 27 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – On circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union and third countries, COM(2007)0248; Council Conclusions on circular migration and mobility partnerships of December 2007.
- 28 'Joint Declaration between European Union and Republic of Moldova' and 'Joint Declaration between EU and Cape Verde', both signed on 5 June 2008.
- 29 Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Priority actions for responding to the challenges of migration – First follow-up to Hampton Court, COM(2005) 0621: 7.
- 30 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Migration and Development: Some concrete orientations COM(2005) 390. The division between the two dimensions is, however, maintained, as the text sends the reader to the Communication on Common Agenda for Integration for details on integration policy.



## Chapter 5

# Interrogating diaspora: Power and conflict in Peruvian migration

*Karsten Paerregaard*

‘Diaspora’, ‘diasporic’ and ‘diasporisation’ have become trendy terms among anthropologists, sociologists, migration scholars and advocates of multiculturalism in the past fifteen years. Among the most prominent thinkers within this trend are Gilroy (1993) and Clifford (1994b), whose influential works from the early 1990s triggered a wave of new migration studies with a focus on the transnational and diasporic dimensions of contemporary migrant populations.<sup>1</sup> The contention of these authors is that culture cannot be examined as a geographically confined construct but must be studied as a dispersed phenomenon, a view that leads to the argument that all people are diasporic, at least potentially. Truly, diaspora ‘has become a global word that fits the global world’ (Dufoix 2008: 108). Such use of the concept of diaspora offers new possibilities for understanding contemporary social change in an increasingly globalising world. But it also raises important methodological and conceptual questions concerning the definition of the terms we employ in our analyses and the many political and moral agendas they propel. In effect, migration scholars face the predicament of addressing a concept that, in the real world, is often employed in divergent and hegemonic ways and, within academia, is associated with emancipation and diversity. As Amit and Rapport state:

If primordialism and essentialism are key elements in the efforts to define the ideological rationale and boundaries of diaspora, it is ironic to see cultural theorists, who have so denounced the exoticisms of the colonial and orientalist gaze, now embrace them as vehicles for subaltern political liberation. (2002: 54)

When using the concept of diaspora, migration scholars consequently must be explicit about how they employ the term analytically and, at the same time, distance themselves from its use by other people for political and other purposes. In Brubaker’s (2005: 12) words ‘we should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice’ that

redefines and remakes the world and ‘only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis’, that is, to describe the world.

The aim of this chapter is to scrutinise the predicaments that the scholar faces when applying the concept of diaspora by discussing its usefulness in the study of global migration. My suggestion is that diaspora serves as an analytical category to study particular aspects of migration processes rather than as a general term for all forms of hybridity and mobility in the contemporary world. More specifically, I propose that we use diaspora to explore migrant populations as communities that are constantly negotiated and contested and that exclude as much as they include, rather than as entities that are bounded and homogeneous and that automatically embrace all migrants from a particular nation. To illustrate this, I draw on my own Peruvian migration data exploring how diasporic networks and ties shape the conflicts, commitments and organisations in which migrants living in the United States, Spain and Argentina engage. I develop this analysis by first discussing the analytical problems of using diaspora as a general concept to understand social fluidity and identity construction in a globalising world and suggesting an analytical framework to explore global migration. I then investigate three kinds of power struggles and contestations among Peruvians in the US, Spain and Argentina. My particular focus is on the role that the bilateral ties, which migrants in the three countries create with Peru, and the multi-sited ties, which they establish with Peruvians in other parts of the world, play in these power struggles and contestations. Finally, I discuss the possibilities of using the concept of diaspora to understand Peruvian migration. I conclude by proposing that it is primarily the Peruvian migrant elite who claim to belong to a diasporic community and that well-off migrants construct such an identity by excluding large numbers of working-class and less privileged Peruvian migrants.

My data indicate that diasporic populations often are very heterogeneous and that diasporic activities tend to be based on social class. These insights resonate with a recent study by Waldinger, Popkin and Aquiles, who found that the hometown associations of Salvadoran migrants living in Los Angeles are torn by a double loyalty to both the sending and receiving society and are therefore ridden by conflict (2007). My data complement these findings, however, by showing that, whereas the transnational dilemma of belonging to two places at one and the same time tends to generate stress within small cross-border migrant communities, such as the Salvadorans, class and ethnic conflicts within the migrant communities – as well as between these communities and the state of the sending country – are the main source of conflict in larger diasporic populations.

## 5.1 Diaspora as an analytical concept

'Diaspora' is not limited to academic use, unlike its twin concept of transnationalism, a term coined by US scholars whose main research interest lies in migration processes between the US and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. Quite the contrary, diaspora has a long tradition in European political and cultural history, and it is only recently that migration scholars have taken an interest in the concept (Dufoix 2008: 4-34). Semantically, the two concepts refer to different yet overlapping social phenomena and processes, which explains their often inconsistent and confusing use in migration studies. Transnationalism, on the one hand, indicates the links that migrants establish to their country or region of origin, which allows them simultaneously to create new lives in the receiving society and maintain strong identity relations to the sending society (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999). Although it is true that transnational links are far from new in the history of international migration, modern technology makes it possible to make more systematic use of such ties and maintain them much longer than previously (Smith 2000).

Diaspora, on the other hand, means dispersion and indicates the many bonds that – in response to either discrimination or assimilation in the receiving societies – bring together people who share the same migration history but are scattered in different locations. In its classic definition, diaspora implies a people retaining a collective narrative of suffering based on an experience of persecution and dispersion in their mythical homeland that continues to make up a central point of reference in their creation of identities (Safran 1991). Moreover, diaspora is commonly understood as a people or historical collectivity defined in terms at once historical and religious, such as the Jews, the Greeks and the Armenians. Typically, they themselves refer to an origin myth vested with an almost sacred value, which gives the term a strong ethnic connotation (Stratton 1997). Diaspora has also conventionally been associated with certain economic and social activities in the host society. One was that of the merchant and another was that of the intellectual, both giving rise to the image of diasporic minorities as intermediaries, also labelled 'middleman minorities' (Bonacich 1973; see Schnapper 1999).

After 1968, the meaning of diaspora was broadened to include communities that scholars had once labelled immigrant, nomadic or exilic. In the words of Tölölyan: 'Where once were dispersions, there now is diaspora' (1996: 3). On the one hand, this change in use of the term is partly the result of a reorientation of identity from within the communities themselves that increasingly embrace the diasporic discourse. As Clifford (1994b) reminds us, membership in a diaspora is now viewed

as a strategy of empowerment because it entails the mobilisation of international support and influence both in the homeland and the host society. On the other hand, this new proliferation of the term 'diaspora' is also due to a shift in paradigm that took place in the 1990s, instigating scholars to explain ethnic relations and identity processes as the outcome of globalisation and transnationalisation. In effect, a growing number of scholars exploring migration, multiculturalism and ethnicity have recast their work as diasporic studies; this simultaneously allows them to capture the deterritorialised and fluid nature of modern life and account for the local embeddedness and particular circumstantiality continuing to shape people's lives in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, precisely because diaspora is associated with origin and primordialism as much as with mobility and hybridity, it implies an immanent tension between belonging and travel. The concept has therefore erroneously compelled many scholars to study migrants, refugees and exiled people through the same analytical lens that anthropologists, sociologists and other scholars conventionally used to explore small-scale and marginal population groups (Amit & Rapport 2002).

As a result, diaspora has become a new buzzword for culture and identity as well as a conceptual vehicle to claim rights on behalf of people who suffer from oppression or discrimination. Indeed, unless we want to lump together in one category all forms of migrant communities and identities, we need to be more specific when labelling global movements and networks as diasporic. Does doing so actually help us understand the changes that take place within the migrant communities we study? Or, does it lead to reification of transnational migrant groups as homogenous or static social units and representation of their engagements and concerns as the mere replication of national and ethnic identities on a global scale? This again raises critical questions regarding the definition of our analytical unit and, more importantly, how we study the process through which societies and communities emerge and evolve into self-conscious constructions. As Amit and Rapport point out, collective identities 'whether defined in terms of nation, ethnicity, occupation or political movement, are all too often invoked to fill the vacuum of location once filled (literally) by place' (2002: 3). Thus, when labelling particular emigrant groups as diasporic, we need to ask whether we are referring to the mere demographic fact that a certain fragment of a national population lives within a territory controlled by other nation-states. Or, are we implying that this group has developed its own political and cultural communities and created its own form of identification (Vertovec 1997)?

In this chapter, I argue that although modern technology prompts a growing proportion of the world's population to move – making travelling and migration a dominant dimension of modern life – this does

not imply that all societies are diasporic or that all nations or cultures generate diasporic identities. Rather than employing the notion of diaspora indiscriminately to all kinds of transnational networks and identities, I propose we follow Butler, who identifies an isolated set of categories for analysis applicable to all diasporas so as to help us not only distinguish diasporas from other movements of people, but also consider them a framework for the study of a specific process of community formation (Butler 2001: 194). In Butler's definition the following dimensions of diasporic research are particularly relevant as analytical categories: the reasons for the dispersal, the relationship with the homeland and the host lands, interrelationships with other communities in the diaspora and comparative studies of different diasporas (2001: 195). I suggest we use Butler's approach in a slightly revised and reduced form. In my approach, to be diasporic implies that a migrant population consists of communities in several countries or cities outside the homeland and that these communities, on the one hand, maintain a degree of economic and political autonomy as an immigrant community in the host societies and, on the other, create networks and ties to not only the country of origin, but also migrants in other parts of the world. Essentially, this makes the global web of relations linking migrants in multiple destinations together the glue of diasporic populations. Hence, in contrast to the notion of transnationalism, which I use to explore the bilateral connections migrants construct to their country of origin, I understand diasporic networks and engagements as the multilateral networks and ties migrants create across regional and national boundaries outside their homeland (Faist 1999: 46-47).

But how do we operationalise such an approach and apply it in empirical research? Moreover, how do we identify those aspects of a migrant population that actually are diasporic and those that are non-diasporic? To answer these questions, I shall try to apply this approach in my own study of Peru's migrant population and discuss to what extent the ties and networks Peruvian migrants create are diasporic. I therefore devote the remaining part of the chapter to the analysis of three cases of power struggles that have instigated Peruvian migrants to create and engage in multilateral networks and ties. The first case, which I label 'diaspora and politics', involves a political conflict caused by a labour migration chain to the US, stretching back more than three decades. The second case, 'diaspora and solidarity', deals with a sense of commitment that propels migrants to collect and remit money to help their fellow countrymen in Peru. The third case, 'diaspora and class', examines the networks and institutions that migrants create in the US, Spain and Argentina. Although the data I draw on were collected several years ago, the three cases shed light on ongoing processes of power struggles in Peruvian migration that continue to cause conflict



and tension among migrants (see Altamirano 2006; Berg & Paerregaard 2005; Berg & Tamagno 2006; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores del Perú 2005).<sup>2</sup> A common theme running through my analysis is the fragmented nature of Peruvians' diasporic relations and the practices that tend to divide migrants anywhere they settle. More specifically, the three cases show that, on the one hand, migrants' attempt to construct a unifying identity as Peruvians is ridden by ongoing ethnic and class tensions and, on the other, their transnational engagement in their homeland reproduces old political conflicts with the Peruvian state, and generates new ones. In effect, the case studies prompt us to ask: politics for whom? Solidarity for whom? Diaspora for whom?

## 5.2 Diaspora and politics

Over the past 30 years, over 3,000 Peruvians have worked on US sheep ranches on the basis of an H-2A visa. Currently, almost 2,000 are working as sheepherders in the US for the Western Range Association (WRA) and other agencies. Many of them have worked on as many as five contracts each lasting three years. Their labour migration meets different economic needs and links distinct lives between the First World and the Third World. At one end of the migration chain, the economic and political crisis in Peru generates a constant supply of rural workers in desperate search for alternative sources of income. At the other end, the sheep ranching industry in the US looks for cheap labour to do work North Americans will not accept. The two ends are connected through a network of Peruvian herders who travel repeatedly between the US and Peru. In the North, the ranch owners, the WRA and US immigration authorities control the flow of Peruvians who enter and leave the US on H-2A visas; in the South, an informal network of family and household relations assures the reproduction of the labour force and provides new recruits (Paerregaard 2002). A critical aspect of this migration chain is a patron-client relationship between the herders and their employers. Not only does it spur Peruvians to continue working in the US and call upon new family members, but the dynamics are used by US ranch owners and the WRA to discipline the herders to endure harsh working conditions in the mountains and the desert and to deter them from running away. Although this relationship creates anxiety about upsetting the ranchers – who often exploit the herders' fear to scare them from complaining about their conditions, quitting the job or returning to Peru before the contract expires – it also instigates some herders to protest.

In 1995, a group of Peruvians living in Bakersfield, California, were led by ex-herder Victor Flores to create the Unión de Pastores

Ovejeros,<sup>3</sup> an organisation for defending the rights of herders and disseminating information about their situation in the US and Peru. The union received public attention in Los Angeles the same year it was formed because Peruvian newspaper *Perú de los 90* began publishing a series of articles about the herders' situation.<sup>4</sup> The news caused an intense discussion within the Peruvian community in California about solidarity among fellow migrants and the moral and legal rights of immigrants in the US.<sup>5</sup> To many of them, it came as a surprise that herders from remote villages in the Peruvian highland were working as legal immigrants in the US in human conditions worse than they were used to in Peru.

The scandal widened when *Perú de los 90* reported that the Peruvian consul in Los Angeles previously had ignored the herders' complaints. The news also reached one of Peru's major dailies, *La República*,<sup>6</sup> while *Caretas*,<sup>7</sup> a weekly magazine in Lima, reported on ill-treated Peruvian herders in the US. Lima television channel *Canal 4* produced a documentary on Peruvian herders in California in which two reporters interviewed a Basque ranch owner who revealed the conditions in which his Peruvian employers were living. The documentary sparked yet another scandal among politicians in Lima, where President of Congress Martha Chávez referred to the herders' situation in a heated debate about human rights in Peru. Similar reports on Spanish-language television channels in the US caused moral indignation among Hispanic minority groups. In 1996, the Peruvian ambassador, together with officials from the US Department of Labor, paid a personal visit to several ranches employing Peruvian labourers.

The debate about economic exploitation and human rights abuses of Peruvian herders in the US that emerged in the wake of the Bakersfield herders' union formation and Flores' accusations against the WRA reflects the economic and social complexity of global migration networks. Once the Peruvian community in Los Angeles, the media in Peru and the US and politicians in Lima engaged in the controversy, the herders' situation became the concern of economic, ethical and political interests of very different kinds. Whereas the Peruvian consul in Los Angeles was superseded, the editor of *Perú de los 90* won an award for its coverage of the conflict. Meanwhile, Chávez played on national sentiments in Peru, accusing the US government of double standards because it criticised the human rights politics of the Fujimori government while accepting sheep ranchers' abuses against Peruvian herders. For its part, the political opposition in Peru traced the cause of the tragedy to the failure of the Peruvian government in solving the country's economic problems.

Although Flores received the most attention, he was not the only ex-herder to articulate the interests of the herders in public. In 1989,

Teodocio returned to Peru after having completed a three-year work contract in the US. Unlike Flores, who called on the US and Peruvian authorities to keep a close eye on American sheep ranchers' use of Peruvian labour and, if necessary, bring it to a halt, Teodocio has argued in favour of Peruvians taking work as sheepherders in the US, which he thinks represents a unique opportunity for them to earn American dollars. In Lima, he made friends with the Peruvian engineer in charge of recruiting herders and occasionally offered him advice and support in selecting new candidates. As the public debate of the herders' situation in the US became more heated in the late 1990s, Teodocio and a group of ex-herders in Huancayo warned that Flores' critique of the WRA and the sheep ranchers eventually would encourage them to look for herders in other countries. Together they formed an association of former WRA workers, the *Asociación de Ex-Trabajadores de la Western Ranch Association*, with the aim of speaking in defence of the WRA and the ranchers. In 1997, Teodocio was invited to present his viewpoints at the committee for human rights formed by Peru's congress. He also met with Flores and representatives from the Peruvian government to discuss the future of the migration programme. At the meeting, an informal agreement was made among the WRA, the engineer and the Peruvian government to respect the herders' rights, and it was decided to allow the migration programme to continue with few changes.<sup>8</sup> Within a short time, the public and political interest in the herders' situation faded away and the number of herders travelling to the US continued to increase.

The labour conflict and the scandal it caused involved a broad range of actors including migrants, journalists, officials and politicians outside as well as inside Peru. At one point, the conflict also caught the attention of other Hispanics, which prompted Peruvians in California to create multilateral ties outside Peru and think of themselves as belonging to a wider immigrant community in the US. Once Peruvian journalists and politicians engaged in the dispute, however, the matter was transformed into a national issue of contention in Peru. In effect, it changed meaning from being a multilateral engagement concerning all migrants to a bilateral affair between the herders and the Peruvian state.

### 5.3 Diaspora and solidarity

Many Peruvians feel obliged to contribute to the material wealth of their countrymen in times of scarcity and crisis. This is expressed in their organised attempts to collect financial and material help from the Peruvian government or from public or private institutions in Peru.

This became evident in 1998 when El Niño hit Central and South America, causing huge human losses and material damage in Peru. Road connection between cities of the northern coast and the rest of the country was interrupted, leaving thousands of people whose homes and fields had been flooded beyond the reach of emergency assistance. The disaster caused by El Niño also jeopardised the government's policy to spark economic growth, and created uncertainty about whether the country's recent economic recovery and its emergence from a recession could be sustained. News about El Niño and images of its devastating effect rapidly reached Peru's emigrant population around the world and stirred many migrants. Peruvian associations in the US began to collect aid on behalf of Peru's victims of El Niño. Initially, individual migrants reacted in an ad hoc way, encouraging friends and neighbours to join their efforts to help countrymen in Peru, but soon Peruvian associations throughout the US followed their example. In Miami, a number of Peruvian migrant associations organised a collection of clothing, food, medicine, tools and money that was sent via the country's national carrier at the time, Aeroperú, and several private Peruvian freight companies. During the collection, which took place on 14 and 15 February 1998 at a small plaza in front of a shopping centre in Kendall, Western Miami, known among Peruvians as Plaza Perú, representatives from different Peruvian associations and the Peruvian consulate in Miami were present. To attract the attention of the Peruvian community in Miami, several celebrities were brought in – including a famous Peruvian model. According to one local Peruvian newspaper, more than twenty tonnes of clothing and other items were collected over the two-day affair.<sup>9</sup> Other newspapers labelled the collection a success because it encouraged cooperation in a common cause by a broad variety of Peruvian associations and institutions in Miami, which might otherwise have acted on their own and with different agendas.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, many participants also expressed their satisfaction that Peruvians in Miami had managed to arrange a collection of such dimensions in collaboration with the Peruvian consulate.

Migrants in other parts of the US also planned collections to aid the victims of El Niño. On 22 March 1998, the Asociación de Instituciones Peruanas en los Estados Unidos y Canadá (AIPEUC), an umbrella organisation encompassing all Peruvian institutions in the US and Canada, arranged a nationwide telethon. It was organised locally by each of AIPEUC's chapters, in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, New York, Chicago and Montreal. The president of the Los Angeles chapter, which represents one of the largest Peruvian organisations in the US, invited a variety of Peruvian artists, musicians and dance groups to entertain guests at a rented banquet hall in Hollywood. Alongside the mandatory entrance fee of twenty dollars, participants were encouraged to make

donations. A majority discreetly dropped ten- or twenty-dollar bills in collection boxes, but a few participants were invited up on the stage to hand over their donations in public. These contributors were all successful businesspersons, professionals and known members of the Los Angeles Peruvian community who each donated up to a thousand dollars. Simultaneously, other collections were arranged by independent Peruvians associations in the area, such as the Arequipa Club in Orange County. To stimulate competition between Peruvian communities across North America, the leaders of the APEUC updated organisers and participants on the results of the campaign in other areas, thus fostering a sense of simultaneity and shared commitment among Peruvians in North America. The outcome of the many contributions was later communicated to Peruvians in different parts of the US and Canada through local newspapers.<sup>11</sup>

The migrants' sense of solidarity, however, was directed towards not only their countrymen, but also Peruvians living outside Peru.<sup>12</sup> Periodically, this concern would trigger debates and campaigns within the migrant communities as they sought to demonstrate solidarity with Peruvians who suffer social injustice and discrimination in the host society or otherwise fall victim to misfortune. In January 1998, a group of Peruvians in Miami formed a committee with the aim of supporting countrymen who struggle to regularise their undocumented status in the US. The committee was founded by the editor of Miami's Peruvian newspaper *El Chasqui* and the leader of the Peruvian American Coalition which, inspired by the success of the Cuban community in Florida, urged Peruvians in the US to use their right to vote to elect a countryman to congress.<sup>13</sup> The committee's political message was that legal immigrants have a moral obligation to help undocumented immigrants because illegality is a universal condition that may affect the lives of all immigrants. By the same token, some of the organisers who use local immigrant newspapers in Spanish to communicate their message contend that such a sense of solidarity should transcend national identities and include immigrants from all Latin American countries.<sup>14</sup> So far, however, the resonance of these attempts to create horizontal ties across social classes and ethnic groups and incite the formation of a national identity among Peruvians immigrants in different parts of North America has been limited.

In other parts of the world, similar movements have been formed among Peruvian migrants to create a collective consciousness of themselves as a separate demographic unit and to mobilise for political purposes. In Argentina, the *Movimiento de Peruanos en el Exterior* ('Movement of Peruvians Abroad') was established in 1999. In collaboration with other emigrant communities in the US and Canada, its aim was to promote the candidacy of an emigrant in the 2001 elections

for Peruvian Congress.<sup>15</sup> The movement's political message is that because of migrants' contributions to Peru's economy through remittances, the Peruvian government has a moral obligation to support struggles against discrimination and marginalisation suffered by immigrants in their new countries of residence. Such a message encourages migrants to think of themselves as a politically homogenous group who share the same interests regardless of where they live or who they are.<sup>16</sup> Other Peruvian organisations in Argentina are also concerned with the welfare of their countrymen, though for very different reasons. In the 1950s and 1960s, hundreds of young Peruvian males went to Argentina to study. Many returned to Peru, but others stayed and either married Argentine women or brought their wives from Peru to settle in Argentina. Some of these women who today are well established and integrated in Argentine society have formed an institution called the *Asociación de Damas Peruanas*, which does charity work for newly arrived Peruvians in need of help.<sup>17</sup>

Migrants' efforts to collect aid on behalf of the victims of *El Niño* in Peru and support their country of origin in time of war and international conflict recurrently encourages them to come together and create links to Peruvians in other cities and countries, thus forging multilateral ties outside Peru. These attempts, however, often cannot be sustained for very long, partly because migrants are internally divided and partly because they distrust the Peruvian state. Furthermore, although migrants' engagement in Peruvian domestic politics has prompted Peruvians in some countries to establish connections across national boundaries, these ties are ridden by class conflict and focused on migrants' involvement in Peru rather than in the countries where they live. Hence, rather than compelling migrants to create diasporic networks and ties, their sense of solidarity makes them turn attention towards their country of origin.

#### **5.4 Diaspora and class**

In many of the communities that Peruvians establish outside Peru, migrants reproduce the power relations and ethnic tensions that divide Peruvian society into economic and social classes. This is evident from the many migrant organisations and associations that Peruvians create in their new countries of residence. Whereas some of these institutions are open for all Peruvians who want to come together – to play football, dance or watch folklore shows – others recruit their members according to either regional origin or socio-economic class. The latter are therefore more exclusive, which has important implications for their capacity to forge diasporic networks and ties. In cities such as Miami, Los Angeles,

New York and Paterson, New Jersey, migrants often form organisations based on their regional attachment in Peru. Associations may be divided along two lines: those based on migrants' attachment to their native village and those based on attachment to their home province or department. Village-based associations are, above all, committed to the migrants' place of origin, often being engaged in an intense relationship of economic and social exchange with their fellow villagers in Peru. Organisations based on migrants' attachment to their home province or department, on the other hand, tend to attract a more heterogeneous group of migrants of both urban and rural backgrounds.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to social, cultural and regional institutions, class-based organisations normally recruit their members from Peru's urban middle or upper classes, being of mostly *mestizo* or European descent from Lima and other major cities in Peru. These institutions can be of various kinds, though are usually private clubs, professional organisations, chambers of commerce or charity organisations. They exist in places with more established Peruvian communities such as New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Buenos Aires and Santiago, places that have been the destination of Peruvian emigration for almost half a century. Thus, during the 1950s and 1960s, hundreds of young men from Peru's middle- and upper-class families travelled to Spain and Argentina to study medicine, law, agriculture, etc., at universities there. Many decided to stay. They eventually married local women, got good jobs as lawyers, physicians or veterinarians and became part of Spanish and Argentinean society. However, most of them maintained their Peruvian identity by forming associations. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Spain and Argentina received a new wave of Peruvians headed by a large number of working-class migrants from Peru's urban shantytowns emigrating at a time of economic and political crisis. Today, many of those once newly arrived live on the margins of the host society, forming an emergent proletariat of immigrant workers in Spain and Argentina. Hence, their migration and livelihood experiences are radically different from those of their predecessors, a difference that often leads to strife within Peru's immigrant communities in these countries.

This variety of migrant organisations reflects Peruvians' possibilities for creating multilateral networks. Thus, migrants from Peru's rural areas and urban shantytowns tend to organise in regional and ethnic associations, which serve as vehicles to sustain ties to their place of origin and engage in transnational relations of exchange with their relatives in Peru. Rarely, however, do they develop links to migrant communities in other parts of the world. If they do, these bonds are usually not only secondary to the relations that link them to the homeland, but also take the form of trans-state rather than transnational connections (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1182). Migrants from Peru's better-off strata, on the

other hand, are more likely to establish relations with other migrant groups because their social and professional status in Peru eases the problems of obtaining stay and work permits in host countries and because they suffer less from social and cultural prejudices than other Peruvians. Their privileged position enhances their mobility and allows them to create migrant institutions, based on class and profession, and form networks with Peruvians from their own strata in other parts of the world. This is clearly evident in the Peruvian American Medical Society (PAMS), one of the oldest migrant institutions in North America, founded by Peruvian medical doctors who migrated to the US to work during the Vietnam War.<sup>19</sup> Today this association has around 1,500 members with its own office in Chicago and a number of local chapters in the US.<sup>20</sup> Similar institutions were created by Peruvians who studied at Spanish and Argentinean universities in the 1950s and 1960s and ultimately stayed abroad to establish families. In Spain, migrants formed an organisation called *Convención Nacional de Médicos Hispano-Peruanos*, which comprises approximately 800 Peruvian doctors and has seven chapters in Spain's major cities. In Argentina, Peruvian doctors are organised in the *Asociación Peruano-Argentina de Médicos*, which is also divided into local chapters. The main chapter in Buenos Aires represents between two and three thousand Peruvian doctors. Apart from the annual meetings these institutions organise nationally for their members, a global gathering for all Peruvian doctors living outside Peru has been arranged on a number of occasions.<sup>21</sup>

In several North American cities, an exclusive group of male Peruvians has formed associations for former students of the Leoncio Prado Military Academy, Peru's most respected military school in Lima.<sup>22</sup> These associations function as institutional anchors of a global network of ex-students of Leoncio Prado – so-called *Leonciopradinos* – who today are architects, engineers, doctors, bank directors, businessmen, etc., living in the US, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and different parts of Europe. They also help *Leonciopradinos* who want to emigrate in finding jobs and getting adjusted to their new environment. Thanks to the support they receive from the network and their frequent communication on the internet and by email, many former *Leonciopradinos* feel as much at home in their new countries of residence as in Peru. As one such graduate explained it:

We are very well organised because we are all professionals with good jobs. We use the internet and communicate by email. We help each other whenever there is need. They help me finding a job and later I help somebody else.

Truly, this exclusive sector of Peru's emigrant population has created a stable network of diasporic connections that allow migrants to feel Peruvian without sustaining active ties to their homeland.



## 5.5 A Peruvian diaspora?

This chapter has explored how Peruvian migrants negotiate and engage in three types of conflicts and power struggles and investigated how these negotiations and engagements compel them to forge diasporic networks and ties. The first case examined a political conflict that emerged because of the economic exploitation and physical abuse of Peruvians who work as sheepherders in the US. It discussed how the conflict caused a scandal within the Hispanic media in the US and a critique of the Peruvian state because it failed to provide the herders legal and moral assistance. However, even when the scandal reached its peak and became an issue of contestation – first, between the Peruvian consulate, the press in Los Angeles and media in Lima and, later, between the Peruvian and the US governments – the networks and ties it activated were mainly bilateral. Rather than mobilising Peruvians in other parts of the world and thus prompting migrants to engage in multilateral networks across regional and national boundaries, the conflict became a tense issue between migrants and the Peruvian state, thereby forging transnational ties at the cost of diasporic ones.

The second case focused on Peruvians' commitment to help their countrymen in Peru and other places. This commitment prompts them to organise collections of aid to help the victims of natural disasters in Peru and to arrange campaigns to support fellow migrants struggling to regularise their illegal status in a host society. Such activities generate a feeling of solidarity with Peruvians not merely in Peru, thus reinforcing ties to the homeland, but also in other parts of the world. As such, they provide migrants with a notion of simultaneity in time and homogeneity as a social group. Peruvians' awareness of constituting a global social unit, however, is susceptible to the vicissitudes of politics and dominating rhetoric of nationalism in the homeland. During times of political conflict in Peru, the Peruvian government often plays on the patriotism of the country's migrant population and its loyalty to the homeland, which tends to lead to its division, rather than unification. In effect, migrants' feelings of unity and shared national identity seldom last long. Although many support with great enthusiasm the humanitarian assistance campaigns that Peruvian organisations launch from time to time, tensions often break out once the aid and solidarity become an object of political controversy.

The third case examined migrant institutions and the social class relations that transcend them. Whereas some social and cultural organisations are open to all migrants, others recruit Peruvians according to class, ethnic and regional affiliation and therefore divide rather than unite them. In fact, the only groups of migrants that have developed multilateral networks linking Peruvians in several locations across

regional and national boundaries are the associates of professional migrant organisations, such as medical associations in the US, Spain and Argentina and the more confined and exclusive networks of former students of Peru's elite schools and military academies. In Peruvian migration, then, diasporic networks and ties emerge from the same conflicts and struggles that divide Peruvians in Peru into social classes and ethnic groups and remain a privilege in the hands of the most powerful sectors of the country's migrant population. Indeed, to this small group of trained professionals and economically well-off Peruvians, it may be argued that the idea of diaspora exists in the form of a cosmopolitan identity (see Hannerz 1996: 102-111). This notion of a dispersed ethnic community united by a shared loyalty to the homeland is based, however, on the exclusion of the vast majority of fellow migrants. In other words, it is the identity of an urban elite from upper-class neighbourhoods in Lima who often claim descent from European immigrants. As indicated in this chapter, their success in mobilising other social classes and ethnic groups has so far been limited.

The fact that only a small group of Peruvians has created multilateral networks and ties and engaged in diasporic activities can be attributed to several factors. First of all, Peruvians tend to disperse across many countries and cities, which undermines their ability to establish organised migrant communities in the receiving countries and to create firm economic, social and political ties with their country of origin or between different migrant settlements. A second factor is that, with the exception of the US, which has been the destination of Peruvian migrants since the mid-1950s, it is only twenty years ago that Peru's exodus gained momentum. In addition, Peru's migrant population is extremely heterogeneous and includes migrants of both sexes, as well as of almost all social strata and ethnic and regional groups. Moreover, unlike some governments in the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America that put migration on the top of their political agenda, the Peruvian state has only recently begun to show concern for its emigrant population (Berg & Tamagno 2006), a concern that makes it into the headlines of Peru's public media only rarely. In fact, the flow of information between the country and its migrant population is surprisingly thin and, except for recurrent estimates of migrants' remittances and their impact on the country's development, the only news that appears in the Peruvian media are occasional reports about migrants who have been caught by the police or immigration authorities because they have broken the law or travelled illegally.

## 5.6 Conclusion

It is now pertinent to return to the opening question of this chapter: to ask what kind of networks and ties Peruvian migrants forge when they engage in conflicts and power relations. The material discussed indicates that Peruvian migration is characterised by few, if any, diasporic aspects and that these are restricted to the exclusive activities and representations of a small group of migrants. Considering that the majority of Peruvians who have emigrated in the past twenty or 30 years belong to an emergent working class of immigrants in the First World, this observation underscores Schnapper's (1999: 33) point that 'proletarian populations are undoubtedly less likely to maintain themselves as a diaspora'. Moreover, my material demonstrates that migrant communities often constitute extremely heterogeneous populations divided by class, ethnicity, education, gender and age, which provides support for Brubaker's (2005: 12) suggestion that rather than essentialising the term 'diaspora' by giving it a specific meaning, 'we should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim.' Finally, the material reminds us that, as scholars, we should be careful not to use the term 'diaspora' to portray the life of contemporary migrants in ways that pull the wires of a political discourse to serve the interests of exporting companies, remittance agencies, politicians, development planners and journalists rather than those to whom the term actually refers: the vast majority of migrants struggling daily to cross national boundaries, legalise their papers, find jobs and create new lives in foreign places.

## Notes

- 1 Ong states that diasporic studies 'look at the subjective experience of displacement, victimhood, cultural hybridity, and cultural struggles in the modern world' (1999: 12).
- 2 I collected the bulk of data between 1997 and 2001, with supplementary data gathered between 2003 and 2005. I used a multi-sited strategy to conduct field research among Peruvians in the US, Spain, Italy, Argentina, Chile and Japan. The multi-sited approach allowed me to explore global relations and diasporic identities through in-depth ethnographic studies in selected countries and research sites.
- 3 The union is associated with the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA) of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).
- 4 *Perú de los 90* Vol. 9: 2, 3, 4 (February, March, April 1998). See also *Los Angeles Times* 17 August 2000: A3+A23; *Oregon & The West* 15 July 2001: A21 + A24.
- 5 Many Peruvians living in the US have either entered the country illegally or overstayed a tourist visa and live and work as domestic servants, gardeners, waiters, construction workers, etc., in the big cities.
- 6 *La República* 16 August 1996: Local.
- 7 *Caretas* 20 June 1996: No. 1419.

- 8 Whereas Flores was successful in calling the public's attention to the matter, he failed to mobilise the support of herders in the US and Peru. Though many agreed that the ranch conditions were reprehensible, they also shared Teodocio's concern that the controversy jeopardised their future prospects for working on labour contracts in the US, to thus save capital and create an alternative source of income. The dispute, then, not only disclosed the predicaments inherent in Flores' strategy – through media attention and with the help of Peruvian politicians, to organise the herders in fighting the WRA and, in so doing, to fight the US sheepherding industry on the whole – but also demonstrated the complexity of economic, social and political interests involved in global migration practice.
- 9 *El Chasqui* No. 3: 98 (February 1998).
- 10 *Peru News* No. 2 (March 1998).
- 11 *Última Hora* Vol. 1: 5 (April 1998); *El Panamericano* Vol. 5: 72 (April 1998); *Actualidad* Vol. 6: 82 (April 1998); *Peruvian Times* Vol. 7: 13 (March 1998).
- 12 Peruvians also showed concern for their home country during the 1995 war Peru briefly fought against Ecuador over the border separating the two countries. Rather than uniting migrants, as happened in 1998 when Peruvians collected money to aid the victims of El Niño, however, the conflict with Ecuador tended to divide Peruvians into two groups: those supporting President Fujimori in his martial rhetoric against neighbouring Ecuador and those in favour of a pan-American – rather than national – identity, seeking a peaceful solution of the conflict.
- 13 A similar movement, called La Plataforma Socio-Política Peruana Americana ('Peruvian American Socio-Political Platform') was created in California in 1998 (*Perú de los 90* Vol. 9: 2 (February 1998)).
- 14 *La Crónica* No. 5: 42 (January 1998), *El Chasqui* No. 3: 98 (February 1998); *Peru News* No. 2 (March 1998).
- 15 *El Heraldó del Perú* No. 3 (October 2000); *Gaceta del Perú* No. 217 (October 2000).
- 16 One of the movement's leaders is brother to former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo. The candidate promoted by the movement as candidate for Peruvian Congress was the owner of the biggest Peruvian remittance agency in Argentina, Argenper.
- 17 Similar institutions exist in most US cities with a major concentration of Peruvian immigrants.
- 18 This division of regional associations is reflected in migrant institutions that evolve from rural-urban migration practice in Peru (Paerregaard 1997: 65-70).
- 19 PAMS also has a few Peruvians dentists in its membership.
- 20 Some members of PAMS deplore the fact that the institution attracts few new members. This can be attributed to the growing difficulties encountered by Peruvian doctors who have studied in Peru and later emigrate as they try to revalidate their academic degrees in the US. In effect, PAMS is increasingly becoming an institution for middle-aged or senior doctors that in time will fade away.
- 21 On several occasions, the global gathering of Peruvian medical doctors in the US has been held in Lima to support the development of medical science in Peru.
- 22 In Los Angeles there are two such institutions: Asociación de Ex-Cadetes de Colegios Militares del Perú and Asociación L



## Chapter 6

# A global perspective on transnational migration: Theorising migration without methodological nationalism

*Nina Glick Schiller*

### 6.1 Introduction

There is currently a large and growing body of descriptive studies of transnational migration. These studies document the many ways in which migrants and their descendants live their lives both within and across the borders of multiple nation-states. Often these studies seem curiously disconnected from both social theory and a series of powerful and contradictory narratives about migration and its consequences. In these narratives, migrants appear as destabilising or even criminal intruders into nation-states, or as coveted global talent, or as the last best hope of homelands whose development depends on migrant generated remittances. Rather than addressing these contradictions within the realm of social theory, mainstream migration scholars, especially those concerned with public policy, respond to contemporary attacks on migrants and migration by adopting the perspective of their respective nation-states. Arguing for the need for, or providing evidence of, the long-term trends towards integration, they accept national borders as the borders of society and as the necessary institutional nexus for citizenship, democratic rights or a social welfare state (Alba 2003; Esser 2001). For their part, many scholars of transnational migration, despite their descriptions of cross-border processes, have also displayed what Wimmer and I (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) have called a ‘methodological nationalist’ approach. They have responded to critiques of dual nationalities and transnational social fields by assurances that migrants with such ties and loyalties can and will rapidly assimilate (Portes 1999; Morawska 2002). In so doing, scholars of transnational migration contribute to the assumption – which has been foundational for much of migration scholarship – that the migrant/native divide is the fundamental challenge to social cohesion and the stability and welfare of the states in which migrants settle.

Meanwhile, politicians and journalists to an increasing extent directly defend the migrant/native divide by projecting an image of their nation-state as a normative cultural community. For example, in the United Kingdom, former *Financial Times* journalist and founder of the current affairs monthly *Prospect* David Goodhart, argues the following:

The justification for giving priority to the interests of fellow citizens boils down to a pragmatic claim about the value of the nation-state. Without fellow-citizen favouritism, the nation-state ceases to have much meaning. And most of the things that liberals desire – democracy, redistribution, welfare states, human rights – only work when one can assume the shared norms and solidarities of national communities.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I argue that if migration scholars set aside their methodological nationalism, transnational migration studies can contribute to social theories that elucidate the mutual constitution of the global, national and local. Migration scholarship can provide a global perspective on power that explains the relationship between the contemporary contradictory narratives about migrants that either demonise them or celebrate them. Rather than being evaluated as either good or bad, migration can be discussed as part of broader transnational processes within which nation-states are enmeshed and to which they contribute.

In the first section of this chapter, I elaborate a critique of the taken-for-granted use of the nation-state as a unit of analysis that underlies much of migration scholarship including that which addresses transnational migration. In the next section, I look to the literature on neo-liberal restructuring of capital accumulation within specific places. I argue that by highlighting transnational processes past and present and addressing institutionalised power, this literature can serve as a conceptual starting point for new perspectives on migration. Finally, I sketch some of the ways in which a new perspective, which I call a ‘global power analysis of migration’, can bring together the various apparently contradictory trends within migration discourses and scholarship, as well as explain their simultaneous emergence and relationships.

## 6.2 Weaknesses of migration scholarship

Building on several decades of scholarship around the construction and naturalisation of ‘national communities’, I use the term ‘methodological nationalism’ to critique the tendency of migration scholars to conflate the nation-state with a concept of society. By methodological nationalism I mean an ideological orientation that approaches the study of

social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states. Members of those states are assumed to share a common history and set of values, norms, social customs and institutions (Beck 2000; Chernilo 2007). Taking state borders as societal boundaries creates a mode of logic that makes immigrants the fundamental threat to social solidarity; natives are assumed to share uniformly common social norms. Because methodological nationalists project each state as not only historically discrete sovereign states but also separate societies, they portray migrants as arriving with particular distinctive national norms. Much of migration theory consistently disregards both the social and cultural divisions within each nation-state, as well as the experiences, norms and values migrants and natives share, because they are embedded in social, economic and political processes, networks, movements and institutions that exist both within and across state borders.

Because many migration scholars accept this kind of bounded thinking and employ a container approach to society, our relationship to migration debates often leads to an unquestioning acceptance of the underlying premises of a politics and public policy of exclusion. Migration scholars speak as though there are discrete national economies and as if what happens on state territory were a product solely or primarily of state policies. More fundamentally, as Castles notes (2007), migration theory stands apart from more general developments in social theory. It is for this reason that migration studies that examine global movements of people have been strangely silent with regard to recent developments in social theory. Such developments include an increasingly sophisticated scholarship about past and present periods of globalisation, a theorisation of a global network society, discussions of a second modernity, critiques of methodological nationalism and advocacy for methodological cosmopolitanism (Beck 2000; Castells 2000; Latour 2004; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci Pellegrino & Taylor 1998; Sassen 1991).

Even scholars of transnational migration or diaspora have often bound their unit of study along the lines of national or ethnic identities. They have generally failed to link their descriptions of migrant local and trans-border connections to analyses of new flexible modes of capital accumulation and the contemporary neo-liberal restructuring of space, self and modes of social legitimation. The end result is that their unit of analysis – often described as a ‘transnational community’ – becomes a migrating population defined and delimited by communal cultural identities that define a ‘transnational space’. It is for this reason, I believe, that so much of the scholarship about transnational migration is about identity formation or its persistence across borders (Levitt 2001; Pries 2001; Faist 2000b). These weaknesses have led scholars of transnational migration into two contradictory, equally untenable and



sometimes simultaneously held positions: the celebration of migrant-built remittance economies and the description of migrant transnationalism as an ephemeral first-generation phenomenon that portends eventual assimilation. It is no wonder, as Bauböck (2008b: 8) has noted, that policy discourses recognising transnational migration are so contradictory:

There seems to be little reflection on the diversity of orientations within migrant groups that do not identify themselves as diasporas. Moreover, there is little awareness of the tension between testing individual efforts at cultural integration as a condition of admission to long-term residence or citizenship and the hope that transnational ties can be instrumentalised for co-development and reducing emigration pressure. Frequently, ministries in charge of foreign relations and development pursue agendas that conflict with policies promoted by ministries of justice and home affairs.

In building a global power perspective on migration, the concept of transnational social field allows for more conceptual clarity. Transnational social fields are networks of networks that link individuals directly or indirectly to institutions located in more than one nation-state. These linkages are part of the power dynamics through which institutionalised social relations delineate social spaces (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller 2003, 2004, 2005). The term 'field' is used not metaphorically but, rather, as a means of locating individual migrants within territorially situated social relationships: taxation, employment, education, policing, property ownership, law and public policy, for example. The transnational social fields of migrants can contribute to, be shaped by or contest the local or transnational reach of various states' military, economic and cultural powers. The concept of transnational social fields I am advocating does not utilise Bourdieu's notion of fields as discrete domains of power. Instead, building on classic social anthropology and geographers' recent interest in networks, I focus on social relations that intersect and transform discrete territorially based and historically specific social spaces of local community, village, city or state (Epstein 1958; Mitchell 1969). Geographers have theorised the social construction of space in relationship to transnational networks, but their work has not been adequately utilised by migration scholars despite the popularity of spatial metaphors in transnational studies.

### 6.3 The constraints of current theoretical frameworks

To make sense of the contradictory policies that highlight and yet impede transnational migration, as well as to place migration within social theory in a way that is conceptually unconstrained by borders of nation-states, we need a global power perspective on transnational migration. A transnational perspective on migration that discards methodological nationalism and begins from a theorisation of global power has the following merits. First, it situates migration as one of numerous processes that both cross state borders and contribute to the constitution or restriction of state powers. Second, it recognises the continuing importance of states as actors within and across state borders. We cannot currently dispense with states as instruments to create and protect rights, to redistribute wealth and to protect public goods and services. The legal regimes, policies and institutional structures of power must be acknowledged in our scholarship and examined within a global power perspective. Third, this perspective recognises that states constitute only one set of institutions of power that extend transnationally. Financial conglomerates, NGOs, religious organisations, treaty-based organisations and corporations are also institutions of power that work across state borders. Finally such a perspective builds on, yet also critiques, theorisations of global networks positing that the world has been transformed into a space of flows.

To date, the theoretical frameworks used by migration scholars have been lacking in one or more of these four domains. Many fail to address power. It is strange that migration scholarship has had so little to say about the global exercise of power, since the question of power structures whether or not we even define a person who moves across state borders as a migrant. Clearly, those who have rights as citizens in states or confederations of states that dominate the world militarily and economically – namely the United States and the European Union – have been able to move to the rest of the world with few barriers. People from the rest of the world have not been able to return the favour. This makes them migrants and the subject of migration scholarship. It would seem, therefore, that migration scholarship requires a global perspective on power beginning with this basic disparity between states to examine what combination of forces fosters and maintains this inequality (Grosfoguel & Cervantes-Rodríguez 2002; Cervantes-Rodríguez 2009; Castles 2007; Mittleman 1994).

Even migration theorists who specifically acknowledge theoretical frameworks that look beyond the nation-state – world systems, world society or Braudelian world-scale theories – approach the global in ways that ultimately negate a global perspective on migration (Wallerstein 2004; Luhmann 1997; Braudel 1980). They negate this perspective by

maintaining distinctions between levels of analysis. A distinction between levels of analysis is conceptually inadequate for migration studies for several reasons. It perpetuates migration scholarship's penchant for discussing the connection between states and migrants as one of push-pull rather than as a single set of globe-spanning processes. A concept of levels of analysis ultimately reintroduces methodological nationalism and, with it, the assumption that processes within the boundaries of the nation-state can be analysed without reference to globe-spanning institutions of power.

For example, by arguing in terms of levels of analysis, Massey ultimately dismisses a global perspective from his multi-factorial effort to synthesise contradictory migration theories (Massey et al. 1998). Massey focuses on a 'migration process' with internal dynamics that constitutes a discrete field of study. Rich in data and insights into process, his approach encourages migration scholars to disregard the ways in which global institutions of power shape, and are shaped by, social relationships in specific localities.

Employing a similar logic Portes (2006: 8), a pre-eminent US migration scholar, in a recent paper on migration and development states:

At a higher level of abstraction, we find world-systems and other neo-Marxist theories that view labour migration as a natural response to the penetration of weaker societies by the economic and political institutions of the developed world. The concept of 'structural imbalancing' (Portes and Walton 1981) was introduced to highlight this process that takes multiple forms – from direct recruitment of workers to the diffusion of consumption expectations bearing little relation to local lifestyles and economic means.

If looking beyond the nation-state is conceptualised as a higher level of abstraction – that is to say, a macro-level analysis – then we are unable to observe and theorise the interpenetration between globe-spanning institutions that structure imbalances of power and migrant experiences within and across states borders. Yet, this imbalance of power both shapes the circumstances that compel people to migrate and simultaneously constitutes the conditions under which migrants attempt to settle and develop transnational social fields. The signing of NAFTA, which Portes (2006) in the same paper consigns to the macro-level, is not an abstraction. It represented the power of an imperial state – the US – instituting its agenda through its control of finance capital and military force. Capital is at its core a social relationship that links people together unequally within and across national borders. Notions of levels of analysis obscure this basic transnational aspect of daily life around

the globe, which not only penetrates states but also shapes distinct migrant social fields across and within states.

Even those social theorists who speak of world society have tended to focus their concerns about migration on their own nation-state and its institutional nexus in ways that make that state their unit of analysis. For example, Bommers (2005) claims that, following Luhmann, he is replacing 'a concept that understands society as a big collective/collectivity by a concept of modern world society'. The relationship between these nation-state systems and the world society, however, remain under-delineated and unclear in Bommers' migration theory, leaving the door open to a continuation of methodological nationalist framing of debates on immigration. For example, Bommers' arguments about migrant assimilation are accompanied by a list of institutions, many of which – even in the context of the EU – can only be sensibly read as remaining embedded in national regulatory systems such as the welfare system of individual states.

The main point of reference for assimilation is differentiated social systems:

organisations and functional realms like the modern economy, law, politics, science, education or health but not groups of (majority) societies. (Bommers 2005)

The weakness in Bommers' theorisation is not his insistence on the continuing significance of nation-states and national institutions. Rather, the problem is a failure to address the way local and national governance and the workforce have been reconstituted within a transnational institutional nexus to serve the broader needs of finance capital.

Even those social theorists who begin by embracing methodological individualism privilege the nation-state as their unit of analysis when they discuss migration. For example, Esser (2004) champions a rational choice framework that builds on methodological individualism. However, Esser places the onus of assimilation on the rational choice of the individual migrant who must come to terms with the structural conditions of the societies he or she faces. Generally, 'societies' for Esser are discrete countries that he describes as sending and 'host' societies. Hence, transnational ties are simply a sign of 'ethnic capital'. As Esser (2004: 1135) argues:

Immigrants have (or should have) an objective interest in assimilative actions and investments in receiving country capital, like formal education or the acquisition of the host society's language, and one would expect the same investment strategies to apply as for the indigenous population. The problems migrants

(and their offspring) face (in relation to most sections of the indigenous population) are obvious: what they mainly have at their disposal is ethnic group capital, like the sending country's language or ethnic social capital. However, ethnic group capital is clearly less efficient than receiving-country capital. By comparison, it is, in most cases, specific capital, because its usability depends on special circumstances, such as the existence of an ethnic community or a transnational network.

'Transnational' for Esser is simply another term for segregation because he cannot conceive of incorporation 'beyond' the nation-state. Simultaneous incorporation in more than one nation-state and society build on transnational social fields that connect various scales of governance (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004).

#### **6.4 Towards a grounded global power framework for migration studies**

There are several bodies of literature from which to draw in order to develop a global perspective on transnational migration. They can illuminate the current contradictory narratives on migration, but have not been used to address transnational migration within global fields of unequal power. Scholars such as Castells (2000) and Latour (2004), who trace networks of interconnections that are not confined to nation-states, provide the basis for an analysis of migrants' transnational social fields within the current historical conjuncture and their transformations of human relations. However, neither has addressed migration or migrants' encounters with regimes of borders, racialisation and dehumanisation. Beck (2007) provides a critique of methodological nationalism that privileges a global perspective and the role of migrants as transnational actors. He assumes that transnational migrants are cosmopolitan actors who necessarily and properly destabilise nationalist projects. Beck homogenises migrants and echoes the opponents of migration who argue that migrants' transnationality threatens the regime of nation-states. Migrants are not necessarily transgressive in their transnational social fields. They may engage in nation-state-building in one or more nation-states. They may reinforce or contribute to, rather than contest, neo-liberal projects. A global power perspective on migration must address the various positionalities migrants have assumed within attempts to implement neo-liberal capitalism and the types of contradictions these positions are currently engendering.

There is a scholarship that addresses unequal power and connects social forces that extend beyond individual states to the experience of

people in particular places as they contribute to the substantiation of both locality and nation-states. This literature emerges out of the analysis of uneven globalisation. It has been led by geographers concerned with the neo-liberal restructuring of governance, the processes of capital accumulation and the reinventing of cities and urban life. With few exceptions, such as the global cities literature, this scholarship does not address migration. Nevertheless, the research and theorisation contained in this literature can prove useful to the project of developing a global power perspective on migration.

Neo-liberalism can be defined as a series of contemporary projects of capital accumulation that, beginning in the 1970s, sought to reconstitute social relations of production, including the organisation of labour, space, state institutions, military power, governance, membership and sovereignty (Harvey 2005, 2006; Jessop 2002). Neo-liberalism has allowed for the creation of wealth by destroying and replacing previous relations of production, consumption and distribution, thus generating new forms of desire. The neo-liberal agenda reflected, therefore, more general processes of capital accumulation characterised by Marx as 'creative destruction'. There are always within capitalist economics contradictions between the need first to construct, and then to replace, previously built social relations, ideas, values, political arrangements and institutions that regulate, circulate and protect capital. The accumulated impact of the transformations wrought by these projects and the policies and technologies that accompany them can be called neo-liberal restructuring, while the policies that institute the transformations can be termed the neo-liberal agenda.

The term 'agenda' is useful because it reminds us of several aspects that have structured the contemporary moment and produced the current global crisis. Neo-liberal projects have taken the form of specific sets of ideas and policies that may or may not be successfully implemented. These ideas have been held, shaped, defended and contested by a range of actors – including social scientists – whether or not they are directly linked to policy. The broader projects involved not just the domain of economics but also politics, cultural practices, ideas about self and society and the production and dissemination of images and narratives. In terms of specific social policies that affect the quality of life for migrants and natives alike, neo-liberal restructuring has included a reduction in state services and benefits and a diversion of public monies and resources to develop private service-oriented industries from health care to housing (sometimes in arrangements called 'public-private partnerships'). It has also constituted a relentless push towards global production through the elimination of state intervention in a host of economic issues – from tariffs to workers' rights. Finally, the term 'neo-liberal agenda' and the work of geographers in exploring the

implementation of these agendas is useful because neo-liberal projects are implemented on the ground and differentially – depending not just on different national policies, but on specific local histories including that of migration.

By conceptualising the global restructuring of capital accumulation and its relationship to urban and state restructuring processes, migration theorists can examine the ways in which the migration process is shaped, in turn, shapes local space and is at the same time reflective of, and contributes to, transnational processes. They can address Castles' (2006: 1) call to analyse the way in which 'migration plays a central role in current global processes of social, economic and political change', as well as his observation that 'migration is both moulded by and helps to mould these global transformations'. At the same time, migration scholars will have an analytic perspective that does not dichotomise macro-level versus micro-level analysis, does not speak of levels of abstraction and does not make the nation-state the exclusive unit of analysis. That analytic perspective allows us to put migrants into the spaces where they live and to which they are connected through various social networks.

Of particular interest in this regard is a debate in geography about the meaning and utility of the concept of geographic scale (Brenner 1999; Herod & Wright 2001; Marston, Hohn & Woodward 2005). Previously, geographers worked with a concept of scale that portrayed the local as being nested within larger encompassing units, which often have political boundaries – municipalities, sub-state administrative units, nation-states, geographic regions such as Europe and the globe. Over the past few decades, geographers have had to confront a restructured world in which the implementation of neo-liberal agendas disrupted fixed notions of nested and territorially bounded political units. Cities became dynamic players within global fields of power and flows of capital and labour, globally marketing their urban brand and, in some ways, creating their own foreign policies and alliances (Brenner & Theodore 2002; Jessop 2001; Peck 1998). They competed in an effort to attract flows of capital and a mix of 'new economy' industries. New economy industries are ones that produce services demanded within the global economy, including the very consumption of locality in the form of tourism. Central to this new economy are 'knowledge' industries, which produce the workers, skills, technologies and consumptive patterns necessary to organise, aggregate and concentrate capital.

Geographers and scholars of the urban began to describe the neo-liberal rearrangements of governance of territory as 'rescaling processes' through which localities change the parameters of their global, national and/or regional connectedness so that they 'jump scale' (Swyngedouw 1992). The term 'rescaling' emerged as a way to address

the repositioning of the status and significance of cities, both in relationship to states and within global hierarchies of urban-based institutional power. Rather than understanding the local and global scale as either discrete levels of social activities or hierarchical analytical abstractions, as in previous geographies of space, 'the global and the local (as well as the national) are [understood to be] mutually constitutive' (Brenner 2001: 134-135).

The theorisation of rescaling provides a way to analyse questions of governance that neither ignores nor privileges nation-states. It allows for the acknowledgement that state sovereignty – never an accurate description of the differential powers of various states – is now more mythical than ever. But states remained players within neo-liberal restructuring. States were rescaled to play new roles by channelling flows of relatively unregulated capital and by participating in the constitution of global regulatory regimes enforced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and international financial institutions. At the same time, specific states such as those of the US and Western Europe remained the base for globe-spanning financial institutions such as the World Bank and the WTO. Currencies based in these states remained necessary for global transactions, albeit linked through the restructuring of finance capital to investment strategies of China, Japan and Middle Eastern oil states. A broader range of states including Russia and China, which maintained their position as military powers, contribute to the global dynamic through which capital accumulation is secured or protected.

As I have indicated, discussions of migration and migration policy generally have not been part of the study of the neo-liberal restructuring of governance and localities. While there are geographers, such as Katharyne Mitchell (2003), who have approached studies of single cities from this perspective, the full implications of this framework have not been broadly applied to migration studies. The one significant exception is the global cities literature (Friedmann 1986; King 1991; Sassen 1991). Looking at a small handful of cities, urban scholars have noted that their prominence has been linked to their dependence on the migration of highly skilled professionals and on migrants who staff the related service sector of the new economy. Global cities, however, often have been described as exceptions, as if all other cities and migration flows reflect only the dynamics of national terrains and policies. Yet, the scholarship on neo-liberal restructuring noted that all localities began to compete globally.

Constantly drawn into discussions of national migration policies, scholars of migration have not paid sufficient attention to the way in which the neo-liberal restructuring of specific localities shapes the way in which migrants live in a specific place. Neither urban geographers nor migration scholars have examined how migrants become active



agents of rescaling policies as they settle in specific places. Drawing from the literature on urban restructuring and repositioning, Çağlar and I (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009, forthcoming; Glick Schiller, Çağlar & Gulbrandsen 2006; Çağlar 2006; Glick Schiller 2005) argue that to differentiate and understand the dynamics of migrant incorporation and transnational connection in different cities, it was necessary to situate migration within an analysis of the neo-liberal rescaling processes.

While combining the scholarship on the neo-liberal structuring of space with migration studies in order to speak to the current apparently contradictory migration policies and their accompanying discourses and polemics, it is useful at the same time to draw on the emerging critique of migration and development. An increasing number of scholars – some in migration studies and others in development studies – have responded to current celebrations of migrant remittance economies by offering a potent critique of the policies of co-development and migrants as key agents of international development (Delgado Wise & Covarrubias 2007; Faist 2009d; De Haas 2007). These scholars have taken to task ‘the global lending community’: the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Fund and other regional banking interests. According to these major institutions, which structure the terms under which two thirds of the world’s countries have been able to obtain financing, migrant remittances can serve as a major source of capitalisation for growth in less developed states (Wimaladharma, Pearce & Stanton 2004). Those critiquing this development strategy examine how Europe and the US in previous eras of imperialism, as well as today, have drained wealth from less powerful regions of the world (Glick Schiller 2009). Transnational migration reflects this transfer of wealth. It is a strategy through which families from exploited regions attempt to meet their needs for housing, education, health care. Critics of migration and development policies look beyond methodological nationalism to understand the context of international migration as a product of uneven fields of power. However, these critics have not sufficiently addressed the specific and varying roles that migrants have been playing in relationship to neo-liberal restructuring and rescaling in both localities of departure and settlement or the forces that configure migrants’ agency. Nor have these scholars analysed the contradictions between migration and development policies and the efforts of states throughout the world to control migration and access to residency and citizenship as well as subject migrants to neo-liberal labour policies.

## 6.5 Explaining contemporary contradictory discourses

Migration scholars can begin to address the seeming contradictions I outlined in the beginning of this chapter if they pay more attention to the global role of power holders – including financial institutions, organisations and states that serve as base areas of capital. All of these centres of power play key roles in reconstructing and locally reconfiguring various forms of capital and labour. Facing ongoing contestation, those who hold power are intimately involved in the legitimation of their regimes of truth through national anti-immigrant discourses, the celebration of migrant remittances by global financial institutions and the policies that divide global talent from the apparently unwashed and unwanted. We can add to this list a number of new issues, locating tensions within, and resistances to, implementation of the restructuring agendas in specific places, as these localities are affected by the introduction of new migration regimes. Furthermore, new vistas for migration research open up to explorations of the multiple, significant roles played by immigrants in the localities where they reside or to which they are transnationally connected. First, in order to examine the underlying coherence of apparently contradictory aspects of migration discourse and policy, I review the relationship between neo-liberal restructuring that was instituted globally and its intertwined migrant regulatory regime. I then speak briefly to some of the variability of locality, migration and neo-liberal restructuring.

I will begin with neo-liberalism and the anti-immigrant rhetoric adopted by so many countries. During the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, state-based institutions provided a common national infrastructure that materialised and legitimated the claims of the state to constitute a single national community of shared norms and practices. Beginning in the 1970s, these trends were reversed as a worldwide, although variously implemented, neo-liberal agenda of privatisation. The diminution of public services, moreover, eroded the quality of life and social cohesion of nation-states and public life. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, as discrete realms of economic production were ever more integrally linked to production and consumption processes elsewhere, state narratives and citizenship regimes were reinvigorated to stress once again the distinctness and exclusivity of national identities based on cultural difference. In short, nation-states have become identity containers that maintain and disseminate images of the nation as a society. These national narratives bear little resemblance to the complex web of the contemporary transnational institutional structures within which social life and relations of power are actually produced. The fewer services and rights states provide for their citizens, and the more they produce citizens educated to identify as

customers enmeshed in cultures of consumption rather than within forms of civic and social engagement, the more these states promote discourses of social cohesion and national community. The inside of that national identity container is increasingly constructed by framing foreigners as the cause of disruption, the decline of social services and the deterioration of community. The larger the number of citizens in states around the world who find their futures circumscribed by poverty or lack of social mobility, the more they are told by political leaders that the problems are caused by persons from elsewhere.

None of this is new: nativism and anti-foreign sentiments have been an aspect of successive stages of nation-state-building (Higham 2002). Anti-immigrant discourse is a historic component of the nation-state-building process. Through this ritual of renewal, citizens of states define their loyalty to a country by differentiating themselves from stigmatised racialised others. Movements of national renewal are currently taking place in the wake of the growing negative consequences of several decades of neo-liberal restructuring. In this context, they have fuelled a revitalised nationalism that has distracted public attention from the hollowing out of the state and the growing disparities of wealth and power facilitated by neo-liberal measures. By providing a foundation for new migrant labour regimes, anti-immigrant discourses also have contributed to new sources of profitability for investors in a situation of falling profits.

Worldwide competition in the last few decades of the twentieth century led to the development of global assembly lines moving industrial production away from North America and Europe into far-flung regions where labour was cheap and unregulated. Tariff barriers were demolished and untaxed export-processing zones were established throughout the world. At the same time, first in the US and increasingly in Europe, service jobs in restructured cities geared for consumer industries. Meanwhile, tourism or agricultural jobs that could not be exported were filled to some degree by undocumented migrants, who provided quiescent, hyper-exploited and flexible labour (Anderson 2007). In some European countries, such as the UK, asylum seekers and refugees – legally or illegally – provided this form of labour. Undocumented migrants working in non-union sweatshops kept industrial production closer to US consumption centres (Kwong 1987).

Agricultural and industrial corporations based in Europe and North America have increasingly faced a contradiction in their production processes – the balance between near and far production. This contradiction was intensified by the rise in oil prices and the prediction of future oil scarcity, which means it will become more profitable to locate productive processes closer to the areas of high consumer demand. As many observers in Europe have pointed out, the low birth rate and

aging composition of European and North American populations will heighten these contradictions by making labour scarce in these regions (Castles 2006).

In response, labour regimes developed that were more suited to the production needs of neo-liberal economies and their inability to realise sustained profitability. These provide workforces that are cheap, controllable and relatively nearby. The crisis of profitability unleashed by the 2008 downturn only increases the pressures to obtain such a workforce, even in the face of dramatically rising unemployment in Europe and the US. Integral to this transformation are the contemporary denigration and criminalisation of asylum seekers and the undocumented as well as the new enforcement regimes of bio-surveillance measures that limit mobility. The new labour regimes once again offer limited short-term 'guestworker' contracts to persons of various skill levels who migrate from states that cannot sustain the workforce they produce and educate. Part of this new configuration is an expansion of the EU labour market, offering the most recent accession states policy initiatives emphasising the merits of circulating labour. It seems likely that we are witnessing a shift to a labour regime made up of circulating labour from within the EU and new, very controlled forms of contract labour from elsewhere. As Vertovec has pointed out: 'circular migration is ... being advocated as a potential solution (at least in part) to a number of challenges surrounding contemporary migration' (2007: 2).

Dehumanised through the rhetoric of national difference, policies of short-term contractual migrant labour meet the needs of neo-liberal agendas and their current profitability crisis more efficiently than the previous use of family reunion, asylum and the undocumented to supply flexible and politically silenced labour. In many countries, new immigration regulations grant work visas, sometimes with time-limited contracts, only to persons with technical and professional educations. This regulatory labour regime complements, rather than contradicts, the overall thrust of anti-immigrant narratives. The discourse highlighting a 'global war for talent' commodifies skilled workers, denying their rights to family life and full personhood.

If we examine the relationships among the neo-liberal restructuring of capital, its profitability and legitimacy crisis and the emerging regimes of controllable and flexible labour, then the underlying unity between the various seemingly disparate trends in migration policy and discourse becomes clear. Nationalist rhetoric and exclusionary policies pave the way for production regimes that rely on highly controllable labour. Faceless migrating labour is portrayed as invading borders, potentially lawless, and so requiring restriction, regulation and contractual constraints that limit the rights of workers to change employers or challenge working conditions. The depersonalisation of labour as

contractual services allows for labour policy statements in which the separation of workers from home and family without rights of settlement and family reunion become good economic policies. Depersonalisation of the process highlights the category of the unskilled, despite the fact that many such workers have relatively high levels of education. The willingness of the university-educated, teachers, health professionals, engineers and architects to migrate as 'unskilled' labour has everything to do with the structural adjustment and privatisation policies in their home localities that initially led to the depression of wages, to unemployment of professionals and, increasingly, to worldwide crisis. Even within the EU, the differential right to migrate for work granted by various Western European states to accession countries in the short term has created a regime of controllable, exploitable labour (Andrijasevic 2009). Meanwhile, labour contracts offered to workers from states with full membership, such as Italian construction workers in the UK, come with restrictions and fee structures that, beneath a cover of legality, make migrant workers more malleable – and exploitable.

Legitimizing the migrant/native divide, scholars and policy analysts, alike, justify legislation that excludes permanent settlement by migrant workers and their families in the name of the importance of maintaining family cohesion and community cohesion in the sending countries. These migration experts report that circular migration increases the likelihood that

both countries of origin and destination can make gains from migration according to their respective preferences. Many migrants and their descendants also prefer to move back and forth between their ancestral and settlement countries. At their best, circular migration policies align the objectives of origin countries, destination countries, and the migrants who comprise these flows. (Newland, Agunias & Terrazas 2008: 2) Portes (2006: 95) goes even further, emphasising how returnees are much more likely to save and make productive investments at home; they leave families behind to which sizable remittances are sent. More importantly, temporary migrants do not compromise the future of the next generation by placing their children in danger of downward assimilation abroad. To the extent that sending country governments provide the necessary educational resources, these children can grow up healthy in their own countries, benefiting from the experiences and the investments of their parents.

When migration scholars emphasise the benefits of transnational migration and remittance economy development to all concerned – without

addressing the severe and permanent restriction of rights that increasingly accompany this form of labour – they support a regime of hyper-exploitation. Short-term labour contracts resurrect older forms of indenture with limited rights and mobility. Condemning workers to a regime of short-term contracts only means that they get caught within a system of long-term family separation without rights, protections or benefits from the states whose infrastructure they are building with their labour, services and taxes. When families are separated by migration regulations that allow no family reunion, they reproduce a social life at great personal sacrifice: parents live separated from children, spouses are divided from each other and elderly parents are left to survive without the assistance of children (Constable 1997).

The global system of power in which this new arrangement of labour takes place – and its human costs – are all too rarely addressed within migration studies. While potent critiques have been made about each strand of these contemporary, apparently contradictory, narratives, including significant critiques of the migration and development paradigm, they remain within separate migration literatures and thus have little impact. It has been far too easy within the different streams of research to take for granted neo-liberal restructuring, rather than questioning the underlying values it fosters and the human toll it exacts. The seemingly disparate scholarships and narratives about migration reflect the implementation of neo-liberal restructuring in different cities and states around the world. By globally examining the fields of power constituted by transnational processes, migration scholars can develop a research agenda that both calls attention to human costs of neo-liberal restructuring and traces the various trajectories and resistances it engenders.

In developing this perspective, it is also important to note that global financial institutions have made migrant remittances a growing industry just at the moment when many migrants may be less interested in transnational strategies. To some degree, transnational migration has reflected a ‘hedge your bets’ strategy on the part of migrants who were unsure of the long-term welcome they might receive in the states where they were settling, even if citizenship rights were available and utilised (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994). Migrants sending remittances to be invested in homes and businesses makes certain assumptions about the viability of local economies in sending states. They assume that there will be sufficient security of persons and opportunity structure for those with capital, such that investment is a viable strategy to benefit them or their families. Increasingly, in many regions of the world these assumptions no longer hold: regions of states or entire states have become destabilised as a result of structural adjustment policies, the hollowing out of national economies through trade agreement

provisions such as NAFTA and WTO restrictions, the growth of international arms and drug trade and the fostering of proxy militias and war. The result is that migrants from some regions in the world might prefer settlement, family reunion and unilateral, rather than simultaneous, incorporation, at the very time that this strategy is being foreclosed to them. Transnational migration and connection are not inherent features of migration but reflect conditions in localities in more than one state.

A global perspective on migration also highlights the varied roles that transmigrants have been playing in relationship to the neo-liberal restructuring and rescaling of localities. Migrants can be 'scale makers' who reshape places as they integrate them within transnational social fields of familial, commercial, religious, political and organisational relationships (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009, forthcoming). Migrants' multiple and contradictory transnational incorporations into localities in more than one state cannot be analysed by reference to globalisation from below – or transnational social spaces or communities – if these terms direct us to separate the analysis of migrant agency from other aspects of the structuration of a transnational social field: class positioning, localised economic and political opportunity structures, cultural politics, racialisation and non-migrant actors. The multiple positionalities of migrants cannot be encompassed within analytical frameworks that approach migrants solely within a context of resistance to uneven globalisation, as ethnic communities or as labour, whether skilled or unskilled.

Instead, building on the growing body of data on transnational migration, researchers can specify a series of differentiated roles that migrants living within transnational fields have been playing within efforts to implement neo-liberal agendas. These roles include, but are not limited to: 1) agents of neo-liberal neighbourhood gentrification; 2) exemplars of neo-liberal values; 3) significant actors in efforts to revitalise urban centres and deindustrialised cities; and 4) links to transnational flows of capital (Glick Schiller & Çağlar forthcoming). These roles make clear that migrants can be agents of differential development or resistance to neo-liberal agendas in specific places and at specific points of time. The roles migrants play in localities around the world have been shaped in the past few decades by the interpenetration of the neo-liberal agenda and local histories and structures. Hence, localities differentially inserted in the global economy offer different opportunity structures, pathways of transnational connection and barriers to incorporation.

In cities and towns that are not among the select handful of global cities but have been very much subject to, and active participants in worldwide flows of capital, migrant activity is ever present: in labour and property markets, in the establishment of small businesses, in neighbourhood gentrification or in the attraction of international capital

and infrastructure investment. Migrant input may prove vital to the efforts of second-tier cities to restructure and reposition themselves regionally, nationally and globally. This general statement applies to localities around the world. On the one hand, the impact of migrant connections and the range of roles migrants have been able to assume within these localities varies in relationship to the local ability to successfully compete and rescale. On the other hand, migrants' participation in, and shaping of, transnational processes are integrally related to larger flows and redistributions of capital – economic, political, social and cultural.

In some instances, corporations with a stake in maintaining their investments in a specific city have worked together with organisations of transmigrants to recruit and retain highly skilled technicians (Brettell forthcoming). In other cases, migrants and persons of migrant background may serve as crucial middlemen linking a deindustrialised struggling city to foreign capital (Feldman-Bianco forthcoming). By contrast, in some localities, migrants contribute to restructuring and rescaling by providing primarily low-wage factory and domestic labour (Salih & Riccio forthcoming). In cities where work is scarce, migrant businesses may provide crucial economic activities as well as necessary products and services to natives and migrants alike, who are faced with widespread unemployment and impoverishment as a result of the destruction of local industry. Drawing on transnational supply networks to stock businesses and on transnational family networks to supply inexpensive labour, migrant businesses may fill up otherwise empty storefronts near the city centre, contributing to the vitality of a city (Glick Schiller & Çağlar forthcoming).

By utilising a global power perspective, we can trace the transnational social fields within which migrants appear not as foreigners to be differentiated from natives, but as actors that connect local people to global processes. An industry that has become as commonplace as that of kebab shops, which provide inexpensive food for urban populations throughout Europe and much of the US, is but one example of the utility of this perspective. It is possible to trace connections within the industry all over the world: websites in Spain offering kebab equipment; German factories producing grills, knives and spits; meatpackers in various European cities serving the kebab industry; middlemen, shop owners and clerks who have migrated from North Africa, South Asia and Central Asia; and consumers of all backgrounds throughout Europe. Some in the network reap sizeable profits, while others toil long hours for low wages. The transnational networks of production, distribution and consumption are simultaneously part of the restructuring of localities, the re-imagining of local cultures and the reconstitution of the local, national and global.



Migrant-sending localities that provide the labour force of transnational social fields have also experienced uneven development in relationship to the global economy and structural adjustment policies. Because states have withdrawn public services during the structural adjustment process, those localities that have been able to receive remittances have developed to the detriment of other municipalities and regions. In some states, such as Mexico, government policies of matching remittance-based electrification or other public-service improvements with government funds have exacerbated differences between town and regions. Remittances have not brought development, but rather, growing disparities within and across a national terrain (Çağlar 2006). The differential success of those localities that do send sizeable numbers of migrants also opens different possibilities for return, investment and transnational connection. Significant investment or return depends on local and regional security, itself an outcome of the balance of power between sending states and larger global institutions and powerful states and their configurations of power including their drug and arms industries.

## 6.6 Conclusions

Within these brief profiles of different trajectories of local restructuring, it becomes obvious that migrants occupy a range of positions in the cities where they settle, including unskilled labour, cultural promoters, city leaders, small business people, global talent and transnational capitalists. It is also clear that migrant transnational social fields contribute to the varying positionality of migrants and to the restructuring and re-scaling of cities. These transnational ties and the resultant local developments have been part of a global migration regime in which movement and family reunification was possible, often legally and sometimes despite barriers to movement. In general, most states where migrants live have allowed some form of settlement with rights either at the time of entry or as a long-term aspiration and realisable possibility. If migration is restricted to those with short-term labour contracts or professional skills, migrants will not be able to play the varied roles described in this chapter. Their multiple positionings in relationship to the restructuring of localities stems from their ability to travel, obtain rights in multiple states and establish transnational social fields.

In short, a global power perspective on migration allows scholars to speak to a series of integrally related processes that cannot be understood separately. First, the projection of migrants as undesirable 'others' revitalises national identities and loyalties of citizens whose relationship to the state as provider of services and social supports has been

undermined by neo-liberal projects. At the same time, the dehumanisation of migrating bodies allows for their insertion and control as various forms of unfree contracted labour. Meanwhile, migrant professionals may be welcomed in specific places as contributors to the neo-liberal restructuring and rescaling of various cities. And migrant remittances can be relied on to transmit foreign currency to families, localities and regimes left behind, enabling their inclusion, however unequally, in global patterns of consumption and desire. Migration scholars need to put aside all forms of methodological nationalism so that their units of analysis do not obscure the localised processes through which capitalism is continually restructured, reproduced, experienced and contested. To understand the dynamics that surround us, we need to examine simultaneously the cultural narratives of everyday forms of nation-state formation, the global efforts to reconstitute capital and facilitate its flexible accumulation and the struggles of people around the world to live their lives with dignity and justice.

By developing such a framework, migration scholars will be able to enter into the policy arena with perspectives that do more than follow the well-worn path of sterile debates about the effects of immigration on social cohesion. We can speak to factors that truly are eroding various human experiences of social solidarity as well as highlight the everyday experiences of openness that bring people together in their search for life with meaning, respect for all varieties of human difference and opportunities to explore their shared humanity.

## Note

- 1 Goodhart, D. (2008), 'The baby-boomers finally see sense on immigration', *The Observer*, Sunday, 24 February 2008. [www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/feb/24/immigration.immigrationpolicy](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/feb/24/immigration.immigrationpolicy).



## Chapter 7

# **Bridging the divide: Towards a comparative framework for understanding kin state and migrant-sending state diaspora politics**

*Myra A. Waterbury*

Whether by the coincidence or convergence of global events, the past two decades have seen a significant increase in the number of states engaging members of their national communities who reside outside the state's borders. As such, there has been a concomitant explosion of academic interest in those transnational and trans-state relationships. More and more states are constructing ties to populations abroad, and those populations are making more assertive claims for recognition of their unique status as members of cultural and political communities bridging more than one sovereign state. In the post-communist world, the liberalisation of politics and the end of Soviet domination brought renewed attention to the relationship between potential kin states and the trans-border ethnic groups created through the dissolution of multinational states and empires. And in other areas of the world, political and economic changes have encouraged states to rethink their previously informal or even exclusionary stances towards migrant populations residing abroad.

Thanks to a flurry of fascinating case studies and theorising about these phenomena, some progress has been made towards understanding how, when and why states structure increasingly complex ties to populations abroad. Yet, as the debates in the literature over the meaning of terms such as 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' continue, we see that important questions remain unanswered. How should we understand the role of the state in shaping transnational practices? What causes states to increase their engagement with populations abroad? What are the risks and benefits of policies that seek to extend sovereignty and control to those outside the state? A significant barrier to further progress towards a full understanding of these dynamics is the prevalent analytical separation between studies of kin state and migrant-sending state policies towards external national populations. By maintaining this distinction – whether self-consciously or not – analysts of both sets of

cases are losing out on potentially fruitful insights that may be gained from engaging across regions and historical specificities. This chapter reconsiders the utility of this analytical separation and asks what may be gained by constructing a broader comparative framework in which to understand how and why states act on behalf of members of a national community residing outside the borders.

The chapter begins by comparing the analytical usage of diaspora terminology in the migration literature with that in the literature on kin states and cross-border minorities, then discussing how the two sets of literature can learn from each other. The second section uses insights and examples from both sets of literature to construct a comparative framework for understanding the relationship between states and populations abroad. This framework addresses four main questions: who the state targets, why and when states increase their level of transnational engagement, how states create and maintain ties with those abroad and what barriers there are to integration of the diaspora into the homeland state political community.

## 7.1 The definitional divide

In general, the literature on diaspora and transnationalism defines a diaspora almost exclusively by its migrant origins or the far-reaching dispersal of an ethnic community to multiple points, reflecting classic cases of diaspora such as the Jewish and Armenian ones. This type of definition tends to exclude cases of trans-border ethnic groups created from the shifting of borders or the dissolution of states and empires, such as ethnic Hungarians in East Central Europe or Russians in the near abroad. For many authors, the diaspora phenomenon is unique to the situation of people moving across borders. As Sheffer defines the subject of his book on diaspora politics, 'an ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration' (2003: 9).<sup>1</sup>

On the other side, those who study the relationships of kin states with 'stranded minorities' across the border have not, for the most part, adopted the diaspora terminology. They generally conceptualise their universe of cases as a discrete set with unique conditions. Unlike migrant diasporas, external kin are the product of borders moving across populations. Migrant diasporas form gradually and voluntarily, are territorially dispersed and members often maintain the citizenship of their country of origin, at least through the first generation. 'Accidental' diasporas, on the other hand, happen suddenly and largely against the will of their members, tend to be more territorially concentrated and often have the citizenship of only their new state of residence (Brubaker

2000: 3). These populations may also be more bound to their host state – and have less flexibility of membership and physical mobility – because the shifting of borders often coincides with the shifting of their prospects for citizenship from the homeland to the host state.

The term ‘diaspora’ is often politically problematic as well. Diaspora in Hungary, Poland and other kin states is most commonly invoked when discussing political and economic migrants who settled outside of the region – and historic territory – of the mother country (Tóth 2004: 375). When the term ‘diaspora’ is used to describe communities of ethnic kin in Eastern Europe, it is equated with weakened bonds of ethnic and linguistic affinity and the triumph of assimilationist pressures on the national community. For example, ethnic Hungarians described as living in diaspora in neighbouring countries are those in a ‘state of abandonment’: they did not migrate, but are living outside of ‘ethnic blocs’ and therefore are in the process of losing their cultural and linguistic ties to the Hungarian nation (Ilyés 2006: 46). In contrast, more concentrated national communities ‘beyond the border’ are reachable and critical components of the national project. Calling them ‘diaspora’ would indicate that they were ‘lost’ to those in the Hungarian state, who would see them as a crucial source of cultural pride and influence. By this logic, even those ethnic Hungarians who leave their ethnic kin communities and emigrate to Hungary become part of the ‘intensification of diasporisation due to assimilation and out-migration’ (Tóth 2006: 100).

The separation of migrant-sending and kin state cases based on these assumptions of difference has led to distinct terminologies, theoretical concerns and analytical debates. However, bringing the two sets of literature into dialogue with each other provides a much more complete picture of the role of the homeland state in shaping transnational practices. For example, migration-centred analysts have begun to rethink the conception of ‘transnationalism as subversive and transnationalists as grassroots actors challenging the hegemony of states’ (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1186). More attention is now given to the homeland state as an agent in constructing diasporas and shaping the membership of those abroad in social, economic and political spheres between homeland and host states (Fitzgerald 2005a; Itzigsohn 2000; Sherman 1999). Analyses of kin states and trans-border diasporas offer a wealth of historical and contemporary examples of the state’s role in structuring ties to those abroad, which can aid in creating useful models of state-led transnationalism. The state of national origin is often a key player in shaping trans-border ethnic ties, particularly in cases where the homeland state is the politically and economically strongest actor in the triadic relationship between host state, homeland and trans-border minority (Brubaker 1996: 67-76). The actions of kin states, such as

Hungary and Germany throughout the twentieth century, demonstrate a range of engagement with 'stranded minorities', from diplomatic efforts to guarantee their security and the creation of government ministries for information gathering and cultural funding, to direct political and economic support as well as ethnic repatriation and naturalisation (Bárdi 2004; Wolff 2000).

Kin state cases also demonstrate the potential dangers of state-led transnationalism: the instrumental use of cross-border ties to justify irredentist ambitions and nationalist politics (e.g. Serbia in the wars of Yugoslav succession); the security dilemma created when a homeland state claims residents of neighbouring states as citizens (e.g. Russia's military intervention on behalf of its 'compatriots' in South Ossetia); and the negative effects on inter-ethnic relations created by fears of minority fifth-columnism or disloyalty to their state of residence (e.g. ethnic Germans and Hungarians in Eastern Europe after World War II). The dark side of transnationalism is an aspect that migration-focused analysts are beginning to grapple with as well. As Zolberg and others have pointed out, states attempt to control both physical and symbolic boundaries. Therefore, all efforts to construct states and nations involve some kind of exclusion (Zolberg 1983; Fitzgerald 2005b). The extension of the national community beyond the borders through extraterritorial membership and other tools can be understood as a form of 'trans-border nationalism', whereby the homeland government promotes a specific definition of the national community for its own purposes (Fitzgerald 2006a: 99).

Many of the cases in the migration-centred literature, on the other hand, usefully demonstrate the contingent and instrumental nature of state policymaking towards diaspora groups by tracing the processes through which policymakers increase their level of engagement with those abroad over time (Brand 2006; Smith 2003; Varadarajan 2005). This perspective is a much-needed correction to the kin state literature, which often sees ties of ethnic affiliation as enduring causal factors in domestic politics and foreign policy decision-making. Analyses of irredentism and trans-border ethnic conflict often assume that state actors respond to the plight of co-ethnics and act accordingly in order to satisfy the demands of ethnic affiliation (Ambrosio 2001; Davis & Moore 1997). Yet, the numerous examples of fluctuating levels of engagement with cross-border populations within and among potential kin states have shown the need to look at domestic political interests to understand the intensity of diaspora policymaking at different points in time (King & Melvin 1999; Saideman & Ayres 2008; Waterbury 2006).

## 7.2 A comparative framework

Bringing together these insights from kin state- and migration-centred cases, the remainder of the chapter outlines a comparative framework for understanding why and when states increase their engagement with populations abroad and what factors affect the implementation of diaspora engagement policies. The framework focuses on the actions that states take to engage populations abroad, rather than on the origin of the population. It uses evidence from a wide range of cases to develop four sets of arguments. First, while states often utilise a rhetoric of engaging the 'global nation', their policies target specific populations abroad, depending on what these populations can offer the homeland state. Second, states increase their engagement with specific external populations because it serves a specific political and strategic purpose. Diasporas represent a set of unique cultural, material and political resources, which homeland state elites come to recognise and seek to capture. Third, states expand the boundaries of citizenship and membership in order to co-opt and control access to diaspora resources. Finally, I argue that because this new engagement involves the expansion of the political community, the development of diaspora policies is often a contested process, which can lead to a backlash against diaspora engagement and a disconnect between rhetoric and the substance of policies.

### 7.2.1 *Global discourse, targeted policies*

In looking at the entire universe of potential diaspora members for any given country, it becomes clear that many states cannot so easily be classified as either 'ethnic kin state' or 'migrant-sending state'. Many states have current or historical relationships with populations in other countries for various reasons, including the redrawing of international boundaries, sporadic and voluntary dispersal and state-sponsored emigration. Some states that are usually thought of primarily as emigration states have had the potential to act as protectors of members of the national community who reside on territory that was once part of the national homeland (e.g. India, Haiti, Mexico). And many kin states also have substantial economic and political migrant populations (e.g. Hungary, Poland, Germany). Some states have policies that extend to both cross-border minorities and migrant communities,<sup>2</sup> but most have chosen to target only one or the other for specific purposes. The targeting reflects what the homeland state wants from its engagement with certain diaspora populations, as well as the feasibility of integrating external communities without risking tensions with other states.



Haiti and India are two cases in which the state has expanded its engagement with migrant diaspora populations, but has rejected a potential role as kin state to those across the border. In Haiti, the post-Duvalier government of Aristide made diaspora relations a top priority, even going so far as to call the diaspora the ‘Tenth Department’ of the government. But because of historical tensions with the neighbouring Dominican Republic over their respective boundaries on the shared island territory and the need for help from economically prosperous and politically connected diaspora members, the focus of Haiti’s policies was Haitians in Canada and the United States, not those across the border in the Dominican Republic or throughout the Caribbean (Itzigsohn 2000; Howard 2003). Similarly, even though the Indian government hailed the ‘global Indian family’ in the 1990s (Vardarajan 2005: 19), its expanded policies to engage Indians abroad targeted primarily the privileged professional-class diaspora working in high-tech jobs in the US and Western Europe. India’s recent laws regarding ‘people of Indian origin’ specifically excluded citizens of neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh, reflecting fears of inflaming regional tensions (Lall 2003: 122).

Kazakhstan and Hungary, on the other hand, crafted policies focused more on the integration of ethnic and linguistic kin than on engaging with migrant populations. Kazakhstan’s decision in the years following independence to offer ethnic repatriation to ethnic Kazakhs was targeted not to those who had migrated to other former Soviet republics, and would therefore likely speak only Russian, but to those outside the Soviet sphere in smaller Kazakh-speaking communities who ‘would most effectively contribute to the cultural rebirth of Kazakhstan’ (Diener 2005: 334). In Hungary, the country’s first post-communist leader claimed to be the prime minister of fifteen million Hungarians, a number that included those in the Western diaspora as well as those in neighbouring Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Serbia. Hungary’s law granting special benefits and national identification cards to ethnic Hungarians (the controversial ‘Status Law’) was valid, however, only for those ethnic Hungarians in the neighbouring countries, not for those assimilated Hungarians in the Western diaspora.<sup>3</sup>

### *7.2.2 Motives and triggers for diaspora engagement*

The targeting described above suggests that the state crafts different relationships to its various external populations, depending on what a deeper engagement with a potential diaspora group could offer. Clearly, homeland state elites are not passive actors stirred only by feelings of national affiliation or by demands made on them by those abroad. Instead, shifts towards increased diaspora engagement are driven in

large part by the interests and perceptions of homeland state political elites. As I will discuss in more detail, these motives can be grouped into three main sets of interests and 'resources' represented by diasporas: the extraction of material resources for economic gain, the creation or maintenance of domestic and international political legitimacy and the utilisation of those abroad as a culturo-linguistic resource to be used in defining the boundaries of national identity.

Many states, however, initially resist opportunities to forge extensive transnational ties, suggesting that diasporas represent a host of negative aspects and potential dangers for homeland states as well. These negative connotations can manifest in representations of diaspora members as 'traitors' who have abandoned the homeland, painful blights on the national psyche or outsiders trying to take away jobs and resources. Mass emigration can be a sign of state weakness and a threat to regime legitimacy, causing resentment of those who left (Brand 2006: 33-34; Fitzgerald 2005a: 7). When those abroad come home, they may be perceived as being tainted by their unique experiences and therefore too different to be reintegrated successfully into the homeland state. In addition, if formerly excluded diaspora members are given access to homeland state resources and membership, they are often perceived by permanent homeland state residents as unwelcome, resented competitors for political influence, subsidies and even jobs. Finally, diaspora populations can embroil the homeland in tense relations with the states of residence, thereby jeopardising the homeland's security and other foreign policy goals. The dual nature of the diaspora issue permeates debates over the state-diaspora relationship in kin states and migrant-sending states, often leading to domestic opposition against increased levels of political and economic integration between the homeland state and those beyond the border.

Because populations abroad can be sources of risk and political uncertainty, there are often barriers to elites perceiving certain diaspora communities as positive resources. We must, therefore, also explain what causes that perception to change: a moment in which the diaspora goes from being seen as a liability or a population that can be ignored, to an important resource that should be cultivated, and even exploited (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a: 219; Shain & Barth 2003: 450). Moments of 'redefinition' are often triggered by large structural changes, such as dramatic shifts in the regime or political system, often occurring simultaneously with important changes in regional relations or economic restructuring. These changes allow space for a redefinition of the boundaries of the political community and a rethinking of the state's relationship to the diaspora. Such a redefinition could also result in a decision to disengage from a previous policy commitment regarding a population abroad, as occurred when the German government phased out

many of its policies towards ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the decade following reunification, including the promise of automatic German citizenship. The primary focus here, however, is to provide a picture of the motives and processes compelling a shift in perception that subsequently triggers increased engagement with diaspora populations.

Diaspora communities are often sources of important material resources through remittances they send back to the homeland state, in the form of diaspora-led investment or by offering the homeland state expanding markets for its exports, cultural output and even a temporary labour pool (Barry 2006: 28; Itzigsohn 2000: 1143). Most migrant-sending countries, like the Philippines, Turkey and many Latin American, Middle Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, rely heavily on the emigrant diaspora working in richer economies to contribute to the country's GDP (Newland & Patrick 2004). Economic interests play less of a role in non-migrant diaspora situations, particularly when the homeland state is more economically developed than the diaspora. Even the promise of possible future economic gains, however, can be used as a justification for activist diaspora policies in these states. For example, in Hungary, the ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring states have been described as a potential resource for businesses in need of labour as a selling point for Hungarian policies towards co-ethnics (Melegh 2003: 120). Similar arguments have been used to justify repatriation programmes in Romania and Russia.

The state's integration into economic and trade organisations is a process that may compel or deepen neo-liberal restructuring of the state's economy, leading to a desire to stabilise and increase the flow of diaspora remittances and investment (Varadarajan 2005: 6). Growing economic opportunities as a result of regional integration and increased foreign investment can also lead to a search for easily assimilated labour migration, which may make the diaspora an attractive prospect. In fact, it could be argued that Spain has invented such a diaspora for this purpose by offering return opportunities to the descendants of Spanish migrants in Latin America (Padilla 2007). Japan has also used second- and third-generation Brazilians of Japanese descent to fill out its labour needs without challenging its exclusive, ethnically based definitions of citizenship (Fitzgerald 2006a: 102).

Diaspora engagement also plays an important role in political legitimation, both domestically and geopolitically. Reaching out to those abroad and establishing cross-border ties can be a way for governments and political parties to redefine the bases of their legitimacy at times of economic or political crisis, or when the sovereignty of the state is being weakened by external forces. In describing the history of Mexico's changing policies, Sherman argues that the state extended its

hand to those abroad during ‘moments in which political legitimacy was being questioned, and the state was trying to consolidate a particular institutional order’ (1999: 847). Maintaining the loyalty of emigrants to their home country, and thereby securing access to those communities and their resources, can be a vital ‘part of the process of nation-building and maintaining elite dominance at home’.

Populations abroad are also strategically important because of their culturo-linguistic function, particularly their role in state-building, national identity construction and cultural reproduction. The diaspora can serve prominently in the construction of national myths, which are used to legitimise nationalist political agendas and the modes of inclusion and exclusion that designate who will have access to political power and the resources of the state (King & Melvin 1999). External populations are often incorporated into narratives identifying forces that threaten the survival of the cultural or linguistic nation, broadly defined as extending beyond existing state borders. The continued existence of a group beyond the border that maintains its cultural identity and connections to the homeland by resisting assimilationist pressures offers a defence against fears of cultural dilution and a source of national pride. For example, in the case of Mexico:

[t]he new Mexican ideology holds that by creating and maintaining a distinct ethnic identity within the United States, albeit different from Mexico’s indigenous culture, Mexican Americans are preserving their national heritage and proving that Latino roots are much deeper than Anglo-American influences. (Shain 2000: 687)

In addition, such populations keep the influence of the homeland language and culture alive in territories that were once part of the homeland’s empire or colonial holdings, recalling the diaspora’s ties to historically significant moments of past greatness and tragedy. Threats to these groups, therefore, are framed as threats to the unity, status and survival of the nation embodied by the homeland. This type of resource has been particularly important for Hungary, a small, linguistically isolated country with a history of empire (Kürti 2001).

One of the main triggers for utilising the diaspora to bolster state legitimacy is political liberalisation through institutional or regime change, which subjects control over the state-diaspora relationship to more intense political contestation. The diaspora resources become prizes to be captured within the context of domestic political competition. The opening up of political competition after decades of dictatorial or authoritarian rule triggers the search for new sources of political support and legitimacy by new political actors on the scene. These actors

have little governing experience, and may also have few organisational resources or a track record of ideological positioning. Reframing a discourse of the nation and national identity that invokes those beyond the border can provide a unique source of legitimacy for these new political actors. They can position themselves as 'nationalising elites' or as saviours of the nation who can now right the wrongs of the past. Emerging elites can also utilise diaspora populations as potential constituents, who can affect domestic political outcomes through trans-border media connections or eventually through gaining the right to vote or have special representation within the government. At times of political transformation, the diaspora 'may come to be considered by a new regime as the key population for domestic transformation' (Shain 2000: 665).

For example, in post-communist Hungary, engagement with the ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries has been a crucial organisational and ideological resource for a party like the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz), a relatively new right-wing party that lacked a mobilised base in the early 1990s (Waterbury 2006). The party campaigned actively in the ethnic Hungarian communities in Slovakia and Romania, not for votes, but to win the battle of public opinion there that would be reflected in Hungarian state media. Domestic political strategies involving the diaspora have also been seen in a number of other cases, including Mexico, El Salvador, Haiti and the Dominican Republic<sup>4</sup> (Itzigsohn 2000). All these countries have seen electoral campaigns spill over into diaspora communities, with party elites hoping to capture the endorsement of diaspora leaders and their formal and informal organisational networks, as well as to control the discourse of national interests and priorities by embracing the diaspora.

External actors and the actions of the state in which diasporas reside can also cause shifts in the opportunity for elites to engage those abroad. If the degree of access to, and availability of, diaspora resources becomes constrained, then the homeland state is likely to increase its level of engagement. For example, if homeland state elites see that new integrationist or assimilationist policies are being put into place by host states, they may respond by trying to 'pull' the diaspora back to the homeland through transnational connections and feelings of loyalty. As Brand argues in regard to the Tunisian and Moroccan diasporas in Western Europe:

as European states successively changed laws governing immigrant integration, the Maghrebi states faced the prospect of declining loyalty among their nationals. In response, new institutions and policies were put into place or existing ones were redefined. (2006: 216-217)

In another example, as its European Union accession became more certain, the realisation grew that Hungary would soon become the eastern border of the Schengen visa regime. This meant that many ethnic Hungarians would be left on the wrong side of a new Iron Curtain, for the Schengen chapter of the accession treaty would have prevented Romanian, Ukrainian and Serbian citizens from crossing the border into Hungary without a visa. This prompted a search of new ways for Hungary to maintain cross-border ties, culminating in the controversial decision to give members of the regional diaspora ethnic identity cards (Waterbury 2008). Poland and Romania also crafted legislation to deal with the stranding of ethnic kin outside the Schengen borders.

### 7.2.3 *The tools of engagement*

We now turn to consider how the engaged homeland state creates, and maintains access to, these diaspora resources. Taking examples from both the kin and migrant-sending state cases, we see that homeland states have better access to these resources when they are able to craft and, to the extent possible, control ties with those abroad and their organisations. In order to shape these relations, states extend their sovereignty and redefine the boundaries of citizenship and membership to include targeted members of populations abroad through institutionalised packages of 'engagement' policies. In a tricky, often unsuccessful, balancing act, state elites attempt to push these policies while keeping in mind the demands of the diaspora communities, who may or may not respond in kind to these overtures.

In both the kin state and sending state literature, institutionalised engagement with populations abroad is recognised as a tool of co-optation and a way of building clientelistic relationships that go beyond the borders of the state. In the case of Hungary, party elites have vied to co-opt diaspora leaders and to create clientelistic relationships that extend across the border. Fidesz, in particular, used the tools of patronage and clientelism to develop its power base and establish its structure of alliances and institutions (Waterbury 2006: 500-503). Similarly, in Mexico, the Fox administration (and earlier governments as well) attempted to shape the message and the loyalties of organised Mexican migrant communities in the US (Martinez-Saldana 2003; García-Acevedo 2003). According to Goldring, state-led programmes in the 1980s

signaled the state's attempt to construct transmigrants and their organisations as one more in a series of corporate groups that the Mexican state could co-opt by engaging them in corporatist and clientelist relations. (2002: 68)

Middle Eastern states, such as Tunisia and Morocco, also utilised counsels and expatriate affairs offices as instruments of coercion and control in order to satisfy their own security objectives (Brand 2006).

Homeland states create systems of patronage and control by 'reasserting sovereignty' over those beyond their territorial boundaries (Brand 2006: 26). They do so by crafting policies that '(re)produce citizen-sovereign relationships with expatriates, thus transnationalising governmentality' (Gamlen 2006: 4-5). All states have available a similar toolkit of policies they can choose from in shaping relations with populations abroad. Homeland states can: (1) seek to change host state policies through diplomatic advocacy or treaty protections; (2) fund diaspora community organisations and the creation of educational, cultural, political and entrepreneurial institutions; (3) offer full or limited forms of political citizenship, such as voting rights, special forms of representation, dual citizenship or dual nationality; (4) offer full or limited forms of social citizenship through welfare state and labour market access and direct subsidies to diaspora members; or (5) extend the benefits of cultural and symbolic membership through rhetorical inclusion, ethnic identity cards and trans-border cultural exchanges.

The most powerful – and controversial – of these policies is the expansion of citizenship through dual nationality legislation, giving those abroad preferential access to entry and the state's political community. Both types of states utilise citizenship options, with some variation in the purpose of the flexible membership. Kin states use 'ethnizenship', which Bauböck defines as 'external quasi-citizenship' for those who do not reside in the country granting the status (2007b: 2396), as a form of symbolic membership and nation-building that may or may not translate into real benefits and mobility. Or these states may allow for multiple citizenship or preferential naturalisation for ethnic kin as a form of minority protection, providing an 'exit option' for national minorities facing discrimination and assimilation (Iordachi 2005: 241). In Hungary, a failed attempt in 2004 to provide extraterritorial dual citizenship reflected the 'ethnizenship' model, whereby ethnic Hungarians in some neighbouring countries would have the option of 'citizenship without resettlement'. In 2005, the left-wing social democratic government, which had rejected the ethnizenship model, simplified naturalisation requirements for ethnic Hungarians, creating a stronger framework of preferential naturalisation based on individual application, not a collective right to ethnic citizenship (Ministry 2005).

In migrant-sending states, external citizenship is meant to create a relationship of rights and obligations with emigrant non-residents in order to tie potentially reluctant or increasingly distant (in time and space) populations abroad to the state or origin. Citizenship is thus 'a substitute for physical presence in the home state, and grounds emigrants'

ability and even need to engage with it from afar' (Barry 2006: 21). Allowing for multiple nationality and even external voting rights is thus a way for states to extend their sovereignty 'in the absence of coercive home-state power' to ensure continued access to diaspora resources (Gamlen 2006: 5).

The policymaking process for diaspora engagement, particularly when it involves the expansion of citizenship, takes place in a context fraught with contention and debate. The context of citizenship policies certainly differs between kin and migrant states, but the policies trigger similar levels of debate and contestation over changing the boundaries of the political community. Policies must go far enough to provide populations abroad – both migrant and ethnic kin – with realistic incentives for maintaining loyalties that correspond to what those populations most likely seek from the homeland state: some combination of increased economic opportunity (either investment, tax-free remittances, property ownership or access to improved labour markets and subsidies), symbolic and cultural membership (ethnic ID cards, support for minority language education, cultural exchanges and events or rhetorical inclusion as positive national members) and protection and advocacy (consular and diplomatic services, pressure on host states regarding migrant or minority rights). Yet, as I will demonstrate in the following section, policymakers risk going too far, thereby provoking backlash against the expansion of the political community.

#### 7.2.4 *Contested outcomes*

When a state increases its engagement with the diaspora, this process necessitates an expansion of the homeland state political community. At a minimum, increased diaspora engagement involves the reordering of foreign policy priorities, redistributing state funds and restructuring government institutions to include agencies, commissions or ministries to administer the new policies. Debates over diaspora policy increase in intensity as those abroad are given access to membership in the political community of the homeland state and new policies expand the boundaries of political membership beyond the state borders, thereby jeopardising the 'coherence of the citizenry' (Barry 2006: 24). As Waldinger and Fitzgerald rightly argue: 'The terms of national belonging are almost always the subject of conflict' (2004: 1179).

Elite rhetoric of ethnic kinship or national belonging, therefore, does not always reflect the reality or acceptance of a particular national project. Such projects are often contested, and there may be widespread resistance to accepting members of the ethnic diaspora as 'real' members of the civic community who deserve the full rights and benefits of citizenship. Thus, even after diaspora resources have been identified and



some policy changes are implemented to maintain ties with the diaspora, efforts to provide co-ethnics abroad with further access to political membership are often met with resistance. Once discussion of deeper access to membership in the homeland political community is opened, tensions are brought forward, stemming from the dual nature of the state-diaspora relationship. Those legitimately opposed to expanding the reach of the state may ask several questions. What is the cost to the state if diaspora members acquire a unique legal status, giving them increased political and even economic influence? What are the consequences if they are allowed to choose among identities and loyalties as they please? Are they – or are we – the authentic representatives of our culture and our nation? What may be lost in terms of our economic and political stability, even our foreign policy goals, by extending membership beyond our borders? Examples from the cases that follow help illustrate the dynamics of this tension over the incorporation of diaspora members into the homeland political community.

Despite the popular rhetoric of historical responsibility and ethnic affiliation, the Hungarian public has consistently shown ambivalence about the Hungarians across the border, particularly in relation to ethnic Hungarian labour migration and citizenship (Csepeli & Örkény 1996: 280). This ambiguity was reflected in the failed December 2004 referendum on whether Hungary should provide non-resident dual citizenship for the ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries. Only 37 per cent of eligible voters turned out for the referendum and, of those, support for the dual citizenship agenda was only slightly more than 51 per cent. The low turnout invalidated the results – by law, 25 per cent of eligible voters must support or reject the initiative. Many expressed surprise that so many Hungarians would vote against the measure (Kovács 2006: 62). Taken in the context of a broader comparative understanding of state-diaspora relations, however, the outcome of the referendum makes more sense. Fear of a ‘wave’ of ethnic Hungarian migration and concerns about the political and economic consequences for Hungary were the main arguments put forth by the centre-left governing coalition against granting co-ethnics citizenship. Such arguments proved to have traction amongst voters anxious about Hungary’s economic and political stability. The willingness to vote against expanding citizenship clearly showed the limits of cross-border ethnic attachments in Hungary when they compete with other concerns of the citizenry and opposing political elites. A similar debate went on for years in Poland over the Charter of the Poles, which gives ethnic Poles in neighbouring eastern states legal recognition of belonging to the Polish nation, in addition to a wide range of rights in Poland, such as less restrictive entry requirements and access to some educational and social services. This ‘semi-citizenship’ included a Polish identity card to be issued by

consulates, which would function as a lifetime nationality visa, but did not allow for preferential naturalisation (Górny, Grzymała-Kazłowska, Koryś & Weinar 2007: 158-163). After many years of debate and opposition, the Law on the Polish Charter was finally passed in September 2007 and came into effect in 2008.

In Mexico, the dual nationality issue spurred a public debate 'about what it means to be Mexican' (Barry 2006: 48). As more integrative policies were discussed, it became clear that there was 'no consensus in Mexico about the precise terms of the membership that should be offered to the people of Mexican descent' (Gutierrez 1999: 567). In 1997, the Mexican government introduced a constitutional amendment to allow Mexicans abroad to take on a second citizenship without being stripped of their Mexican one. This was seen as a crucial move to keep the diaspora in the US from assimilating completely and losing their ties with the mother country, and thereby to ensure a steady flow of remittances and investment. Opposition to the new citizenship law, however, exposed concerns about the migrants' political loyalties and the potential for Mexico's independence to come under attack. As one analyst described this fear:

When migrants return home, they carry with them an assortment of questionable beliefs, values and habits acquired in the United States... Allowing them to participate in the national electoral process paves the way to the degradation of Mexico and the loss of independence. (Martinez-Saldana 2003: 46)

Reluctance about granting voting rights was also expressed by entrenched political interests, most notably the previously hegemonic Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which feared that diaspora voting would shift the political balance against them (García-Acevedo 2003: 543). However, once diaspora resources were rediscovered and the perception had shifted, the political loyalty of Mexicans in the US became a political prize to be won, reordering the interests of various party elites. The PRI, once reluctant to incorporate the diaspora politically, shifted to using its version of revolutionary nationalism to criticise the Fox government for not doing enough to help those beyond the border, and the dual citizenship legislation eventually went forward (Martinez-Saldana 2003: 38).

In Kazakhstan, the government's ethnic repatriation plan also triggered backlash over the issue of national belonging. After Kazakhstan's independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, the government actively sponsored the return and repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs in what it called the 'far abroad', meaning primarily those in Mongolia, Turkey and other parts of Asia. This policy was part of a nation-building

process designed to balance out the demographic reality that Kazakhs were an extremely tenuous ethnic majority in Kazakhstan: there were large numbers of non-Kazakh Russian speakers as well as ethnic Poles, Germans and other regional nationalities. At least 500,000 ethnic Kazakhs came to Kazakhstan in the 1990s, induced by repatriation benefits such as free air flights, expedited residency permits, language courses (in Russian), job training, housing and potential economic opportunities. The process of incorporating the ethnic Kazakhs from abroad proved to be difficult, however: cultural tensions between the culturally 'pure' Kazakhs from the diaspora and the 'Russified' motherland resulted in distrust of those coming from outside (Cummings 1998: 141-145). Political tensions over the definition of the political community and to what degree it should be defined by ethnicity led to incomplete policies that left many repatriating Kazakhs in a legal and economic limbo. In 1995, dual citizenship – which previously had been allowed only for ethnic Kazakhs – was abolished, forcing those from abroad to give up their existing citizenship in order to apply for Kazakh naturalisation. However, the paperwork necessary to formally renounce one's citizenship and gain another proved bureaucratically cumbersome and costly. As a result, by 1999, almost 90 per cent of the repatriates from the diaspora lacked Kazakhstani citizenship, and therefore could not vote, own property or run for office (Diener 2005: 339). In addition, many repatriates were not receiving their promised allowances or lost their benefits because they neglected to register properly with local authorities or failed to stay in the areas designated by government agencies as suitable for resettlement (Cummings 1998: 144). As has been the case in a number of states that have allowed ethnic repatriation of specific diaspora populations, the state uses the influx of cultural siblings for specific purposes, and shapes the terms of their incorporation to benefit the perceived, often contested, needs of the state.<sup>5</sup>

### 7.3 Conclusion

Looking at the similarities in the structure and political dynamics of diaspora engagement by a variety of kin and migrant-sending states, this chapter generated a broadly comparative model of how and why states make policy towards their national populations abroad. In summarising this model, we see first that populations abroad represent a set of unique cultural, material and political resources for homeland state elites. This model of 'diaspora as resource' offers a useful framework for explaining the motives for, and modes of engagement with, those outside state borders. Within this framework, homeland state elites come to understand and promote the diaspora population as a source of strength,

rather than a symbol of weakness for the homeland state and for their own political agendas. Once the diaspora resources have been identified and merged into political discourse and policy debates, potential threats to their access are met by an increase in activism by the homeland state. Changes in external conditions – such as realignments of power in interstate relations and shifting economic and geopolitical alliances – shape opportunities for states to establish and control their relationship with external communities. In responding to these challenges, states extend their sovereignty and redefine the boundaries of state citizenship and national membership in order to create, co-opt and maintain ties to populations abroad. Policy consensus and implementation can, however, be challenged and disrupted – leading to incomplete and contested engagement – by the overextension of sovereignty, domestic political contestation and a backlash against the redefinition of the political community to include those outside the state borders.

There is still much work to be done towards a comparative framework. One way to talk about both sets of cases without diminishing or ignoring important differences would be to work towards a typology based on targeting specific types of populations abroad (e.g. diasporic economic migrants, diasporic exiles and political migrants, unorganised expatriates, cross-border co-ethnics after independence) and the types of policies the state uses to engage those populations. Such a typology could help us see possible patterns to match motivation (what state elites want from certain populations) with action. Some comparative typologies have already been generated by those looking at one type of action (e.g. external voting) or at one type of population (e.g. migrant communities), but few attempt to incorporate both aspects (Gamlen 2006; Chander 2006). Work on the introduction of new types of citizenship and membership options is a particularly promising model for cross-regional and cross-type analysis (Bauböck 2007b; Faist 2001). Future research towards a broader comparative framework would also benefit from a deeper investigation of the role of host state policies. As mentioned, a change in the diaspora's political and economic incorporation in the host state can trigger a reaction by homeland state elites towards more intense transnational engagement. Host state policies regarding kin minority or migrant populations also shape how and to what extent diasporas will organise, and what kinds of connections they will seek from the homeland state, thereby determining whether or not a potential diaspora population is available to be mobilised as a resource. Furthermore, the amount of host state resistance to homeland state activism can constrain or open opportunities for extraterritorial policies to develop.

In terms of definitional distinctions, although using the term 'diaspora' to define a population beyond the border may be problematic,

adopting the phrase ‘diaspora politics’ to describe state action and the contention around those policies may be useful. Whether a migrant or other external group can rightly be considered a diaspora bogs us down in the rather fruitless search for an objective set of criteria. ‘Diaspora politics’, however, may represent a stance taken by a potential homeland or kin state that focuses on the *intentionality* of treating an external group as if they were a bounded, distinct group with ties of loyalty and affiliation to the motherland. In this way, I believe that diaspora politics can be a useful catch-all to define a constructed relationship and intentional set of policies employed to keep those abroad connected to the homeland.

Clearly, there are important empirical and analytical nuances that are lost in the attempt to create generalisations from such vast diversity. Instructive differences between cases may include the ethnic make-up of the homeland state (degree of homogeneity), whether a primarily emigration state has kin state potential tied to a specific historical territory (e.g. India, Dominican Republic) and the relative economic and political strengths of the external population compared to the homeland state. Yet, there is clearly analytical utility in looking beyond the prevalent type-specific distinction between kin states and migrant-sending states. By engaging both sets of cases, we are forced to question case- and region-specific assumptions, leading to a more nuanced understanding and broadly applicable theorisation.

## Notes

- 1 Some authors have crafted broader definitions of diaspora that include trans-border kin minorities (Shain & Barth 2003: 450; Brubaker 2005; Joppke 2005: 30; King & Melvin 1999).
- 2 Italy, Turkey and Croatia are three examples of states that have developed policies to engage both ethnic kin populations in neighbouring countries and migrant diasporas.
- 3 Other countries with special legislation targeted only at kin minorities include Germany, Poland and Russia.
- 4 Sheridan, M. B. ‘Salvadoran leader embraces diaspora’, *The Washington Post* B01 9 October 2004.
- 5 Other cases using targeted repatriation to move ethnic kin into specific, often economically depressed regions of the country include Greece, Russia and Turkey.

# Chapter 8

## Diasporas and international politics: Utilising the universalistic creed of liberalism for particularistic and nationalist purposes

*Maria Koinova*

### 8.1 Introduction

The growing pace of globalisation in the first decade of the twenty-first century has prompted scholars to seek a better understanding of the role of non-state actors in world politics. Transnational social movements challenge states on international issues such as global warming and global inequalities. International NGOs criticise states for disrespecting human rights and lagging on democratisation and development. Terrorist groups use violence to advance transnational ideological and religious creeds that transcend the state. Diasporas use institutions of their host state to advocate causes for their home states. All these non-state actors are relatively autonomous from the state they live in and its material resources; they are transnational or linked to more than one state, and they seek to affect political change.

Analysing diasporas as non-state actors is a relatively new trend in political science. While diaspora studies first emerged from cultural studies, anthropology and sociology, political science followed this trend starting in the 1990s. (Sheffer 2003; Shain 1994-1995 2002, 2007; King & Melvin 1999; Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau & Brannan 2001; Kaldor 2001; Wayland 2004; Adamson 2005a, 2006; Brinkerhoff 2006; Lyons 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006; Smith & Stares 2007). Interest in diasporas grew after 9/11 because foreign-born nationals living in Western states were behind the terrorist attacks. There is a growing understanding that during this era of globalisation, diasporas are not simply migrants in the eyes of host states; they are linked simultaneously to many political contexts through cheap communication and transportation networks. Diasporas are becoming political actors with local and transnational agendas.

To theorise about diasporas in political science means facing a number of challenges, including the conceptual ambiguities surrounding

the term 'diaspora'. As highlighted in more detail elsewhere in this volume, positivist conceptualisations have so far dominated the field, viewing diasporas as multigenerational groups of migrants who share a similar identity and maintain recurrent contacts with their country of origin (Esman 1986; Safran 1991; Cohen 1997; Sheffer 2003; Bruneau this volume). Alternative constructivist accounts have recently become more widespread. They treat diaspora as 'a category of practice, project, claim and stance, rather than as a bounded group' (Brubaker 2005). Nevertheless, conceptualising diasporas as a global political phenomenon requires more than mirroring classic disagreements in the literature on how to define the 'nation' (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Anderson 1991; Smith 2001). Diasporas in the global age differ from nations of the modern age because they have multiple national identities and loyalties and are interlinked across the globe. The original nation is no longer 'homogeneous'. Dual citizenship and multiple loyalties abound but are not yet conceptually integrated into the term 'diaspora'.

These conceptual deficiencies obscure the unit of analysis in political science. The questions asked, methodologies used and generalisations reached are affected by whether a scholar considers a diaspora to be a bounded group, a conglomerate of elites and individuals functioning within that bounded group, networks or enduring discursive patterns. Positivist views facilitate asking questions about the impact of diasporas on the state and political processes within it, the use of comparative and statistical methods and the conception of diasporas as unitary actors or elites with a shared identity. Such research designs simplify the complexity of a diaspora by ignoring generational, gender and location-based differences, but examine correlations and causality between dependent and independent variables. In contrast, a constructivist view of diaspora enables more complexity. It asks questions about how diasporas emerge, who belongs to them from various generations and genders and how identities – in general (rather than a specific group or elites) – affect the political world or are affected by it. This line of scholarship is closer to the humanities, where content and discourse analyses are often the methods preferred.

Without trying to resolve the conceptual debate about the term 'diaspora', I adopt in this chapter a definition used by Adamson and Demetriou to address the contours of a 'diaspora' in the global space, which contains both positivist and constructivist elements.

A diaspora can be identified as a social collectivity that exists across state borders and that has succeeded over time to 1) sustain a collective national, cultural or religious identity through a sense of internal cohesion and sustained ties with a real or imagined homeland and 2) display an ability to address the collective

interests of members of the social collectivity through a developed internal organizational framework and transnational links. (2007: 497)

The second major problem with theorising diasporas in political science stems from the non-consensual definition of the term ‘non-state actor’. Although I have outlined three major traits of non-state actors – autonomy from the state, transnationalism and aspirations for political change – legitimate questions arise about all of them. How autonomous is a non-state actor if state programmes are often the sponsors of NGOs, if transnational social movements are penetrated by state officials and if terrorist groups – such as Hezbollah and Hamas – and are embedded within state institutions? How transnational are non-state actors? Are they ‘rooted cosmopolitans’ (Tarrow 2005) embedded primarily in one political context while maintaining links with others across the globe, or are they embedded simultaneously in several social and political contexts (Portes 1999)? Finally, some non-state actors, such as international NGOs, may have a clearly defined agenda for political change. Diasporas have no clearly unified agendas. Their institutions, powerful individuals and transnational networks are capable of steering political change, but often advance competing claims. Thus, political science scholarship on diasporas has much conceptual and theoretical work ahead.

This chapter will focus on theorising the role of diasporas in world politics, though will concentrate specifically on diasporas in liberal democracies linked to homelands experiencing limited sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> Since the end of the Cold War and the growing pace of globalisation, territories of limited sovereignty have proliferated due to secessionist and other intra-state conflicts. Their ambiguous international status opens considerable political opportunity for international actors to intervene in shaping domestic developments. Diasporas are among these actors because of their connection to kin in the homeland and the significant resources that local elites are eager to capture. In this chapter, I argue that such diasporas utilise democratic discourses and procedures in order to pursue nationalist projects related to their land of origin. The mechanisms used relate to how diasporas filter global pressures for democratisation.

## **8.2 Theoretical accounts of diasporas as radical and moderate actors**

Recent scholarship on diasporas and homeland politics has focused on the role of diasporas in conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in their homelands. This interest has been prompted by two major



findings. In 2000, a statistical large-N study on the economy of civil war demonstrated that civil wars with strong diaspora involvement are highly likely to continue to perpetuate, especially if the diaspora has large concentrations in the United States (Collier & Hoeffler 2000). Kaldor (2001) arrived at the same conclusion from a different theoretical perspective; juxtaposing 'new' (intra-state) vs. 'old' (interstate) wars, she found that diasporas were crucial in sustaining the intra-state wars of disintegration of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. In the early 2000s, other studies made similar generalisations, mostly deriving internal validity from case studies rather than external validity across many cases. Occupying scholarly attention have been the Tamil Tigers and the conflicts in Sri Lanka, the Albanians and the conflict in Kosovo in the 1990s, the Kurds and the conflicts in southern Turkey and Iraq, among others. As a result, diasporas have largely been considered 'long-distance nationalists' (Anderson 1998) that participate in a wide range of nationalist and conflict-perpetuating activities because they lead comfortable lives in the industrialised world and do not face the consequences of their actions. Diasporas that emerged as a result of political conflicts, rather than from economic or other types of voluntary migration, maintain traumatic identities attached to homeland territory and the myth of return, barring them from seeing potential avenues for conflict resolution (Faist 2000a; Shain 2002; Sheffer 2003; Lyons 2006; Smith & Stares 2007; Baser & Swain 2008). While they lobby their homeland governments, organise peaceful demonstrations and provide humanitarian aid, they also often mobilise for radical causes in the transnational space. They broadcast hate speech and nationally intolerant messages, engage in fundraising and sponsorship for radical groups and often take up arms to go fight in the homeland (Byman et al. 2001; Hockenos 2003; Biswas 2004; Wayland 2004; Adamson 2005a; Fair 2005; Lyons 2006; Orjuela 2008).

More recently, other scholars have noted that such accounts are one-sided, not capturing the peaceful practices in which a number of conflict-generated diasporas have been engaged. While the Boston-based Irish diaspora for years helped perpetuate the conflict in Northern Ireland by supporting the Irish Republican Army through fundraising activities, it was able to moderate its stances after intervention from the Clinton Administration in the peace process that led to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (Cohrane 2007; Anonymous 1 2008). More recently, the Ethiopian and Kurdish diasporas have been promoting moderate politics in their homelands ravaged by internal wars (Lyons 2006; Koser 2007; Natali 2007; Zunzer 2008). Diasporas have been able to promote liberal ideals and participate in the democratisation of their home countries before the end of communism and thereafter (Shain 1999; Biswas 2007; Koinova 2009).

Nevertheless, scholarship is still in the preliminary stages of understanding the conditions and mechanisms that make diasporas agents of either the radicalisation or the moderation of politics in their homelands. Little comparative work exists, and much scholarship describes diaspora practices in different cases instead of building theory. This chapter goes beyond taking sides in a cluster of arguments maintaining that diasporas are either 'nationalists who perpetuate conflicts' or 'could be moderate actors'. I argue that diasporas in liberal societies linked to homelands experiencing challenges to their external or internal sovereignty react not simply by endorsing nationalist rhetoric and activities. Rather, they act in a more sophisticated way: they filter international pressures for democratisation in a world where the liberal creed has no significant ideological opponent after the end of the Cold War apart from radical Islam (which nevertheless has incoherent ideological messages across a variety of internally divided communities and organisations). Hence, diasporas use the universalist creed of liberalism instrumentally in order to increase their political clout with Western governments while simultaneously pursuing nationalist projects related to their country of origin. They do so by: 1) using *discourses* about democratisation, peace and reconciliation and 2) occasionally endorsing minimal democratic *procedures*. They do not, however, promote a full-fledged version of liberalism and they fall short of supporting liberal democratic *values*.

I build this argument on the basis of numerous interviews that I conducted between 1999 and 2008 with representatives of Albanian, Armenian, Ukrainian, Serbian and Lebanese diasporas in Washington, D.C., and other locations along the East Coast of the US, Kosovo and Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, I expand my argument based on literature and interviews conducted among diaspora returnees in Macedonia in the summer of 2008. While I am aware that these diasporas do not represent the entire universe of cases, they are nevertheless representative of diasporas generated by conflicts and severe tensions in deeply divided societies.

I limit the scope of this chapter to diaspora linkages with homelands that do not experience acute violence. Non-violent periods allow domestic and external actors – including diasporas – to make choices ranging from moderate to radical in order to affect domestic change. The gamut of choices is foreclosed during periods of violent warfare in the homeland when diasporas almost unconditionally support the local actors who best advance nationalist goals (Shain 2002). Under violent conditions, radicals usually hold more political clout.

In order to avoid simplifications when generalising diaspora behaviour, scholars should examine diaspora mobilisation and attitudes during different stages of the political processes in the homeland. On the

most basic level, a diaspora might become belligerent when violence affects its ethnic brethren, but become much more constructive when the violence stops. Bercovitch rightly argued that a diaspora's involvement may vary depending on the conflict-cycle in the homeland (2007: 27). However, his account considers cycles of violence from a beginning to an end, ignoring the fact that in states where sovereignty is deeply contested – e.g. Lebanon, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh – conflicts may last for decades in some parts of the country while non-violent relationships predominate in others. Thus, a diaspora connection to the homeland may not be related to a conflict cycle, *per se*, but to the violence and non-violence ensuing during larger processes of secessionism, state collapse and contested sovereignty. The Albanian diaspora provides a good example. It supported the radical Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during the most violent years of Kosovo's secessionist struggle, 1998-1999. The Albanian diaspora acted more moderately, however, prior to the conflict and following NATO's 1999 military intervention in Serbia. This moderation occurred despite the fact that Kosovo did not enjoy international state sovereignty throughout that time and gained independence only in February 2008.

### **8.3 Diasporas and the liberal creed**

Socialised with liberal values in Western societies, diasporas might be expected to be interested in promoting such values in their homelands. Indeed, this often occurs in the transnational space. Diasporas teach their extended families and friends about democratic practices, such as how to vote for local government and to develop gender equality norms – a process termed a transfer of 'social remittances' (Levitt 2001). Moreover, there are deep-seated reasons motivating this transfer. Voluntary migrants chose a democratic political system over living in their original societies, whether autocratic, semi-autocratic or democratic. At first glance, conflict-generated diasporas may look different from voluntary migrations because they were dispersed by violence and could not proactively make political choices. However, this perception is not entirely accurate. Political exiles – such as many among the Lebanese and Albanians from this pool of cases – were given asylum because of their pro-democracy inclinations. Even refugees dispersed by violent conflicts and settled in Western states – such as refugees from the wars of disintegration of former Yugoslavia – have interacted with the political culture of their host country for extended periods of time and internalised some of the liberal political values. Moreover, political pluralism allowed many migrants who did not have a political voice in their homeland to form political groups and societies in their host lands

(Adamson 2002). These formations socialised migrants with the democratic values of freedom of speech and association.

Empirically, however, we can still observe a wide range of diasporic practices: radical activities, aggressive and passive nationalism as well as interest in promoting democratisation. The Polish diaspora, for example, was consistently anti-communist and pro-democratic long before the end of communism. Thus, it would not be an analytically crucial case for elucidating reasons why – and ways in which – diasporas might relate to democratisation during the age of globalisation. Diasporas linked to homelands experiencing internal or external challenges to their sovereignty would be more analytically significant because these challenges make them more prone to act on the nationalist and radical side of the spectrum. If they were to act with moderation, however, there should be clear-cut reasons explaining this behaviour. Challenges to the homeland's sovereignty subject diasporas' engagement with the liberal creed to what social sciences call 'strong tests'.<sup>3</sup>

I argue that diasporas of this kind utilise the universal creed of liberalism for particularistic purposes. They are neither simply nationalists nor simply democracy promoters. They claim a middle ground by adopting democratic discourses and using democratic procedures to advance nationalist goals. Situating their claims in this central space, they use the existing global opportunity structure of liberalism to advance goals related to their country of origin. Teleological statements that democracy signals 'the end of history' and an end-point of man's ideological evolution after the end of communism (Fukujama 1992) would be misplaced in this discussion. Nevertheless, acknowledging that liberal democracy has been the most powerful ideological creed for the past two decades would be an accurate description of its place in the global normative space. Adamson even argued that liberalism has become a global opportunity structure in the international system (2005b: 547-569). However discredited by the US-led pre-emptive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq during the early 2000s that were justified in the name of 'democracy', democracy promotion has nevertheless long been embedded in the foreign policies of major powers such as the US and the European Union, as well as global institutions linking democracy promotion with development aid, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Thus, almost every country in the world – even if not sincerely interested in promoting democratisation within its borders – has been exposed directly or indirectly to elements of the liberal creed.

One could rightly argue that Marxism lost its currency as an ideology with the demise of communism, but economic inequalities within societies and across the North-South divide are growing and creating space for new ideological creeds to emerge and channel such

grievances. The anti-globalisation social movements that grew in ascendance in the 1990s have been one venue to address them, but they lacked a clear ideology and have lost some significance (Tarrow & Hadden 2007). Thus, the majority of grievances have been channelled through religious-based movements making claims on behalf of populations of various nationalities living in multiple states. Islam, in particular, has aspired to such a global ideological reach (Adamson 2005b). While ambitions for a global Islam certainly exist, the actual reach of Islamic organisations has been confined to certain world regions such as the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central and South-East Asia. Islamic groups are stronger in Europe than in the US and Australia, with no real footing in Latin America.

#### **8.4 Democratic discourses for particularistic purposes**

One way in which diasporas linked to homelands experiencing challenges to their sovereignty engage with the political projects in their country of origin is to frame sovereignty within discourses on democratisation. In order to demonstrate how they do so, I use theoretical insights from the literature on framing, an integral part of scholarship on social movements. Works on transnational social movements – addressing anti-globalisation, environmental, feminist and other movements – originally engaged with theorising on principled action based on universalist claims rather than on particularistic projects of identity-based actors such as diasporas (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp & Sikkink 1999; Della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2005). However, a number of scholars have incorporated ideas from this scholarship into their works, seeking to capture dynamics in diaspora politics. Most notably, the opening of political opportunity structures – such as the onset of wars, withdrawal of foreign troops and the political opportunities available in the host country and the international environment – have been deemed important for the political mobilisation of diasporas (Wayland 2004; Adamson 2005a; Brinkerhoff 2006; Smith & Stares 2007; Natali 2007; Skrbic 2007; Koinova 2009). Political opportunities both constrain and enable diasporas, determining to a certain extent their ideological and strategic choices (Biswas 2004). The choice to frame pro-sovereignty claims in democratisation terms deserves attention as an important characteristic of diaspora mobilisation.

A frame is an ‘interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment’ (Snow & Benford 1992). Effective frames demonstrate that the existing status quo is not natural, identify a

responsible party or parties and propose credible solutions (Keck & Sikkink 1998). Framing takes place alongside strategic 'alignment processes', among which 'frame bridging' is the most common (Benford & Snow 2000). Frames do not operate in a vacuum but are dynamically related to political and cultural opportunities and constraints. In the transnational realm, local insurgents capture distant imaginations and the support of international actors by successfully matching five shared elements with their international counterparts: substantive goals, customary tactics, ethical precepts, cultural attitudes and organisational needs (Bob 2005).

I will illustrate how framing of sovereignty is linked to democratisation by comparing the cases of the Lebanese diaspora linked to the 2000-2005 movement in Lebanon and the Albanian diaspora linked to the 1999-2008 pro-sovereignty movement in Kosovo.<sup>4</sup> The largely non-violent episode of contested sovereignty in Lebanon began in 2000 when Israel withdrew its military forces from the country's south and finished with Syrian troops' withdrawal in 2005. The Lebanese diaspora linked to Lebanon mobilised to restore the country's internal sovereignty and the ability of domestic institutions to function without perpetual interference from Syria. In Kosovo, the period started with the end of NATO's military intervention in 1999 and the arrival of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on Kosovo's territory, and, to a certain degree, ended with the proclamation of Kosovo's independence in February 2008.<sup>5</sup> The Albanian diaspora was strongly connected to the pro-sovereignty efforts of local elites and institutions that chose an 'institutional path to independence' over previous strategies of non-violence and guerrilla warfare.

The Lebanese and Albanian diasporas used the process of frame bridging to connect sovereignty with democratisation claims. The process refers to the 'linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem' (Benford & Snow 2000). Sovereignty and democracy are ideologically congruent because national self-determination has been a major part of the democratic creed since US President Woodrow Wilson formulated his fourteen points at the end of World War I. In both cases, diasporas linked sovereignty and democracy, aspiring to resonate with US policy's global promotion of democracy. While often contesting each other and acting without sustained coordination, Lebanese diaspora organisations nevertheless adopted a similar pro-democracy stance: 'Help Lebanon to regain its place among democracies of the world...' appealed Hassan El-Najjar, a prominent diaspora individual, to US President George W. Bush (Najjar 2001). Delegates of the World Maronite Congress, a pro-opposition and anti-Syrian gathering of journalists, exiles and Lebanese diaspora members in 2002 in Los Angeles, joined forces to

'speak with a common voice and to advocate a Free and Sovereign Lebanon...free to elect a democratic government where all are equal...' (LFP 2002). Supporters of one of the most active diaspora factions, the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) of Michel Aoun, exiled in France, used its political influence in the US to emphasise Lebanon's partnership with the US in building democracy in the Middle East (Anonymous 2 2007). Individuals linked to the Lebanese Forces, another political group with strong diaspora presence, linked sovereignty and democracy claims by emphasising how human rights abuses should not be tolerated in Lebanon. They argued that abuses occur because Syria suppresses domestic opposition (Anonymous 3 2007). These claims were made keeping in mind that their leader Samir Geagea was imprisoned in Lebanon.

Like their Lebanese counterparts, Albanian diaspora organisations in the US held personal and institutional rivalries, but they also adopted a clear stance linking Kosovo's international sovereignty to a democratic discourse. The president of one of the most influential diaspora institutions, the Albanian American Civic League (AACL), Joe DioGuardi, congratulated Kosovo-Albanians for their 'disciplined behavior' in the 2000 municipal elections and claimed that it established that 'Kosova is ready for a democratic society and self-governance.' Although DioGuardi maintained ties with less moderate parties in Kosovo that emerged from the former KLA, including war veterans, he nevertheless claimed that he wanted to 'see leaders who are ready to demonstrate that Albanians are ready to solve problems...', thus 'speeding Kosovo's democratization and solidifying international support for its independence.'<sup>6</sup> The National Albanian American Council, a Washington, D.C.-based organisation more closely related to parties in Kosovo that had emerged from the non-violent Democratic League of Kosovo during the 1990s, emphasised the need to develop the rule of law, thus launching programmes for the democratic education of Kosovars to pave the way to independence (Anonymous 4 2006). Although diaspora groups shared a rejection of the United Nations policy of 'standards before status' – developed in 2002 to give leverage to the international community in speeding the democratisation process and including respect for minority rights – they used the democratic creed to justify their own logic against this policy. They argued that, regardless of intentions, 'standards before status' de facto prevented Kosovo from becoming more democratic. Self-government without membership in international institutions that open opportunities for economic development is difficult to sustain.

One could argue that democratic discourses can be adopted easily because there is no cost to advancing them and commitments are not 'sticky'. While such observations sound almost commonsensical, the literature on democratising an Eastern Europe of the 1990s has shown

that rhetorical entrapment might be a mechanism for further democratic change (Schimmelfenning 2001). Reputational, rather than material, costs are paid if one deviates greatly from rhetorical commitments. Especially in Western societies, reputational costs matter. Diasporas that often want to be viewed as 'good citizens' (Biswas 2007) also want to avoid increased securitisation measures after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Rudolph 2003) and various stigmas related to their connection to a conflict-ridden homeland. They could face reputational costs if they do not adhere to their discursive arguments.

### 8.5 Democratic procedures and unresolved nationalist goals

Diasporas do not only use democratisation discourses, they also promote minimal democratic procedures in their homeland. These practices are mostly related to electoral pluralism and rotation of power of local elites rather than to liberal aspects of democratisation associated with human, minority or gender rights. Diasporas advocate these democratic procedures for nationalist and other particularistic purposes. Evidence from diasporas linked to the democratising region of Eastern Europe during the past two decades could well elucidate this point.

Serbia was a chronically disintegrating state from 1991 and did not enjoy full internal sovereignty over Kosovo during the 1990s. Local political institutions, economic life, educational and medical facilities were mirrored by the parallel structures of the secessionist Kosovo shadow state. In this time period, Serbian diaspora groups in the US focused their efforts – however sporadic and uncoordinated – primarily on supporting Milosevic and some parties of his opposition. Interestingly, the diaspora promoted groups that were often no less nationalist than Milosevic. For example, Chicago-based groups stemming from old Chetnik organisations rendered limited support to both opposition leader Vuk Draskovic and his ultra-nationalist rival, Vojislav Seselj (Hockenos 2003: 127). The influential Serbian Unity Congress (SUC) initially backed Milosevic during the war effort in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but changed its attitude after the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. Thereafter, Milosevic was briefly considered the 'peacemaker' of the Balkans' in US circles, but the diaspora considered him an opportunist who had jeopardised Serbian interests in 'Greater Serbia' (Hockenos 2003: 109; Anonymous 5 2007). The Serbian Unity Congress (SUC) supported opposition groups that could oust him from power and sponsored some of their leaders to travel to the US to testify before US Congress. SUC president Michael Djordjevic often acted as the official representative in the US for Serbian politicians Vuk Draskovic, Zoran Djindjic and Vesna Pesic (Hockenos 2003: 171-172).



As mentioned, in the case of Kosovo it was not internal, but international, legal sovereignty that was missing. The diaspora's engagement with the homeland's unresolved nationalist goal was not simply to link claims between sovereignty and democratisation, but to engage in promoting certain procedural aspects of democratisation. Keeping their eyes on Kosovo's future independence, the Albanian diaspora adopted a pragmatic attitude with the understanding that if democracy is the 'only game in town' for achieving independence, then it will play it (Anonymous 6 2006). Diaspora organisations regularly provided monitors for elections in Kosovo. They officially disapproved of mob violence in 2004 when Kosovo-Albanians injured and killed a number of Serbs and destroyed Serbian cultural monuments. They also did not actively stand in the way of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) when it indicted for war crimes Ramush Haradinaj, once a KLA commander and then Prime Minister of post-war Kosovo.<sup>7</sup>

Challenges to the international legal sovereignty of Nagorno-Karabakh have been responsible for the Armenian diaspora's limited involvement with democratisation. Unlike Kosovo, for which independence is *de facto* a reality, the conflict over the Armenian enclave of Karabakh on Azerbaijan's territory is considered 'frozen' after a ceasefire that ended the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994. The Armenian diaspora has had few real incentives to promote democratic behaviour, knowing that a resolution of the Karabakh problem is not on the international community's current agenda. It nevertheless engaged with promotion of democratic procedures in the most minimalist ways in order to meet general international pressures for democratisation, for example, by providing monitors for elections (Chouldjian 2007). After the violent electoral outcome during Armenia's 2008 presidential elections, a few diaspora individuals became proactive in supporting the opposition represented by former President Levon Ter-Petrossian.

Finally, the Macedonian diaspora based primarily in Australia used the democratic procedure of the referendum to challenge the adoption of a package of laws aimed at allowing Albanians living in Western Macedonia and other territorially concentrated minorities to enjoy larger self-government rights. This package emerged from the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement that ended the brief internal armed conflict in Macedonia in 2001. During the conflict, the guerrilla Albanian National Liberation Army challenged the internal sovereignty of the state. At that time, the territorial division of Macedonia into areas populated primarily by Albanians and Macedonians was strongly contemplated among both Albanian and Macedonian elites. Thus, the post-war decentralisation package became highly politically charged. The November 2004 referendum was organised by the nationalist Macedonian opposition and sponsored by diaspora contributions

channelled through the World Macedonian Congress based in Macedonia. Many Macedonians with close connections to the diaspora became engaged in widespread grassroots activities to advocate participation in that referendum. They attacked the upcoming redistricting of municipalities, which they considered as favouring the Albanians. Both the EU and the US made extraordinary efforts to campaign against this referendum, regarding it as a tool to promote Macedonian nationalism rather than liberal democratisation. It is common knowledge among scholars and activists in the region that the referendum would have had high chances of succeeding, and therefore preventing Albanians of Macedonia from benefiting from the Ohrid Peace Accords and its envisaged devolution of power, had the US not committed themselves to recognising Macedonia by its constitutionally defined name, Republic of Macedonia. With this move on the eve of the referendum, the US boosted the established Macedonian government's position and the legal framework envisaged under the Ohrid Accords. This example illustrates how a diaspora can be instrumental in boosting nationalism by using a common democratic procedure, the referendum.<sup>8</sup>

## 8.6 Why not promote liberal democratisation?

The discussion thus far demonstrates that diasporas linked to homelands experiencing challenges to their sovereignty use democratic *discourses* and can promote *procedures* for the democratisation of their homelands (political pluralism, electoral change, referendum) in order to advance unresolved nationalist goals in the homeland. Unlike violence or clandestine activities, these discourses and methods allow them to promote the homeland's political goal through democratic practices acceptable to the international community. Why, finally, do I then argue that diasporas cease their pro-democratic support when a promotion of liberal *values* of democratisation enters the picture? I will validate this argument after putting the diasporas' behaviour to test on one issue of great importance for the liberal values paradigm: the tolerance of ethno-national diversity.

Among the cases I have researched, only the Ukrainian diaspora supported some aspects of liberalism in their homeland, including inter-ethnic cooperation throughout the 1990s. I have argued elsewhere that this difference owes to the fact that the Ukrainian diaspora was linked to the newly independent state of Ukraine since 1991 (Koinova 2009). Unlike Poland, which alongside Japan is one of the most internally homogeneous states in the world, Ukrainian society is deeply divided between Ukrainians and speakers of Russian in Ukraine. Thus, the Ukrainian diaspora provides an appropriate shadow case to demonstrate that challenges to the sovereignty of the homeland are what predicts

whether a diaspora will engage in full-fledged promotion of the liberal creed or will stop short of promoting democratic values. Without deeper research one could expect that the ethno-linguistic divisions in Ukraine would give the Ukrainian diaspora an incentive to support primarily Western Ukraine, the territory from which its ancestors originated. Unlike in Macedonia, however, these divisions had not become internal challenges to the sovereignty of the state. For the Ukrainian diaspora, which had supported state independence since World War I, it became of utmost importance to preserve the integrity of independent Ukraine. This meant that, in a political neighbourhood dominated by Russia and prone to conflict, the diaspora was interested in keeping the loyalty among Russian speakers towards Ukraine intact. Thus, diaspora groups provided occasional support for dialogue among parliamentarians and mayors of Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking regions and supported other initiatives that cut across the Ukrainian-Russian internal divide (Andrushkiw 2007).

None of the other diasporas linked to homelands experiencing challenges to their sovereignty was inclined to consider support for minority rights and ethno-national diversity. Lebanese in the diaspora have traditionally engaged in Arab-American causes and often joined demonstrations advancing the Palestinian cause in the Arab-Israeli conflict. But challenging the Lebanese system to allow more rights for the displaced Palestinians in Lebanon would have been considered highly inappropriate. For example, the 2002 World Maronite Congress rejected – by overwhelming majority – a proposition to discuss the state of Palestinians in Lebanon on the grounds that many Christian Lebanese hold them responsible for ‘the destruction of Lebanon’ (Najjar 2002).

Similarly, Albanians in the US have adopted a zero-sum game attitude towards the national question. The AACL was opposed to the international community’s vision that post-war Kosovo should become a ‘multi-ethnic society’ through the return of large numbers of Serbian refugees (DioGuardi 2003). Most of the politically active diaspora groups either remained silent or made pro forma statements against the sporadic violence in March 2004 that inflicted serious harm on the Serbian minority in Kosovo. As the most influential Serbian diaspora organisation, the SUC has been openly anti-Kosovar. From a total of 29 issues of the *Bulletin of the Serbian Unity Congress*, 23 issues (sixteen from 1998-1999 and thirteen from 2000-2007) contained at least one article dedicated to Kosovar ‘terrorists’ and ‘war-mongers’ or to keeping Kosovo as an integral part of Serbian territory.

The Armenian diaspora has remained hostile to any reconciliation with, or moderation towards, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Moreover, the diasporic trauma of the Armenian genocide has perpetuated continued hate speech against Turkey and increased lobbying to prevent Turkey

from entering the EU or from entering into more amicable relations with Armenia proper. Becoming a textbook example of how a diaspora can harm conflict resolution in the homeland (Libaridian 1999; Tölölyan 2000; Papazian 2001; Shain 2002) is the case of former President Ter-Petrossian, who was ousted from power in 1998 after strong intervention from the Armenian diaspora because of his inclinations to improve Armenia's relations with Turkey. Ten years after this event the Armenian diaspora has not changed its attitude.

## 8.7 Conclusions

This chapter has sought to demonstrate major modes of thought about diasporas in political science and the challenges this scholarship encounters. Political science inquiry currently focuses on considering diasporas as non-state actors similar to anti-globalisation, feminist, environmental, terrorist and other movements. Major challenges arise from the lack of a clear conceptual understanding of how to treat diasporas. It is also unclear to what extent diasporas are indeed autonomous from the state as non-state actors, if various diaspora groups have competing claims driven by both diaspora and home-state circles. Theorising about diasporas as identity-based actors requires critical scrutiny of existing theoretical approaches on transnational social movements that have dominated this new scholarly field. This scholarship has built its insights mostly from principled, rather than identity-based, transnational action. It could thus make claims about universalist, rather than about particularistic, ideological projects.

Another goal of this chapter was to review major theoretical accounts with respect to the question of whether diasporas are actors of radicalisation or moderation of homeland politics. It identified two major clusters of arguments. One argued that diasporas often perpetuate conflicts by way of their traumatic identities, myth of return, attachment to territory and various practices such as fundraising for radical causes and taking up arms to fight for the homeland. Another line of thought found these statements biased towards certain diasporas (Tamil, Sikh, Albanian) on which scholarly attention has been focused. Some scholars deemed these cases not be representative of all diasporas, even those generated by conflicts. They argued that diasporas could also be engaged with moderate politics and with peace-building and democratisation activities. A few recent accounts have shown how to go beyond this dichotomy, demonstrating that diasporas may relate differently with respect to different phases of a conflict cycle in the homeland. These works do not take into account that homeland conflicts often are 'frozen' (Nagorno-Karabakh), have multiple spirals (Lebanon) and are related to

larger underlying processes such as secessionism (Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh), state collapse (Serbia) or transition during democratisation. I have offered theoretical insights that illuminate the fact that diasporas are not simply moderate or radical actors, but actors that engage strategically in homeland projects. I have limited my theory-building to a universe of cases of diasporas linked to homelands experiencing limited sovereignty. I have argued that they use democratic *discourses* and *procedures* to pursue unresolved particularistic nationalist goals related to their homeland, but do not fully endorse democratic *values*. I derived this argument on the basis of multiple interviews with representatives of the Albanian, Armenian, Lebanese, Macedonian, Serbian and Ukrainian diasporas.

This chapter contributes to the existing literature on diasporas and homeland politics in several ways. First, it focuses scholarly attention on the need to discuss diasporas not in general, but how they relate to particular political contexts in their homelands. Second, my account demonstrates that diasporas are not simply identity-based actors driven by nationalist or ideological claims. They can act instrumentally when approaching political issues in their homeland that need support from their host land or the larger international community. The need for the international recognition of the emerging Kosovo state is a good example of a major incentive for the Albanian diaspora to formulate democratisation discourses on its own, and to promote democratisation procedures and transform its own radical behaviour from 1998-1999 into one that makes moderate claims. Third, this chapter offers a wide comparative approach to the study of diasporas against the backdrop of the single-case approaches that still dominate the field. This chapter thereby contributes to meso-level theorising on diasporas and world politics.

My theoretical account faces some limitations due to the selection of cases of diasporas in liberal states linked to homelands experiencing limited sovereignty. It remains to be tested whether my theoretically informed findings could be generalised into a broader theory of diasporic support for democracy by extending the analysis to three other contextualised comparisons. These are: 1) diasporas linked to homelands experiencing challenges to their sovereignty but residing in non-liberal states (Lebanese in Africa, Armenians in Syria and Iran and Palestinians in the Middle East would be good examples); 2) diasporas living in liberal states that are engaged with homelands that do not experience any challenges to their internal or external sovereignty (the Ukrainian and Polish cases discussed above are good examples and the pool of cases could be potentially expanded to diasporas linked to the democratising political environments of Eastern Europe and Latin America); 3) transnational political participation of migrants casting absentee ballots in a democratic election. This phenomenon could be

studied across an even wider array of cases including citizens of transition countries or competitive authoritarian regimes, but also expatriates of liberal democracies residing throughout the globe, including increasing numbers of individuals enjoying double citizenship.

## Notes

- 1 International legal sovereignty designates the judicial recognition of an international legal entity. Domestic sovereignty denotes the ability of domestic authority structures to control activities within their territorial borders (Krasner 2001).
- 2 In-depth comparative studies on concrete conflicts can be found in Koinova (2009, forthcoming).
- 3 A 'strong test' is one whose outcome is unlikely to result from any other factor except the operation or failure of the proposed theory (Van Evera 1997).
- 4 For further in-depth discussion about framing, access and shifts of foreign policy with regard to these cases, see Koinova (forthcoming).
- 5 One can rightly argue that challenges to Kosovo's sovereignty have not been completely resolved with the February 2008 declaration of independence since, as of July 2009, Kosovo had been recognised by only 62 of the 192 UN member states. Nevertheless, this major event paved the way for UN rule in Kosovo to be significantly downsized, as well as for further development of statehood structures, including diplomatic missions in major countries that have recognised Kosovo. Most notably, it created widespread sentiment among Kosovars that their sovereignty goal has been finally achieved.
- 6 Zeri, 'A Strong Man on the Side of Kosova: Interview with Former Congressman Joe DioGuardi,' October 2000, [www.aacj.com/Diaspora.html](http://www.aacj.com/Diaspora.html), accessed November 2009.
- 7 Haradinaj was acquitted by the ICTY in 2008.
- 8 While the referendum is a democratic procedure, it has been widely used to enhance the legitimacy of non-democratic regimes, and democratic regimes have used it to support non-democratic policies. This discussion demonstrates that diasporas could potentially be part of a pool of actors who utilise the referendum for non-democratic (here specifically, for majoritarian) purposes.



## Chapter 9

# Diaspora, migration and transnationalism: Insights from the study of second-generation 'returnees'

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### 9.1 Introduction

In an era of globalisation and accelerating and diversifying mobility, certain 'new' types of migration escape the attention of statisticians and demographers. They become 'known' through anecdotal evidence, qualitative research, even newspaper reports. Such is the case with the particular migratory form that we discuss in this chapter: the 'return' of the second generation to their parental 'homeland', often independent of their parents who remain in the 'hostland'. In the United Kingdom, newspaper articles have recently picked up on this phenomenon, describing it as 'going back to my roots'<sup>1</sup> or 'home from home'.<sup>2</sup> Wajid (2006) describes the growing number of British-born Pakistanis, especially women, who are settling in the parents' country of origin. She identifies two different types. One concerns young women taken back, sometimes against their will, to arranged marriages in villages in Mirpur, the main area of origin of Britain's Pakistani community. The other features university-educated career women who migrate to Pakistan's cities to pursue professional careers. In Karachi or Lahore, they enjoy a greater measure of freedom than they would have been allowed by their family and community in Britain, as well as being free of the racial discrimination still characteristic of British society.

Our aims in this chapter are, first, to bring this phenomenon of second-generation return into focus and, second, to explore its theoretical and conceptual implications. The chapter comprises three parts. The first deals with conceptualisation and definition: of the narrow phenomenon of second-generation return and its constituent elements (second generation, return); and of the broader theoretical frameworks that are central to this book, namely transnationalism and diaspora. In the second section, we demonstrate the significance of second-generation return as an empirical phenomenon by pinpointing three geographical



settings where the phenomenon has been researched: Japanese Brazilians or *Nikkeijin*, British-born ‘returnees’ to the Caribbean and Greek-Americans relocating to Greece. The last of these three case studies draws on our own research.<sup>3</sup> In the third and concluding part of the chapter, we use the second-generation return optic to reflect briefly on the broader theoretical approaches of diaspora and transnationalism.

## 9.2 Second-generation return: A new migration chronotope

The stripped-down definition of second-generation return is unambiguous: it is the ‘return’ of the second-generation children of first-generation immigrants to their parents’ country of origin. It is a time-space phenomenon, or chronotope, defined by genealogical time and by two places – origin and destination – which are the reverse of those framing the parental migration. Complications arise when we adopt the emic gaze of the second-generationers themselves, for whom the ‘destination’ is also the ‘origin’ – ‘going back to their roots’ (Wessendorf 2007). A similar reflective ambiguity surrounds the notion of home: they are relocating from one home to another, except that the return to the parental home place has a different cadence – the home is the homeland. The same holds true for return: strictly speaking, if the migrants were ‘true’ second generationers, i.e. born and brought up abroad, this is not the return migration of migration statistics. Yet, for the protagonists themselves, it is very much a real, ontological return to the land of their ancestors.

These, then, are some of the nuances that emerge when we excavate the apparently straightforward term ‘second-generation return’. Other difficulties arise when we break the term down into its constituent parts. We quickly appreciate the rigidity of definitions in the face of the messy evidence of reality.

The term ‘second generation’ is a hostage to fortune. Its pure form is clear enough, but all sorts of complications arise when we scrutinise the concept more closely. Ego may be foreign-born to immigrant parents, but if the parents were married before emigrating, there may be other siblings in the same family who are not, in the pure sense, second generation, i.e. born in the host country. Some definitions of second generation include children born in the home country and brought to the host country at an early age, for instance, before the age of six years in many European studies, though later in American research (Thomson & Crul 2007). The well-known studies by Portes and Rumbaut take the threshold at twelve and relax the definition of second generation even further by allowing one of the parents to be native-born (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Rumbaut & Portes 2001). Home-country-

born children brought by their migrating parents are also known as the 1.5 generation, although this definition too can be very loose, ranging from very young babies to teenagers, with consequent differences regarding educational experience, acculturation, linguistic competences, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Three further refinements of second generation phenomenology can be noted. First, interesting questions arise when the second generation is the offspring of parents of two different immigrant national origins. The transnational allegiances and diasporic identities of such individuals have yet to be studied. We signal this as a major gap in the literature on the second generation.

Second, how does one define host-country-born individuals when one parent is first generation and the other second? Given the practice among many ethnic communities of seeking spouses for the second generation in the home country and then 'importing' them through 'marriage migration', this category of offspring is becoming increasingly common and is sometimes labelled the 2.5 generation.

Third, how do we describe individuals who are born in the host country but are then sent back to their 'home' countries for part of their schooling? Many reasons may lie behind such a course of action: the need for both parents to work full time and to be relieved of childcare duties, taken on by grandparents or other relatives; the desire of the parents for the child to absorb the home-country language and culture; the wish to have their children educated in a safer and more supportive environment. Each individual case will vary and depend on the ages at which the child is sent 'home' and brought back, as well as the frequency and quality of parental contact during the separation. Ultimately, these 'transnational children' (if that is an appropriate term to describe them – we are not sure) are difficult to regard as 'pure' second generation. Their evolving identities, career options and subsequent migratory paths are unlikely to be unaffected by a period of schooling in the home country.

Moving now to 'return', the meaning of this term is clearly stretched when we consider individuals who are relocating to a place they have never lived in – although they may have visited it frequently. The point has already been made, however, that there is an ontological sense of return to a point of origin, a homeland. The literature on return migration, which is now quite substantial<sup>5</sup> but under-theorised (Cassarino 2004), says very little about second-generation return, although it does acknowledge a subspecies of return, 'ancestral return', noting studies on such groups as Jews 'returning' to Israel; *Aussiedler*, ethnic Germans resettling in Germany from Eastern Europe; and the Pontic Greeks, similarly relocating to their ethnic homeland after generations of exile in places such as Georgia and Kazakhstan (King 2000: 10).

What does this mean for the broader conceptual fields of transnationalism and diaspora? Some answers will be given in the final part of this chapter. For now, we signal relevant perspectives to be kept in mind during the intervening empirical section of our account.

The first general point to make is that none of the four main literatures that are constitutive of the themes of this chapter – those on the second generation, return migration, transnationalism and diaspora – has much to say about second-generation return migration, which seems to slip into the interstices between these literatures. The literature on the second generation – dominated by US scholarship – is beset by the assimilation paradigm that derives from the historical self-narrative of the United States as a large, welcoming country ‘made’ by immigrants who become, eventually, ‘Americans’; ‘return’ is thus counter-intuitive (King 2000: 29). Meanwhile, recent comparative survey research on the integration of the European second generation focuses largely on their educational and employment trajectories within host societies, not on links to the parental home country (Crul & Vermeulen 2003). Likewise, in the now-extensive literatures on transnationalism and return migration, scant attention is paid to the second generation: the returnees, on the one hand, and the transnationally active, on the other, are overwhelmingly portrayed as the first-generation migrants.

There are some exceptions to this last generalisation, but only few. Leichtman (2005) has documented the second- and subsequent-generation transnational links of the Lebanese community in Senegal. On a broader front, Levitt and Waters (2002) have edited an important volume on the transnational lives of the second generation in the US; many of these contributions reveal that strong tendencies towards assimilation can coexist with significant participation in transnational social fields. The kinds of second-generation transnational activity most commonly depicted are return or homecoming visits that are designed to link up with family roots and to expose the foreign-born to the ‘ethnic culture’ of their parents’ country of origin. Such visits usually do reinforce the emotional link to the parental homeland, but they can also make the visitors realise that they can never relocate or feel at home there. In Kibria’s contribution we hear of Jeff, a Korean-American who went to Korea on a study-visit after finishing high school (Kibria 2002: 304-305). Flying into Seoul, he felt a deep connection to his ‘homeland’:

I remember flying into Seoul... I could see these little houses, farms in the country... Something about it felt good. I remember thinking... ‘this is an important part of me.’

Then, disappointment set in:

The natives looked down on us because a lot of us couldn't speak Korean... they were basically saying, 'You're so stupid. You're Korean, but you can't speak Korean.' There were some isolated incidents where we were... yelled at, harassed.

For Jeff and others like him, the homeland visit serves only to accentuate *differences* of culture and nationality, and to reinforce a heightened sense of their *American* identity (Kibria 2002: 307). A definitive return seems out of the question.

Diaspora theory, on the other hand, posits a somewhat different relationship to second-generation return since, according to most definitions of diaspora, return is part and parcel of the aetiology of the concept. If we subscribe to Safran's often-quoted criteria for diasporas, we find strong relationships to the homeland and the aspiration for return prominently featured. To paraphrase, diasporas maintain a collective memory (which, however, may be mythical) about their homeland; their consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by their ongoing relationship with their territories of origin; and they see their ancestral home as their 'pure, authentic' home and as a place of eventual return (Safran 1991: 83-84). In this sense, 'ancestral return' or 'counter-diasporic migration' (King & Christou 2008) represent the logical closing of the diasporic cycle: the final, longed-for return 'home'. This is consistent with Van Hear's observation (1998: 6) that, if diasporas have become more widespread in recent decades, for instance, through onward or secondary migration, so too has the 'unmaking' of diasporas, through 'in-gathering' or 're-grouping'.

But return is perhaps questionable as a defining criterion of diaspora. Some diasporas do not desire to return. The Parsees, mainly resident in Western India but also scattered in many other locations, have no ideology of return to their original homeland, Iran, which they left in the eighth century. Gypsies or Roma are a different case (Safran (1991: 87) calls them a 'metadiaspora') because their nomadic diasporisation is an expression or idealisation of their existential condition. African Americans, products of the slave diaspora, do have a 'homeland myth', but it can no longer be precisely located and only a tiny minority have 'returned' to Africa.

A complicating factor with any attempt to frame second-generation return within diaspora studies is that the definition of what, exactly, constitutes a diaspora has inexorably widened (Brubaker 2005). On the whole, we endorse Cohen's (1997) typology of diasporas into those formed as a result of persecution, labour migration, colonial settlement and trade, not least because this makes us realise that counter-diasporic

flows, including second-generation return, originate from different diasporic formations. However, the danger with this elasticated meaning of diaspora is that it becomes confused with other notions such as migration, ethnic communities and transnational social fields. What distinguishes the diasporic condition from contemporary international migration and transnational communities, we suggest, is historical continuity across at least two generations, a sense of the possible permanence of exile, and the broad spread and stability of the distribution of populations within the diaspora. In other words, ‘time has to pass’ before a migration becomes a diaspora (Cohen 1997: 185).

We recognise the problems inherent in this broadening of the manifold historical processes and myriad individual journeys and narratives that lead to diasporas being formed; yet we also appreciate that Cohen’s diversification of diasporic types is helpful in explaining the spread of diasporic consciousness among so many exiled peoples in the world, be they the result of ancient population displacements or of contemporary economic and political processes such as labour migration or refugee expulsion.

### 9.3 Studies of second-generation return

Second-generation return is a rather specific migration chronotope within the wider movement known as ancestral or counter-diasporic return (King & Christou 2008, 2009). Studies of ancestral return are quite numerous, if scattered, and include a variety of cases from different time periods and different parts of the world. Earlier we noted Jews going to Israel, the German *Aussiedler* and the Pontic Greeks. We can also point to various ‘return’ migrations of colonial peoples, such as the ‘Dutch Indonesians’ who repatriated from the Dutch East Indies after the independence of Indonesia in 1949, the *pièds noirs* who settled in France from Algeria in the early 1960s, the Portuguese *retornados* who ‘came back’ from Portugal’s African colonies in the mid-1970s and British colonial settlers who came to the UK after independence was achieved in India and East Africa. Andrea Smith calls these post-colonial returnees ‘Europe’s invisible migrants’ and estimates their numbers to be between five and seven million (2003: 11). In terms of European demography, this migration, concentrated in the three decades after World War II, contributed to the continent’s shift from a site of population export to one of mass immigration – an immigration which is more commonly studied by a focus on ‘foreign’ immigrants, some of whom came from the same ex-colonies whence came the colonial repatriates. Their return was relatively invisible because it was an ambiguous and problematic relocation: they were

a population that arrived in a decolonizing metropole during an era of shifting understandings of their nation's relationships to Europe [when]...the colonial era [was] quickly fading in significance. (Smith 2003: 31)

Although Smith's book is careful to avoid homogenising the colonial returnees, there is almost no attention paid to their generational specificity. In the rest of this empirical review section we examine three case studies where the particular issues surrounding 'second generationness' are more prominently foregrounded: Japanese Brazilians, British-born in the Caribbean and Greek-Americans.

### 9.3.1 *Japanese Brazilians*

Compared to other highly developed countries, Japan was a 'late-starter' as a country of emigration and as one of immigration. During the first two thirds of the twentieth century, around 350,000 Japanese emigrated to Latin America, mainly to Brazil but also to Peru, Mexico, Argentina and Paraguay. By 1998, according to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were 1.5 million *Nikkeijin* (people of Japanese descent) living in Latin America, 1.3 million in Brazil and 100,000 in Peru (White 2003: 314).

When Japan's industrial economy started to run short of labour in the 1980s, *Nikkeijin* were prioritised as immigrants to Japan, filling 'bottom-wage' jobs in factories (Sellek 1997: 182-183). A new immigration law implemented in 1990 allowed *Nikkeijin* up to the third generation and their spouses to legally enter, reside and work in Japan, initially for three years. Employers were keen to hire them, partly because they were ethnically Japanese, but also because of fear of prosecution for employing illegal migrant workers from within the Asian region (the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, etc.). By 2000, there were around 250,000 Brazilian *Nikkeijin* in Japan, 47 per cent of them *nisei* (second generation) and 37 per cent *sansei* (third generation); their age range – more than half between 25 and 44 years old – reflected their primary function as labour migrants (Tsuda 2003: 98-101).

How has the encounter between the Brazilian *Nikkeijin* and Japanese society worked out? The comprehensive ethnography by Tsuda (2003) provides detailed and nuanced answers to this question.<sup>6</sup> Tsuda explores how the migrants constitute their identities in ways that 'fit' neither the country of origin nor that of destination. This is partly because the specification of origin and destination is ambiguous for the Japan-bound second (and third) generation, and partly because of the way Japanese cultural nationalism devalues those who are not fully Japanese by virtue of their significant time spent abroad. Multiple status

and identity shifts are involved, some of them contradictory. From the Japanese perspective, *Nikkeijin* are regarded as 'inferior' for a variety of reasons: their historical origins as lower-class Japanese who emigrated to Latin America out of poverty; their present employment in working-class jobs; and their 'non-Japaneseness' including poor Japanese language skills and 'Brazilian' cultural traits. From the *Nikkeijin* perspective, moving to Japan, initially on a temporary basis but increasingly long-term through family migration, involved both a return to the 'ethnic homeland' where income prospects were much better than in Brazil, but also a loss of social status since most *nisei* and *sansei* had achieved middle-class status in their birth country. In fact, in response to their socio-economic marginalisation in Japan, many Japanese Brazilians have strengthened their Brazilian cultural and nationalist sentiments.

These 'Brazilian counter-identities' are deployed as a reaction to the ironic situation in which, from the point of view of an expected conformity to rigorous Japanese cultural standards (which demand total assimilation for those of Japanese descent), it is easier for the Japanese Brazilians to pursue a strategy of marginalisation rather than attempted ethnic adjustment (Tsuda 2003: 274-275). 'Acting Brazilian' involves displaying a more assertive, convivial and outgoing lifestyle, including public displays of embracing and kissing, wearing tight jeans and T-shirts with the Brazilian flag or slogans, affirming Brazilian first names and organising samba festivals. However, it is evident that many of these 'Brazilian' lifestyle components are either exaggerated or merely symbolic constructions of Brazilianness: they are 'culturally decontextualised and reconstructed' so that they have ethno-national meaning only in Japan. Thus the samba is a 'performance' that is actually rather a pale imitation of the 'real thing' – the costumes are amateurishly home-made and 'unauthentic' and few returned *Nikkeijin* know the dance movements (Tsuda 2001: 67-70, 2003: 283-289).

On the other hand, there are strategic advantages to such 'Brazilian' comportment, since it is a way of pre-empting negative judgements based on failure to conform to expected Japanese cultural standards. In the words of two of Tsuda's interviewees (2003: 280, 282-283):

It is easier to live in Japan if you... reveal your Brazilian identity... and give up trying to be Japanese because, this way, you can escape the pressure to act Japanese... If I try to be Japanese, they will judge me by their own standards and this will lead to discrimination... Instead I can say: 'I'm sorry, I'm Brazilian so I come late to appointments...'

Or, put more crudely:

Hey, I'm Brazilian and I'm going to act Brazilian in Japan. And if you don't like it, screw you.

It needs to be emphasised that the situation of *Nikkeijin* in Japan is structurally different from the two cases which follow. British-born Caribbeans and Greek-Americans are, by and large, migrating to their ethnic homelands out of sentimental and lifestyle choices rather than purely economic considerations; they are moving from highly developed economies to ones that are somewhat less advanced; and they generally attain middle-class socio-occupational positions in the homeland. Japanese Brazilians were recruited to Japan as guest workers and remain socially positioned as such; their Japanese origins gave them preferential treatment in terms of their immigration rights, but their Brazilian birth and culture disadvantage them within the Japanese hegemonic ethno-nationalism. Although at arrival only 2-3 per cent of Brazilian *Nikkeijin* intended to make Japan their permanent home, nowadays more than half are committed to staying long-term and 60 per cent are with their families, including children (Tsuda 2003: 377-378). These children give an interesting, final twist to the story; they are, in a sense, 'the second generation of the second generation', and their own assimilation into Japanese schools (where the educational curriculum and their socialisation process blot out their Brazilian heritage) leads them to deny their Brazilian roots. This sets up a generational tension between parents and children: both are second-generation returnees, but the parents are also, in a way, first-generation immigrants to Japan holding on to their Brazilianness in the face of the impossibility of fully becoming Japanese, while their children are pressed to assimilate and have the capability to achieve this, but can only do so by shedding their Brazilian parental culture.

### 9.3.2 *British-born 'returnees' to the Caribbean*

The Caribbean has been a classic locus for migration research, including studies of return. Until recently, however, most of the published work on return migration focused on the first generation (see, among others, Byron 1994; Chamberlain 1997; Gmelch 1992; Pessar 1997; Thomas-Hope 1999). From this literature it is apparent that return as a 'homecoming' project is not a unified social process but a versatile cultural experience characterised by diversity, complexity and ambivalence. The return can be a source of creativeness and ingenuity that expresses strong agency and ambition, but it can also be a socially conservative act linked to later-life return and retirement. For both first- and second-



generation returnees in the Caribbean homeland, the experience of migration does not necessarily end with return: transnational links generally continue. Unlike the Brazilian Japanese, returning Caribbeans generally enjoy enhanced social status in the homeland. This is partly through the various kinds of capital (financial, social, cultural, etc.) they have acquired through migration, and also through time spent in the colonial 'mother country'. As Chamberlain (1997: 70-72) points out, the 'sacred geography' of empire remained intact in the Caribbean, such that emigrants leaving for Britain in the post-war decades felt, in a sense, that they were heading for a kind of 'home': an imagined space, 'remembered' through school and colonial propaganda, which was the heartland of their imperial world. For many, the reality of emigration brought disillusionment, above all through the racism that they were subjected to, but also the difficult conditions of work, housing, food and climate. Some of these negative outcomes have been inherited by the second generation and form part of the nexus of push factors that have stimulated a substantial return of British-born in recent years.

According to the pioneering research of Potter and his associates in Barbados,<sup>7</sup> it seems that second-generation returnees are a positively selected group in terms of education and ambition; hence, these individuals are seen, and see themselves, as agents of social change and economic development. Plenty of work and business opportunities exist for qualified returnees, reflecting a strong economic performance driven by tourism, light industries and offshore finance. Typical second-generation returnee jobs in Barbados, according to Potter (2005: 220-221) and Potter and Phillips (2006a: 905-909), are found (for males) in mechanical trades, catering, computing, sales and management, and (for females) in administration, accountancy, personnel, clerical work, health services and retailing.<sup>8</sup>

Potter and Phillips (2006a) see second-generation return as a mainly middle-class phenomenon: nearly all their interviewees had been to college and more than a third were university graduates. There was a tendency among those returnees without qualifications to 're-return' to Britain (Potter 2005). However, returnees' class position in Barbadian society (and presumably this holds true for other Caribbean countries involved in migration to Britain) is only partly determined by their educational qualifications. The returned second generation occupy a structurally intermediate position as post-colonial hybrids: they are both black and – because of their British birth, upbringing and accents – symbolically white (Potter & Phillips 2006a). In Fanonian terms, they reflect a black skin/white mask identity. Interviewees articulated the contrast they felt between how they were treated in Britain (racialised because of their Afro-Caribbean ethnicity, stereotyped as low-achievers and potential trouble-makers) and how they were perceived, and were

able to position themselves, in Barbados – as smartly dressed go-getters who traded on their English accents (Potter & Phillips 2006a).

More contradictory and nuanced views, however, were also uncovered in the encounter between returned ‘Bajan-Brits’ (Potter & Phillips’ term) and the island’s still racially stratified society. Returnees were surprised that, in contrast to ‘cosmopolitan’ London, Barbadian society still embodied the acceptance of ‘white hegemony’, segregated in a form of quasi-apartheid where, effectively, whites and blacks rarely mixed socially (Potter & Phillips 2008). The returned (black) second generationers were put – and saw themselves – in an intermediate and ambiguous position in regard to this colour-coding, as noted above. But they also expressed other negative feelings towards the way local society functioned. They complained about the slow pace of life, lack of professionalism in business and poor public services. Barbadians, for their part, fashioned a trope of ‘madness’ as a means of ‘othering’ the Bajan-Brit returnees, thereby positioning them outside mainstream island society. The ‘mad’ label derives from two origins: first, the Bajan-Brits’ observed behaviour (rushing around in the heat, talking quickly, obsession with punctuality, etc.); and second, stories of high rates of mental illness among Caribbean migrants in Britain (Potter & Phillips 2006b).

Although Barbados dominates the existing research on second-generation return to the Caribbean, other islands are not totally overlooked. Reynolds’ (2008) research in Jamaica and Guyana provides a somewhat different slant. She focuses on the role of social capital and family narratives in sustaining an ideology of return that, when not actualised by the first generation, is transmitted to the second as a kind of inherited duty. In her words:

So central to the family narrative was this dream to return to the country of origin that their parents’ narrations of home and return became part of the second generation’s own narratives in terms of understanding their personal identity and sense of self. (2008: 10)

Key to Reynolds’ analysis is also the social disadvantage and poor economic conditions encountered by many British-born Caribbean youth. Roystone, interviewed in Jamaica, put it like this:

I was born in England but I always felt unwelcomed in my own country, so I can’t call England home, if you mean home as a place of warmth and comfort... prejudice and discrimination was always there... in London you grow up constantly looking over your shoulder... I was always getting stopped by the police... now here [in Jamaica] I’m comfortable in my own skin. I’m a very hard worker... and if you come to Jamaica with that attitude...

there's more options to build up your own business. I'm in a better position now to invest in a future for my family.

In his last remark, Roystone hints at another factor favouring return – looking to the subsequent generation and the judgement that the Caribbean ‘homeland’ is a more ‘secure’ place to raise children. In the words of Monica, interviewed in Guyana:

You make your life for your kids... I can see how much the move has been good for the kids. They love it here and have settled really well... they walk to school on their own, they're always out playing on the lane – I would never allow them to do that in London... I have peace of mind because I'm not constantly worrying about their safety.

With these interview quotes Reynolds (2008: 12, 15-16) highlights the emotional and psychological satisfactions of returning to the parental homeland – something that also looms large in the Greek-American case.

### 9.3.3 *Greek-Americans*

Although the colonial aspect is absent in the Greek-American context, this example of second-generation return has several things in common with the Caribbean case, though rather less with the Japanese-Brazilian one. In all three cases, the first generation's memories and stories of the diasporic home were passed on to the second generation, often reinforced by periodic visits that were a prelude to the ‘final’ return. In the Caribbean and Greek cases, we observe a post-war mass emigration of poor, mostly uneducated labour migrants, followed by a selective second-generation return made up of young men and women who, for the most part, were much better educated than their parents and aspired to middle-class or professional status upon their homeland relocation.

The 40 oral and written narratives collected by Christou (2006) and the further accounts obtained in a subsequent phase of research by King and Christou (2010) confirm the highly educated profile of the second-generation returnees. Unlike their parents, whose emigration in the 1950s and 1960s was economically driven, the returnees migrate to the ethnic homeland primarily for emotional, life-stage and lifestyle reasons. Of course, economic considerations do play a role, but they are not the prime pull factor for return; rather, the situation is generally one of subsequent difficulty in finding sufficiently remunerative, stable and intellectually rewarding employment for those (the majority) who are seeking work. Good, well-paid jobs are hard to attain in Greece, and

all too often returnees find access to such posts cloaked in corruption and nepotism. In the words of Christou's (2006: 128, 131) two male interviewees:

I sent my résumé to a few companies that I would see advertisements that would fit my qualifications, and got really discouraged when I didn't even get a response back...They put an ad in the paper and even before it's been published the job has been filled by somebody's nephew or cousin.

Working here is hard... To start a business you have to bribe half the population... you have to 'pay for air', as they say... I want to live here, I love this country but it's difficult to start from scratch. You either have to have connections or you got to have money.

This is not the only disappointment faced in the homeland. Two other themes repeated themselves in interviews: the lack of care for the environment, and the changes brought in Greek society through globalisation and immigration. On the environment, Lucy said:

We still get frustrated about the things we never noticed before [when we came to Greece on vacations]. We didn't notice the graffiti, or the garbage on the beach, and we can't understand why they just can't keep their environment clean, you know, it really bothers us...

The issue of immigration into Greece is more complex in terms of returnees' reactions. Some returnees are surprised, even shocked at the scale of immigration into Greece in recent years, particularly the influx of half a million Albanians; this has compromised the pure, ethnically homogenous Greek homeland that they had held as an ideal in their return project. Christou and King (2006: 826-827) have documented openly racist reactions to this change in the composition of the population. For instance:

When I was in America I felt Greek and was Greek. Unfortunately... at this moment, this specific time period in Greece, I don't feel Greek. I feel like a stranger, like a foreigner in my own country... A lot of foreign immigrants have come to Greece, especially illegal migrants... It has made a big impression on me...I don't like it, I haven't accepted it... It has upset me... and... yes, it has made me angry.

Other returnees are highly critical of Greek racist attitudes towards immigrants, especially the way the Greek media frame them so negatively. According to another interviewee:

Sometimes the media spend too much time [on immigrants]... This morning... on TV... they were talking about a Polish man who was on a bus and he was drunk and being aggressive and threatening... And the news presenter was going on and on... I mean, hey, what kind of news is this? Big deal! I mean... if he were a Greek, would they spend so much time discussing it? No. There is a phobia, it's obvious, a phobia in Greece [about immigrants].

Yet another dimension of the migration story is the way that the returnees themselves are treated as partial outsiders by Greek society – a reaction also noted for returning Japanese Brazilians and foreign-born Caribbean resettlers. The fact that the diasporic hearth does not offer the anticipated welcoming embrace is a major disappointment to Greek-Americans who have bought into the ideal of the Greek homeland as the 'place to be'. We have treated this particular diaspora dynamic in a separate paper, from which we take the following two quotes: the first from an older long-term resident of Athens, the second from a younger, more recent arrival (Christou & King 2006: 829).

Being a Greek-American in Greece has a lot of drawbacks. The Greek people are not that ready to accept someone who is not really Greek. Even though I speak Greek, my dad was born in Greece, I am married to a Greek, I've been here 35 years, they have not accepted me...

I feel that being American or half-American or raised in the States is not accepted at all... I still find it kind of hard. I feel that I stand out even though I love Greece... and I speak the language much better than when I first got here... It's not like I walk around with the American flag draped round me... But yes, I still feel like... I don't fit in.

And yet the strength of attachment to Greece, and of the motivation to 'return' and resettle, seems almost overpowering in the Greek-American case – at least among those who *have* returned. Time and again, our participants stressed the importance of relocating to the *patria*, the fatherland, and how this final, mythical return 'closed the circle', not only of their own lives but also the migration cycle started by their parents half a century or so ago.

## 9.4 Concluding discussion

What light does the second-generation-return chronotope shed on the broader theorisation of diaspora and transnationalism and on the distinction between these two overlapping concepts? As a particular form of counter-diasporic migration, second-generation return should be conceptualised first within the study of diasporas and, as such, here we pick up some of the issues raised earlier.

Classic definitions of diaspora (e.g. Clifford 1994b; Safran 1991) and also their subsequent refinement and deconstruction (e.g. Anthias 1998; Brah 1996; Brubaker 2005) tend to portray a rather static entity: a historical process of spreading and scattering to produce a particular 'ethnic' population distribution and a 'state of being' or 'diasporic consciousness' that likewise does not stress further movement, except perhaps in terms of a 'floating' liminality and hybridity (Mitchell 1997). Even if the (often mythical) return to the diasporic hearth is written into the aetiology of diaspora à la Safran, few scholars have paid much attention to this final phase, in which the diaspora is 'unmade'. It is almost as though the very definition of diaspora assumes that diasporic populations aspire to but *cannot* return. This may indeed have been the case in the past, and may still be so in some diasporas for whom the point of origin no longer exists or cannot be identified. Increasingly, however, a combination of the maintenance of the diaspora's ethnic (or other) identity and improved means of long-distance travel enables a return to the land of parents and ancestors to become a reality.

According to Fortier (2000: 160), the association between diaspora and dispersal produces three dualities that lie at the heart of the inherent betweenness of diaspora: here and there, homeland and hostland and indigenesness and foreignness. These binaries emerge from conceptualisations of culture and ethnicity that are deeply connected to history, territory and language, but which also produce mixings and crossings of the dualities, such as the notion of being 'at home abroad' or the condition of the second-generation 'immigrant' or 'returnee' who no longer speaks the language of the ethnic group. Second-generation return demonstrates the blurring that exists over these dualities and even challenges how they should be framed.

Our three case studies of second-generation return reveal both the common features of the chronotope, but also some key differences in how this movement is conceived and motivated in different historical and geographical contexts. One of the strongest similarities is the reflective symmetry of 'strangerhood' when 'here' and 'there': in other words, the return turns the feeling of being Japanese in Brazil into one of feeling Brazilian in Japan. As Lucy, one of our Greek-American interviewees said:

Let me put it this way...When we were in the United States we were Greeks, and now that we've come to Greece we are Americans, and that's what we've realised – we're neither good here nor there!

Also common is the strength of memories from homecoming visits that makes the 'homing' vivid and a step towards a more definitive 'return'. Of course, the return, whether short- or long-term, is very much a negotiated and constructed experience filtered through cultural markers, images and events.

As for the differences, the following can be highlighted. The return of the Japanese Brazilians to Japan was orchestrated as a labour recruitment within clear hierarchies of socio-occupational class, global economic power and hegemonic Japanese culture: the result was a kind of 'reactive ethnicity' whereby the *Nikkeijin* reasserted their Brazilianness in the face of the Japanese marginalisation of them as 'impure' Japanese. In the Caribbean, there seems to be a 'culture of migration' through which most families have implemented a migratory model based on economic necessity and flexible mobility for various family members: a combination of individual autonomy of movement with family loyalty and sharing of responsibilities (such as child rearing) that enables frequent journeying home, including second- and 1.5-generation return. The selectivity of this return (mainly available to the better educated) combined with lifestyle choices and a developmental focus tend to make this case a broadly positive experience, albeit framed within post-colonial hierarchies of race and 'Britishness'. The Greek-American case, like the Caribbean, arises from a history of poverty and mass emigration in the post-war years. This is set not within a colonial context, but involves historical and ideological links between nationalism and the cultivation of a strong ethno-national identity as part of the modern Greek state's irredentist policy that supports claims for co-ethnics' repatriation to the Greek homeland.

Transnationalism fits into our analysis in three ways – first, in the maintenance of meaningful links to the homeland during the pre-return phase, especially return visits; second, in the maintenance of those links in the other direction in the post-return phase; and third, in the way that second-generation host-country entrepreneurs invest in the 'homeland' without resettling there. Second-generation return is a reflection of the strength of transnational social spaces (see Faist 2000b), and can also act to strengthen them, although this does not always occur, particularly if the return involves a rejective detachment from the place of birth and upbringing.

## Notes

- 1 Wajid, S. (2006), 'Going back to my roots', *The Guardian* G2 23 October 2006: 18-19.
- 2 This is the headline of an article detailing five case studies of 'second-generation return' featured in *The Guardian* 22 May 2008.
- 3 See Christou (2006), Christou and King (2006), King and Christou (2008, 2009). Our current research into what we call 'counter-diasporic migration' is funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council under their 'Diasporas, Migration and Identities' programme (grant no. AH/E508601/XI), 2007-2009.
- 4 Rumbaut (1997) has proposed a graduated system of 1.75, 1.5 and 1.25, respectively referring to children arriving: before age six; between six and twelve; and between twelve and seventeen.
- 5 For key studies see Bovenkerk (1974), Ghosh (2000), Harper (2005), King (1986) and Markowitz and Stefansson (2004).
- 6 For other worthwhile studies see Lesser (2003), Linger (2001), Roth (2002) and Yamanaka (2000); on returning Japanese Peruvians see Takenaka (1999).
- 7 See especially Potter (2005), Potter and Phillips (2006a, 2006b, 2008), as well as the selection of studies in Potter, Conway and Phillips (2005).
- 8 These findings come from two surveys totalling 91 interviewees of whom, however, 74 were females and only seventeen males; it is not clear to what extent this predominance of females reflects the real gender distribution of second-generation return, since there are no official data for comparison.





# Chapter 10

## Private, public or both?

### On the scope and impact of transnationalism in immigrants' everyday lives

*Paolo Boccagni*

#### 10.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, research on immigrant transnationalism has shifted. It has gone from being primarily concerned with 'transnational migrants' – aiming to identify specific groups of people (or even communities) that somewhat qualify as transnational (e.g. Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999) – to a wider focus on the transnational features in immigrants' everyday lives. This new emphasis may shed more light on their opportunity structures and subjective experiences, as well as on any ongoing interdependence with countries of origin (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007).

Nevertheless, the use of the term 'transnational' as a general theoretical category, in sociology at least, still shows relevant ambiguities (Bauböck 2003; Faist 2004; Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). One lies at the core of this chapter: an implicit conflation of quite different objects of immigrants' involvement at distance, namely, their mother country (or local community), their family and their earlier life.

From a bottom-up, actor-centred perspective (e.g. Levitt 2001; Smith 2006), I have developed upon certain implications arising from my own doctoral fieldwork for the theoretical consistency of the transnational approach (Boccagni 2009). This fieldwork has involved a two-sited, ethnographic and biographic study of a relatively recent and unstructured migration flow from Latin America (Ecuador) to Northern Italy. It allowed for an in-depth analysis mediated by my systematic relationships with Ecuadorian immigrants and with their family members at home. Within a limited translocal case, I have generally found little evidence of transnational social ties. These mostly apply to the practices of transnational care giving in families set apart by migration. Transnational ties are quite sporadic and less effective, however, in the public sphere with respect to social relationships linking immigrants or

their groups to social institutions back home – i.e. the political system, market and civil society in the country of origin. From this viewpoint, immigrants' homesickness and persistent belonging by far exceed the scope and the relevance of their actions at distance.

In this chapter I first focus on the meaning of transnationalism. I will then interpret findings in my ethnography, highlighting the variable relevance of transnational ties in the everyday lives of the immigrants (and their significant others) whom I personally met, from three complementary vantage points: an individual level, a family level and a wider social group level. In the conclusion, I will raise two key critiques against the dominant theoretical framework of transnational migration: 1) the poor fungibility between social action at distance and in proximity (especially in the affective realm) and 2) the need to distinguish between private and public features of immigrants' transnational action.

## 10.2 'Transnational ties': A window on immigrants' everyday lives?

Given the risk of using (or abusing) 'transnationalism' as a catch-all,<sup>1</sup> I have developed a working definition of the term that aims to be more accurate. It is better applicable to empirical research than the earlier standard notion introduced by Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994: 6): 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and of settlement'. At the same time, my proposed definition is wider than the well-known definition by Portes and colleagues (1999: 219): 'occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation'.

The latter definition, though valuable for its greater empirical rigour, may be broadened to include immigrants' attachments at distance in the affective and the emotional realms, insofar as they fuel systematic relationships of mutual communication and support not grounded in physical proximity.<sup>2</sup>

I will approach Ecuadorian immigrants' daily lives, therefore, through the notion of *transnational social ties*. Such ties imply any social relationship and practice 'at distance' (along with the identity orientations they build on) that allows immigrants to exert relevant influence on the social lives of those left behind and, vice versa, that allows the latter to impact the life course of the former in significant ways. Building on such an 'agential' approach to immigrant transnationalism (Kivisto 2001; Morawska 2003a; Faist 2004) – and centred on the differential involvement-at-distance of ordinary social actors – I will explore immigrants'

social, affective and emotional ties, in their everyday lives away from home.

This does not necessarily amount to assessing whether their orientations, relationships and practices are more or less transnational or increasingly localised in the receiving countries, whatever their wishes and expectations. The real point is a deeper and more significant one: whether and, if so, to what extent social relationships at distance – between migrants and their significant others left behind – may offset the lack of physical proximity, or even substitute (or replicate) co-present relationships, in the life courses of those affected by physical distanciation as the result of migration. This also involves examining in which life domains such replication takes place, and for how long. I will therefore explore, through multi-sited ethnography within a long-distance migration flow (Marcus 1995; Fitzgerald 2006b), the perceptions, utilisation and maintenance of transnational ties in immigrants' daily lives.

### **10.3 On weight and usability of transnational ties in immigrants' everyday lives: From self to family and to one's wider community**

My research is built on participant observation of the daily social lives of a few hundred Ecuadorian immigrants in a local immigration context in Northern Italy and of their manifold exchanges with those left behind in Pasaje, Ecuador (Boccagni 2009). For one and a half years, I carried out ethnographic research both 'here' (Italy) and 'there' (Ecuador).<sup>3</sup> After a critical period in which I negotiated access to the field, I became familiar with the immigrants' informal social events and after-work activities – associational meetings, parties, religious services, sport and cultural events, or simply going out together. I interviewed some 35 of them in depth. I was also hosted, while in Ecuador, by a few of their family members left behind in Pasaje.

By meeting these immigrants and gradually entering into their informal places of sociability, networks and public events, I explored the connections between the 'transnational' – as a theoretical construct – and their daily behaviours and experiences – as reflected in their self-perceptions insofar as they refer to a persistent tie with their motherland.

In what follows, I explore the immigrants' own 'transnational social field' (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004) from three vantage points: at an individual level, in the realm of family relationships and in a wider public sphere. Each is explored in terms of accessibility, relevance and impact of transnational ties, assuming that such ties do exist and endure, which, as I will show, is far from obvious. While these three viewpoints

crisscross in many ways in immigrants' ordinary lives, it is still worth distinguishing between them on analytic grounds.

10.3.1 *The individual level: Belongings, cognition and communication from a transnational vantage point*

A first terrain of analysis concerns the actual relevance of transnational ties and the potential to keep them alive by examining immigrants' personal attitudes. From this perspective I will look at their identities and belonging, as well as the actual scope and depth of their communication with the motherland, or in any case at their ongoing interest – if any – for the social life and current events there.

Most Ecuadorian immigrants I met, whatever their 'integration' in Italy, still feel overtly and proudly bound up with their mother country. Many would regard Italy, or their local receiving context, as little more than 'the place where I work hard' to save money to send back and to lay the foundations for a future better life at home. Though arguably related to a time factor – most Ecuadorian emigration to Europe having occurred only within the last decade (Jokisch & Pribilsky 2002) – this finding is not without practical import.

'Italy', in the immigrants' own accounts, is basically a resource that one (and one's family) has invested in for the sake of attaining some urgent or non-deferrable key objectives. In everyday life, 'Italy' is the place where one might feel either exploited and misunderstood, to varying degrees, or helped and supported, though in any case unable (indeed, not allowed) to lead a normal life with regard to carrying on with one's earlier habits and lifestyle. Almost no one among the first-generation immigrants I stayed with would ever claim to belong 'here' rather than to their home country (or village).

Apart from self-identification, the unbroken relevance of the motherland often emerges in their accounts. Whether family members have been left behind or not, it emerges both as a source for nostalgia and as an implicit standard according to which one makes sense of values, habits and life experiences in the context of immigration.

Homesickness for Ecuador concerns, first of all, immigrants' emotions, perceptions and feelings related to their former everyday milieu. While their self-identification, on an abstract level (or in patriotic terms), may remain intact, reminiscence of the sensory features of their daily lives at home – colours, tastes and smells – may easily fade away. To the (limited) extent that they may be reproduced by immigrants, this is a result of repeated social events with fellow countrymen *here*, rather than of the continuous relationships with co-nationals *there*. As S, an immigrant reunited with his wife and children (and thus showing an apparently good 'functional adaptation' to life here), puts it:

The longer I stay here, the more I lose my identity – not really ‘my identity’, I know what I am – I am Ecuadorian; I lose... the pleasure of staying in my own land. [...] I lose this taste, I mean when you feel right there, don’t you? Yeah, it’s like when you get up in the morning [here], you get up and breathe... you can smell it when it’s spring, when it’s autumn, the smell of the leaves... for me it was different, I used to wake up and there were banana plantations everywhere... and it smelt of wet land, of guavas, of coffee... (S, 36, in Italy for six years)

A special reference to one’s earlier life – irreducible to a vague feeling of patriotism – can be found in most immigrants’ accounts, including among those who have actually built or rebuilt a regular family life here. The relevance of one’s continuously Ecuadorian identity, should not, however, be reduced to only a matter of reminiscences.

In immigrants’ self-awareness, still feeling Ecuadorian results in an ‘identity reservoir’ one cannot be stripped of, whatever the difficulty one may face in the country of settlement. Hence the unwritten conviction that one’s own values, habits and lifestyle can still make a relevant contribution for oneself and, even more so, for one’s children. Moreover, there is a sense of moral duty – going well beyond a merely passive habit – not to lose them. Reaffirming one’s national identity, whether as an obvious fact or as a source of pride, is a means of self-distinction from the all-embracing identity of ‘immigrants’ – or, in its stigmatising Italian version, *extracomunitari* – that one feels being imposed by the receiving society. Whatever regret or disenchantment regarding the ‘ever worsening’ situation in Ecuador, one’s persistent national identity is the basis for personal consistency, in the face of the drastic changes that result from migration.

The central position of ‘home’ in immigrants’ mindsets manifests itself in their future life projects as well. These reportedly remain, with a few exceptions (basically relating to mixed marriages), strictly linked to the motherland. Nearly everybody among the inhabitants of Pasaje whom I met in Italy would like to build a new house at home, is building it now, or – in the more successful cases – has already done so. Building one’s own house in Ecuador is a clear marker of the expectation to return there ‘soon’. It is also a matter of maintaining social status and a simple investment strategy for the money saved here – that is, a complementary form of remittance, which gains increasing salience once non-migrants’ daily needs are satisfied.

Nobody would really deny the intention to return home, albeit postponed to a ‘future’ they are unable to determine. Indeed, a covert but pervasive ‘myth of return’ (Anwar 1979) is manifest here. A good illustration is found in the account of H, a woman in Italy for almost a

decade who is the first link of a chain including a dozen family members. Though aware of the ambivalent gazes and opportunistic responses a migrant encounters when back home, H sounds just as determined as most of her country fellows to return sooner or later in order to enjoy the fruits of her labour and sacrifices abroad.

[When you return home], it's different, it's no more the same, 'coz they think we've come here and made big money, which is not – and they look at you, they ask you for money. 'You who come from there, lend me some money! 100, lend me 200, 300,' and as this is not so, one tells them 'no', and they get steamed up, they don't look at you anymore, one is nearly upset, 'coz it's your own people... it's no more the same. [...] We want to return, as we say, our life is there, we've come here to work, we make sacrifices while we are young, and then we'll go there. We don't know how life will treat us, but we want to go back. (H, 38, in Italy for nine years)

One may wonder, however, what the primary object of the immigrants' persistent self-projection towards the home country is. As these quotes suggest, it has much more to do with the past of one's country, or actually with a few selected good memories related to it, than with the present state of its affairs. Apart from special emergencies (e.g. political upheavals, natural disasters), immigrants' interest is generally weak. Scepticism and mistrust – especially as far as politics is concerned (Boccagni 2007) – are quite widespread.

Ecuadorian immigrants can and often do communicate at distance in a relatively easy way. Cheap phone calls, 'the social glue' of immigrant transnationalism (Vertovec 2004b), are a pertinent current social practice, especially within the family realm. Still, as a wider survey on Ecuadorian immigrants in Italy suggests (Boccagni 2007), relevant information on the motherland involves one's private sphere (i.e. family members left there) much more than the public one. Accounts by non-migrant kin play a far more significant role than immigrants' access to the internet – or to any other channels of information available in the immigration context.

It is an open question whether this selective gathering of information results more from lack of interest and disenchantment regarding public life at home or from poor access to information and communication technologies and 'ethnic media' in the country of immigration. The fact remains that the apparent real time accessibility to information on public life at home certainly does not amount to an actual 'information involvement' of most immigrants, nor to a real interest in it.

Moreover, if an attitude is considered transnational only if it involves ‘feeling equally at home in both countries’, according to the rather demanding criterion of Haller and Landolt (2005), one must object that such a condition is hardly filled by the people I have met. Their attachment to the country of origin by far exceeds that to the settlement one. The above definition, which suitably applies only to a restricted and self-selective minority of ‘cosmopolitans’, underestimates the relevance of the persistent (though vague) orientations to the motherland emerging in my case study. The transnational projection of Ecuadorian immigrants, as far as their identities and life projects are concerned, can hardly be regarded as a merely symbolic (Gans 1979) or abstractly patriotic one. Quite the contrary: their homeland orientation may exert a relevant impact on their patterns of consumption, their ways of sociability, their values and narratives underlying children’s upbringing and their future life expectations.

The fact remains that, in terms of ‘actually existing’ transnational relationships and practices, the family domain is the only one where – for some time, at least – systematic interactions between migrants and the motherland could be empirically detected in my case study. The realm of family life, therefore, warrants a deeper investigation in its own right.

### 10.3.2 *The family level: ‘Your body is here, your heart is there’<sup>4</sup> – a real case for transnationalism (and its shortcomings)*

If any widespread social practice within the migration flow I have studied may qualify properly as ‘transnational’, it is that which is related to the social life at distance of family members pushed apart by emigration. Building on the framework of transnational families (e.g. Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Landolt & Wei Da 2005), I will focus on the interactions between migrant parents and the children who are left behind.<sup>5</sup> This set of phenomena includes their personal expectations, the practices of ‘filling the distance’ (both in emotional and material terms) and the dilemmas parents and children are bound to face. I will shed light on the everyday practices of here and there that fuel and reflect reciprocal commitment and obligations, rather than emphasise the structural features of the families involved. The notion of a ‘transnational family life’ (Sørensen 2005; Smith 2006; Banfi & Boccagni 2010) may be especially helpful here.

In transnational mothers’ accounts, providing for the livelihood of their children stands out as the only explicitly stated, self-conscious mission of the new life that begins after leaving their children behind – supposedly for a short period. The emphasis on the significant expected material gains from emigration may lessen the relevance, though not the suffering, of their actual affective loss:



You feel stronger as you say: 'Well, I'm working for them [one's children left behind]... that's all!' 'Stronger', I mean that... you think: 'Who am I here for?' I think: if I was alone, what's the point of staying here? Why do I stay here, making sacrifices, staying alone... why? It wouldn't make sense. [...] I – I love my child, but I'm compelled to stay here. Coz you need money, to help him. But if you are alone... who are you fighting for? (N, 25, in Italy for five years)

Unless the hope of an approaching reunion can be sustained, women struggle, according to their own accounts, to find meaning and justification in the practice of mothering-at-distance. Whatever the reasons inducing or compelling them to leave, whatever their efforts to keep in touch and the self-sacrifices they make, transnational mothers hardly deny that they are missing something important in the realm of affection, in their capability to raise their children, in their very role as mothers. This role may shift towards being that of a female breadwinner, while those who care for the children left behind take centre-stage in the children's affections. A few interview quotes may be helpful in illustrating each of these issues.

I've lost so many major things of my life... for instance, my family, which now... exists no more. My husband, for instance. My children, who are growing up without me, which is still worse... I'm even losing my hope to see them growing up...[...] The only thing I will really complain about, till my – my last days, is... my children. Not being with them, right now. (I, 45, in Italy for five years)

Most of them [immigrant mothers] – well, they don't really 'forget': they trust those who stay here with their children... I know only this, they get used to staying without them. They forget that they are the mothers... [...] They think all is settled with the money they send back. And it is not... (D, 41, former immigrant, interviewed in Machala, Ecuador)

Maybe you can reproach yourself... I mean: I went away, I didn't see my children growing up... I've completely lost their childhood years. But at the same time you're satisfied, as your children... never behave badly... I tell them: 'If you behave well, if you keep on studying, if you don't give it up – I will be always proud of you.' And I think they, while studying, have a good example of a mother who, from afar, can give them what – what maybe she couldn't have given them at close range. [...] My

children have been growing up in the country, with my parents – for them, my parents are their own parents... (M, 27, in Italy for four years)

Despite these inherent limitations, nearly all mothers-at-distance whom I met make systematic attempts to retain close ties with the children they left behind by sending remittances, communicating at distance and – to a lesser extent, given the costs involved – visiting home. The role of remittances, as well as their impact, would deserve a deeper analysis in its own right (Boccagni 2009, 2010). I will here make only a few remarks about communication at distance.

While calling home once a week or so is a common habit for most of the Ecuadorian immigrants I have talked with, for transnational mothers the frequency is usually higher and the communication is charged – or maybe overburdened – with greater meaning and expectation. For parents communicating with children at distance, telephoning can be a unique opportunity to recover a sense of real proximity through voice contact. Hence a peculiar personal space emerges, though it is ephemeral and filled with painful experiences, through which those who left may dive into the everyday and emotional lives of those who stayed.

At the same time, while communicating at distance, a transnational parent – and indeed, any migrant – may realise that he or she can hardly exert any real control over the children (or anybody else) left behind. This is manifest, for instance, in the use of remittances. Whatever the parents' endeavours, it is only those taking care of their children in situ who may have a chance to really impose their will on them. Once again, it seems hard to find a substitute for actual physical proximity.

If we look closer, even frequent phone communication has its shortcomings. The loss – or the indefinite postponement – of physical proximity, much more so in the delicate realm of primary care relationships, is hard to heal. 'Always communicating by phone', as M remarks pondering her own experience, may recreate some feeling of proximity for adults, but is unlikely to do the same when one's children are involved.

No. They don't accept you. They want you to be there. Phoning is not enough for them. My elder [daughter] can already understand you a bit, she knows why one stays here... the younger [son] instead, no – he wants to share all with you, the simple things of every day... no way. (N, 25, in Italy for five years)

Most mothers, when communicating with their children and families, seem intentionally to leave out – or even disguise – actual references to

their own life conditions, including the manifold difficulties and troubles they may be facing.

Whenever I call them up, they tell me what happens there, what they're doing, or how my child's doing – what about school, what he did, what he didn't... and anything more about him. All about my family: what's happening, what will happen...all about them. If they ask me how do I do here, fine?, and I – even when I feel bad – I always tell them I feel well. 'Coz I – I don't want them to suffer. So, I'd never... tell them how I do really feel. (Y, 27, in Italy for four years)

At stake here is an attempt to prevent suffering that may hardly be managed at distance, rather than simply the transmitting of an idealised picture of one's conditions overseas. Whatever the motives, communication across distance between migrants and non-migrants – though instantaneous and easily accessible – results in a highly fragmented and selective flow of information. The same applies to the incessant flow of gossip and rumours, which dominates the relationships between compatriots in the immigration setting.

Ironically, the family members left behind in Ecuador seem quite aware of the 'emotional filters' developed by their relatives abroad, and tend to do the same.<sup>6</sup> Only visits back home, ultimately, may really allow for eased communication between one another, without the ambivalent mediation of physical distance.

In the accounts of migrant women who leave infant children behind, the most painful aspects of transnational motherhood result from the loss of topical moments such as birthdays, First Communion and religious feasts.

However 'close' one may feel and in spite of any remittances, physical distance seems here to remain an objective constraint – much more so when it cannot be bridged by frequent, circular migration. The very inability to overcome distance applies most obviously to critical events such as a serious disease, or even the death, of a family member at home. This is, for instance, how I told me about her mother's death, experienced from afar.

[You can participate] only with your own thoughts... as I know from the experience of my mother's death. (...) We are accustomed, there [in Ecuador], to hold a wake at the dead person's home (...). That day they did so, then they carried her to the cemetery... [here in Italy] we had a mass, the priest prayed for my mother's soul too. (...) But at the time of the funeral [night time, in Italy] I was alone. I was calling up my daughter all the time,

and she was telling me: 'We are almost at the cemetery now';  
'We are praying'... it was awful. (I, 45, in Italy for five years)

On the whole, relationships at distance between migrants and their loved ones – whether children or not – are permanently exposed to a sort of unspoken uncertainty. This is due to the chance that some negative event takes place – here or there – without the 'others' being able to participate directly, that is, without their physical presence. It is right here that a transnational social relationship unfolds both its utmost import, in affective terms, and its utmost inadequacy, or even its impotence, in comparison with an ordinary co-presence relationship.

'We always sleep with the mobile on', N abruptly tells me. You can never tell: 'If they call us from there, all of a sudden, when something happens...'. (Field notes, Trent, 26.10.06)

Whatever may happen there, we do suffer here... we feel powerless, as we can't help... my son, for instance, when he was there [as an irregular migrant, before being repatriated], he once had a bike accident, and I was in despair here, I didn't know what I could do... you feel impotent 'coz you can't stay there with your family, with your child... no way. You suffer, that's all. All of us with some relatives there, we suffer the same. (H, 44, mother of a former immigrant, interviewed in Pasaje)

To sum up, for most Ecuadorian families divided by emigration, transnational ties are basically a tool for coping with the negative effects of an extended separation, in terms of both time and space. Such a condition impinges both on their private relationships and, broadly speaking, on the trust and scope for reciprocal control inherent in any proximity relationship. Family life at distance is a matter of endurance, or of resilient affections, along with the social practices emanating from them (e. g. remittances, gifts, ongoing communication). The more these practices make sense and the more effective they are for those involved, the quicker they disappear as a result of a family reunion. Hardly ever is family life at distance perceived as a value or resource in its own right. It is experienced rather as a natural, albeit difficult, way to counter the injurious impact of migration in the affective realm.

Family life at distance is expected to be a transient condition, foreshadowing a return to life together, whether 'here' or 'there'. It is simply a constraint one has to live with, attempting to fill the distance gap with frequent communication, remittances and a constant emotional involvement, which in the medium term may prove – especially in the

realm of relationships between spouses or partners – difficult to sustain.

Despite referring to a similar set of relationships at distance, transnational family life has indeed little in common with the so-called transnational social practices, in the public sphere of immigrants' 'dual-focused' lives. I now turn my attention to these social practices, which, in my case study at least, are far less widespread or socially relevant than the former.

### 10.3.3 *The public sphere level: The motherland as a catalyst for transnational symbols*

Another key area in studying transnational ties in the field concerns immigrants' attitudes and behaviours in the public sphere, beyond their personal orientations or their family belongings. At issue here is whether their sociability patterns in the receiving context, as they manifest themselves specifically in co-ethnic 'community' events, have some impact on their ties with the motherland. Is there, in other words, a link between immigrants' social life here and their ongoing involvement (if there is any) with social life in their home country? A good starting point here is the so-called 'socio-cultural' facet of transnationalism. According to a well-known definition, this refers to:

transnational practices that recreate a sense of community based on cultural understandings of belonging and mutual obligation. We examine the scope and determinants of participation in institutionalized sociocultural transnational activities, that is, the formation of a community public space that spans national borders. (Itzigsohn & Saucedo 2002: 767)

In empirical terms, the authors draw attention – in the wider framework of a US survey on the transnational practices of three Latino groups (Portes 2003) – to certain key indicators: participation in hometown associations, monetary support for projects in one's hometown, travels back home for public festivities and involvement in any club or charity linked to one's country of origin. As I will show, the structure of the migration flow I have considered (and indeed of most immigration to Italy) is not ripe enough for such transnational practices to have relevant impact with respect to all these indicators. To put it differently, the approach, though possibly pertinent in the US context (at least for selected minorities of immigrants), far overestimates the potentials for a real public transnationalism in a recent and poorly structured migration flow, such as the one studied here.

In the context of this migration flow, informal sociability relationships with co-nationals, which are not necessarily coextensive with solidarity relationships, play a significant role in many respects. First, co-nationals are generally a reference point for job and accommodation searches, as well as for leisure activities and friendship networks. Second, they are a potential resource for organising informal sociability initiatives – in, for instance, entertainment or ethnic consumptions – that reinforce common feelings of belonging and homesickness. Third, in the context of immigration, co-nationals are an essential touchstone for one's reputation, which may give everybody the incentive to preserve some trust – or at least respect – from the others. For most of the people I met, informal gatherings with co-nationals are a natural habit, somewhat recalling their earlier life at home, that needs no justification. Hence, they have frequent involvement, within the boundaries of fragmented subgroups, in common social events such as parties, dinners, football matches and so on.

In the context I have studied, which is quite isolated from the major Ecuadorian 'colonies' in Italy, the scope of informal sociability is, however, essentially a local one. This is because it cannot rely on the infrastructure of an ethnic economy – that is, on products or services dedicated to their own consumption and mostly imported from the motherland. The small size of the Ecuadorian collectivity studied (some 400 individuals overall) does not permit a relevant circular flow of goods and resources from the motherland. Even apart from the impact of their number, one cannot help but conclude that distance, once again, (still) matters.

To the extent that some transnational circulation of resources does take place between the host country and the motherland, it is mediated by networks of co-nationals going to Pasaje (for holidays only) and then returning back here. This consists of no more than a few informal and emotionally charged exchanges of photographs, letters, clothes or small presents. A short fieldwork account may be helpful here.

I am at an organisational meeting of the first local Ecuadorian association. Curiously, it has been summoned right on Easter Day. A public feast, which will take place a few weeks later, should be prepared; few are, as usual, volunteering for this. Once again, I feel astonished by their emphasis on small details which an outsider would find quite irrelevant: the rules for electing the reyna, the girl who will be patroness to the event; [...] the three-colour band she will have to wear, which should be in velvet, with a number of ornamental frills I can't even remember.

As petty as they may be, these details (as well as their emphasis on the national flag) may suggest their unspoken but resilient

identification with earlier habits and rituals. Both for the velvet band and the association banner, they would like them to be brought right now from Ecuador – their hope being that some *pasajeño*, being on holiday just now, may return in the meantime. The only Italian guy there (apart from me), the husband of one of the leaders, makes an objection: well, they could just buy all that stuff right here, it would be cheaper... nobody seems to agree. It is as if there were always, in their own background, a blurred (but potentially rich) intermediate social space – that is, the circulation of information and objects between here and there, along with the circulation (an almost uninterrupted one) of immigrants on holiday there, and soon back here – which they would like to build on, in order to put together the few symbols they will proudly exhibit on the feast day. It's a pity that, for now, this 'social space' is so discontinuous and not much trodden. (Field notes, Trent, 08.04.06)

From a transnational viewpoint, immigrants' informal sociability looks ambivalent. Conspicuous references to the motherland (exhibiting the national flag, wearing the national football team T-shirt, reproducing the flag's colours in one's clothes) coexist with little interest in current news from the motherland, and with even fewer contacts – outside of the family domain – with any social, political or economic institution at home. Hence, there is a common vision of the motherland as an object of cultural consumption, rather than a significant point of reference in immigrants' everyday life (Boccagni 2007, 2008).

Even immigrants' own associations, spontaneously emerging (and vanishing) quite frequently, build on the same pervasive feelings and symbols of patriotic affiliation, though are quite localistic in their scope and orientation. Whether concerned with leisure and sport activities or occasionally with advocacy and solidarity, they basically aim to satisfy common demands or needs inherent in immigrants' everyday life. The motherland remains an evocative background symbol; the dimension of mutuality by far prevails over the transnational one in the interests and practices of those involved. A few field notes illustrate how, once again, a common identification with the motherland, even when paving the way for a shared collective action, is hardly a channel for contacts or exchanges with the country of origin itself.

In a year, or so, this is at least the third attempt to found an 'association' involving the Ecuadorians in Trent. The initiative, this time, has been from I, in Italy for decades and married to an Italian. At the first meeting, while she talks of 'representing Ecuador' or of 'making solidarity' with their country, the others stay silent. They don't look very persuaded. Apparently, they would rather expect to be able to claim

more rights or opportunities here; for instance, an easier access to home loans, or to banking operations, as S puts it. ‘Solidarity’ is not an issue at stake here. Nor, indeed, is Ecuador. At most, the new association should be concerned with some Christmas initiative, involving entertainment and presents for their children, here. (Field notes, Trent, 27.04.06)

The ‘start up’ of the new association has been made, the second meeting of the ‘board’ has begun. As frank as usual, K summons up what most of them apparently think: ‘We’d better help first those of us who are here! And then, the rest...’ (Field notes, Trent, 02.06.06)

Much caution is needed, therefore, with respect to Itzigsohn and Saucedo’s (2002) claim of a growing ‘participation in immigrant organizations that promote cultural or social ties with the country of origin’. This may apply (in a few cases at least) to relatively structured migration systems, apart from being related to significant integration in receiving societies (Portes 2003). In my case study, this conjecture is not supported by the empirical evidence. In the context of a recent, first-generation migration flow, immigrants’ sociability in the public sphere acts as a channel for mutual support and recognition, or for a revival of the past, but definitely not for ‘the creation of an institutionalized transnational public space, not dependent on local propinquity’ (Itzigsohn & Saucedo 2002: 779).

#### 10.4 From fieldwork back to theory: Emerging issues and relevant implications

The more days go by, the more it seems to me that, here and now at least, so-called ‘transnational social fields’ are nothing but little paths, not always laid out well (nor much trodden). Seldom have they greater scope than family relationships, or contents other than exchanges of affections at distance... homesickness... and sometimes, whether to complement them or to substitute for them, of remittances. (Field notes, Pasaje, November 2006)

Altogether, the Ecuadorian *pasajeños* immigrants I stayed with qualify, at least in the public realm of their everyday lives, as only ‘potentially transnational’. Most of them feel emotionally bound up with their country of origin, or possibly with their earlier ways of living. Yet, given the large distances and high costs separating them from the motherland (in travelling and even in communicating), they prove unable to really keep in touch with it. Many of them would probably like to do so. This is suggested by their patterns of sociability in the public sphere, which attempt to reproduce their earlier ‘social worlds’, i.e. their own habits,



values and lifestyles (Guarnizo 2003). Given the structural conditions of immigrant life, however, the actual transnational interactions of migrants are rare and inconsistent, and their knowledge of current events in the motherland is just anecdotal and superficial, being shaded by their prevailing disregard and disenchantment with political life there.

A somewhat different picture emerges for their family lives. For at least as long as family members live apart – which applies especially to migrant mothers and children left behind – a constant flow of information, affections and even material resources links immigrant workers to their significant others at home. Though widespread, these affection-based relationships at distance are a reaction to an unwelcome separation – hoped to be a short-term one, though not necessarily so – rather than a deliberate attempt to keep ‘living in two places’, building on the potential opportunities inherent in one’s double embeddedness within separate social systems.

Having said this, affective relationships of proximity at distance may be successful in the short term and from an ‘instrumental’ point of view (i.e. in earning a livelihood). They can, however, hardly endow migrants and non-migrants with the depth of communication or the opportunity to negotiate and control each other’s behaviours inherent in any co-proximity relationship (Urry 2006). Unless such a relationship is restored in the medium term, or at least replaced by frequent journeys back home, proximity at distance seems bound to be an extremely vulnerable and weak condition. This holds not only for mothering-at-distance, but also for elective relationships between spouses and partners.

Overall, my ethnographic evidence questions the validity of a fashionable notion such as ‘transnational social field’. While some authors would have it as no less than an empirical research tool, my study suggests it is far too vague for fieldwork use and contentious not only as a theoretical tool, but even as a simple metaphor.

Rather than transnational, most social ties maintained at distance by the people I stayed with are actually translocal, as they involve only a specific local community of origin (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). The label ‘transnational’ may instead apply, to some extent, to their wider patriotic or nostalgic orientations, in basically symbolic terms. Rather than ‘long-range fields’, Ecuadorian immigrants’ accounts reflect a set of fragmented and highly particularistic relationships, hardly ever stretching beyond the familial domain and not always predictable – even within that domain – in their actual solidity and persistence. As significant as ‘cross-border contacts’ may turn out to be – especially in the affective realm – they generally act, and are perceived as, a poor surrogate for physical proximity.

Given this small scope of transnationalism, terms such as ‘transnational social paths’ – describing immigrants’ privatised ties at distance in the realm of affective relations – or ‘transnational social tracks’ – that is, their even weaker transnational connections in the public sphere – may be more appropriate metaphors than ‘transnational social fields’.

## 10.5 Conclusions

Applying a transnational perspective to a recent migration flow originating from a distant country highlights both frequent relationships and exchanges at distance in the realm of family life and a growing embeddedness in the local immigration context. Proper ‘transnational practices’ – involving entrepreneurship, political activism, socio-cultural initiatives, philanthropy or whatever else – are instead marginal, apart from remittances. In contrast with transnational family relations, transnationalism in the public sphere is much more self-selective, contingent and even elitist. It is only within the scope of kin ties – or, moreover, primary care relationships – that transnational hypotheses are substantiated, at least for as long as family members live far apart. In any other respect, the motherland is still a source of identity and belonging, but much less a source of opportunities in ordinary immigrant lives.

No wonder Waldinger (2008) argues that a relevant transnational engagement in one’s private sphere may coexist with a substantive embeddedness in the receiving country (whatever one’s persisting national self-identification may be). Still, if the diagnosis of an ambiguous coexistence of *private transnationalism* and *public localism* (not necessarily amounting to straight ‘assimilation’) is correct, one may wonder if it still makes sense – from a sociological viewpoint – to frame the twofold phenomenon under a common analytical rubric. The persistence of significant social relationships at distance may, in itself, be a poor reason for maintaining a common ‘theoretical qualifier’. The two forms of transnational social ties are in fact quite different in their extent, sustainability and impact.

On the one hand, private transnationalism is relatively widespread, but – from an individual viewpoint at least – likely to decline in the medium term, together with remittances, insofar as families come together again (or if, instead, they split up forever). On the other hand, public transnationalism – in terms of distinctive social practices interacting with the homeland, apart from common symbols or belonging – is much less frequent and more selective; in my own case study, it is almost non-existent. Whether it gains relevance, even in the medium term for first generations only, depends more on key structural factors than on immigrants’ will. These factors include the potentialities for

the development of an 'ethnic economy', facilitating both ethnic consumption and transnational businesses oriented towards the motherland; the political orientations prevailing in countries of origin – e.g. whether voting at distance is bound to remain a merely symbolic act or a potential channel for emigrants' greater influence on the political life back home, which reinforces their huge economic weight through remittances; the accessibility and costs of communication at distance, both in terms of information and communication technologies and physical transportation to the motherland.

From all these viewpoints, the translocal case I have studied, which is likely to apply to the overall migration flow between Ecuador and Italy – or Europe overall – suggests scepticism about over-generalised uses of the term 'transnationalism'. Apart from all other factors, geographical distance makes it relatively hard to keep up transnational practices, while creating lesser obstacles for interpersonal ties and attachments.

The very notion of transnationalism, ultimately, conflates three quite distinct 'motherland references', which may be more or less relevant in immigrant life experience:

- 1) social ties at distance with one's motherland structured by its political, economic or other institutions through which this country of origin remains for the migrants a source of rights, opportunities, identities or belonging;
- 2) social ties at distance with one's family, or with a limited group of 'significant others', embedded in a regime of mutual affections and obligations;
- 3) emotional and affective ties with immigrants' earlier lives, whose often idealised nostalgic memory contrasts with the exigencies of the immigrants' hard present life; this orientation towards the past may pave the way for ongoing contacts with home but will rarely support a viable future 'dual' life project.

In my case study at least, I found a continuum of increasing empirical salience when moving from public ties at distance to private ones and to ties based on mere reminiscence. Whether the term 'transnational' should be applied to all three manifestations of ties across borders and which one should be the focus of analysis is an issue that warrants far more attention in future transnational migration studies.

## Notes

- 1 The following key literature reviews helpfully discuss both the proper and the not-so-proper uses of transnationalism in migration research: Kivisto (2001), Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), Vertovec (2004a) and Levitt and Jaworsky (2007).
- 2 One further aspect of transnationalism missing in Portes' definition concerns transnational institutional structures and policies of sending and receiving states (Bauböck 2003).
- 3 The research process also resulted in a significant investment of writing down – and then analysing – my own field notes (see Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2001), along with migrants' narratives (see Bertaux 2003). As I aimed to understand migrants' representations and use of their transnational social ties, these methodological options were more promising than an impersonal survey or even a set of formal interviews (unless they were situated in a specific ethnographic setting). As such, this chapter contains frequent recourse to my field notes as a reflexive and self-critical research tool.
- 4 From the interview with I (44, in Italy for four years), a mother with two children left behind in Ecuador.
- 5 No less significant and even more troublesome is the realm of interactions at distance between partners separated by the emigration of either: for the Ecuadorian case see Pribilsky (2004), Banfi and Boccagni (2010), Boccagni (2009).
- 6 While in Pasaje, I found systematic evidence of a greater awareness regarding the actual life conditions of immigrants in Italy than I expected. A fieldwork passage may be helpful here. It is drawn from my visit with D, a former immigrant, whose children are still in Italy and with whom I have often talked.

Here we are at Mrs. D's. [...] In the dining room, along with the usual paintings of their ancestors hanging on the walls, I cast an eye on a small photo – right above the TV set. It shows a girl, in Italy, outside a Despar supermarket. Mrs D has been to Italy, as an irregular migrant, and has come back. In her wake, an indefinite number of children, brothers and nephews has left too. She says she would return now, but 'only together with all my children.' Only at last, while asking her for some more photos, do I realise that one of her children still in Italy, in their twenties, is S (still undocumented): one of those guys who seem to drink, play football and listen to (loud) music all the time. He has not called up home 'for five months', but she looks resigned, rather than worried. 'He always drinks a lot, doesn't he?' I try to come up with a vague answer, but I feel really impressed by her lucid account of S's situation – despite living far from him for years, and despite – I guess – their poor communication. No room for migration myths, here. 'They're messing around, that's all,' she sighs at last. (Field notes, Pasaje, 22.11.06)



# Chapter 11

## Operationalising transnational migrant networks through a simultaneous matched sample methodology

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### 11.1 Introduction

Migration is a topic of great interest in both research and policy circles. On the one hand, the increasing numbers of migrants to developed countries and the xenophobic reactions in many of these countries have led to a slew of studies focusing on migrant integration in receiving-country societies. On the other hand, governments of developing countries and development organisations have become increasingly conscious of the great contribution that migrant remittances make to home country economies. This awareness has led the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international institutions to commission studies of the effects of remittances for the development of migrant home countries.

These studies split migrants' lives in two: they focus on either what migrants do in the receiving country or the effects that migrants have on the people back home. Reality, however, is more variegated, with migrants often maintaining linkages with the country of origin and creating new social ties, adapting ideas and values and redefining a sense of belonging in the new country of residence. 'Transnationalism' was coined as a concept in the early 1990s to bring these two research arenas to bear on one another. It was noted that migrant realities could be understood only by taking into consideration the *linkages* between home and host countries and the *simultaneity* of flows with which these linkages are created and maintained.

Since the 1990s there has been a burgeoning of transnational studies. Many theoretical works have been written, identifying transnationalism as a new and unique area of study. Empirical studies have addressed the theoretical concepts to differing degrees and are still developing methodologies through which to operationalise these concepts. This chapter offers a review of the important theoretical concepts

making transnationalism a unique area of study and identifies a remaining methodological gap. It explores the contributions of a simultaneous matched sample (SMS) methodology by way of a case – the Ghana TransNet research programme – with reflections on the kinds of additional knowledge an SMS methodology can contribute to current understandings of migration.

In the second section of the chapter I briefly review transnationalism as a concept, categorise empirical studies according to the methodologies used and identify a methodological gap. Section three describes in detail the SMS methodology used by the Ghana TransNet research programme. Section four reviews some findings emerging from the SMS methodology that can supplement knowledge about migration. Section five concludes with some recommendations for research and development policy.

## 11.2 Transnationalism

Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc (1992) were among the first to theorise about the concept of transnationalism. What sets their analysis apart from previous approaches to the study of migration is that they focus on migration within a globalising economy and draw into question the role of the nation-state in regulating the activities that migrants engage in and the identities that they create. Transnationalism problematises notions of space that assume that physical, social and political spaces overlap perfectly onto one geographical area. The nation-state affects the way migrants move and organise themselves by creating barriers for them (via restrictive visa policies) or providing opportunities (e.g. employment within developed country economies). At the same time, there are also flows that transcend the nation-state such as cultural images (Appadurai's (1996) ethno-space, media-space, etc.), people and goods that contribute to the constitution of new kinds of spaces.

Various definitions of transnationalism have been set forth, reflecting the different disciplinary backgrounds of scholars it has attracted. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc define transnationalism as 'the *processes*<sup>2</sup> by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (1994: 7). Vertovec emphasises the importance of people within networks by focusing on the 'multiple *ties* and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states' (1999: 447). Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt delimit the concept of transnationalism to *occupations and activities* that require sustained contacts over time across national borders (1999: 218). Other authors emphasise the flow of

immaterial things such as *ideas* and *feelings of solidarity* across boundaries (Clifford 1994b) that serve to form transnational *identities*.

What these definitions have in common is their emphasis on the linkages that bind people living in different countries. A major contribution of the literature on transnationalism has been to recognise the individual migrant as a member of a larger whole that extends beyond geographical boundaries. This conceptualisation of transnationalism has methodological consequences. Hannerz (1998) explains that in most transnational cases, the most relevant unit of analysis is the network, or what others have called transnational communities, villages (Levitt 2001) or circuits (Rouse 1992).

Simultaneity is considered to be a second distinguishing feature of transnational linkages (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). New technologies (airplanes, telephones, satellite technology, faxes and computers) make movement and communication between large distances possible with much greater frequency, speed and regularity and in greater numbers than even just 50 years ago (for overview articles see *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(2); Vertovec 2001; Mazzucato, Van Dijk, Horst & De Vries 2004). This makes it possible for people to be simultaneously engaged in both their home country as well as in other countries where they have lived or are living. Simultaneous engagement enables linkages to tighten between dispersed people, new livelihood opportunities to emerge, social institutions to change and hybrid identities to develop. These changes have led to qualitative differences in how migrants, the cities in which they live and their home communities are impacted by migration (Foner 1997).

Thus, simultaneity and networks are two important aspects that emerge from the theoretical transnational literature. In what follows I investigate how these aspects have been operationalised in methodologies used by transnational studies.

The simultaneity of flows means that at least two locations must be incorporated into one research field. This has been operationalised in two ways. One is by situating research in one geographical location, usually migrant-receiving areas,<sup>3</sup> but focusing on people's discourses about home and their feelings of belonging. Many transnational studies follow this line of questioning (Charles 1992; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; Poros 2001; Salih 2002; Smith 1998). They are fundamental to the point that in order to understand migrant realities, it is not sufficient to study how migrants take on cultural forms of the countries in which they reside, or whether they participate in local labour markets. It is also necessary to understand how migrants relate to their countries of origin in their imaginaries, in the cultural forms they practice, the political identities they associate themselves with and the discourses they engage in. These studies have, however, largely neglected the more



material social and economic flows in which transnational identities result,<sup>4</sup> and they do not include any empirical research in the other location: a migrant's home community that is conceptualised as being important by the theoretical transnational literature. Furthermore, these studies cannot be distinguished from any others on identity and ethnicity that were undertaken before the coining of the concept of transnationalism.

A second type of transnationalism study that became more prevalent in the late 1990s and early 2000s operationalised simultaneity by studying both home communities and migrants' country of residence jointly, giving rise to theoretical reflections on the need for multi-sited research (Hannerz 1998; Stoller 1997; Marcus 1995). These two-country empirical studies offer something apart from previous methods and their approach will thus be the focus for the rest of this chapter.

Two categories of two-country studies can be distinguished: those with matched samples and those without. A matched sample focuses on networks of people linked to one another across national boundaries as the unit of analysis. Unmatched sample studies select people who are on both sides of the migration process but may not be directly linked to one another. The individual is thus the unit of analysis in unmatched sample studies, while the network is the unit of analysis in matched sample studies. Unmatched sample studies are more numerous.

Since the 1990s, two-country, unmatched sample transnational studies have burgeoned. They have taken research on the linkages between countries further by conceptualising home and host country as a single arena for migrants' social, economic and political action (Basch et al. 1994; Feldman-Bianco 1992; Gardner 1999; Glick Schiller & Fouron 1998; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller 2003; Hinojosa Ojeda 2003; Matthei & Smith 1998; Marques, Santos & Araujo 2001; Portes & Guarnizo 1991; Riccio 2002; Rouse 1992).

Matched sample studies are fewer (Osili 1998; Saifullah Khan 1977; De la Cruz 1995; Massey 1987). Because such studies collect information from both sides, they best investigate questions about the inner workings of transnational flows and link migrants' actions with those of people back home. These questions include: how do migrants decide to whom they send remittances? What kinds of reciprocal relations exist between people living in different countries, and how do they work? What mechanisms do migrants use to ensure that remittances get used as they intend, and, at the same time, are migrants' remittances being used in the way migrants intended?

A review of two-country, transnational studies (see Table 11A.1) shows that few studies work with matched samples and no study to date has involved collecting information from both ends of the migration process simultaneously.

Among two-country transnational studies, two further methodological distinctions can be made: their scope, relating to the number of people they study, and the type of contact with the research population, be it intensive or one-off (this categorisation is presented in Table 11A.2). The majority of studies is large in scope (more than twenty respondents) and uses methods in which respondents are interviewed only a few times (such as surveys or one or two in-depth interviews per respondent). Such one-off methods can be used to learn the extent of certain phenomena and can produce reliable data only if the population involved is not vulnerable (e.g. migrants with working permits). In cases of a vulnerable population, a relationship of trust between researcher and respondent is necessary and an intensive research methodology is needed. Intensive methods involve repeated contacts with the same people. Table 11A.2 shows how the studies that use intensive methods are for the most part ethnographies. They do not collect quantitative data and cannot assess the extent of the transnational phenomena they study (Portes 2001).

This chapter explores a simultaneous matched sample (SMS) methodology in which a relatively large matched sample of respondents is studied simultaneously and intensively (repeated visits over a long period of time). It is similar to an ethnosurvey, as described by Massey (1987), in that it uses multi-method data collection and a matched sample of respondents, yet it gives equal attention to, and collects data simultaneously from, both sides of the matched sample. The chapter reflects on the experiences of using such a methodology from the Ghana TransNet research programme by investigating what it can add to our knowledge of transnational migration and by discussing some considerations one needs to make before employing such a methodology.

### 11.3 A simultaneous matched sample methodology

The Ghana TransNet research programme<sup>5</sup> examines how migrants' transnational networks affect the principles and institutions<sup>6</sup> on which local economies are based. Through the flows of goods, money, services and ideas between migrants and the people they know in their home country, values, knowledge, economic opportunities and means of social assistance change, adapt and transform. This ultimately impacts the institutions that shape local economies both at home and abroad. The Ghana TransNet research programme aims to understand how local economies are being changed by focusing on institutions that are impacted by migrants' transnational lives.

The methodology thus takes migrants' simultaneous engagement in two or more countries directly into account (Mazzucato 2000). The

programme is composed of three projects based in three important nodes of Ghanaian migrants' transnational networks: Amsterdam, where most Ghanaians in the Netherlands reside; Accra, the capital city of Ghana, where most migrants have lived or passed through; and rural to semi-urban villages in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, to which many migrants trace their roots. The projects have been conducted simultaneously so that transactions between people could be studied on both sides and in real time.

Migrants' social networks are taken as the unit of analysis. Migrants have a multiplicity of contacts with people in their home country, ranging from friends and family members to business partners and church members. We were interested in investigating the different roles of kin and non-kin relationships in migrants' networks, rather than to assume that it is only kin relationships that are relevant, as is done in studies that take the household as the unit of analysis.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were applied over a two-year period (2003-2004) with 115 respondents who were followed intensively over the three research locations.<sup>7</sup> In a first phase, 29 Ghanaian migrants in Amsterdam were selected based on a network survey conducted among 106 migrants. There exists no baseline survey of Ghanaians in the Netherlands, and a large number of migrants are undocumented. The 106 Ghanaians were therefore selected through a variety of gateways (churches, community leaders, hometown associations, cultural projects and randomly encountered migrants in markets or at the workplace). The diversity of gateways helped ensure our coming into contact with a wide variety of migrants with different individual and network characteristics.

Once the selection of respondents was made, the second phase of the programme could begin. The research team jointly developed questionnaires and question lists so that the same information would be asked for in the three research locations. First, a transaction study was developed to record on a monthly basis all transactions conducted in eight domains of daily life, which were identified from literature and preliminary fieldwork as being important in the economic lives of migrants and people back home. These domains are housing, business (including farming), funerals, church, health care, education, communications and community development projects. Transactions were recorded on a monthly basis during the period of July 2003 to June 2004. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out on the eight domains. Third, life histories were collected, focusing on the changes in people's social networks throughout their lifetime. Fourth, observation of, and participation in, social events were employed in Amsterdam from June 2002 to February 2005 and in locations in Ghana from May 2003 to August 2004.

## 11.4 Results from a simultaneous matched sample

This section reviews findings from the Ghana TransNet research programme that are particular to the SMS methodology. Reflections are made on how the findings supplement current knowledge coming from transnational, migration and migration and development studies.

### 11.4.1 *Linking policy consequences across countries*

Expenditure patterns reflect migrant objectives as well as policies that may create or facilitate certain expenditure categories. An SMS methodology allows migrants' expenditure patterns to be studied simultaneously in the country of origin, in the country of residence and across national borders. At the same time, it allows the effects of migrants' expenditures on network members to be observed directly. As such, an SMS methodology can show the direct effects that policies in one country have on livelihoods in another. The example of Amsterdam-based Ghanaian migrants' expenditures illustrates such effects.

Ghanaian migrants' in the Netherlands from our sample spent over 35 per cent of their total non-consumption expenditures<sup>8</sup> on remittances in the period of July 2003 to June 2004. Remittances consist of money and goods sent or carried to Ghana by migrants. Forty per cent of these remittances was spent on help for network members or organisations in Ghana (including funerals, church donations, education, health, community development projects and general subsistence), and 50 per cent was spent on investments (on housing or business pertaining to the migrant himself or herself) (Mazzucato et al. 2006). Almost 5 per cent was spent on identity documents for travel to, and stay in, the Netherlands, and the remaining 5 per cent on miscellaneous expenditures (Mazzucato 2005).

At the same time, almost 60 per cent of non-consumption expenditures was spent in the Netherlands. Non-remittance expenditure patterns show in what ways migrants participate in the Dutch economy as well as the consequences Dutch migration policy has on migrants' ability to send money back home and contribute to development. Discussions of whether migrants support the neighbourhoods and cities in which they live focus on whether migrants start their own businesses or buy their own homes. Like any inhabitants, however, migrants can support the neighbourhood, city or country where they live in many different ways. Table 11.1 presents the major non-remittance expenditure items and their geographic destination based on the transaction study conducted with 30 Ghanaian migrants over a one-year period.

**Table 11.1** *Geographic destination of largest non-remittance expenditure items of Amsterdam-based Ghanaian migrants*

<i>The Netherlands</i>			<i>International</i>
<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>Amsterdam</i>	<i>Other</i>	
• School party	• House purchase (real estate agencies)	• Dutch wax cloth (Visco) <sup>a</sup>	• International phone calls
• Church/association donations	• Rent (housing corporations)	• Business and income taxes	• Electronic appliances
• Food shopping	• Car purchase (second-hand stores)	• Health care taxes	• Airline tickets
• Liquor (for celebrations of rites of passage)	• Housing and household refuse taxes	• <i>Lawyers</i>	• Shipments via sea freight
• Services (child-care, telephone call centres, money transfers, travel agencies)	• Personnel for own business	• <i>Foreign police</i>	• <i>'Connection men'</i> <sup>b</sup>
		• <i>'Connection men'</i> <sup>b</sup>	
		• <i>Dutch embassy in Ghana</i>	

Source: Transaction study 2003-2004; table from Mazzucato (2008)

Note: Entries in italics indicate non-productive investments.

<sup>a</sup> This is a type of high-quality cloth used to make clothing, produced by a Dutch company and much valued in many African countries.

<sup>b</sup> Refers to persons who facilitate obtaining travel or residency papers in exchange for payment.

Non-remittance spending shows that Ghanaian migrants contribute to businesses and services that are offered at the neighbourhood, city, national and international levels. Not all spending, however, leads to growth in the formal economy. Much money gets absorbed into the formal and informal economies of identity papers (see italicised items in Table 11.1). As mentioned, identity papers absorbed 5 per cent of total remittances sent, but they also take up financial resources in the Netherlands. Substantial amounts of money are spent on lawyers' fees. Some lawyers are of very low quality, not having specialised in migration law, and can cause delays and, ultimately, the denial of a visa request due to improper handling of the application procedure (personal communication, head of visa office, Dutch consulate, Accra, 26 March 2004). Fees charged by the Dutch embassy for legalisation of documents and for visas can also lead to substantial spending. Legalisation alone cost € 122 in 2002 and, due to highly stringent procedures, a person may have had to pay the fee several times before succeeding. The fact that the embassy verifies the detailed information it requires of migrants leads the migrants to hire people to oversee the verification

procedure. In 2003 and 2004, such people charged around € 2,000. Over two years, the immigration police raised the fees for staying and permanent residency permits eightfold and fourfold, respectively (Table 11.2). For some migrants, this cost is equivalent to their monthly incomes. One of the most substantial costs for undocumented migrants is obtaining papers in the informal economy. In 2003 and 2004, the going rate for such transactions was between € 10,000 and € 15,000. The other significant cost incurred is for using other people's papers in order to work. The unwritten rule is that the papers' owner keeps 30 per cent of the net salary earned by the undocumented migrant. This can amount to almost € 4,500 per year for the blue-collar jobs typically held by undocumented migrants. Another cost is the forgone income of better-paying jobs that are inaccessible to those without a working permit. Finally, there is the cost of the ill health likely to result from working in informal economy jobs. These jobs are usually physically stressful – for example, cleaning jobs, in which people inhale strong cleaning solvents all day or repeat the same movement for large parts of the day – and lead to ailments.

These expenditure patterns on both sides of the migration process – remittances to Ghana and investments and spending in the Netherlands – reflect the double engagement of migrants in their home country and in the country where they reside. At the same time, some expenditures reflect the hardening of Dutch migration policies that create both a formal economy (lawyers, embassies, immigration police) and an informal economy ('connection men',<sup>9</sup> marriage partners, use of others' documents) of identity papers. Were these resources not taken up by obtaining identity documents (visas, passports, work permits), we deduce from migrants' current spending patterns that these resources would be spent in ways that contribute to the Dutch economy

**Table 11.2** Cost (in €) of formal and informal economy of identity papers, the Netherlands 2001, 2003

	2001	2003
Residence permit	56	430
Renewal of residence permit	0	285
Residence permit for unlimited time	227	890
Legalisation of birth certificate		122
'Help' with legalisation procedure		2,000
Marriage partner		10,000 – 15,000
Use of other person's work permit		30% of salary earned
'Typical' immigration lawyer fee		1,000
Prison stay for two months		4,000

Source: Table from Mazzucato (2005)

at the neighbourhood, city or national levels, to multinational corporations and to the local economies of cities and villages in Ghana.

Our analysis links migrant spending in the receiving country with spending in the home country and highlights how migration policies in a receiving country can have development consequences for sending countries. An SMS methodology also brings these effects to light on the individual level. Joy, a Ghanaian nurse living in the Netherlands, was never able to have her nursing diploma validated in the Netherlands and worked in the lowest ranks of elderly care for nine years. Joy had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the repercussions for her self-esteem and, during our fieldwork, her patience reached a limit. She decided to move to the United Kingdom, where she had a better chance of getting her diploma recognised. This move had financial consequences, as she needed to pay for her trip and housing in the UK, and would not have income for the time it would take her to obtain a nursing job. Her husband in the Netherlands had to use all his savings to support her and took on an additional night job. The consequences of this additional spending for Joy's immediate household and her network in Ghana were documented in the transaction study. Joy and her husband were supporting a nephew through school in Ghana and, as a consequence of Joy's move, were unable to pay the school fees for the remainder of the academic year. By the end of our fieldwork, no one in Ghana had been able to compensate the lost money and the child was taken out of the school.

Observing this effect was made possible by collecting transaction data simultaneously in different locations. Joy and her husband had not mentioned their inability to pay school fees for the nephew, perhaps because they had not thought to do so, or because they were ashamed. Questioning respondents in Ghana long after the boy had been taken out of school may not have turned up this information as the link between the remittances and the boy's schooling may have been forgotten or was not clear in people's minds. This effect might not have emerged had the research relied solely on informants on one side – instead of both sides – of the migration process simultaneously.

Having transnational lives means that factors affecting migrants' resources will have repercussions in more than just one country. Economic studies of the benefits and costs of migration for receiving countries typically focus on migrants' participation in the labour market and their use of social services such as education, health and pensions (Roodenburg 2003). The analyses presented here show that a more accurate estimation of the costs and benefits of migration involves widening the scope of these studies. A broader view as such would include estimated costs of excluding migrants from participating in an economy to the state of the receiving country (the budget of the Dutch migration

police is greater than that of the whole of the UNHCR (Veenkamp, Bentley & Buonfino 2003)), to the migrant (i.e. reduced resources, ill health and an unsatisfactory life) and to the migrant's home country economy (i.e. forgone remittances).

#### 11.4.2 *Two-way flows*

Studies on migration and development often focus on one-way flows and what migrants do for the home country. There are also flows that go in the other direction, from home country to receiving country, but these flows have usually been ignored. A recent overview of international migration and economic development shows one exception (Lucas 2005): studies of brain drain analysing flows from developing countries to migrant-receiving countries (Mensah, Mackintosh & Henry 2005). Transnational studies also tend to focus on what migrants do for their home countries, for example, through hometown associations and festivals in which contributions are collected for community development projects or through entrepreneurial activities (Guarnizo et al. 2003; Levitt 2001). Some transnational studies mention services that people at home provide to migrants abroad, such as caring for children, managing housing construction (Levitt 2001) or sending local goods (Wiltshire 1992), but no detailed analysis of these flows has been conducted.

In what follows, I present a study of how insurance agreements between migrants and their network members back home bind the country of residence with the home country. One of the possible uses of remittances is for insurance. The new economics of migration (NEM) theory argues that migration is a household-level strategy for dealing with risk (Stark & Levhari 1982; Lucas & Stark 1985; Stark & Bloom 1985; Taylor 1999). Remittances are explained as the outcome of self-enforcing contractual arrangements between migrants and their families in which both parties expect to be better off. The family helps the migrant to move to where he or she expects to have better income opportunities. The migrant then sends remittances either as delayed payment for the initial investment the family made in the migration or as insurance to the family in times of need (Stark & Lucas 1988). What make the migrant abide with the contract are altruistic feelings towards his or her family and/or the desire to be eligible for the family inheritance, usually land or cattle (De la Brière 2002).

No study to date has explored the possibility that migrants and home country dwellers may be involved in a mutual insurance contract in which a migrant may provide for the family because she is in need of their help. Using SMS methodology, we investigated this possibility. Migration histories of our respondents revealed that migration



trajectories of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands have three phases: first, the preparation phase in Ghana during which the money and documents necessary for the trip are obtained; second, the installation phase in the Netherlands during which migrants regularise their stay by obtaining the necessary documents; and third, the settled phase after they succeeded in obtaining their documents and are able to travel extensively back and forth to Ghana. During the 1980s and first half of the 1990s, the second phase of undocumented stay in the Netherlands typically lasted from two to five years. Subsequently, with increasingly stringent visa policies in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe, this phase has become longer. Some respondents in our sample had been waiting ten years.

While a migrant is in the process of obtaining needed documents, the probability of unforeseen events having a large income shock is high. An insurance event must involve a degree of unpredictability; if one could know exactly if and when the event were to occur, one could plan ahead and not rely on mutual insurance. An insurance event must also involve costs that migrants are unable to pay on their own. Table 11.3 shows the kinds of shocks that migrants experience during the second stage of the migration process.

Different aspects of the unpredictability of the events outlined in Table 11.3 create a need for insurance. First, one does not have the certainty that the events will occur. For example, some people without staying permits are lucky to never be caught by police. Second, migration policy in the Netherlands and Europe has changed quite dramatically and frequently over the past fifteen years, becoming increasingly

**Table 11.3** *Insurance events for migrants in the Netherlands during Phase II*

<i>Insurance event</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Unpredictability</i>	<i>Urgency*</i>	<i>From whom</i>
Getting a residence permit legally	Paperwork in Ghana	+	+	Family and friends in Ghana
Getting a residence permit in the black market	Finding a candidate Candidate paperwork	++	++	Family and friends in Ghana and The Netherlands
Marriage deal gone wrong	Arbitration	++	+++	Family and friends in Ghana and the Netherlands
Getting put in prison	Getting out of prison	+++	+++	Family and friends in Ghana and the Netherlands

*Source:* Adapted from Mazzucato (2009)

\*Urgency is used as a proxy for financial cost as the help that is needed from the migrant is usually a service, such as obtaining correct documentation, arbitration or obtaining accurate information. These services are not always quantifiable in terms of financial costs.

stringent towards migrants. Potential migrants may have acquired information about the ease of obtaining documents in the Netherlands that was no longer valid after their arrival in the Netherlands.

Insurance events can impose a large financial cost on migrants. Our data show that although migrants use their own financial resources or borrow from their migrant networks in the country of residence, they also need the services of family and friends in Ghana. In what follows I describe the nature of these services for each kind of insurance event.

Respondents without papers first try the cheapest route of obtaining papers via official channels. This entails a lot of work in Ghana, collecting the necessary documentation and informing all those who might be interviewed by the embassy controllers what answers to give. This system is necessary as the Dutch embassy employs strict documentation verification that is virtually impossible for Ghanaians older than 25 to satisfy because the consistent documentation needed to satisfy embassy requirements did not exist 25 years ago. This means migrants need to have documents made, school records changed, hospital birth records forged and extended family members informed about the 'official' answers to controllers who come to villages to verify all information given on the application form. One friend or trusted family member in Ghana will be charged with collecting forms at the embassy, which entails many hours of waiting in lines at the different agencies, travelling and coordinating efforts to ensure information will be consistent on all records. These services require a substantial input from family or friends in Ghana, which can be documented with the SMS methodology.

To obtain documents on the black market, in most cases migrants need to find a 'marriage partner' with legal documents. Here again, migrants make use of friends or family in the Netherlands or in Ghana to put them in contact with a trustworthy candidate. Migrants are in extremely vulnerable positions vis-à-vis their prospective partners because costs must be made up front. Many are the occasions in which a migrant loses his or her money on a deal gone wrong. Thus, finding a trustworthy candidate is essential.

In the case of a marriage deal gone wrong, a migrant must try to obtain reimbursement by asking his or her own network members in Ghana to pressure the candidate – in turn, through his or her own social network – to repay the costs. In one case in our study, the marriage candidate of a migrant who had paid € 2,000 for the arrangement disappeared. The migrant was able to recuperate the money after his parents in Ghana went to speak with the parents of the partner.

In the event of having been caught and put in prison, again the migrant may rely on friends and family in Ghana. One respondent who was imprisoned in the Netherlands asked his family in Ghana to help

by going to a prayer camp with pastors who were believed to have powers to resolve document problems. Other respondents who were experiencing problems in obtaining their residence permits also asked family in Ghana to attend prayer camps (see Van Dijk 1997). This involves costs for the family back home, such as funds for travel and making donations at the prayer camp, as well as time, since a prayer camp usually involves an extended stay of one or two weeks for prayer and fasting.

These insurance services are difficult for a researcher based in a migrant's home country to notice as they blend in with everyday tasks. Furthermore, some difficulties migrants experience, such as imprisonment, are shameful, and the family back home may not want to tell people about them. An SMS methodology can help make such services more visible. When an unexpected insurance event occurs to the migrant, the researcher in the migrant-receiving country can alert the researchers in the home country to observe attentively and ask how network members deal with the crisis.

There are many additional services that migrants receive from people at home, such as help with housing construction, business investments and child-care in their home country. These services have been described by transnational studies (De la Cruz 1995; Matthei & Smith 1998; Marques, Santos & Araujo 2001). An SMS methodology can help researchers go beyond the description of reciprocal relations and to explain how these relations work by observing both sides of the reciprocal relation simultaneously. Moreover, by following people over an extended period of time, it is possible to quantify these services, for example, through a time-budgeting study that collects data on how much time is spent on these services.

#### 11.4.3 *Triangulation, tracking change and getting beyond migration discourses and false dichotomies*

So far, this chapter has focused on what type of information can be found by using an SMS methodology. This section focuses on the quality of data obtained, centring on three characteristics: triangulation, tracking change and getting beyond migration discourses in both practice and academia. Collecting similar data in different localities contemporaneously can enhance the quality of data because researchers can triangulate information with each other about their research locations. This enables researchers to complete and correct information by asking for more relevant or detailed responses and topics that they would otherwise not consider. For example, a respondent in Accra had not mentioned owning a business, but the fact came to light in Amsterdam when a migrant mentioned helping her to start one. This alerted the

researcher in Accra to ask more detailed questions and obtain more complete information about business activities. Another relevant example resulted from an interview with a migrant who had a tense relationship with one of her network members in Ghana. By asking both her and the network member in Ghana about this relationship, it was possible to obtain both versions of the story, add detail and gain insight into the relationship and how it became strained over time.

Interviewing people repeatedly on a monthly basis over a one-year period made it possible to *observe* changing attitudes or social relationships. In the course of our study, a mother in Ghana and a daughter in Amsterdam became closer after a period of estrangement. We were able to ask about the reasons for the estrangement and also to observe how the relationship evolved. Quantitative data showed how the closeness between mother and daughter resulted in a series of two-way flows between Ghana and the Netherlands that had not existed previously.

In another case we witnessed a respondent's growing religiosity. While at the beginning of the research the respondent was quite critical of Ghanaian pastors operating in Amsterdam, she later began to frequent one of the Pentecostal churches in her neighbourhood. We were able to trace the events leading to her increasing religiosity and the effects on her exchanges with people in Ghana. We were able to document factors that lead to strong membership in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in the Netherlands and the flows they generate. Although not unique to the SMS methodology, another benefit is that it is possible to track changes by following those respondents who move from one research location to another (Smith 1998; Sorensen 1998).

One year of data collection cannot capture all changes, but it does enable researchers to *observe* the evolution of some attitudes and social relationships, rather than rely only on interviews. The latter are subject to the pitfalls of human recollection and reflect discourses about the way people want to remember the past rather than the actual events themselves.

Collecting information from more than one site and following what people do over an extended period of time also facilitates getting beyond dominant discourses. Various discourses exist around migration among both migrants and academics. An example is migrants' complaining of their family's constant requests for help. Often, researchers who base their findings on one-off interviews with migrants report this discourse as a finding, and thus propagate the image of the migrant as a helpless victim of extended family systems prevalent in developing countries. Observing what migrants do – i.e. their practices – revealed in our study the various strategies migrants employ in order to continue supporting people back home while, at the same time, giving space to their own personal objectives (Mazzucato, Kabki & Smith 2006). In reality,

migrants have more room for manoeuvring, we concluded, than they portray. Furthermore, we observed how some migrants do not receive so many requests, and others that do sometimes explicitly deny these requests. Finally, as stressed in section 4.2, migrants also depend on their relations in the home country, particularly in certain phases of their migration trajectory. This can partially explain why they continue to send remittances despite the fact that they say they feel oppressed by requests. This conclusion could be reached only by observing and collecting quantitative data from the different sides of the migration process. Migrants' reliance on home did not emerge in interviews with migrants themselves because migrants often view this reliance with shame as it is associated with a 'failed' migration story.

Another dominant discourse is that migrants show off their hard-earned income in their country of origin, leading to the misconception that 'money grows on trees' overseas. This misconception encourages in youth a desire to migrate and compels extended family members to make constant requests for money and goods. Having researchers in different locations allowed us to observe migrants' behaviour during their home visits and ask migrants what they tell their network members in Ghana about life overseas. We could cross-check this information by asking the network members in Ghana what they knew of life overseas. This inquiry led to the finding that people in Ghana, especially in cities, had a very realistic picture of life in developed countries and were aware that their compatriots were often working and living in difficult conditions. We found that migrants usually did not make explicit to their network members their own personal circumstances, but they explained how living conditions were difficult, in general, and sometimes gave details about people they knew. That some of our young respondents who were able to secure a decent job in urban Ghana did not express any desire to migrate showed that, while the 'money growing on trees' discourse may have reflected reality at the beginning of Ghanaian emigration overseas in the 1980s, it is now outdated. Many migrants have since returned temporarily or permanently with realistic stories about their experiences or, worse, with little to show from their stay abroad. The exaggerated discourse may, however, still be relevant in rural or other areas (Kabki, Mazzucato & Appiah 2004) where there is little overseas emigration (De Lange 2003).

Finally, an SMS methodology is useful for researching migration across the academic divide between international and internal migration. As Skeldon (1997) argues, often the two are related – migrants first migrating internally and then overseas – and involve similar dynamics and ties with the home area. An SMS methodology does not depart from national boundaries as defining the relevant research field but, rather, works from the network and where the nodes of the

network are located. These nodes may be located both within the same country and/or beyond country borders. The Ghana TransNet research programme studies, for example, not only the linkages Amsterdam-based migrants have with people in their hometowns or in Accra, but also the linkages internal migrants have within Ghana between the hometowns and Accra. In the latter case, we were able to document the intermediary function of Accra-based network members who disbursed remittances to members located in hometowns and to show that Accra-based network members were often used to check on how recipients were using remittances. These dynamics demonstrate that internal migration and international migration are parts of one process, fulfilling different functions in a transnational network.

## 11.5 Conclusions

Two general implications result from this review of SMS methodology and its contributions to our knowledge about the migration and development nexus. First, more studies using SMS methodology are needed. SMS methodology allows the operationalisation of two concepts that make transnationalism a unique area of study: the embeddedness of migrants in *networks* that span sending and receiving areas, both within and across national boundaries, and the *simultaneity* of flows between these areas. Two-country transnational studies are multi-sited and focus on both migrants' communities at home as well as their place of residence. To our knowledge, however, data have never been collected simultaneously, and rarely across a matched sample of network members. One way to do this is through an SMS methodology. This chapter has reviewed the main added advantages of using such an SMS methodology. First, such a methodology allows migration policies in a receiving country to be directly linked to effects at the local level in developing countries. Second, it highlights the principle that flows engendered by migration are two-way: they involve not only remittances from migrant recipient countries to their home countries, but also flows, especially of services, from developing to developed countries. Both flows should be taken into account when studying the benefits and costs of migration for developing countries. Third, an SMS methodology allows the triangulation of results, provides supplemental information with which to improve the reliability of data and allows researchers to go beyond dominant migration discourses. Finally, an SMS methodology transcends the dichotomy of internal versus international migration and demonstrates how the two forms of migration are linked through transnational networks. Our findings regarding the simultaneity of migrant networks have implications for the conceptualisation of migrants

in both academic and policy circles. Migration is usually seen either as an issue of development studied by developing-area specialists (e.g. development economics, development studies), or as an issue of integration and social exclusion studied by scholars of different disciplines focusing on the developed world where migrants usually live (for a review see Portes & DeWind 2004). Policies follow a similar separation. While development often falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, integration is an issue dealt with by ministries concerned with the national territory such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice. This dichotomy obfuscates the relationship between migration policies in developed countries where migrants live and development processes in migrants' countries of origin. The bifocal lens used in transnational studies – and specifically, an SMS methodology – is useful for highlighting the linkages that exist between migration policies in developed countries and the lives of people in the developing world. Migration researchers should be familiar with the economy and society of the countries from which migrants emigrate as well as with the policy and economic circumstances migrants face in receiving countries. Working in interdisciplinary teams, researchers can combine the knowledge of developing-area specialists with that of urban anthropologists, sociologists, legal experts and economists specialising in developed countries (Stoller 1997; Hannerz 1998). For policymakers, the transnational lives of migrants linking developed and developing countries mean that receiving-country governments affect development in migrants' home countries through their migration as well as their development policies. Migration policies should focus on reducing – if not eliminating – the unintended consequences they have produced, such as the formal and informal economies of identity papers. Our SMS methodology has shown that migration is related to development, not only through flows (i.e. remittances) from the receiving country to the home country, but also through reverse flows of services that home country residents must conduct for migrants in order to bring security to migrants' vulnerable lives in the receiving country. This has the consequence of absorbing productive resources of network members back home, which, in the absence of migration, could have been employed elsewhere. Designing policies that recognise migrants' double engagement in their home country and in the receiving-country economies can help avoid the unintended negative consequences of migration policies. Such policies should aim at creating space for migrants to invest in their home country while facilitating their more active participation and offering them secure living in the receiving-country economy.

At the same time, development policies should aim at making migrant remittances as productive as possible. This means investing in

basic infrastructure and human capital to attract migrant investments or fostering the creation of credit unions in migrant-sending areas to provide multiple services for migrants such as money transfer services, as well as arranging health and funeral insurance for migrants' family members, similar to what has been done in some rural communities in Central America (Orozco 2003b). Credit unions have mandates in which they must reinvest their profits in the community, thus leading to greater multiplier effects from migrant remittances than are currently being realised in countries such as Ghana, where most profits from remittances accumulate with large multinationals such as Western Union with no obligation to reinvest in migrant-sending areas.

This mixture of migration and development policies needs to be coordinated and implemented simultaneously in order to avoid possibly counterproductive effects of one policy on another. This can only be achieved through closer collaboration – than is currently the case in most developed countries – between ministries that deal with migrant integration and the ministry that deals with development cooperation.



## Appendix

**Table 11A.1** *Two-country transnational studies by simultaneity and matched sample*

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Simultaneous</i>	<i>Step-wise</i>
Matched		De la Cruz (1995) Osili (1998) Massey (1987)
Partly matched		Saifullah Khan (1977) Basch et al. (1994) Constantinides (1977) Goldring (1998) Klaver (1997) Landolt (2001) Levitt (2001) Sorensen (1998) Wiltshire (1992)
Unmatched		Feldman-Bianco (1992) Gardner (1999) Glick Schiller & Fouron (1998) Guarnizo et al. (2003) Hinojosa Ojeda (2003) Matthei & Smith (1998) Marques et al. (2001) Portes & Guarnizo (1991) Riccio (2002) Rouse (1992) Watson (1977)

*Source:* Author's literature review

**Table 11A.2** *Two-country transnational studies by scope and type of respondent contact*

	<i>Respondents N ≤ 20 per country</i>	<i>Respondents N &gt; 20 per country</i>
Intensive contact with respondents	Levitt (2001) <sup>1</sup> Matthei & Smith (1998) <sup>2</sup> Saifullah Khan (1977) Sorensen (1998) <sup>2</sup>	Costantinides (1977) <sup>2</sup> Rouse (1992) <sup>2</sup> Watson (1977) <sup>2</sup> Massey (1987)
One-off contact with respondents	De la Cruz (1995) Klaver (1997) <sup>1</sup>	Basch et al. (1994) Feldman-Bianco (1992) <sup>2</sup> Gardner (1999) Glick Schiller & Fouron (1998) <sup>2</sup> Goldring (1998) <sup>2</sup> Guarnizo et al. (2003) Landolt (2001) Marques et al. (2001) Osili (1998) Portes & Guarnizo (1991) Riccio (2002) <sup>2</sup> Wiltshire (1992) <sup>1</sup> Hinojosa Ojeda (2003)

*Source:* Author's literature review

<sup>1</sup> These sources include surveys by way of background information but the material on migrants' lives comes from a partly matched sample of respondents. These studies are categorised according to their methods with the partly matched sample.

<sup>2</sup> These sources are ethnographies in which it is not clear how many people are studied.

## Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the conference Migration and Development Within and Across Borders organised by the Social Science Research Council of the United States and the International Organization for Migration in New York, 17-19 November 2005. This chapter was originally published in DeWind and Holdaway (2008). It reports on results of a collaborative research programme entitled 'Transnational networks and the creation of local economies: Economic principles and institutions of Ghanaian migrants at home and abroad' (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) grant number 410-13-010P). Programme partners were the University of Amsterdam (AGIDS), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (AOE), Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID) and African Studies Centre Leiden – all of which are in the Netherlands – and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) in Ghana. I would like to thank Luca Bertolini and the members of the 'Transnational links and livelihoods' group for insightful comments and Magali Chelpi for excellent research assistance.
- 2 All italics in this paragraph indicate the author's own emphasis.
- 3 Based on a literature search of 33 articles, book sections and books, only one study (Georges 1992) situated research in one geographical location and in a migrant-sending area.
- 4 Portes, Guarnizo and Haller (2002) is the exception.
- 5 See [www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet](http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet).

- 6 Institutions are the commonly held rules and norms that guide social behaviour by 'defining the incentive structure of societies and specifically economies' (North 1994: 360).
- 7 An additional sixteen respondents were followed in a fourth location (Kumasi) over a six-month period.
- 8 Consumption expenditures refer to all expenditures used for obtaining food for daily consumption. All else is considered a non-consumption expenditure.
- 9 'Connection men' are persons who facilitate obtaining travel or residency papers in exchange for payment.

## Chapter 12

# Transnational research collaboration: An approach to the study of co-publications between overseas Chinese scientists and their mainland colleagues

*Koen Jonkers<sup>1</sup>*

### 12.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, the mobility of students and scientists has dramatically increased worldwide. Initially a trickle, the outbound flow of Chinese students increased during the 1980s and, after a dip following restrictive measures in the wake of the Tiananmen incident, the outbound flow continued its exponential rise during the 1990s. The return rate of students and scientists to China in the 1980s and 1990s was low (Zhang & Li 2002). Many students decided to remain and work in their host system – or to move on to another. In many cases, this resulted in permanent migration and the adoption of a foreign nationality. This happened especially in North America, for a long time the most popular destination region, and to a lesser extent in Western Europe. As a result, the number and visibility of overseas Chinese scientists has grown considerably over the years, as will be shown in this chapter's section on findings and results.

Some of these overseas scientists return to their home country on a temporary or a permanent basis. But even when they remain abroad, overseas scientists can be important sources of new knowledge, technology, business links, policy advice and collaborative ties. The Chinese government has therefore not only set up programmes to promote the return of overseas Chinese scientists, but also engaged in a range of activities to strengthen its ties with growing communities of overseas scientists. Networks of Chinese scientists had begun to emerge organically in the United States, and the formation of similar networks has been actively supported in various other host countries. Examples of such networks include the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America, the Chinese Life Scientists Society in the UK and the Chinese Network of Life-sciences in the Netherlands (Jonkers 2010). Through the support

of such networks, governments in the home country can attempt to remain in contact with their expatriate communities. Ways to do so include the organisation of conferences aimed at this group and the facilitation of networking and information-sharing between expatriate scientists. Internet portals provide another way to actively engage overseas communities of scientists and students by providing access to information on opportunities and events in home and host countries. Yet another type of measure encouraging contact with expatriate scientists includes programmes to promote temporary and permanent return as well as cooperation between overseas Chinese scientists and their counterparts in mainland China. Chinese intermediary organisations offer some designated research funding for overseas Chinese scientists.<sup>2</sup>

The last decade has seen a rapidly emerging presence of China in the global science system. This development has made China an increasingly important collaborative partner for science systems in North America, Western Europe and Asia-Pacific. The growing number of China's international co-publications has almost kept pace with its enhanced share of publications in international journals (Jonkers 2009). One would expect overseas Chinese scientists to be involved in a relatively large share of international co-publications with China. This expectation is based in part on an assumption that the scientists would have a relatively strong interest in cooperating with their peers in mainland China. A second possible reason is that they are actively encouraged to do so by governmental and intermediary organisations in their home country. Yet another reason to expect a major role for overseas Chinese scientists is that these actors are assumed to possess cultural capital – including language skills – as well as existing contacts with researchers in mainland China. These factors are thought to give them an advantage over their non-Chinese peers in forging ties with researchers in mainland China.

This chapter contributes to the study of migrant transnationalism by examining the specific field of scientific collaboration across international borders that uses ethnic origin and migration experience as a resource. There are several possible reasons to treat this type of interaction as a specific subset of international collaboration. The motivations for the formation of such ties, the barriers and stimuli affecting their formation and intensity – as well as the distribution of the potential cognitive, material and reputational investments, outcomes and spill-overs at the individual and systemic levels – may differ from other forms of international scientific cooperation. The study of such ties can also shed light on the positive effects of migrant communities on development of the home system. This chapter will focus on discussing a methodological approach that can be used to study transnational research collaboration.

## 12.2 Definition of concepts

‘Scientific cooperation’ refers to the conscious (and voluntary) exchange of private valued resources between scientists. The resources can include research materials, unpublished information, cognitive resources in the form of advice, criticism and other inputs, the provision of training both to each other and each other’s staff and students, etc. The strongest form of scientific cooperation is defined as ‘research collaboration’, in which researchers work together on a specific joint project with the aim of a joint publication (Jonkers 2010). It is this phenomenon that is of interest in this chapter. When considering collaboration between researchers working in different countries, it is common usage to speak of international research collaboration.

The term ‘international research collaboration’ is problematic from both a semantic and a conceptual viewpoint. To start with the semantic issue: ‘international collaboration’ means collaboration between nations rather than between individual actors in different nations. The terms ‘cross-border’ or ‘transnational collaboration’ used by Crawford, Shinn and Sörlin (1993) may be more appropriate for this latter type of interaction, but they have not come into common use. As will be discussed later in this section, the concept of ‘transnational research collaboration’ will be defined as having a different meaning, following theoretical work outside the realm of the social studies of science. The term ‘international collaboration’ may also be conceptually problematic. It could be understood to refer to interactions between actors at all four levels that Van der Meulen and Rip (1998) identify in the research system – including the governmental level of policymakers, the intermediary level of funding agencies and the organisational level of research institutes and universities. Finally, international research collaboration can be – and generally is understood to refer to – the interaction between scientists at the operational level of the research system supported, or not, by agreements made at higher levels of the research system. It is the interaction at this operational level of the research system to which international research collaboration refers in this chapter.

As indicated in the introduction, the focus of this paper is on a specific subset of cross-border or international collaboration, namely the interaction between expatriate scientists and researchers in their home country. The concept of transnational research collaboration will be used to refer to this specific phenomenon. Transnationalism is a concept that originated in the international relations literature (Keohane & Nye 1972), before it was taken up in the early 1990s by anthropologists and sociologists studying international migration. It refers to ties between actors, at sub-political levels other than the governmental, which are important in shaping relations between nations. Crane (1971) was

the first to apply this concept to a study of the science system. She uses it to refer to the cross-border ties of non-governmental organisations such as scientific associations and international organisations in which individual scientists from different countries are members, as well as the cross-border interactions of individual scientists engaging in scientific cooperation. All three types of actors may influence national science policies, which could lead to truly international science policies at the level of national governments and intermediary agencies, or to the set-up of joint research programmes and joint laboratories. With some exceptions, the concept of transnationalism has not been used frequently in studies of scientific collaboration.

The concept has been more popular in other areas of social science, such as migration studies. In this literature, authors began using the concept to refer to cross-border linkages beyond the political realm including, for example, the role of migrants in the formation of commercial, cultural and religious ties (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Portes 1999). Compared to international relations literature, migration studies literature has put greater stress on the shared ethnic or cultural background of the individual actors or members of organisations who engage in these cross-border interactions. In recent years, several authors have begun to explore the formation of 'transnational innovation networks' in which expatriate, returning and circulating entrepreneurs play an important role in connecting innovative regions in different national innovation systems (Saxenian 2002, 2005; Coe 2003). This chapter discusses a simple extension of such literature by considering the emergence of cross-border scientific networks in which overseas Chinese researchers engage with researchers in their former home system or, in the case of second-, third- or nth-generation migrants, their ancestral home system. The definition of a transnational scientific cooperation in this chapter is thus narrower than that adopted by Crane (1971) and is restricted to the interaction between individuals with the same ethnic or cultural background living in different countries. A classification of transnational activities according to degree of institutionalisation in the manner introduced by Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) is difficult to make using the methodology introduced in the next section. In general, international research collaboration – of which transnational research collaboration is a subset – is thought to be characterised mainly by bottom-up investigator-driven interactions. Some degree of institutionalisation, however, such as framework agreements, which allow researchers to engage in cross-border collaboration, is always required. The importance of intermediary agencies in promoting and potentially funding these interactions will differ from one instance of transnational research collaboration to another. How large this influence is on average is an empirical question, which will not be addressed

in this chapter. By focusing on transnational research collaboration this chapter does not refer in detail to other forms of scientific migrant transnationalism, such as the influence exerted by prominent overseas and circulating Chinese scientists on Chinese science and technology policy in the past three decades, the active involvement of overseas Chinese scientists in peer-review structures and advisory functions in mainland China or the role of circulating migrants in directing international joint labs or entire research institutes (see, among others, Jonkers 2010).

This chapter refers to Chinese scientists who reside and work abroad – whether as first- or nth-generation migrants – as overseas Chinese researchers. The expectation that overseas Chinese scientists engage to a relatively high extent with their former or ancestral homeland is shared with the diaspora literature. However, a choice was made not to make explicit use of the concept of ‘scientific diasporas’ (Meyer & Brown 1999; Meyer 2001). Unlike the members of many other so-called diasporas, most, though not all, overseas scientists are expected to be first-generation migrants. Compared to other types of migrants, scientists and highly skilled expatriates, in general, continue to display a relatively high level of international mobility after arrival in their first home country (e.g. Koser & Salt 1997). Scientists and other highly skilled professionals tend to include migrants as well as non-migrants in their professional networks (Meyer 2001). In comparison to other types of migrants, they are therefore expected to have a relatively low positive bias for professional interaction with members of their ethnic/cultural community in the host country.

Because of the highly specialised nature of scientific research, actors engaged in transnational research collaboration are assumed to do so in relative isolation from other expatriate scientists working outside their own relatively narrow subfield of research. The formation of institutionalised student and scientific migrant networks or associations, which were briefly mentioned in the introduction, appears to be an argument against the latter expectation, but it is unclear what role these associations play in facilitating transnational research collaboration. The choice not to refer to ‘scientific diasporas’ in this chapter, but to use the concept ‘overseas Chinese scientists’ instead, is thus mainly motivated by an attempt to make clear that the level of analysis consists of individual overseas Chinese scientists and their interactions with mainland Chinese scientists, rather than associations of Chinese scientists that have formed in various countries.



### 12.3 Methodology and data sources

As discussed in the previous section, scientific cooperation is a broad concept, which refers to a wide range of activities. This makes development of a proxy/indicator that could be used for its measurement difficult. Gaining detailed insight into the intensity of the various forms of interactions between scientists would require data gathered through surveys or in-depth qualitative interviews. As such, co-publications will be used as an imperfect proxy for research collaboration, which is an intense form of scientific cooperation. The databases most commonly used for bibliometric studies contain information on the authors of publications and their addresses, which allows for co-publication studies at the individual, organisational, national and international levels. For a review of the literature on the use of this proxy, see Glänzel and Schubert (2004). Exclusive use (in absolute counts) of co-publications as a proxy for research collaboration has received considerable criticism over the years, but it goes beyond the purpose of this chapter to discuss these limitations in detail. For a more extensive discussion, see the aforementioned review as well as Katz and Martin (1997).

Reliable large-scale data about the nationality and/or ethnic/cultural background of scientists in North American and Western European research systems are not publicly available. It is believed that some organisations, most notably the US National Science Foundation (NSF), collect these data in their surveys and it may prove valuable in future studies to gain access to these records. Other potential sources, such as national census data gathered by governmental organisations and collected in comparative databases by international organisations like the OECD and UNESCO, lack the level of detail required to conduct studies of the activities of overseas scientists, let alone their role in specific subfields of science. Studying specific scientific subfields is considered important because the dynamics of various types of interaction between scientists, including the levels of international research collaboration, varies across scientific fields (see e.g. Wagner 2005). For this reason, a proxy was developed to measure the visibility or the contribution of overseas Chinese scientists in different host countries. It makes use of an approach that was initially developed for human population biology (for a review see Colantonio, Lasker, Kaplan & Fuster 2003). In recent years, bibliometricians have started to adopt a similar approach (Webster 2004; Basu & Lewison 2006; Jin, Rousseau, Suttmeier & Cao 2007; Lewison & Kundra 2008). In short, it involves the collection of a country's scientific publications co-authored by researchers with surnames that are geographically, ethnically and culturally distinct. Lists exist of typical Chinese (as well as Indian, Korean, Iranian, etc.) surnames, and a surname search can yield a collection of articles co-

authored by scientists of Chinese descent. In China, fewer than 5 per cent of surnames are held by over 85 per cent of the population (Yuan, Zhang & Yang 2000). Because there is so little variation in Chinese surnames, this approach is particularly suitable for assessing the visibility of overseas Chinese scientists. Similar approaches, however, have been applied to measure the contribution and visibility of other ethnic/cultural groups in the output of Western research systems as well (e.g. Webster 2004; Basu & Lewison 2006). A recent report used a similar approach to study the contribution of migrants and their descendants in filing World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) patents in the US (Wadhwa, Jasso, Rissing, Gereffi & Freeman 2007). For this study, a list of 270 surnames was used, consisting of variations of those most frequently occurring in the Chinese population. What motivated taking these common spelling variations into account was an attempt to capture the descendants of previous generations of migrants as well as recent migrants. To control whether the surnames yield a sufficient proportion of Chinese-born scientists, a search was performed applying the list to publications produced by authors based in mainland China. The search yielded over 95 per cent of the total number of Chinese publications. After inventorising the articles in which these surnames did not occur, fifteen other surnames were included in the list. Several additional surnames will be considered in future studies. Some surnames that were also common in other countries were deleted from the list.

To assess the relative contribution of overseas Chinese scientists in a nation's publication output using this simple approach, it is necessary to exclude international co-publications with the home country. In the case of overseas Chinese scientists, this involves excluding co-publications with researchers based in China, Chinese Taipei (Republic of China, Taiwan) and Singapore, since their inclusion would lead to a substantial overestimation of the contribution of scientists with a Chinese surname. Their exclusion potentially leads to slight underestimation of the contribution of researchers with a Chinese surname in each country's output. At least this would be true if there is indeed a significant influence of Chinese ethnic/cultural background on the likelihood of co-publishing with scientists in mainland China. For the specific aim of the analyses discussed in this chapter, inclusion of these international co-publications would also have led to a methodological problem of endogeneity because the number of international co-publications with China is used as a dependent variable. For, apart from using these data to show the contribution of overseas Chinese scientists in the research output of the Western research system, they can also be used to explore whether the size of the community of overseas Chinese scientists in various host countries is related to the number of international co-publications between China and these countries. The data on

which these proxies are based were collected for each year between 1990 and 2007 for twenty countries.

On the basis of available statistical data, neither transracial adoption (Stolley 1993) nor transracial marriage (US Census Bureau 2006) were considered to have a large influence (less than 0.5 per cent) on the number of articles published by researchers with a Chinese surname. The unavailability of sufficiently detailed data, however, makes it impossible to give an exact assessment of the error introduced by these factors. Another issue open to question is whether second- or third-generation migrants do indeed retain sufficient cultural capital to justify a distinction from other individuals in the host/partner system. To address this and similar concerns, a small-scale survey was carried out among researchers with a Chinese surname. This survey limits one of the benefits of this methodological approach, namely its non-intrusiveness. Fortunately, it only has to be carried out once in order to test whether the assumptions hold for the specific group under study.

The sample for this survey was collected from among the corresponding authors of scientific publications in the international scientific press in the year 2007. To identify these corresponding authors, an approach similar to that described in the previous sections was followed. That is, the corresponding authors had to have 'Chinese surnames' and be based outside China, Chinese Taipei (Republic of China, Taiwan) or Singapore. Respondents were asked only a few questions relating to their place of birth, their nationality, the country in which they started their university training, the country in which they did their PhD and language skills. Answers to the first and the last questions were especially of interest. Answers to the first question were expected to provide insight into the relative distribution of first- and second-generation (or *n*th-generation) migrants. Responses to the last question were expected to provide us with insight into the extent to which surnames can be used as a proxy for cultural capital or the cultural background of scientists. Email surveys tend to have a low response rate, especially – as was the case for this survey – when they are sent out in summer. In determining sample size, a response rate of 32 per cent was expected. Setting the confidence interval at 10 and the confidence level at 95 per cent, the estimated required sample size was therefore 300. The confidence interval was set relatively high in order to limit the number of respondents involved. As the response rate was initially lower than expected, a second round of email messages was sent out after two months. A response rate low as the one expected for this email survey indicates that a response bias could influence the findings. The distribution of responses to the follow-up part of the survey, which were similar to the first round, does not add to this doubt. Still, the low

response rate does require caution in placing too high a level of trust in the extent to which the outcome of the survey can be generalised.

## 12.4 Findings

The final response rate of the survey was 33 per cent. Around 8 per cent of non-response was due to faulty or expired email addresses. The survey yielded the following results. First, 7 per cent of the respondents indicated that their surname was not exclusively 'Chinese', but Korean, Vietnamese or Indian as well. These responses could be used further to refine the query in future studies. Of all survey respondents, 75 per cent were born in China and 46 per cent still had Chinese nationality. A total of 74 per cent started university education in China, but only 12 per cent did their PhD there. Of the latter, 2 per cent of respondents had completed a second PhD degree in the US. Of the group as a whole, 93 per cent of respondents reported being able to speak and/or read and write Chinese. If the newly identified names in which the surname was also a popular Korean or Indian surname are excluded, the respective percentages are 80, 50, 79, 13 and 100. While all these respondents indicated having Chinese-language abilities, 2 per cent stated that the skills were limited.

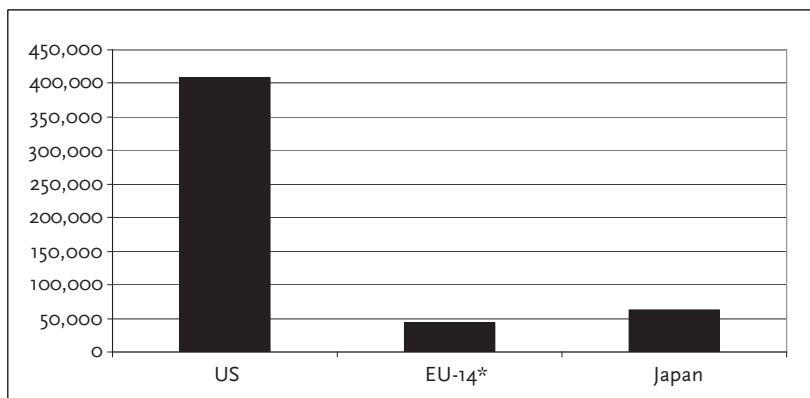
Based on responses to the last question, this approach appears suitable for identifying researchers with a Chinese cultural background according to their surnames. Other interesting findings are the high number of first-generation migrants in the sample, being 75-80 per cent. This share would have been slightly higher had 'China' been defined in this survey as including Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei (Republic of China, Taiwan). As one respondent indicated, respondents who originate in either of the two places likely consider themselves as not having been born in China. Since this chapter discusses a transnational phenomenon in a migration-study context, it is also interesting that almost half the respondents still had Chinese nationality at the time of the survey. Finally, the relatively high share of Chinese-born respondents who started university training in China (99 per cent) combined with the relatively low share of respondents who did their PhD in China (16 per cent) provides us with some additional insight into the mobility dynamic of overseas Chinese scientists. Most of the respondents were likely to have left China for postgraduate/PhD studies, and only a relatively small share of overseas Chinese scientists left China at a later stage of their scientific career.

Over the past decade and a half, the output of the Chinese research system in terms of publishing in international journals listed in the Science Citation Index (SCI) has increased rapidly. The relative impact

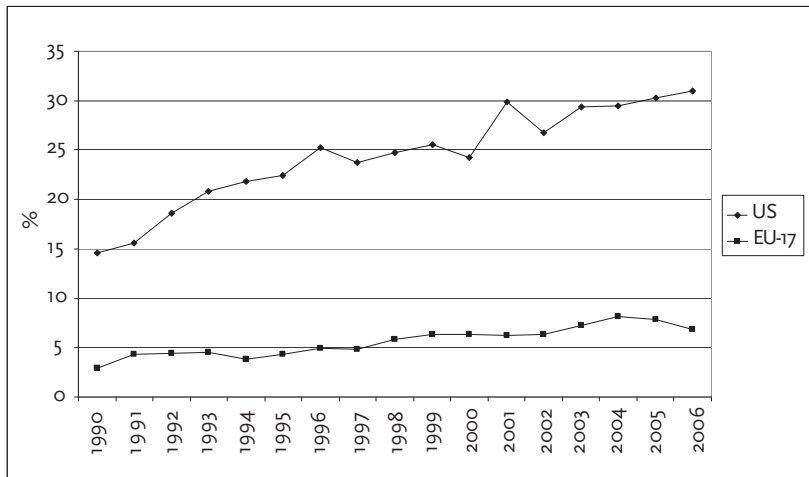
and visibility – both in terms of publications and of the citations these publications receive – show strong variations across fields. In the plant molecular life sciences, for example, one in ten SCI journals is currently published by mainland Chinese authors, and these publications receive a similar number of citations as the average article published worldwide (Jonkers & Tijssen 2008). Other molecular life science subfields score far lower on these indicators. For all subfields, the number of international co-publications increased rapidly over time as well. In relative terms, the importance of North American research systems as collaborative partners (measured in terms of the share of China's co-publications) has increased at the expense of Western European systems. This trend is expected to be related in part to the increasing importance of transnational research collaboration (Jonkers 2009).

The data presented in Figure 12.1 give an indication of the size of the number of highly skilled individuals born in China in various countries in North America and Northern Europe based on 2000-2001 national census data collected by the OECD (2004). 'Highly skilled' refers to anyone with a tertiary education and is thus not restricted to active scientists. What is more, it is not possible to make a distinction between researchers working in different scientific fields on the basis of this type of general data. For this reason, a proxy was developed to gauge the contribution of scientists with a Chinese background in various research systems in specific fields of science. Figure 12.2 shows how the share of US and EU-17 SCI publications published by researchers with a Chinese surname has evolved over time in the field of the plant molecular life sciences.<sup>3</sup> Worldwide, the share of the total number of publications in the plant molecular life science subfield co-authored

**Figure 12.1** *Chinese-born with tertiary education in the US, EU and Japan<sup>1</sup>*



**Figure 12.2** *Share of plant molecular life science publications co-authored by researchers with a Chinese surname (in %)<sup>2</sup>*

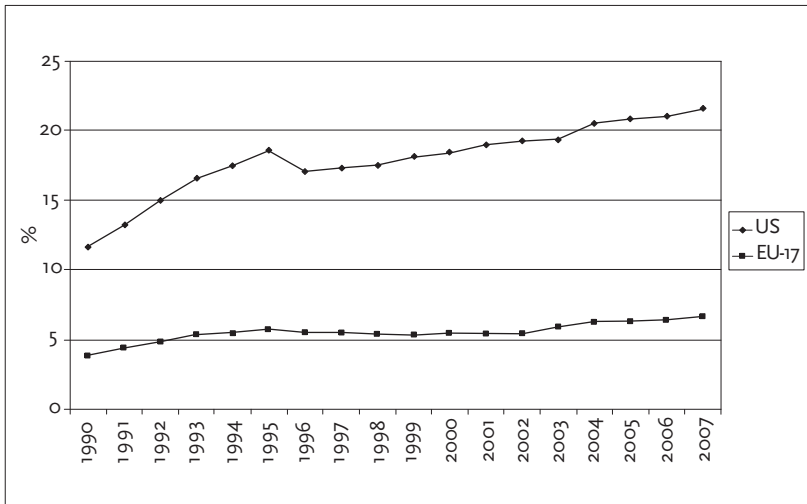


by a researcher with a Chinese surname has increased from less than 10 per cent in 1990 to more than 25 per cent in 2006.

If one excludes articles of which one author is based in China, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei (Republic of China, Taiwan) or Singapore, the share increased from around 8 per cent to a little below 15 per cent. As Figure 12.2 shows, more than 30 per cent of American SCI publications in this subfield are currently co-authored by a researcher with a Chinese surname, while this share was around 15 per cent in 1990 (Jonkers 2009). This relative measure provides a strong indication that the contribution of overseas Chinese scientists in the US research output has increased considerably. To a far lesser extent, this increasing contribution holds for the EU-17 region as well. Within the EU-17, the share of publications co-authored by researchers with a Chinese surname is higher in some countries, such as the United Kingdom, than in others, such as France. The share is even lower in the case of countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal or Greece. It thus appears justified to deduce, on the basis of this figure, that in this subfield the relative size – or at least the contribution of the overseas Chinese community – in the EU-17 is much lower than in the US.

Figure 12.3 presents a similar figure, albeit for all scientific fields taken together. These data on English-language articles, letters, notes and reviews was sourced from the online version of Elsevier's Scopus.<sup>4</sup> As the figure shows, the trend towards increasing contribution by researchers with a Chinese surname is visible for all scientific fields collectively

**Figure 12.3** Share of English-language publications co-authored by researchers with a Chinese surname (in %)



as well. The observed shares are lower than was the case for the plant molecular life sciences.

Table 12.1 presents the results of a series of simple partial correlation analyses that aim to show the correlation between the annual number of international co-publications between China and twenty countries in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific and three factors that were expected to be potential explanatory factors for observed geographical variations. The data underpinning the proxies for these potential explanatory factors were all collected on an annual basis for each year between 1990 and 2006. That the size of the research system – for which the

**Table 12.1** Partial correlation coefficients for annual indicators of scientific output, population of overseas Chinese and international co-publications with China

	Plant molecular life science	All fields
X <sub>1</sub> . National share of international publications	0.535**	0.492**
X <sub>2</sub> . Share of a nation's publications by authors with Chinese surnames	0.362**	0.246**
T. Year	0.309**	0.412**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed).

Source: Adapted from Jonkers (2010)

proxy  $X_1$  denoting a country's share of the global number of international scientific publications was used – would be correlated to the number of co-publications with China is far from surprising: a highly visible research system contains a large number of potential collaborative partners for researchers in China. All other things being equal, it is thus likely that there be more co-publications with this potential partner country than with smaller and less visible research systems. Over time, the number of international co-publications increases, so the significantly positive correlation between the year variable  $T$  and the dependent variable was also expected. Of greater interest to the discussion in this chapter is the significantly positive independent correlation between the proxy used to gauge visibility of the overseas Chinese scientific community in respective partner countries ( $X_2$ ) and the number of international co-publications (Jonkers 2010).

The relationships between these indicators are explored in more depth in a recent paper using cross-panel time series analyses (Jonkers 2009). These analyses provide an indication of the relative increase in importance of transnational research collaboration between the Chinese research system and its main partner systems. The outcomes of these analyses reveal, among other things, that the explanatory power of the independent variables increases over time. Simple regression analyses of annual data indicate that the relative contribution of variable  $X_2$  becomes consistently significant only in the years after the turn of the century. A different paper by Jin, Rousseau, Suttmeier and Cao (2007) uses a similar methodology to explore in detail the role researchers with Chinese surnames in various partner countries play in co-authoring international co-publications with China. With the aid of a large team of students, this research actually studied the authors of each individual paper, showing that 72 per cent of the international co-publications between the US and China in the period 2001–2005 had at least one US-based author with a Chinese surname. For Europe, this percentage proves considerably lower albeit still quite high (40 per cent for Germany, 48 per cent for England and 30 per cent for France). Another highly relevant finding of this study is that an increasing share of international co-publications between the US and China is made exclusively by researchers with a Chinese surname based in the two countries. In 2001, co-publications of this sort were 30 per cent US-China, 12 per cent Sino-English, 14.6 per cent Sino-German and 12 per cent Sino-French. In 2005, the respective shares were 35 per cent, 18 per cent, 14 per cent and 10 per cent. This growth in the number of international co-publications written exclusively by researchers with a Chinese surname provides an especially strong indication that transnational research collaboration is becoming an increasingly important characteristic of scientific interaction with China (Jin et al. 2007).



## 12.5 Conclusion and discussion

This chapter discussed a methodological approach for quantitative studies of the visibility of ethnic groups of scientists in Europe and North America and of transnational research collaboration, which is understood as research collaboration between overseas (expatriate or migrant) scientists and their counterparts in their home country<sup>5</sup>. The validity of the approach has been provisionally tested by means of a small-scale survey providing a first indication that Chinese surnames can indeed be used to identify this particular group of scientists and make statements about publications co-authored by them. This approach thus permits quantitative studies of specific groups of scientists, something that is not possible with available survey and statistical data.

This chapter provides a quantitative example to show that highly skilled expatriates interact to a relatively high degree with their former home system. It offers a further indication that transnational interactions can involve the transfer of cognitive as well as material resources. Scientists are expected to be distinct from other migrants because they are thought: 1) to be very mobile internationally, 2) to engage in a relatively high degree of professional interaction with non-migrant individuals and 3) to be of potentially high importance for the development of their home country. Furthermore, 4) in the case of China, transnational interaction is actively promoted by the government of the home country.

This and related studies show an absolute and relative increase of transnational research collaboration between overseas Chinese scientists and researchers in mainland China. This finding compels a qualification of the notion of 'brain drain', insofar as sending countries can benefit from their expatriate scientists. This effect is likely to occur only or mainly for those countries that have succeeded in building up a research system with the absorptive capacity to gain from international research collaboration. Overseas scientists may form a bridge between scientists in their home country and their colleagues in their host countries. In addition, provided they have attained independent positions and a critical mass in their host country, they may engage in exclusive transnational collaboration with researchers in their home country.

The observed increase in, and dimensions of, transnational collaboration could be specific to the Chinese case. There are at least three reasons why this may be. First, the number of overseas Chinese scientists is high in absolute and relative terms. Second, the Chinese research system has experienced a rapid improvement in terms of infrastructure, manpower and visibility in the last decade, whereby it has outpaced other major sending countries. Third, the Chinese government has implemented a broader and more intense range of programmes to engage

its overseas scientists than other major sending countries. While the methodology described in this paper is particularly suited to the case of China, it may also be used for several other sending countries, such as Korea, India, Iran and Turkey. Whether scientists from these countries or, for example, Eastern European countries and Russia can be identified through this approach depends on whether most of the surnames used in these countries are unique to them. For this reason, the approach is less suited for studies of expatriate scientists from classic immigration countries in Latin America and South Africa, as the surnames of the inhabitants and migrants from these countries are expected to be less easily distinguishable. The same is true for studies of European expatriates in the US. It may be possible to apply a similar methodological approach to fields outside the social studies of science. It is clear that it can be used for patent studies for which similar databases are available. Whether transnational collaboration also occurs frequently in this field remains an open empirical question. Other fields in which data on contributions or companies is linked to the names of authors, owners or directors could potentially be amenable to a similar approach.

An interesting question asks to what extent the increase in transnational scientific collaboration leads to a change in the distribution of both costs and potential gains of research collaboration between the participating research systems. Scientific cooperation is not a zero-sum game – all partners may gain but, then again, some may gain more than others. The Chinese government's active promotion of transnational collaboration and other forms of interaction with overseas scientists suggests that the government believes there are benefits of interaction with its expatriates that extend beyond the benefits associated with international research collaboration in general. The first of these potential benefits is that the promotion of research collaboration, like the promotion of short-term return and other forms of interaction, may lead to an increase in permanent return migration of its overseas scientists. Second, but only hypothetically, transnational collaboration may yield higher benefits to the Chinese research system than other forms of international collaboration in terms of the transfer of knowledge, information and other resources. This expectation could be based on supposedly better understanding by overseas Chinese scientists of the potential, problems and needs of researchers in mainland China. Their cultural and linguistic skills may also lead to higher-quality collaboration. Finally, compared to non-Chinese scientists, overseas Chinese scientists may have a relatively strong desire to contribute to the development of the Chinese research system. They may also be more willing to do research on subjects that are of strategic importance to China's development. Whether such qualitative differences between

transnational and international collaboration exist on average or not remains an empirical question.

The potential rise of transnational scientific collaboration may warrant some attention from a European and North American policy perspective as well. First of all, one may wonder whether partner countries that lack a large Chinese scientific community have fewer opportunities in developing ties with the emerging Chinese science system. Will the potential emergence of a transnational scientific community between mainland China and North America put the EU at a relative disadvantage in the development of strong scientific ties with China? By extension, similar dynamics could play a role in the formation of other ties, including commercial ones. If so, should this have implications for immigration policies with respect to the highly skilled? Or are other approaches to investing in the establishment of cross-border ties less costly, more effective and/or sustainable?

As prior discussed in this chapter, transnational scientific collaboration may differ from other forms of international scientific collaboration in terms of the motivations that drive this type of interaction. It can also differ in the distribution of the potential gains from this interaction with respect to intellectual property rights or non-protected spill-overs that could include human capital development, technological development or policy insights. The increasing economic, political and scientific prowess of major sending countries such as China may or may not lead to greater sensitivity concerning the desirability of knowledge flows and the role that scientific mobility and transnational cooperation play in these processes. A risk of the emergence of scientific nationalism appears low; over time, the resistance to cross-border scientific contacts has been overcome by considerations of their benefits. Overall, the large contribution of foreign-born scientists in the research efforts of some countries and the positive light in which international collaboration generally tends to be seen are likely to offset these potential concerns.

Pondering these potential, possibly far-fetched policy concerns triggered by an increase in transnational research collaboration does bring to the fore some ethical considerations regarding the use of this methodology. The classification of researchers or their contributions on the basis of ethnicity or cultural background is a potentially sensitive issue. Individuals may object to being classified as members of a group on the basis of a simple linguistic signifier – a surname – alone. The survey results suggest that, in this case, surnames do constitute a relatively reliable indicator of cultural background (i.e. linguistic skills). The published material, on which such assessments are based, is furthermore in the public domain. Using the methodology to assess group size or group visibility, as demonstrated in this chapter, is therefore not considered very problematic. Care should be taken, however, to use

sufficiently large samples and to stress that, while the number of scientific publications seems an accurate measure for estimating group visibility, it is not justified to make statements about the ethnicity or cultural background of specific individuals on the basis of their surnames alone.

## Notes

- 1 This chapter is based on part of the author's PhD thesis entitled 'Scientific mobility and the internationalisation of the Chinese research system', defended at the European University Institute and funded through a PhD grant provided by the Dutch Ministry of Education (Jonkers 2008b). A book on the basis of this thesis is currently in press (Jonkers 2010). The chapter has benefited from comments provided by reviewers and participants of the IMISCOE conference on which this book is based. Parts of this chapter have been published in a different form (Jonkers 2009).
- 2 See, among others, Jonkers (2008a) for examples of return migration programmes and network activities set up by the Chinese government.
- 3 Data sourced from the online version of Thomson Scientific ® ISI Science Citation Index expanded 2007. For a discussion of the journal-based demarcation of this scientific subfield see Jonkers and Tijssen (2008).
- 4 The EU-14 figure for the Chinese-born population with secondary education consists of the EU-15 member states, Norway and Switzerland. Specific statistics on Chinese-born residents in Germany, Italy and Switzerland are unavailable, hence the abbreviation EU-14 rather than EU-17. More than half of Chinese-born with tertiary education in the US, Canada and Australia have been naturalised. To a lesser extent, the same is true for France (38 per cent). The figure is adapted from Jonkers (2010).
- 5 The EU-17 includes the EU-15 member states, Switzerland and Norway. The figure is adapted from Jonkers (2009).
- 6 Thomson Scientific ® ISI recently changed the interface of the SCI in such a way that complex searches, such as those described in this chapter, are, at least for the moment, no longer possible. This change hindered further elaboration of this chapter and may hinder future studies using this methodological approach. Fortunately, alternatives to this database do exist and it is possible to do a similar study in Elsevier's ® Scopus database. The data for 'all science fields' in Figure 12.3 and Table 12.1 were based on a collection of all English-language articles, notes, letters and reviews in Scopus. This search may include publications in journals not included in the SCI. The sudden decrease observed in the share of Canada and the US around 1995-1996 is thought to be related to the structure of the database.
- 7 Home country is used in this text to refer to the country (China) in which the individual researchers have been born themselves or in which their ancestors were born.



## Chapter 13

# The internet as a means of studying transnationalism and diaspora

*Kathrin Kissau and Uwe Hunger*

### 13.1 Introduction

Present-day challenges in conceptualising diaspora and transnational migrant activities have proliferated different ways for defining the theoretical characteristics of a prototype group. These definitions, however, have come without means for analysing differences and commonalities in detail. The various typologies created (e.g. by Cohen 1997) have been such that most groups can be assigned to more than one type or that one group can develop from one type to another over time (e.g. the Greek diaspora in the United States transforming from one of trade into one of labour) (see Kokot 2002: 35).

The diaspora concept itself has evolved over the years, from the original 'old diaspora' conception (Jewish, Armenian) defined by groups' concentration on return to the (imagined) homeland (Safran 2004), to encompassing characteristics such as a transnational relationship with both country of origin and host country, now conceptualised broadly as 'new diaspora' (Grassmuck 2000). Such a flexible, open definition stresses the particularity of each migrant group and its widely varying characteristics. In this case, almost all migrant groups could be defined as a transnational or new diaspora, thus making the concept itself quite meaningless. A narrower definition, however, highlights structures and patterns of migrant contacts and networks more accurately. In this respect, disassociating ideas of diaspora from ideas of transnationalism could yield more lucid results (see Cohen 1997; Faist 1999).

Another challenge to date is the classic triadic model (Sheffer 1986) that portrays the relationship between host and home country and the migrant community. The model is criticised for its simplicity, as it implies a migrant community homogenous in its activities and interests. This theoretical approach is central to most analyses, as internal differentiations of migrants' contacts and goals are a methodological problem (Adamson 2001: 158). Østergaard-Nielsen concludes that migrant activities in relation to host and home country 'must be measured with a

more finely meshed tool than is usually the case in the analysis of political change at domestic and international levels' (2002: 200).

In our chapter, we suggest that the internet could be just such a finely meshed tool, constituting an appropriate research site for advancing the study and comprehension of migrant networks and influence abroad, and adding to more fertile conceptions of diaspora and transnationalism. Discussion of these concepts began (anew) simultaneously with the globalisation debate, which suggests the ideas are closely intertwined. The globalisation process is driven by, among other things, new information and communication technologies (ICT), which indicates that ongoing developments of ICT, globalisation and migrant activities are intertwined.

Additionally, a new rise in diaspora activities and changing dynamics in the role in politics played by migrant groups abroad since the development of the internet show that processes and contacts between dispersed groups (in different countries) are now enabled to a degree not previously possible. In fact, as Scherer and Behmer assume, community structures destroyed by migration are often rebuilt only with the help of the internet, thereby also engendering new forms of community abroad (Adamson 2002: 297).

When studying diasporas or migrants' transnational activities, factors such as social networks, identity construction, the local dimension of day-to-day life, migrants' role in bridging national and cultural borders, their position in the public sphere and their migration history are often the focus of research (Kokot 2002: 34). The internet can be an asset in exploring many of these aspects. Note how it has become central to the following life dimensions:

- 1) 'Diasporic communities have always relied on networks, which expanded from the immediate local to the transnational and global' (Georgiou 2002: 3). The internet is now the central framework for such *networks*, so that observing online structures can provide insights into diasporic community characteristics. When the influence of migrant groups is investigated, it becomes obvious that main avenues are found in their cooperation with NGOs and third political parties, the construction of new (alternative) political identities, discourse within transnational space and fundraising and campaigning for action (Adamson 2001: 160). For all these influential activities, the internet is a significant instrument – if not *the* central instrument – used by diaspora groups.
- 2) The construction of a shared imagination is also crucial to sustaining migrant communities. Central herein is inter-group communication behaviour, which promotes identification and goal attainment. Today, internet platforms play a key role in this process as they further the retention or reawakening of *identities and imagined homelands*. As Georgiou put it:

The Internet has allowed most of these communities to discover and rediscover this shared imagination and commonality; it has taken even further the potentials for developing diasporic cultures of mediated, transnational and partly free from state control communication. (2002: 3)

- 3) Though ICTs alone do not create a community, they enable the communication that is essential between its members.
- 4) Meanwhile, the internet has also taken up a central function in many migrants' *day-to-day lives* (forums, email, online chat, weblogs, private homepages, ethno-portals, etc.). The implicitness of ICT in migrants' lives is equivalent to the use of the technology by non-migrant citizens. It can be stated that, in general, most migrants use the internet as often as everyone else does and for the same reasons (information, communication and recreation). Newer studies show that the percentage of internet use by migrants is increasing steadily, as is their competence of the internet itself (see (N)Onliner Atlas 2008).
- 5) Diaspora and transnational communities form *bridges* between host and home countries. In analysing these bridges, the internet can be used as a device, as these connections mainly consist of communicative relationships sustained, to a large degree, with the help of ICT. The internet's significance for this purpose can be understood when we keep in mind that the situation of exile and dispersal is constituted by a specific communication problem (Scherer & Behmer 2000: 283). This issue has, to a large degree, been resolved with the rise of ICTs (the internet, mobile phones, etc.). Therefore, analysis of internet sites, their uses and thus emerging communication paths can add to the understanding of migrants' bridging behaviour, as well as the differences and similarities within and between transnational communities and diaspora.
- 6) Apart from this, the internet as a meeting point – for private and public as well as personal and communal – reflects different levels of migrant interaction. Online platforms are used for personal discussions between friends, the organisation of community activities or the publication of alternative information about the home country's or diaspora's situation. Through this information about the general public as well as about other migrant community members, 'dispersed Diasporas gain political and community *visibility*' (Georgiou 2002: 2). By obtaining access to the public sphere as it exists online, topics can be kept on the public agenda in the host country or beyond. This might well be the most relevant possible influence of diaspora groups. Again, this aspect can be analysed by monitoring the internet, as it is increasingly becoming central for the public sphere. While the offline public sphere is dominated by mass



media, the internet highlights private, non-governmental actors, such as migrant groups and organisations.

- 7) Last but not least, a vast number of resources are available on the internet about the *history* of individual migrant movements as they themselves, their host country and country of origin see it. The study of these resources is basic and central to understanding migrant groups' behaviour and their orientation towards both countries.

All in all, using the internet as a research site to decipher the characteristics of different migrant orientations and relationships seems to yield insights into institutions, behaviours and novel developments online as well as offline (Wellman & Gulia 1999). One should not make the mistake, however, of studying all these activities solely by analysing the internet. Though online spheres are the extension of offline worlds, they alone do not suffice for a thorough analysis. Field studies of offline realms cannot be replaced, but the internet can add to an overview of different migrant communities' characteristics. Online and offline worlds interact and are not independent of one another, so that analysing online behaviour allows us to draw conclusions about overall, general interests (also offline) (see Matei & Ball-Rokeach 2002: 409).

At the same time, the analysis of internet phenomena aids in overcoming problems of 'methodological nationalism' and 'groupism', as internet sites and their users do not respect national or group boundaries. Online networks are instead grouped around topics and interests, rather than geographic background or neighbourhood proximity.

## 13.2 Method

This section will illustrate methodological possibilities associated with the internet for exploring diaspora and transnational communities with the help of empirical data and experiences collected as part of the authors' research project at the University of Münster in Germany. As the political interest and involvement of migrants in their host country and/or home country are significant aspects of diaspora and transnational communities and experience (Morawska 2003), we focus on *political activities* carried out on the internet by migrants from the former Soviet Union, Turkey and Kurdish areas in the Middle East. Combined, the three groups represent roughly 25 per cent of all migrants in Germany (Destatis 2008).

### 13.2.1 *Empirical analysis of the internet*

The internet opens up new options for assessing social activities. Until now, however, there have only been a few studies using socio-scientific methods in conjunction with analysing the internet (Luzar 2003), and there are many challenges to face. One of the biggest obstacles for empirical research on the internet is that it is up to now impossible to identify enough websites to – in no uncertain terms – define the universe of cases, which would be necessary to satisfy one of the criteria of scientific research (Janetzko 1999: 145). This means that it is problematic to make general statements about the characteristics of the internet (Theobald 2000: 182). The use of particular search engines, such as Google and AltaVista, gives only partial insight into the total universe of websites. For lack of alternatives, however, these search engines are often used in internet research (Welker, Werner & Scholz 2005: 52) on the grounds that internet users themselves make use of these same search engines to access the World Wide Web.

A further challenge for website analysis is the fact that the internet is a dynamic construct. The content of websites, user profiles and access to the content of websites can change daily (Meier & Pentzold 2009). Moreover, websites often contain audio and video content, increasing the scope of data that need to be taken into account (Van Leeuwen 2005). Websites with multilingual options as well as links to other similar websites augment the research object further (Welker et al. 2005: 133). Finally, anonymity is another element that makes it difficult to link web phenomena to social groups or individuals: it is common for website users and providers to withhold their names or use fake identities.

On the basis of these limitations, scientific research on internet phenomena must draw on a variety of different research methods in order to get the most differentiated picture of online reality possible. The methods of our study consist of a content analysis of websites created and used by migrants for political activities (focusing on their thematic orientation, self-description and group boundaries), an analysis of the link structures of these websites (using a hyperlink analysis program to uncover virtual networks) as well as a survey of the sites' users and administrators (detecting individual interests beyond groupism).

Using a structured website search with the help of search engines and the snowball sampling method (Hawe, Webster & Shiell 2004), we studied websites created and used by migrants from the former Soviet Union, Turkey and Kurdish areas in the Middle East who are now living in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. In this analysis, we viewed over 800 sites. Of them, 99 German-post-Soviet, 108 German-Turkish and 102 German-Kurdish websites<sup>1</sup> turned out to be relevant for our

research question about political content. These sites were explored with respect to their year of establishment, the degree to which they could be considered up to date, their political information, communication and participation features, as well as existing references to home and/or host country politics. In addition, 30 websites were chosen for a more intensive content analysis and a survey of the sites' operators and users.

Since our interest lay in uncovering organisational structures and orientations of migrants' political online activities, we made use of a network visualisation tool (called "Issue Crawler"). This server-side internet network location software performed a co-link analysis of the 99, 108 and 102 relevant URLs entered from the three groups (see Rogers 2006: 2). The results of the inquiries are geographical visualisations of the networks (see Figures 13A.1, 13A.2 and 13A.3). This method enabled us to reveal relationships, displayed online through hyperlinks, between different political websites, thus enhancing our understanding of migrants' political spheres that were the focus of this research.

We also conducted an online user survey, which was posted on the 30 most relevant German-post-Soviet, German-Turkish and German-Kurdish websites,<sup>2</sup> and explored the political online and offline activities of the three migrant groups. In all cases, the questionnaire was available in two languages (German or Russian/German and Turkish). The form was completed by 136 migrants from the former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, etc.), 177 Turkish migrants and 136 Kurdish migrants. Of the first group, 37.6 per cent identified their ethnic background as Russian-Jewish, 21.8 per cent as German (*Aussiedler*) and 20.3 per cent as Russian, which shows how heterogeneous the migrant groups are. The sample is not representative due to the self-selection of the participants (Dillman 2000: 209). Nevertheless, since drawing a representative sample of internet users is, to date, impossible, this procedure allows us to generate preliminary explorative conclusions about the political use of the internet by migrants in Germany.

By analysing the political activities of migrants in this way, we sought to view the following dimensions of migrants' orientations:

- 1) internal interaction of migrants within one online community and within one country (information and data exchange, discussion and political mobilisation);
- 2) interaction with the residents and organisations in the country of origin (input of alternative information, articulation of opposition, mobilising resistance);
- 3) interaction with the residents and organisations in the host country (information about the situation in the country of origin, lobbying for support);

- 4) interaction within a possibly international public (diaspora) sphere (worldwide visibility and influence).

In compliance with Kokot (2002), we argue that rather than developing different concepts and then finding migrant groups to fit the definitions, the reverse approach is much more sensible. Analysing migrant activities online, we collect data to reveal the characteristics of each group in order to compare them and ultimately conceptualise our findings.

### 13.3 Results

#### 13.3.1 Website analysis

The website analysis was conducted mainly in order to address the following questions: which target groups are associated with the sites? Which political topics are treated with what kind of priority? What language is used? And how are the websites linked to each other?

##### *Target groups*

For eight out of the ten most relevant political internet sites evaluated, migrants from the former Soviet Union are not the primary target group. The administrators of these sites more often stated that their websites were designed for Russian-speaking users in host and home countries as well as people interested in Russian culture and politics (for details see Seveker 2007). By contrast, nine out of ten surveyed Turkish administrators indicated that their primary target group comprises persons of Turkish origin who now live in Germany. Five administrators stated that they also address web users of German origin. One administrator explained that his site was intended to serve as 'a forum for exchange of experiences and opinions of all German-speaking Turks, all their friends and those who are interested in them.' Analysis of the Kurdish websites showed that the sites were not designed primarily for Kurds in Germany, but for Kurds everywhere in the world or people interested in Kurdish issues. Since many of the websites are blocked by the government in Iran, Syria or Turkey, it can be assumed that Kurdish websites are not commonly used for communication between migrants and inhabitants in the country of origin.

##### *Topics*

The majority of websites deals with political issues concerning the country of origin as well as the country of residence, but clear discrepancies become evident as each migrant group is considered separately (for details see Table 13.1). More than 50 per cent of the evaluated post-

**Table 13.1** *Geographical references to political topics on the analysed websites (in %)*

	Total (N=309)	Post-Soviet case study (N=99)	Turkish case study (N=108)	Kurdish case study (N=102)
Both country of origin and country of residence	41.7	21.1	32.4	70.6
Solely Germany/Switzerland/Austria	24.9	19.0	50.9	1.0
Different countries (international, beyond countries of origin and residence)	17.2	50.5	4.6	1.0
Solely the country of origin (former Soviet Union, Turkey, Kurdish areas)	16.2	9.4	12.0	27.5

Source: PPI data

Notes: Chi-square test significant ( $\chi^2=175.661$ ;  $p < 0.001$ )

Cramer's V=0.533

Soviet websites concentrate on international topics. In contrast, political topics with reference to Germany count for 19 per cent, and 9 per cent of the websites concentrate solely on post-Soviet topics. The emphasis of the Turkish websites is on German politics: 50 per cent have a dominant political reference to the migrants' host country, while roughly 17 per cent of the websites refer to political developments in Turkey. Political information from both countries is offered by 32 per cent of the webpages. Kurdish sites show a strong focus on the Kurdish 'cause': 28 per cent focus exclusively on this topic, highlighting a strong 'Kurdish nationalism'. They also deal with political events in their host country (70 per cent of the websites), but only when linked to Kurdish interests or incidents in Kurdish areas in the Middle East.

### *Language*

German is most often used on the analysed websites, although there are differences between the three migrant groups (see Table 13. 2). The Russian language serves more often than German as the communication basis of post-Soviet migrants on the web: 70 per cent of the post-Soviet websites use Russian, while on more than 30 per cent of the sites it is the only language. About 22 per cent of the sites are exclusively in German, while 23 per cent are multilingual. In contrast, Turkish websites are mostly maintained in German, while more than 47 per cent are in the language of only the host country. Of the Turkish sites, 26 per cent are offered in both German and Turkish, whereas 12 per cent use Turkish as the only language. Again, Kurdish sites differ,

**Table 13.2** *Language use on the analysed websites (in %)*

	Total (N=309)	Post-Soviet case study (N=99)	Turkish case study (N=108)	Kurdish case study (N=102)
Solely German	31.4	22.2	47.2	23.5
Multilingual (e.g. Kurdish, Turkish, German, English, Swedish)	24.9	23.2	13.9	38.2
Turkish/Russian/Kurdish and German	23.9	24.2	26.9	20.6
Solely Russian, Turkish, Kurdish	19.7	30.3	12.0	17.6

Source: PPI data

Notes: Chi-square test significant ( $\chi^2=35.859$ ;  $p < 0.001$ )

Cramer's V=0.485

as they are predominantly multilingual. This means the user can choose between at least two languages such as German, Turkish, English, French or Arabic; 20 per cent of the sites are in German and Kurdish, while 23 per cent use solely German.

### *Links*

Links to other websites are the foundation and central idea of the internet. However, post-Soviet as well as Turkish migrant websites are rarely linked to each other (possibly due to competition). The sites of post-Soviet migrants basically refer to Russian websites, particularly weblogs (for details see Figures 13A.1, 13A.2 and 13A.3). Only rarely do they show a connection to Germany by linking to German websites. A major contrast, Turkish sites are linked primarily with host country websites, particularly with German media sites and national institutions such as Germany's parliament, the federal government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Goethe Institute. Another group of links refer to Turkish self-help organisations in Germany, such as the Federation of Turkish Entrepreneurs (Bteu.de), the Turkish Student Federation (BTSONline.de) and the Turkish Community in Germany (TGD.de). Links to Turkish websites without reference to Germany are very rare. Websites of Kurdish migrants, however, are strongly interlinked: many sites have a list of links to a number of other Kurdish websites maintained from Germany or other European countries. There are also generally more websites in the Kurdish network than in the post-Soviet and Turkish ones.

### *13.3.2 User surveys*

The user survey addressed the following questions: what are the interviewees' political interests? Which form of political activity (information, discussion, participation) do they prefer online and offline? And who are their preferred communication partners online and offline?

*Political interests*

For the majority of the interviewed migrants, international affairs as well as political developments in their country of origin were of foremost interest. Of the post-Soviet interviewees, 46 per cent stated that their main political concerns lie with 'international relations' followed by the topics 'education' and 'labour and social affairs'. The topic 'migration and integration' was less important for this group of users (see Table 13.3). In general, 56 per cent of the post-Soviet users were interested more in the politics of their country of origin than in German politics (see Table 13.4; for details see Kissau 2007). The main topic of political interest to Turkish interviewees, by contrast, was 'migration and integration' (29 per cent). International politics rank in second place, ahead of themes such as elections and democracy. Kurdish migrants show a dominant concern for 'international relations' (55 per cent), developments in Kurdish areas in the Middle East (91 per cent) and the topic of migration.

**Table 13.3** *Interest in political topics on the internet (in %)*

	Total (N=133)	Post-Soviet case study (N=133)	Turkish case study (N=174)	Kurdish case study (N=129)
International relations	39.2	46.6	21.3	55.8
Migration and integration	18.3	9.8	29.3	12.4
Elections, democracy, participation	11.7	9.0	13.8	11.6
Education	10.8	12.5	11.5	7.8
Labour and social affairs	8.9	11.3	11.5	3.1
Economy and finance	6.7	6.8	8.6	3.9
Religion	4.4	3.8	4.0	5.4

Source: PPI data

Notes: Chi-square test significant ( $\chi^2=57.258$ ;  $p < 0.001$ )

Cramer's V=0.257

**Table 13.4** *Main political interest/orientation (in %)*

	Total (N=441)	Post-Soviet case study (N=134)	Turkish case study (N=172)	Kurdish case study (N=135)
Country of origin (former Soviet Union, Turkey, Kurdish areas)	65.3	56.7	51.7	91.1
Country of residence (Germany, Switzerland, Austria)	34.7	43.3	48.3	8.9

Source: PPI data

Notes: Chi-square test significant ( $\chi^2=58.003$ ;  $p < 0.001$ )

Cramer's V=0.363

*Political activity*

In general, the survey shows that Turkish and Kurdish users are more politically engaged online than post-Soviet users. Turkish and Kurdish users more often search for information on websites of parties or public authorities, online newspapers as well as associations than do post-Soviet users. Forums and weblogs, however, are used more frequently by post-Soviet users. These findings correspond to the political offline activities of the three groups: Turkish and Kurdish migrants are more frequently members of political parties, trade unions or migrant self-help groups than post-Soviet migrants. They also discuss politics offline more often. Turkish and Kurdish users also indicated that their political activities (information retrieval, political discussions and participation) have increased considerably since they began using the internet, while post-Soviet users' political activity has increased only slightly.

*Communication partners*

Using the internet to enable – and simplify – contact with their country of origin is a central motive for many of the questioned users, suggesting that their individual online sphere and online activities are influenced by their migratory experience. Their primary communication partners online are migrants from the same country of origin who also live in their country of residence (see Table 13.5).

**Table 13.5** *Communication partners on the internet (in %)*

	Total (N=433)	Post-Soviet case study (N=135)	Turkish case study (N=165)	Kurdish case study (N=133)	$\chi^2$ p
Migrants from the former Soviet Union, Turkey and Kurdish areas now living in Germany, Switzerland, Austria	61.3	57.0	59.1	67.9	Not significant
Germans, Swiss, Austrians without a migratory background	44.2	33.4	55.1	44.2	16.908 0.031
Residents of states of the former Soviet Union, Turkey, Kurdish areas	44.1	55.6	40.6	36.0	16.736 0.001
Migrants from the country of origin now living in countries apart from Germany, Switzerland, Austria	12.9	19.5	5.7	12.9	-

Source: PPI data

Notes: sum of response categories 'very often' and 'often'

Germans: Cramer's  $V=0.140$

Residents: Cramer's  $V=0.139$



More specifically, post-Soviet users communicate more often with inhabitants of the former Soviet Union than with Germans lacking a migration background. Turkish and Kurdish users tend to have this contact with German users more frequently. The majority of Turkish and post-Soviet migrants also belonged to a permanent group of communication partners on the internet, with whom they discuss politics (52.6 and 53.8 per cent, respectively). Kurdish users were less often integrated in such an online community (46.6 per cent).

## 13.4 Discussion

The political online activities that we identified throughout our research can be used to characterise differences and similarities in the orientations and organisational structures of migrant groups. Our study found variations between migrant groups in terms of their online linkage structures, predominant online language use, purpose for using internet sites, integration status offline as reflected online, as well as the central function of the internet. All in all, we think that our sample of migrant internet users represents three different online spheres of migrants (see Kissau & Hunger 2009). These can be categorised as transnational (online) communities, (virtual) diasporas and ethnic (online) public spheres, all of which have become evident through analysis of internet usage characteristics (for an overview of the distinguishing criteria, see Table 13A.1).

### 13.4.1 *Transnational online communities*

We consider migrants from the former Soviet Union an example of a transnational (online) community that is politically involved, albeit not very actively, both in the home country and the host country through the internet. This group communicates predominantly with other post-Soviet migrants and inhabitants of their country of origin online, thereby preferring to use the Russian language and frequently reverting to their common Russian culture. With respect to the general communication structure of post-Soviet migrants on the internet, the network of their political sites is stable. In contrast to the Kurdish group, for example, the aim is not to facilitate return to their home country, but to sustain interest among users in political topics relevant to host and home countries. They exchange political views and information about their political activities in both countries, such as online petitions or fundraising campaigns, which are supported by many of the post-Soviet migrant internet users.

The political internet sites used by post-Soviet migrants in Germany are part of a larger Russia-based internet network. Most hyperlinks of

the analysed sites refer to Russian-language sites and only a few to German ones (see Figure 13A.1). Through hyperlinks, website administrators and users express their orientations and interests by referring other users to these pages. In this respect, links to webpages have been compared to references in academic documents (Thelwall 2001). The number and quality of links on one page also add to the relevance and visibility of an internet site. Hyperlink structures of websites, therefore, reveal power structures, communication paths and relationships and interests between different sites within the network (see Kim 2000). In our example, relevant political sites of migrants in Germany thus show the groups' central thematic focus on their Russian heritage.

The social spaces inhabited by transnational communities are not uniform, but should rather be viewed as constituting what Appadurai refers to as a 'diasporic public sphere' (1996: 147). This is in fact visible when studying the online interests and interactions of post-Soviet migrants. Within their online public sphere, which is dominated by the use of Russian, inner differentiations can be detected between individual and sub-sphere orientations – some are more host country-oriented, while others are more home country-oriented. Many of the migrants also explicitly stated that they prefer not to choose between home and host country but, rather, to sustain a parallel interest in the politics of both countries. As to the relationship between offline and online activities, it became evident that users are politically active in German organisations offline while, online, their orientation is focused more on their home country.

Transnational communities maintain lasting relationships across borders, through the agency not of states or nations, but individual actors or associations (see Kokot, Tölöyan & Alfonso 2004: 4). This individualistic character is also noticeable online. The majority of post-Soviet migrants interviewed keep themselves informed about political topics through online journals, forums or weblogs, while the sites of political parties or governmental organisations are seldom visited. While most of the questioned migrants had posted in a forum or blog, only 13.5 per cent used emails to contact politicians in home or host country.

#### 13.4.2 *Virtual/online diasporas*

A contrast to this transnational focus, our analysis of Kurdish migrants' uses of the internet reveals that online activities serve to enhance their diaspora identity. This migrant group is centrally focused on the Kurdish 'cause'. While they communicate with other Kurdish migrants dispersed worldwide, the entire structure of their online interaction and their residence abroad appears unstable, as their return to 'Kurdistan' is a predominant goal. At the same time, the network of these diaspora websites

has something of a campaign character, whereas only a few of the other Turkish or post-Soviet sites have such a quality. Many of these sites are even blocked by the governments in Iran, Syria or Turkey, which again underscores their central focus on political change and influence.

Their political involvement in the host country, as it becomes visible online, is, in contrast, only peripheral, though not altogether absent. Often, the host country's government is lobbied into taking action. Schwalgin points out that:

a positive redefinition of diaspora offers the possibility of a positive identification with locality because a diaspora can only serve as a mediator if it is successfully integrated in its country of residence. (2004: 88)

Kurdish websites reflect – much more than post-Soviet and Turkish websites – an ethnic group consciousness (common homeland, myth, origin, tradition, history), which is used to distinguish Kurds from other groups in the host society (see Wonneberger 2004: 118). In contrast to post-Soviet and Turkish sites, topics such as life in Germany, integration or political developments in Germany are almost never discussed. On Kurdish sites, Kurdish nationalism is evident in many cases, and is at least subliminal to the political online discussions of Kurdish migrants.

Another difference between Kurdish sites and their post-Soviet and Turkish counterparts is the network factor. Among the Kurdish sites, interlinkage is strong and reciprocal. While it seems that competition between sites is no obstacle, this is not the case for many of the post-Soviet and Turkish sites. Kurdish internet sites have an international focus group of Kurds worldwide, since quite often the sites are multilingual (French, German, Kurdish, Turkish, English), thus showing how analysis of the internet goes beyond national frameworks.

Other research data suggest that Alevis in Germany have a similar diasporic online orientation. They have also established a close network of action in order to improve the living conditions and rights of Alevis in Turkey. However, they are much more rooted in German life and society than Kurdish migrants in general (see Sökefeld 2002). This again shows the value of assessing differences between diasporas through internet analysis.

### 13.4.3 *Ethnic online public spheres*

Evaluating political information, communication and participation of migrants online has disclosed that additional forms of political migrant institutions and structures beyond diaspora and transnationalism have developed. We have come to conceptualise them as 'ethnic (online)

public spheres' (Hunger 2004). Migrants from Turkey in Germany provide an example. While contact with their country of origin is essentially passive, their political interest and actions are focused on their host country, Germany. These migrants prefer, however, to discuss political topics within their differentiated 'ethnic' sphere.

Contact with German citizens does take place frequently (in contrast to post-Soviet migrants), but Turkish migrants' chosen political communication space is one of Turkish heritage. Online and offline worlds are, in this case, very close and interwoven because the local dimension of users within one country makes it theoretically and practically possible for users to meet offline (whereas online and offline contact is much more unrealistic in diaspora and transnational contexts). Such internet use as shown by the Turkish group indicates the creation of a public sphere in a twofold sense. The contents are, on the one hand, publicly accessible, often even in German (this is much more often the case than on post-Soviet or Kurdish websites), and topics are tailored for an 'ethnic' user group of Turkish migrants. On the other hand, the internet as a platform enables the creation of an ethnic public, independent from the general German public and journalistic selection mechanisms.

This concept of an ethnic online public sphere describes a public sphere that is predominantly open to a subgroup within society – in our case, Turkish migrants. This sphere enables its members to develop discursive abilities under conditions shielded from the pressures of the dominant group's public sphere and simultaneously allows members to maintain or develop their cultural identity apart from the dominant culture (see also Fraser 1992: 126). Such a sphere is not to be mistaken with an ethnic enclave that severs all connections with the general public sphere (Fraser 1992: 124). In contrast, our survey of the websites' link structure (see Figure 13A.2) uncovered a tight network and interlinkage of Turkish migrant and German websites. The study also revealed that web users of Turkish origin communicate more frequently with German web users than do users of post-Soviet or Kurdish origin.

This example illustrates how globalisation has not influenced all migrant groups to act as a diaspora or transnational community. Other research has also shown that Indian migrants in Germany, for example, may well also be understood as maintaining such an ethnic public sphere (see Goel 2007). Characteristics of sites such as *theinder.net* seem to indicate that differentiations viewed in our analysis may also apply to other migrant groups.

### 13.5 Outlook

These three communication structures discussed above – transnational (online) communities, (virtual) diasporas and ethnic (online) public spheres – are probably not implicitly stable. Rather, their modification is dependent on the political, social, economic or even religious developments of home, host and third countries, the status of migrants themselves and the duration of their presence abroad. In this context, it seems possible to imagine a phase model based on time, in which the first generation of migrants could be called a diaspora and the second, a transnational community (see also Faist 1999: 44; Emanuelsson 2005: 52). The results of our research also suggest that a third stage is possible in the form of an established ethnic public sphere that is predominantly nationally oriented and displays only a secondary transnational dimension. For this reason, we rather could call it a ‘national public sphere with an ethnic imprint’. Given this typology, one could speculate whether the transnational post-Soviet online community might develop in this direction over time.

This question of course cannot be resolved at this stage, but must be observed closely in the years to come. It is to be expected that the young generation accustomed to internet use in day-to-day life will especially determine migrants’ networks and orientations in the future. Second- and third-generation migrants in host countries will have to decide for themselves how to use the internet to fit their political interests and activities. By evaluating ongoing changes in communication practices and characteristics of internet sites, however, the fluidity and malleability of these structures and relations can be taken into account. Using network analysis of linkage structures within and between different communities on the internet, we can trace contact with other actors and monitor shifts in activism and orientation. Stable linkages between websites and user groups provide evidence of the existence of durable transnational communities in contrast to mere transnational practices of individuals.

In this context, it appears necessary to point out that though national borders are not visible online, they are often artificially drawn through the behaviour of users – in our case of migrants. Where no such borders exist, language and ethnic belonging enable the creation of new in-group-outgroup structures. It therefore becomes evident nonetheless that the nation-state is dominant for online interaction. Especially with respect to political topics, the migrants in our research acted in relation to such national patterns despite the internet enabling activities beyond the nation-state.

Furthermore, the internet is of growing importance for numerous aspects of society (e.g. the internet and development), and it will have an enormous impact on the structural change of migrants’ situations

abroad. But this does not mean that migrants' interests or organisational structures did not exist prior to these technological possibilities. Rather, the dominant features of different migrant settlements abroad were reinforced and strengthened by new media developments. In some cases (e.g. the Crimean Tatars), moreover, the internet has helped diaspora communities to survive when contact was lost, membership numbers were too low or individuals too dispersed. In such cases, the internet has not only intensified diasporic communication and activities, but has been essential for survival as a group.

In another respect, the internet allows for diversification and democratisation of migrant opportunities. Now it is not only opposition leaders deciding what the diaspora should do, but also other, even marginalised, individuals can gain a voice within these communities. An example here is the Kurdish diaspora, which was originally a tightly linked and politicised community. Now the open and more democratic design of online interaction enables alternative actions, beyond established power structures. The minority within the minority is no longer voiceless or invisible, as Georgiou summarises (2002: 10). Since communication online is non-hierarchical, or almost nearly so, it lets diaspora centres become more grounded, strengthening pluralism beyond the focus on a homeland, imagined or not. Empowerment of the periphery can thus add to the advancement of diaspora groups towards transnational, ethnic public spheres and/or other forms of migrant orientations.

Nonetheless, all migrants are not online. There is a digital divide within migrant communities abroad, and social boundaries are reproduced online, which hinders an all-embracing internet-aided evaluation of migrant actions. Further problems with, and restrictions on, the analysis of migrant networks include the deficits of technological infrastructure in home countries, control or censorship by governments, inadequate knowledge of internet use and the necessity of English-language skills for computer and internet activities. Normally, the internet cannot reach a large or even world public by itself without classic mass media coverage, which also constricts the role of the internet for migrant activities and empowerment.

The internet constitutes a new realm and new possibilities for communication, representation and imagination, as migrants are often otherwise excluded from the public sphere or mainstream media (see Georgiou 2002: 5). This alternative space online is only a solution to some extent, however, as the central problem of exclusive public spheres in the host countries still exists.

## Appendix

Figure 13A.1 Network analysis of post-Soviet websites









**Table 13A.1** *Migrant political orientations*

	<i>Transnational (online) community</i>	<i>(Virtual) diaspora</i>	<i>Ethnic (online) public sphere</i>
Political involvement in home country	Partly involved in home country	Centrally focused on home country	Observant, not directly involved
Political involvement in host country	Partly involved in host country	Low, only with respect to home country	Centrally focused on host country
Stability of communication structure	High	Medium	Medium
Central orientation	Transnational	National (home country)	National (host country)
Anchorage	Migrants worldwide from one home country and inhabitants of that home country	Migrants worldwide from one home country (dispersal)	Migrants within one host country
Integration level in host/home country	High – medium	Medium	High
Political objectives/goals	Improve relations between both countries	Have political influence	Keep informed, participation not central
Reason for/emotion behind development	Emotional	Emotional	Rational
Examples of migrant groups	Migrants from Russia, Jewish migrants from Russia, migrants from Mexico	Kurdish migrants, Ukrainian migrants, Kazakh migrants	Turkish migrants in Germany, Indian migrants in Germany
Sample websites	<a href="http://www.eursa.org">www.eursa.org</a> <a href="http://www.sem40.ru">www.sem40.ru</a>	<a href="http://www.palpal.de">www.palpal.de</a> <a href="http://www.atameken.de">www.atameken.de</a>	<a href="http://www.turkcom.org">www.turkcom.org</a> <a href="http://www.theinder.net">www.theinder.net</a>

## Notes

- 1 In this section, when speaking of the migrants' host country, only Germany is referred to for the sake of simplified legibility, even though our study also included websites and migrants in Austria and Switzerland.
- 2 In this section, websites are often referred to as 'Turkish websites' or 'Kurdish sites' for the sake of simplifying legibility. However, as explained above, they also comprise websites used or created by migrants from Turkey, the former Soviet Union or Kurdish areas in the Middle East now living in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.



## Chapter 14

# Transnational links and practices of migrants' organisations in Spain

*Laura Morales and Laia Jorba*

### 14.1 Introduction

Recent scholarship on transnationalism has focused primarily on practices of individuals, to the extent that some argue that the individual is – or should be – the proper unit of analysis (see Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999). Yet, the literature is vastly populated with research on whole communities and migrant groups. In particular, a number of scholars place migrants' organisations and organisational networks at the core of their definitions of transnationalism. For example, Faist (2000a: 189) broadly defines transnationalism as the 'sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms'; meanwhile Portes (2001: 186) emphasises how the notion of transnational activities should be restricted to initiatives by members of civil society, be they 'organized groups or networks of individuals'.

From these perspectives, migrants' organisations and their networks are not just privileged actors in the web of transnational practices and fields, but they also crucially shape access to social capital and patterns of network embeddedness that allow us to understand individuals' transnational practices more clearly (Vertovec 2003; Portes 2003). Most notably, migrants' organisations are afforded a special role in the processes that structure transnational political practices; to the extent that their transnational activities are often equated with political transnationalism per se (Portes et al. 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c).

In contrast to this core placement of migrants' associations in the study of transnationalism, there are still only a limited number of empirical studies that systematically address the transnational engagement of a wide range of organisations in several contexts.<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a modest attempt to contribute to filling this gap in the literature. Our study aims to provide a systematic analysis of the transnational practices of migrants' organisations in three Spanish cities, with

information on more than 200 associations of migrants of multiple national and regional origins. In doing so, we favour a methodological approach that combines the advantages of studying ‘several groups’ in the same context and ‘one group in several’ contexts (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b: 772), while also avoiding the severe limitation of sampling on the dependent variable – in this case, transnational engagement (Portes 2001).

In this regard, we have chosen to study multiple locations within the same country because we share with other scholars an intuition that the place of settlement is of primary importance (see e.g. Bloemraad 2005; Martiniello & Lafleur 2008). And, though the primary focus in the past has been on national contexts, research in this field is pointing increasingly to the critical role of subnational politics in moulding socioeconomic and political opportunities for transnational practices to emerge and be shaped (Bauböck 2003).

Our research focuses on migrant associations in three Spanish cities: Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia. This study<sup>2</sup> is part of a larger European project called LOCALMULTIDEM. It has been designed in such a way that all active associations of migrant groups are listed (and included as the target population) and later contacted for interviewing.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, because our information was gathered through structured interviews with the leaders of these organisations, we can address the issue of how widespread transnational practices are within the migrant associational field and what factors are associated with transnationalism. Hence, our chapter addresses some of the main questions that remain unanswered when studying the transnational practices of migrants’ associations: how many organisations actually engage in transnational fields? What kinds of practices prevail? Which organisations are more likely to become ‘transnational’? How does the settlement context impinge on migrants’ transnationalism?

## **14.2 Transnational practices of migrants’ organisations: Conceptual and methodological considerations**

Studying transnational activities of migrants has served to emphasise the multiplicity of identities and roles that shape the daily experiences of immigrants and their descendants. Transnationalism – in some of its early definitions – encompasses a wide range of activities, and has been defined broadly as ‘the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement’ (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994: 7).

Even beyond the debate on the overall scope and extension of transnational activities (for a summary see Portes 2001), this initial notion of

transnational practices has been contested frequently, as it prevents researchers from focusing on clearly defined boundaries of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In this sense, Portes and his colleagues (Portes et al. 1999; Portes 2001; Guarnizo, Portes & Haller 2003) have proposed to limit the notion of transnationalism and transnational practices to those organised by non-institutional actors and across national borders, which take place outside the realms of state regulation and control. Thus, more recent conceptualisations of transnationalism have focused on civil society actors and individual migrants as the main units of analysis, and some scholars are strongly advocating a focus on transnational 'practices' as a more restricted and useful notion for empirical research (Martiniello & Lafleur 2008: 651).

Civil society actors – and, in particular, migrants' organisations – should thus be privileged agents in transnational practices because they provide the networks and the infrastructure to facilitate and sustain various forms of transnational engagement by individuals and communities (Faist 1998: 214), most notably civic and political transnationalism. Thus far, however, the systematic and quantified analysis of organisational transnational practices has been limited to very few studies (Orozco 2003a; Portes et al. 2007), which is not to say that scholars have in the past ignored the organisational dimension of transnational practices altogether (see Rex, Joly & Wilpert 1987; Soysal 1994; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c; Cano 2004; Bloemraad 2005, 2006; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005; Dumont 2008; Itzigsohn & Villacrés 2008).

Still, in most cases, organisational studies present a number of shortcomings that limit their usefulness in producing generalisations to go beyond the case studies analysed. Frequently, these studies are based on ethnographic methods that – while extremely useful for generating hypotheses and providing 'thick descriptions' – are ill-equipped to evaluate the scope and extension of transnational practices. In other cases, studies suffer from a serious selection bias, as they 'sample on the dependent variable' if the selection of the organisations has been made on the basis of their actual involvement in transnational practices. The latter problem is very common, for example, in studies that restrict attention to hometown or international cooperation and development associations. Hence, the results of these works can hardly provide insights about the extent and nature of organisational transnational activities. Overall, there are extremely few studies that attempt to overcome these limitations by casting the net wider through including all reachable organisations of a number of ethnic or migrant communities (a notable exception is Cordero-Guzmán 2005).

Similarly, past studies have tended to study only specific ethnic groups or communities (e.g. Turks, Italians or Dominicans), thus

placing a special stress on ethnicity as the main category for the social organisation of migrant communities. We are unconvinced that this is an adequate methodological approach. While acknowledging that a vast proportion of transnational practices is structured along ethnic lines, transnational alliances and practices that transcend the most immediate and restricted ethnic identities should be afforded due consideration. In particular, we are interested as well in exploring the transnational practices that revolve around broader identities: regional, religious or 'positional'. Hence, when studying migrants' organisations we should not restrict our attention to those of co-ethnics, but broaden the scope to all associations formed primarily by migrants and their immediate descendants, regardless of whether they identify themselves around a specific ethnic identity or choose to rally around religious, regional or professional identities.

These methodological considerations are relevant because, even if engaging in transnational practices is often regarded as a 'natural' inclination of migrants and their communities (Sayad 1975), a number of studies have shown that transnationalism is far from generalised and substantially decreases with second generations (see e.g. Portes 2003).<sup>4</sup> Hence, when studying the transnational practices of migrants' organisations, one of our first goals should also be to determine the scope and extension of these practices as well as their correlates. Indeed, Portes et al. (2007) suggest that a number of factors are relevant to understanding the different types of transnational practices by organisations: in particular, national origin and type of membership.

A final conceptual consideration before proceeding to describe in greater detail the methodological aspects of our own research is the connection between our study and the analysis of political transnationalism. Some scholars would regard all or most transnational practices by migrants' organisations as expressions of political transnationalism even when these associations are not *prima facie* 'political' in their aims – as with hometown associations and committees (see e.g. Portes et al. 1999; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b). Though migrants' organisational activities almost by definition belong to the public realm, not all of their activities either at the receiving or sending country are politically oriented, nor should they be considered expressions of political transnationalism *per se*. Otherwise, we risk stretching unnecessarily and excessively the notion of 'political' transnationalism. Equally, and unlike Martiniello and Lafleur (2008), we favour a notion of political transnationalism that does not automatically include every form of political activity in the country of residence but, rather, one that only considers those truly linking migrants with the political realm of their countries of origin. This conceptual clarity is important if we want eventually to assess the analytical and empirical connection between transnational

practices and activism and migrants' capacity and inclination to become actively engaged in political mobilisation in the receiving country.

#### 14.2.1 *The context*

Spain has experienced a sudden immigration flow that has resulted in a rapid change in the social outlook and composition of its major urban centres. The strong and sustained growth of the Spanish economy during the first half of the 2000s, together with its ageing population structure, has favoured the inflow of migrant workers mostly from Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Maghreb. This has resulted in a steep surge, from little more than 2 per cent of a foreign population in 2000 to more than 10 per cent in 2007.<sup>5</sup> The longitudinal trends and the migration structures in the cities of Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia resemble, for the most part, those of the whole country. The crucial difference is that the proportion of migrants in these three cities is somewhat higher than the national average – a pattern common to the major urban areas in Spain.<sup>6</sup> Some differences exist, though, between the three cities in terms of the national composition of their migrant populations. First, Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are settling down in Madrid much more than in Barcelona and Murcia; Argentineans are more numerous in Barcelona than in Madrid or Murcia; the proportion of Ecuadorians living in Madrid and Murcia is double the size of that same group in Barcelona; and, while the most numerous national community in Barcelona and Madrid is the Ecuadorian, Moroccan citizens outnumber them in Murcia; finally, non-Chinese Asians – primarily Pakistani – are a much more sizeable community in Barcelona. Second, the cultural – and in particular, religious – diversity of the migrant population is higher in Murcia than in the other two cities, as the proportion of migrants from countries where the majority of the population is of Islamic religion is higher in the former (30 per cent) than in both Barcelona (14 per cent) and Madrid (9 per cent).<sup>7</sup>

Similarities in the overall structure and trends of immigration should not lead us to conclude that the local context for migrants is the same or very similar in the three cities. First, the patterns of urban segregation differ in important ways. Migrants are much more spatially concentrated in Barcelona than in Madrid and Murcia. A second important difference in the local context that migrants encounter in the three cities is related to the policies towards immigration and immigrants designed by the respective municipal and regional governments. Even if the major elements of immigration policy – entry, permits, nationality, voting rights<sup>8</sup>, conditions for family reunification and socioeconomic rights – are defined by the national government, regional and local governments can have a substantial impact on migrants' daily lives through



their policymaking. Spain is a quasi-federal state, and most of the powers related to the implementation of welfare-related policies – health care, education, housing, social services, etc. – are assigned to regional governments. Frequently, moreover, local governments complement this policymaking with their own budgetary and regulatory authority. This means that local governments can leave an important imprint on the nature and direction of the welfare policies that affect migrants' integration into the host society. In Barcelona, left-wing parties and coalitions have been governing the city since the first democratic local elections of 1979 whereas, in Madrid and Murcia, the centre-right Partido Popular (PP) has been in control of the local government since the early 1990s. And, as we shall see, this has resulted in very different approaches to migrants' integration and migrants' participation. Specifically, Barcelona has a much more developed and structured policy of citizen participation and consultation than Madrid or Murcia, as well as a more open and transparent practice of selecting associational representatives to the participation bodies.

If we turn our attention to the specific policies towards migrants' integration and participation, important differences emerge between the three cities. A first crucial difference relates to the overall approach to migrants' integration. The policy orientation in Barcelona starts from the assumption that migrants' integration should be approached from a general perspective of combating social exclusion and promoting equality of treatment, just as it is for the mainstream population. Other than specific actions that must be undertaken for assuring the adequate initial settlement of newcomers to the city, migrants' integration is viewed as a 'natural' process that will emerge from migrants' equal access to all social welfare and services provided by the city, which are based on the same principles and requirements than for pre-existing residents. In sharp contrast, the local and regional policies in Madrid have, in a very short period of time, been explicitly designed to address migrants' integration through services specifically catering to migrants at the district and neighbourhood levels. And an important feature of the approach to integration policies, especially by the regional government, is the emphasis on national origin as one of the main axes around which some integration services are organised. This is evident in the creation of 'national centres' or 'houses' on the basis of national origins – Bolivian, Ecuadorian, Colombian, Dominican, African, Moroccan, etc. – that are conceived as spaces where migrants of specific national origins can gather for social activities as well as to obtain vocational training and general counselling and orientation. Finally, in the city of Murcia, the municipality embraces openly the concept of social integration for immigrants, but rather than setting up parallel networks of assistance and support for migrants, the city has incorporated all information and

support initiatives within the general structure of the local social services. Nevertheless, the local government of Murcia has been much less active than that of Madrid in accommodating any special needs of the immigrant population.

This differential approach to migrants' integration is also clearly reflected in local governments' approach to calls. The local government of Madrid has set up separate calls for granting subsidies to migrants' organisations, and has created spaces for participation exclusively concerned with representing migrants – the Madrid Forum (Foro Madrid de Diálogo y Convivencia) and the district boards for dialogue and coexistence (Mesas de Diálogo y Convivencia Distritales). Meanwhile, the local government of Barcelona intentionally funds migrants' organisations within the general call for subsidies to all local associations, and has avoided setting up participation mechanisms that are specifically addressed to migrants.<sup>9</sup> The local government of Murcia does not have any separate funding for migrants' associations either, but this is quite consistent with its lack of well-developed policies towards migrants and towards participation more generally.

In summary, the context of settlement in Madrid is much more welcoming for migrants to organise around ethnic and national identities than in Barcelona and Murcia, if only because there is explicit policy by the regional government to promote the self-organisation of immigrants along those lines. Furthermore, the accommodation and promotion of migrants' separate organisations through specific calls for funding in Madrid should result in more economic resources being available for engaging in sustained transnational practices.

#### 14.2.2 *The study and the data*

The data employed in this chapter were collected by a joint team of researchers at the University of Murcia and the Autonomous University of Barcelona following the same methodology between 2003 and 2008. The final dataset combines information gathered through a pilot study done in Madrid and Murcia in 2003-2004 – which was updated during 2007-2008 in both cities<sup>10</sup> – and a full new study in the city of Barcelona also done in 2007-2008.

In every city, the data collection was organised in two different stages. First, we elaborated a census or list of all existing migrant organisations – as no reliable single list was available. At a second stage, we organised interviews with organisational leaders and administered a face-to-face structured questionnaire of approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in duration. For the pilot studies in Madrid and Murcia, interviews took place between October 2003 and September 2004,<sup>11</sup> while the updates and the new study in Barcelona were conducted between May 2007 and

July 2008. All stages of the process and the three cities combined, we interviewed 218 distinct associations.

#### 14.2.3 *The definition, location and selection of migrants' associations*

As Moya (2005), Vermeulen (2005, 2006) and Recchi (2006) have correctly pointed out, there are a number of significant difficulties that we are confronted with when studying migrants' organisations. Among them, those of definition, location and selection of the organisations stand out as being most critical for the research process.

Two definitions were thus crucial in our selection of organisations. First, we consider an association to be 'a formally organized named group most of whose members – whether persons or organizations – are not financially recompensed for their participation' (Knoke 1986: 2). This definition allows us to distinguish associations from other social and political institutions such as the family, groups of friends and other organisations frequently encompassed in notions of the 'third sector' or 'civil society'. In this regard, associations are considered to be distinct from other organisations, such as foundations or government agencies, in that very few individuals receive payment for their activities in the former (Knoke & Prenskey 1984). Additionally, associations are different from economic organisations such as companies in that they are institutions seeking solutions for individual or collective problems distinct from those of the market (Knoke 1990: 5). And Knoke's definition also excludes kinship groups that are not open to outsiders, while including groups or clubs of migrants that are not fully institutionalised, as long as they have a name and some minimal visibility to outgroup individuals.

Second, we defined an association as a migrants' organisation when at least nearly half of its members or half of its board members (i.e. its leadership) were of migrant origin (either foreign-born themselves or having at least one foreign-born parent), thus including first and second generations. We thus used a relatively wide definition of the term 'migrant' – in order to include other EU citizens<sup>12</sup> – though we did not include associations mainly devoted to work with or for migrants but, rather, those mostly composed of Spanish natives. However, we did include associations – whether founded by natives or by migrants – of mixed memberships as long as approximately half of the members or the leadership were of migrant origin.

Other important aspects of our case's definition of 'migrant association' contrast with that of Vermeulen (2005, 2006). We included only those organisations that are, directly or indirectly, membership-based, though we did not require the organisations to signal in any specific way that they were 'ethnic-based'.

Turning to the crucial issue of 'detectability', our mapping census of migrants' associations of all origins was created by combining the available information from various official registers, embassies, privileged informants (NGOs, trade unions, etc.) and systematic searches on the internet.<sup>13</sup> We then sifted these initial lists by considering ineligible those organisations not formed by migrants themselves – e.g. pro-migrant organisations – as well as by excluding those that had disappeared in previous years. Table 14.1 summarises this multi-stage field process.

An important point to make is related to mortality and response rates. Unfortunately, official registers and directories in Spain are not regularly updated; that is, associations must register in order to gain legal status, but they are not obligated to update their information regularly, nor do public administrations set any registration 'expiry' date so as to keep information up to date. This means that initial lists are always problematic, as they include many associations that no longer exist, but also fail to capture a substantial portion of the real associational

**Table 14.1** *Summary of the fieldwork process*

	<i>Barcelona (2007-2008)</i>	<i>Madrid (pilot study 2003-2004)</i>	<i>Madrid (2007-2008 update)</i>	<i>Murcia (pilot, 2004)</i>	<i>Murcia (2007-2008 update)</i>
Associations in the initial list	707	215	540	33	114
Sifted list without known ineligibles (i.e. native and/or not membership-based)	465	172	417	31	74
Sifted list with only confirmed active associations	223	147	199	16	17
Confirmed not active	34		24		13
Mortality rate*	13.2%	14.5%	10.8%	48%	43.3%
Interviewed associations	100	67	96	12	18
			20+43(+33)		3+8(+7)
Response rates	44.8%	45.6%	40.7%	75%	76.5%
Registered eligible associations	388		312		47
Sifted list only with confirmed active associations	186		139		13
Confirmed not active	26		15		3
Mortality rate	12.3%		9.7%		18.8%

*Source:* Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Madrid and Murcia (2003-2004); Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia (2007-2008)

\* Mortality rate is computed to include only those fully confirmed as inactive. For Madrid and Murcia, the first figure of the interviewed associations indicates the re-interviewing of those that responded in 2004; the second figure is for organisations interviewed for the first time in 2008; the last figure is that of associations interviewed only in 2003-2004. For the Madrid and Murcia update figures, response rates are computed by including in the calculation only those associations interviewed in 2003-2004 that are still active: eighteen for Madrid and two for Murcia.

field that is not recorded in official registers because it is less institutionalised (see lower section of Table 14.1). We could, however, estimate how many associations were no longer active when attempting to locate them for an interview: between 10 and 15 per cent of migrants' associations have disappeared in Barcelona and Madrid, while the mortality rate is much higher for Murcia. Nevertheless, we should note that this mortality rate includes only organisations for which we have clear confirmation of being no longer active. For a large number, we could get no confirmation though we suspected inactivity. In fact, out of the 67 associations interviewed in Madrid in 2003-2004, ten (15 per cent) were no longer active in 2007. For an additional six we could get no final confirmation, though they were also suspected of being inactive. When these aspects are taken into account, our response rates thus result in much wider coverage of truly active associations in the three cities.<sup>14</sup>

#### *14.2.4 Overall description of the associations targeted and interviewed*

The organisations targeted vary substantially in terms of their self-definition and country or area of origin. Some of them will primarily identify as associations that defend immigrants –or a specific subset of immigrants, e.g. Latin Americans – while others gather around their specific national origins or some functional status (e.g. professionals, artists, doctors). Our data collection process allows us to record at least the country and regional origin even for those organisations not interviewed and to draw a comparison with the results. The subset of organisations we were able to interview indicates that there is no substantial bias by origin in our dataset.

The distributions very much reflect the stocks of migrant groups in each city. Latin American organisations are more abundant due to the relative size of the groups of migrants from this region. Across national origins, however, associational formation is not necessarily strictly proportional to the relative size:<sup>15</sup> there is a clear over-representation of Peruvian associations as compared to their population sizes both in Barcelona and in Madrid. This is probably due to their longer period of settlement in Spain (since the 1980s), as compared to Ecuadorean migrants (who mostly arrived in the 2000s). Similarly, non-Moroccan African organisations are also much more numerous than would be expected from the size of the populations in all three cities. Thus, there seem to be relevant differences in organisational capacity depending on the regional and national origin of migrants.

In the remaining part of this chapter we will focus on the transnational activities and engagement of the organisations we interviewed. Our study of immigrants' organisations in three Spanish cities – Barcelona, Madrid, and Murcia – is ideally suited to address the

research questions around the extension, nature and covariates of organisational transnationalism, as well as to address some important methodological shortcomings in past research on transnational practices.

### 14.3 The scope and nature of transactional practices among migrants' associations

To what extent are migrants' associations in these Spanish cities engaged in transnational activities? What is the nature and variety of transnational practices? What factors account for the fact that some organisations do engage in such practices and others do not? In this section we approach these questions in a fundamentally descriptive fashion and leave the more systematic account of correlates for the following section.

Most theoretical accounts of migrants' transnationalism reflect on the multidimensionality of transnational practices and fields (e.g. Portes et al. 1999; Faist 2000a). While this multidimensionality is usually referred to as different arenas of the public space – economic, socio-cultural and political – it is undoubtedly also related to the multiple forms transnational exchanges can take. We focus our analysis first on the several ways in which migrants' associations can engage in transnational practices, paying special attention to 'how' they act transnationally, with 'whom' and for 'what'. Consequently, we differentiate between: 1) different forms of ordinary transnational activity – the 'how'; 2) the various other organisations with which they establish transnational alliances – the 'with whom'; and 3) a specific area to which transnational engagement by migrants' associations is commonly oriented, the political arena – the 'what for'.

In all these instances, we are looking for sustained and recurrent patterns of transnational exchange and linkage, rather than sporadic or circumstantial activities across national borders. For this purpose, most of our questionnaire items are phrased to uncover regular, as opposed to sporadic, exchanges and links. We are thus tapping both information exchanges and reciprocity patterns. Overall, these items will allow us to provide a more or less complete picture of the nature of the transnational practices of migrants' organisations in these three Spanish cities.

Table 14.2 presents the general outlook of the extension and nature of the transnational practices of migrants' associations. The results of our survey in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia indicate that – although transnational activities are quite common – a substantial number of migrant organisations (between 20 and 40 per cent, depending on the city) do not engage in transnational practices at all. By a wide margin, political transnationalism is the least common of cross-border

**Table 14.2** *Transnational engagement by migrants' associations, in % of all associations in each city*

<i>Type of transnational activity</i>	<i>Barcelona (2007-2008)</i>	<i>Madrid (2004 &amp; 2008)</i>	<i>Murcia (2004 &amp; 2008)<sup>1</sup></i>
Ordinary transnational activity			
Undertakes activities in other countries (other than Spain)	15	25	11
of which are...			
in homeland country	13	20	6
elsewhere overseas	5	9	0
both homeland and elsewhere	3	4	0
Regular contact with any public administration of the country of origin, past two years	24	35	12
Gets any funding from country of origin, last year	2	6	6
Have arranged meetings with homeland TV journalist, past two years	23	30	11
Have arranged meetings with homeland newspaper journalist, past two years	35	38	22
Organisational transnational alliances			
Association is a member of an international organisation, federation/ confederation	16	12	28
Regular contact with any organisation in homeland country, past two years	42	38	33
Regular contact with any organisation in any other overseas country, past two years	22	32	17
Political transnationalism			
Regular contact with politicians or political parties of the country of origin, past two years	15	19	6
Any member has been a candidate in homeland country elections	0	13	0
Summary indicators			
Any transnational activity (any of the above)	71	82	61
Ordinary transnational activity	56	59	39
Organisational transnational alliances	55	56	56
Political transnationalism	15	27	6
Number of cases	100	96	18

*Source:* Survey of Immigrants' Associations in Barcelona, Madrid and Murcia (2007-2008)

exchanges that migrants' associations engage in, thus contradicting the common view that most transnationalism of migrants' organisations is political in nature.<sup>16</sup>

In general terms, migrants' associations do not commonly engage in transnational practices that require their continued attention. For

example, the proportion of organisations undertaking activities in other countries is relatively reduced, between 10 and 25 per cent, and this is largely limited to activities in the home country. Similarly, fewer than one third have frequent contact with public administrations in their countries of origin, and only a tiny minority gets any funding from the sending-country authorities. More common, though, is the less demanding exchange of information with homeland TV and press journalists. In most of these cases, we notice a substantial gap in levels of transnational engagement among the three cities, especially between Madrid and Murcia.

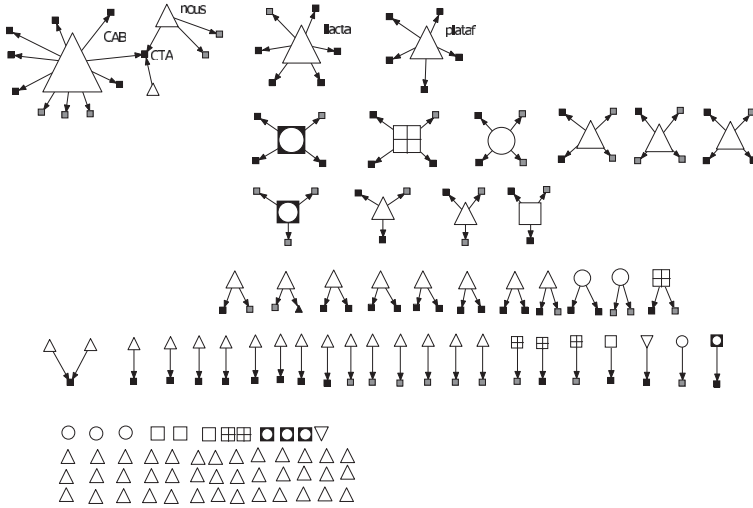
These gaps are much smaller when we focus on organisational transnational alliances. Around half of all migrant organisations in the three cities are connected to organisations overseas, and around one fifth have stabilised these links by joining international federations or confederations. Yet, in sharp contrast, explicitly political transnational practices are much less frequent. Typically, fewer than 20 per cent of the organisations have regular contacts with politicians or political parties in the countries of origin, and only in Madrid can we find any organisation whose members have recently run as candidates in homeland elections.<sup>17</sup>

A more detailed analysis of the patterns of transnational organisational alliance of migrants' associations in our three cities reveals very interesting findings (Figure 14.1).<sup>18</sup> The use of formal social network analysis (SNA) is useful because it preserves the original information on interactions and exchanges, and is a methodological approach mostly absent from analyses of transnationalism (see Vertovec 2003). Because of how the information is retrieved, these are, by necessity, ego networks with asymmetrical connections, thus reducing the overall connectivity. Yet, SNA depictions allow us to analyse several factors that condition transnational practices in a single snapshot. On the one hand, our results indicate that Latin American associations accumulate a larger number of transnational links with organisations in their homelands and elsewhere overseas. On the other hand, the results in Figure 14.1 show that – even if usually more associations have contact with at least one homeland organisation than with at least one such organisation elsewhere overseas – the extension of non-homeland-based transnational links is quite wide. Indeed, many Latin American associations have contacts only with transnational organisations that are not based in their homelands, especially in Madrid. In this sense, there is an interesting contrast between the configuration of transnational networks of Latin American associations in Barcelona and Madrid, as the former are much more likely to restrict transnational contacts to homeland organisations. And it is interesting to see that even Latin American associations in Murcia are very poor in transnational contacts as compared



**Figure 14.1** Structure of the organisational transnational alliances of migrants' organisations

Barcelona



Madrid

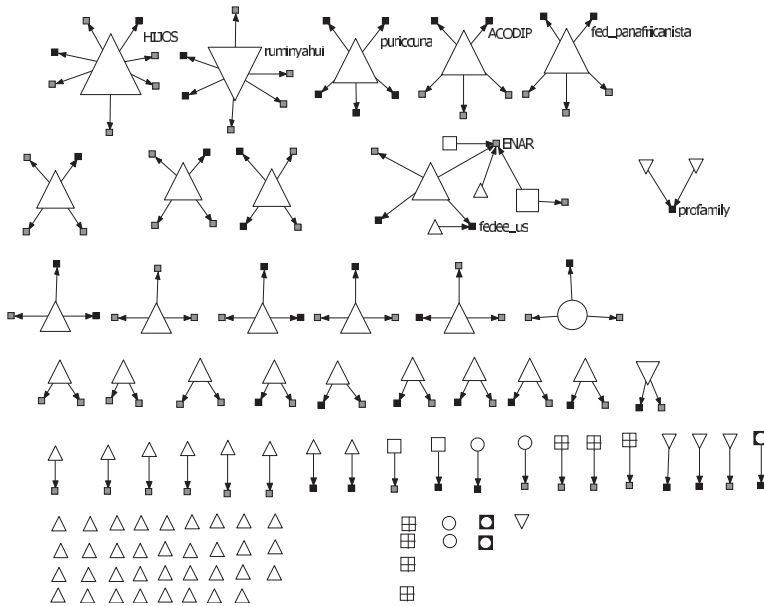
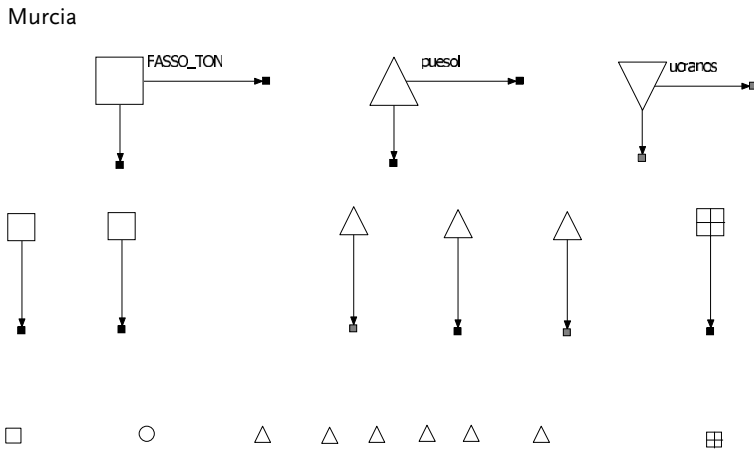


Figure 14.1 Continued



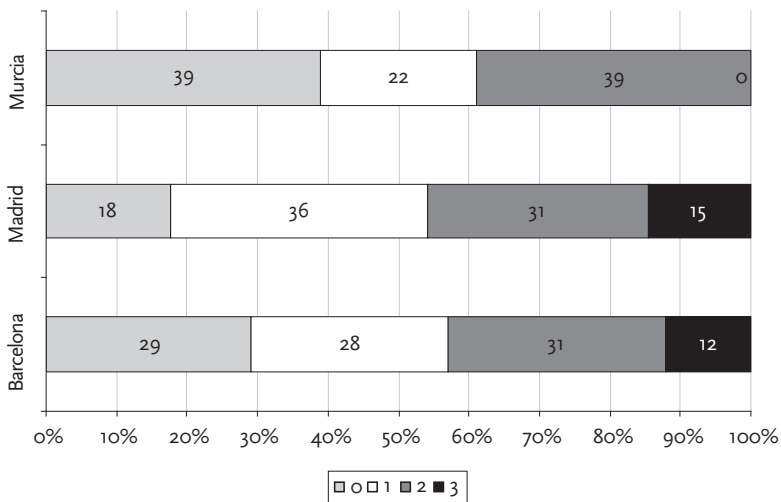
to their counterparts in Barcelona and Madrid. Finally, although ego networks are not particularly suited for the study of overlapping links within networks, we do find that some homeland organisations spontaneously ‘connect’ several local associations through common transnational alliances. For example, Argentinean Workers Central (Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos, CTA) is a common transnational contact for three different local associations in Barcelona, two of which comprise Argentineans, but a third is composed of people of mixed Latin American origins. Equally, in Madrid, four organisations – two sub-Saharan African and two Latin American – are linked in their transnational alliances through the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

Hence, the SNA of the transnational alliances of migrants’ organisations provides us with valuable additional information on the patterns of transnational interaction of migrants’ associations in our three Spanish cities. The contribution that formal SNA can make to the study of transnationalism should thus not be underestimated, and it is a methodological innovation in this field that we feel should be embraced.

One final aspect worth exploring relates to the distinction between ‘comprehensive’ and ‘selective’ transnational practices (Levitt, DeWind & Vertovec 2003). Comprehensive transnational practices cut across different arenas or domains, while selective practices are restricted to one or only a few. Figure 14.2 shows the distribution for each of our three cities of the number of types of transnational activity – as classified in Table 14.2 – in which migrants’ associations become engaged. When an association engages in ordinary transnational activity, in organisational transnational alliances and in political transnationalism, it gets a score of 3. Clearly, the majority of migrants’ associations are ‘selective’ in their transnational practices, but a substantial proportion is engaged in two or three domains simultaneously, especially in Madrid and Barcelona. If we apply an even more stringent notion of ‘comprehensive’ transnationalism – and require that an association undertake activities abroad, have regular contact with a public administration and have regular contact with any organisation in their homeland or overseas – then only a tiny proportion of migrants’ associations can be regarded as practicing comprehensive transnationalism: 9 per cent in Madrid, 6 per cent in Murcia and 2 per cent in Barcelona.

Two illustrative examples can provide further insight on this. One of the associations in Barcelona that qualifies as comprehensively transnational is a large Moroccan association created more than ten years ago.

**Figure 14.2** *Comprehensive vs. selective transnationalism: Number of types of transnational activities of migrants’ associations*



It is well connected with platforms and networks of autochthonous organisations, describes itself as an immigrants' association (rather than a Moroccan association), is primarily active in issues related to Moroccan migrants in Catalonia, but does not often engage in protests related to international or homeland politics. It is also one of the largest Moroccan associations in Barcelona, with a significant number of staff and volunteers and a large budget. Another of the comprehensive transnational organisations – this time based in Madrid – is an Ecuadorian association that is also more than ten years old, has multiple connections with Latin American and autochthonous organisations, is active in all of Spain in addition to Ecuador, also defines itself as mainly an immigrants' organisation (rather than solely an Ecuadorian association), is primarily active in issues related to politics, but also does not often engage in protests related to homeland politics and is, again, one of the largest Latin American associations in Madrid, though its budget is much more modest. These are only two examples, but they are illustrative of the resources required to be 'comprehensively' transnational, in a context where migrants' associations have fairly limited technical, economic and human resources.

In summary, systematic differences in the transnational inclinations of migrants' associations are apparent between organisations based in Barcelona and Murcia and organisations based in Madrid. Almost every indicator points in the direction of the organisations in Madrid as being much more transnationally focused than those in either of the two other cities. Furthermore, ordinary transnational activities and organisational transnational alliances are much more common than political transnationalism regardless of the context. And Latin American associations are particularly inclined to accumulate many transnational organisational contacts and, for the case of Madrid, quite often with organisations that are not based in their homelands. In the next section, we analyse in greater detail what causes might be driving transnational practices as well as the cross-city variations.

#### *14.3.1 What drives transnational practices? The organisational correlates of transnationalism among migrants' associations*

Some scholars have past reflected on factors that drive migrants' transnational practices, both at the individual level and the systemic or macro level. For example, Faist (2000a) discusses the systemic or contextual elements that are linked to transnationalism and mentions the saliency of ethnicity as a factor that could contribute to the development and extension of transnational practices. He also discusses how obstacles to migrants' integration or the denial of acculturation can foster transnationalism. Portes (2003) agrees that hostile contexts of reception

also foster transnational practices, but he also mentions other relevant properties of the sending and reception contexts: for example, highly concentrated communities are likely to show more intense patterns of transnationalism.

At the individual level, Portes et al. (1999) point to additional factors related to transnational practices: access to technology, the economic and human capital stocks as well as the distance to the homeland. Hence, more resources and longer times of settlement are more conducive to engaging in transnationalism (Portes 1999; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Portes & Rumbaut 2006).

There is, however, much less scholarship on what factors we should expect to be related to transnationalism when we focus on migrants' associations. Nevertheless, in one of the few systematic studies of organisational transnationalism, Portes et al. (2007) show that transnational engagement is determined by the country of origin and related to the degree of formalisation and form of creation. Furthermore, if we extend the hypotheses put forward at the macro and individual levels, we should also expect the following types of organisations to be more likely to engage in transnational practices: 1) those formed by migrant groups that face greater hostility in Spain – e.g. Maghrebis and Africans, generally; 2) those that define themselves along more restrictive ethnic categories – thus making ethnicity more salient; 3) those with greater access to technological, economic and human capital; and 4) those based in cities with greater spatial concentration of the migrant population, i.e. Barcelona.

In Table 14.3, we explore the relationship between transnational activity and the origin and identity of the organisations, while in Table 14.4, we analyse the covariation between certain organisational attributes and transnationalism.<sup>19</sup>

Although estimates are unstable, and statistical significance is rare due to the number of cases, some patterns emerge, especially with regard to self-identity of the organisations. There is mixed evidence with regard to the impact of 'hostility' towards the group in the settlement country: African and Muslim organisations are somewhat more likely to engage in transnational activity, but more so in Madrid than in Barcelona, and the difference is not statistically significant. Furthermore, associations that define their primary identity along territorial lines and a single country of origin are more likely to maintain transnational activities or links, but associations whose primary identity revolves around functional or ascriptive social categories (e.g. women, immigrants' or professional groups) are equally oriented towards transnational contacts. These results contrast with Koopmans et al.'s (2005: 129-135) finding that groups that organise around status-related identities (such as 'immigrants' and 'foreigners') are less likely to make

**Table 14.3** *Transnational engagement by origin and identity of organisations, Madrid and Barcelona (% with any transnational activity)*

	<i>Barcelona</i>	<i>Madrid</i>
Total	71	81
<i>Region of origin</i>		
Latin American	71	81
African	70	100
Eastern Europe	(100)	(100)
Other regions	(63)	(67)
Mixed regional origins	(71)	60
Muslim	(100)	(100)
<i>Type of primary self-identity of the organisation</i>		
None	54*	84
Functional and/or ascriptive	87	83
Territorial – regional	40*	(86)
Territorial – single country	84*	80
Religious	(67)	(100)
Ethnic – non-territorial	(100)	–
Total number of cases	(100)	(96)

*Notes:* Values are row percentages for each column. The asterisk \* signals a percentage that is statistically different from the total value for all organisations for  $p \leq 0.05$ , as indicated by adjusted residuals. Chi-square tests confirm the existence of a statistical association between primary self-identity and transnational engagement only for Barcelona. In brackets we signal those percentages that are computed from a row category with fewer than ten cases. The – sign indicates that there are no cases in this category.

**Table 14.4** *Transnational engagement by organisational characteristics*

	<i>Barcelona</i>		<i>Madrid</i>	
	<i>Any transnational activity</i>	<i>Value for all organisations (number of cases)</i>	<i>Any transnational activity</i>	<i>Value for all organisations (number of cases)</i>
% of female members	51	50 (81)	49	49 (81)
% of income derived from public subsidies from Spanish institutions	15.9*	11.8 (86)	20.9*	18.8 (93)
Total annual budget (in €)	28,838*	22,254 (90)	54,657*	48,853 (87)
Total number of members	957 *	709 (87)	1,401*	1,227 (88)
Degree of organisational formalisation (0-1 scale)	0.55*	0.51 (100)	0.58	0.58 (96)
Number of years since its creation	7.5	7.3 (100)	9.4	9.2 (99)

*Notes:* Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. The asterisk \* signals a value that is statistically different from the value for organisations with no transnational activity/links for  $p \leq 0.10$ .

transnational claims than groups that organise around ethnic and national identities.<sup>20</sup> We have found, however, that the former groups are as likely to become engaged in transnational practices as those that identify along more restrictive (national) ethnic categories. The findings are not necessarily contradictory, but they indicate that transnationally oriented 'claims-making' is just a particular form of transnational engagement, possibly with dynamics different from other transnational activities. Hence, different types of transnational practices are likely to be differently related to identity construction processes, and we should not conclude that only ethno-national identities are conducive to heightened transnationalism.

In general, differences in the inclination to act transnationally across identity-based categories are more pronounced in Barcelona than in Madrid. This is probably related to the fact that the context in Barcelona is generally more hostile than in Madrid towards the acceptance of ethnicity as a valid category for public engagement. Thus, migrants' associations that avoid any clear identity as 'immigrants' or that embrace wider regional identities – e.g. Latin American – refrain more from engaging in practices that link them to narrow ethnic identities.

The findings that economic and human resources contribute to transnationalism are valid not only for individual transnational practices but also for organisational ones. Again, in spite of the limited number of cases, we can safely say that larger organisations (in terms of the number of members) with more formalised structures, larger budgets and larger proportions of public funding are invariably more likely to engage in transnational activities. In contrast with other hypotheses developed with individual-level data, feminisation and the time passed since settlement, which is of course highly correlated with the 'age' of the organisation, are not related to transnational practices.

In recent times, increasing attention is being paid to the link between transnational practices and development promotion in the sending countries. Hence, we should expect that migrants' associations that describe themselves as organisations primarily devoted to humanitarian aid, human rights or cooperation, or that are active in these areas – regardless of whether they prefer to describe themselves as a more generally oriented association – will be more inclined to engage in transnationalism. Tables 14.5 and 14.6 explore this connection.

Our evidence generally supports these expectations. Migrants' associations that define themselves as humanitarian aid or human rights organisations or that are active in these areas, in community development or in international cooperation are indeed more likely to be engaged in transnational activities. This is more the case in Barcelona than in Madrid, however, where generally higher levels of transnationalism make these distinctions less relevant.

**Table 14.5** *Transnational engagement by primary self-description of association (% with any transnational activity)*

	Barcelona	Madrid
Immigrants' organisation	80	78
Cultural, musical, dancing, etc., society	65	82
Humanitarian aid or human rights organisation	90	88
Ethnic organisation	57	91
Charity or social welfare organisation	86	100
All organisations	71	82
Number of cases	92	93

Notes: Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. No difference with the average for all organisations is statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ .

**Table 14.6** *Transnational engagement by sectors/areas of activity (% with any transnational activity)*

Active in...?	Barcelona		Madrid			
	Yes	No	Yes	No		
Charity	82	↔	58	83	81	
Ethnic group concerns	83	↔	47	88	77	
Sports	71		71	89	78	
Culture	72		68	86	↔	70
Humanitarian aid	80	↔	59	89		78
Human rights	78	↔	57	83		81
Community development	83	↔	62	94	↔	76
Issues related to immigration	80	↔	48	83		81
International cooperation	83		57	90	↔	75
All organisations		71				82
Number of cases		100				96

Notes: Values are average figures for each row attribute for each column. The left right arrow ↔ signals a difference in the percentage of transnational activity between organisations active and inactive in a give sector/area that is statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ . When no arrow is present, the difference is not statistically significant.

To conclude the analysis of the correlates of transnationalism among migrants' organisations, we assess the concurrent impact of the various factors explored in previous tables. Table 14.7 shows the results of three binary logistic regressions on the separate indicators of transnational practices: ordinary activity, organisational alliances and political transnationalism. Our goal is to examine whether different factors are relevant for the different forms of transnational activity that we have identified in the initial sections of this chapter.

Indeed, our results are noteworthy to the extent that they point to the existence of commonalities and differences in the correlates of transnationalism. Latino organisations are only more likely to engage in



**Table 14.7** *The correlates of transnational practices among migrants' organisations, logistic binary regressions*

	<i>Ordinary transnational activity</i>	<i>Organisational transnational alliances</i>	<i>Political transnationalism</i>
Intercept	-0.58 (0.24)	-0.49 (0.47)	-2.91 (0.53)
Latino organisation	n.s.	n.s.	0.76 (0.46)
African organisation	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Self-identity = territorial-single country	0.9 (0.32)	n.s.	n.s.
Self-description = Humanitarian aid or human rights organisation	1.6 (0.6)	n.s.	n.s.
Active in community development	n.s.	0.57 (0.33)	n.s.
Active in international cooperation	n.s.	0.75 (0.33)	0.81 (0.41)
Derives any income from Spanish public subsidies	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Annual budget (in 100s € )	0.001 (0.000)	n.s.	0.001 (0.000)
Number of members	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Degree of formalisation (0-1)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
City (ref = Barcelona)			
Madrid	n.s.	n.s.	0.63 (0.38)
Murcia	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Number of cases	193	193	193
Chi-square of model (degrees of freedom)	29.158 (3)	16.173 (7)	19.487 (4)
Nagelkerke R-square	0.19	0.11	0.15
Cox & Snell R-square	0.14	0.08	0.10
Hosmer & Lemeshow test Chi-square (degrees of freedom)	4.38 (8)	8.63 (8)	9.62 (8)

*Notes:* Beta coefficients with standard errors are in brackets. All coefficients are statistically significant for  $p \leq 0.10$ , and n.s. marks those that were initially estimated but removed from the model because they were not statistically significant and the number of cases calls for parsimonious models. All Hosmer and Lemeshow tests show a good fit of the models to the data.

transnational practices when these refer to the political domain. In contrast, African organisations – which represent the migrant groups facing greater hostility and discrimination in Spain – are not more transnationally oriented than the other organisations, irrespective of the form of transnationalism we scrutinise. Narrowly defined ethnic identities do promote greater engagement in ordinary transnational activities, but are not crucial for the establishment of transnational links with organisations abroad or for political transnationalism. Associations that are active in community development or in international cooperation are more inclined, by the nature of their own activities, to establish organisational alliances that are transnational but, interestingly enough, they

are also more likely to be active in political transnationalism. When assessing the role of resource mobilisation, only economic capital seems to have any significant impact: the number of members or the degree of formalisation is not decisive, surely due to its important correlation with budgetary capacity.

Finally, once we control for all these organisational attributes, the local context in itself seems to have a very limited additional impact. Migrants' organisations in Madrid are more likely to engage in political transnationalism. This is probably due to the fact that Madrid is the capital of the country, and thus is more often the focus of political mobilisation from homeland institutions and actors – such as the embassies and the political parties – but it could also reflect an endogenous process: migrants who were politically active in their countries of origin might be more likely to choose the capital city due to migration chains among political refugees. In any case, this should not lead us to conclude that the local context of settlement has little or no impact; rather, its impact is indirect: migrants' organisations in Madrid more frequently define themselves along narrow (national or local) ethnic lines, receive substantially more public subsidies, have an average budget that is roughly double that of associations in Barcelona and Murcia and have larger memberships. In sharp contrast, migrants' associations in Barcelona are more likely to be active in the areas of humanitarian aid, community development, human rights and international cooperation, hence partially offsetting their resource disadvantage. In other words, local policies and local contexts are relevant not so much because they directly promote (or fail to do so) transnational practices – which they do sometimes through subsidising policies – but primarily because they have a substantial impact on the type of migrants' organisations that consolidate and on the resources they accumulate.

#### 14.4 Discussion

Transnational engagement is by no means universal among migrant organisations in Spanish cities, but it is very common that a large majority of them will at least practice some form of transnationalism. Our chapter makes the point that the type and nature of transnational practices migrants' associations engage in is quite varied, and thus we should analyse different forms of organisational transnationalism separately. Migrants' associations in Spain are more often involved in ordinary transnational activity and frequently they establish alliances with organisations abroad, yet they more rarely engage in political transnationalism. Consequently, we reject the common view that migrants' organisational transnational practices are primarily expressions of

political transnationalism. We would encourage a less all-encompassing view of political transnational practices, or else we risk emptying it of real meaning.

On the other hand, transnational practices are certainly not restricted to links with homeland actors and social fields. We have found a considerable number of exchanges with overseas countries other than the countries of origin of the migrant groups. In particular, there is a significant connection with the United States for the Latino groups, and with European countries and organisations for migrants' associations of all regional origins.

Yet, the picture that emerges from our study is one of 'selective' rather than 'comprehensive' transnationalism. Comprehensive transnational practices are rather limited to a few organisations and are more frequent in Madrid than in the other cities. In general terms, while we also find smaller and more informal associations that are comprehensively transnational, when it comes to engaging in transnational practices in multiple domains and forms simultaneously another profile dominates. That is, the profile of large, resourceful and well-connected associations, which often also identify with the broader identity of 'immigrants' and are not necessarily explicitly concerned with homeland politics, but more with improving the situation of their co-ethnics in Spain.

In this sense, transnationalism is often driven by the identity of the organisation – when narrowly defined along ethnic lines – the area of activity – especially if it is active in community development and international cooperation – and the economic resources at its disposal. In this regard, the local context of settlement and the policies implemented by local and regional governments are especially relevant to the extent that they fundamentally shape the migrants' associational ecology. The impact of the local context and of local policies is thus both direct and indirect. Directly, they can incentivise transnational practices through their promotion of international cooperation and development activities of migrants' associations. Indirectly they can do so through their effect on the resources associations they accumulate and the collective identities they generate. Yet, local policies do not always operate in consistent directions to promote or hinder transnationalism, and our three cases illustrate the variety of effects we can find in real-life situations. On the one hand, the local policies and approach in Madrid foster the emergence and consolidation of associations that coalesce along narrow ethnic identities, whereas policies in Barcelona discourage the emphasis on ethnicity. Furthermore, in Madrid, migrants' associations can access a larger net amount of economic resources from different funding institutions, while in Barcelona and Murcia they grow cash-poor. Yet, local and regional policies in Barcelona are very active in promoting

international cooperation and development, and hence we find that migrants' organisations privilege these areas of activities in this city; and this offsets the limitations that smaller budgets impose on the transnationalisation of migrants' organisations. A lack of both cash and active international development policies in Murcia largely results in a much more limited engagement in transnational activity.

In conclusion, the local context powerfully shapes through direct and indirect paths the opportunities that migrants' associations face in taking on transnational practices. Further comparative studies of multiple ethnic groups across multiple cities should shed more light on the extent to which our findings may be more generally applicable.

## Notes

- 1 Some exceptions are Bloemraad (2005) and Portes, Escobar and Walton Radford (2007).
- 2 The Spanish project was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education (grant SEJ2005-07733/CPOL) and by the Séneca Foundation of the Region of Murcia (grant 03007/PHCS/05). More information can be found at [www.um.es/capsocinmig](http://www.um.es/capsocinmig).
- 3 Multicultural Democracy and Immigrants Social Capital in Europe: Participation, Organisational Networks, and Public Policies at the Local Level, also known as the LOCALMULTIDEM project, was funded by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission (contract CIT5-CT-2005-028802). Comprising a team of seven European universities and research institutes, it studied the cases of Budapest, London, Lyon, Madrid, Milan and Zurich. For more information see [www.um.es/localmultidem](http://www.um.es/localmultidem).
- 4 Portes also argues that the concept is only of some use if this is not an omnipresent phenomenon, i.e. if there is variation across individuals and organisations.
- 5 Nevertheless, there are sizeable migrant populations from sub-Saharan Africa and, most recently, from China. 'Retirement' migration from Western Europe is also substantial.
- 6 Some rural municipalities, however, have even higher proportions of migrants than the larger cities, especially in the Mediterranean regions and in Andalusia.
- 7 The size of the Muslim population is roughly estimated by adding all individuals born in countries that the *CIA World Factbook* lists as having populations that are 50 per cent or more Muslim in 2005.
- 8 Non-EU nationals cannot vote in any elections in Spain. Voting rights, even at the local level, can only be granted by the national level and, in most cases, they require modifying the Constitution. Although the issue of allowing all residents to vote in local elections has been raised on various occasions, the necessary political agreements between the two major parties (PSOE and PP) have never materialised into legal amendments in this direction.
- 9 This does not mean that in Barcelona there are no consultation bodies dealing with migration issues. Though there is a municipal sectorial council for immigration, it is not specifically designed to address migrant or immigration issues in particular but, rather, as an additional sectorial policy alongside many other issues – youth, gender, sports, homosexuals and transsexuals, housing, etc.

- 10 The update entails partially re-interviewing organisations included in the pilot study to analyse changes in their organisational activities and composition and interviewing organisations we were unable to interview in 2004 as well as organisations formed after the pilot was completed.
- 11 A more detailed description of the questionnaire and of the pilot studies can be found in Ortega and Morales (2006).
- 12 EU-15 citizens' associations (e.g. French, Italian, British), as well as those from richer OECD countries (e.g. US, Canada, Australia), have been excluded from the analyses and tables in this chapter to restrict our focus to the national origins that produce the bulk of 'economic' migrants in our three cities. The needs and activities of these two subpopulations differ too much to make their joint analysis meaningful for the purposes of this chapter.
- 13 Our searching methods in official registers and on the internet were systematic and thorough, and included a long list of word strings with various variants of the words 'immigrant' and 'foreigner' and the multiple countries and national qualifiers.
- 14 One might wonder whether, given this relative fluidity of associations, our results on transnational practices are likely to be stable over time. Of course, this can only be fully assessed by a proper longitudinal study, but if the over-time evolution of the few associations (22) that we were able to interview both in 2003-2004 and 2007-2008 in Madrid is of any indication, the inclination to engage in transnational practices seems quite stable. For example, only five associations that mentioned transnational links with associations overseas in 2003-2004 did not mention any in 2007-2008, and only two associations that mentioned any links in 2007-2008 had not mentioned any in the previous round of interviews.
- 15 See Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) for a discussion of this frequent mismatch.
- 16 In the 2007-2008 questionnaires, we included an item that enquired into the main specific protest or demonstration events associations had participated in over the previous two years. However, because this item was not posed to the associations interviewed only in 2003-2004, we decided not to include it in these analyses. Nevertheless, a close inspection of them leads us to conclude that 'transnational' protest is the exception rather than the norm, as barely fifteen associations out of over 100 that had participated in protests mentioned a 'transnational' cause being at stake. In fact, 'international' issues, such as the Iraq War, were much more common; and, by far, exclusively national or local issues dominate the scene. Among the few transnational protests, the most abundant were those related to violence in Colombia, political turmoil in Pakistan and support for victims of national disasters in the homeland.
- 17 Unfortunately, given the difficulty in tracking such a detail, our ability to establish whether these members ran for office once already in Spain is limited. However, having included an item that enquired into the date when these members ran as candidates, we found that all were in the 2000s, thus strongly suggesting that respondents report on only recent electoral contests and that this is indeed a valid indicator of political transnationalism.
- 18 Although the total number of cases interviewed in Murcia is too small for frequency statistical analyses to be meaningful, we have preferred to report them as an additional piece of information. Parallel to the study in the city of Murcia, we undertook an identical study in the whole region/province of Murcia, which resulted in 25 additional interviews (a total of 43). In terms of the transnational practices, the results are very similar for the whole region and, if anything, would indicate that the organisations in the city of Murcia are more transnationally oriented than those of the rest of the region.

- 19 These are all ego networks. The relative size of the interviewed organisations (in white shapes) indicates the number of transnational organisations they named, i.e. their outdegree.
- 20 In subsequent tables we do not include the case of Murcia because the limited number of cases renders it unsuitable for bivariate analyses.
- 21 These are self-defined identities that need not overlap fully with the 'legal' status of members of these groups. Koopmans et al. (2005: 126-127) identify three types of transnational claims-making: transplanted homeland politics (e.g. claims against the homeland regime), homeland-directed transnational claims (e.g. claims requesting the settlement country government to intervene in homeland politics) and country of residence-directed transnationalism (e.g. homeland resources mobilised to intervene in host country arenas).



## Chapter 15

### Cold constellations and hot identities: Political theory questions about transnationalism and diaspora

*Rainer Bauböck*

The initial question from which we started when inviting the contributions assembled in this book was whether the concepts of transnationalism and diaspora can still be analytically distinguished, or if they have become so overstretched and blurred that they no longer refer to distinct phenomena. If we find that the two concepts are still useful, then a second question follows: how do they relate to each other in different academic disciplines and theoretical perspectives, and can they be integrated into broader theories of boundary-crossing and boundary change? Finally, does the study of empirical phenomena that are called ‘transnational’ or ‘diasporic’ also require replenishing the methodological toolboxes used in social research with new instruments?

Predictably, our authors have not agreed on answers to these three questions. Some have responded indirectly by demonstrating the heuristic validity of a certain approach to transnationalism and diaspora; others have done so by highlighting in a critical vein what has been missing or overlooked in their respective disciplines. The appropriate conclusion to be drawn from this exercise is that this is neither the time to jettison the two concepts nor the moment to integrate them into a grand theoretical synthesis. Instead, this is a time for ‘talking across disciplines’ (Bretell & Hollifield 2006) in order to explore how different perspectives may cross-fertilise each other and move the debates forward. We may even hope, rather optimistically, that such transdisciplinary encounters have a transformative effect on academic boundaries similar to the effect of transnational migration on the boundaries of nation-states.

This concluding chapter will not repeat the task of the introduction in summarising the debate or drawing conclusions from the contributions assembled in this book. Instead, I want to consider what my own discipline of political theory could learn from engaging with the findings of other disciplines and what it could contribute in return. For this



purpose, I will refer selectively to other chapters in this volume. The weakness of political theory is that it takes a long time to digest insights of other disciplines about changing structures of modern societies, including those changes that we associate with transnationalism. Its strength lies in the striving for analytical consistency in conceptual analysis and normative judgements. I will therefore want to explore whether political theory can help clarify the relation between the two concepts and to address the normative challenges for democracy that arise from a transnational blurring of political boundaries and the mobilisation of diasporic identities.

### 15.1 Transnational citizenship from above and below

As discussed in Faist's introduction to this volume, transnationalism has had a strong career as a concept in quite disparate fields of academic study. Probably the three most important ones are the following: first, international relations, where the concept began to be used as early as the 1970s to refer to the growing importance of non-state actors, such as multinational corporations and international NGOs, in the international arena (e.g. Keohane & Nye 1972); second, social movement studies, which were interested in political mobilisation across borders (e.g. Smith, Chatfield & Pagnucco 1997); and third, migration studies (e.g. Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994). Although these are quite different fields, there was a common underlying perception that transnationalism was about 'globalisation from below' (Guarnizo & Smith 1998; Della Porta, Andretta, Mosca & Reiter 2006). Transnational relations were accordingly distinguished from international ones by insisting that at least one of the actors involved in the former be a non-state entity (Risse-Kappen 1995; Portes, Guarniz & Landolt 1999). Much of the empirical research on transnationalism has accordingly focused on individual and group agency across international borders.

From a political theory perspective, there is something missing here: a focus on political institutions and how they not only provide 'opportunity structures' for individual or collective transnational practices, but are themselves transformed through transnational relations. Political philosophy has for some time been divided between approaches that focus on the ethics of individual action or on justice as the first virtue of political institutions (Rawls 1971: 1). The latter approach has been dominant since the 1970s, and has led to a stronger engagement between normative political theory and empirical research on democratic institutions (Bauböck 2008a). The notion of transnational citizenship reflects such an institutionalist perspective (Bauböck 1994).

While the international relations and social movements literatures have focused on boundary-crossing political *issues*, such as environmental risks or economic globalisation, and responses by institutionalised or informal political actors, migration raises more complex questions about political *membership*. The underlying problem is how to resolve the mismatch between states as territorially bounded jurisdictions and citizenship as an intergenerational status of membership in a political community. Democratic citizenship has a sticky quality: it clings to individuals, and they cling to it as well when moving across international borders. But democratic states are organised as non-overlapping territorial jurisdictions. Migration between states therefore produces citizens abroad and foreign citizens in the territory. The term 'transnational citizenship' was coined to refer to a pluralisation of citizenship statuses and the differentiation of rights in response to this problem. This response can be partially derived from the evolution of democratic state practices, but the term also contains a normative surplus in the sense of providing guidelines as to how liberal democracies *ought* to transform their conceptions of membership when faced with transnational migration.

In the post-World War II era, democratic immigration countries had gradually and unevenly liberalised their conceptions of citizenship by granting quasi-citizenship status to long-term resident foreign nationals. They did this by turning naturalisation from a discretionary decision of authorities into an individual entitlement and by tolerating dual citizenship acquired at birth or through naturalisation. Some authors explained this move towards greater inclusion as the impact of global human rights discourses (Soysal 1994) and international legal constraints on state sovereignty (Jacobson 1996), while others emphasised domestic sources of liberalisation (Joppke 1999; Hansen & Weil 2001). Only a few scholars noted that towards the end of the twentieth century, analogous changes occurred among an increasing number of sending countries. These started to consider external citizenship as a persistent link with their expatriates abroad that could be activated for economic, political and cultural policy goals. The move towards toleration of dual citizenship has been even more dramatic in sending than in receiving countries (Faist & Kivisto 2007; Blatter, Erdmann & Schwanke 2009). Since nearly all receiving countries also have substantial numbers of expatriates, mixed motives of both kinds have driven policy change in most Western democracies.

The core citizenship rights of democratic participation and representation have undergone a similar expansive development. Western liberal democracies have generally abolished previous restrictions on political activity by foreign nationals, and fourteen European states currently grant local voting rights to all long-term residents (Shaw 2007). At the

same time, a much larger number of states has recently introduced absentee voting in national elections for their citizens residing abroad (IDEA & IFE 2007).

These reforms have made citizenship not only internally more accessible and inclusive for immigrants, but also less clearly bounded externally. The legal statuses and rights of denizens and dual nationals are jointly produced by receiving and sending states. Responding to Hammar's (1990) influential discussion of denizenship and dual citizenship as alternative solutions for the legal and political integration of immigrant, I have suggested that what these two statuses had in common was their transnational character (Bauböck 1994). While Hammar had analysed them primarily from an immigrant integration perspective, they should be seen instead as a legal expression and recognition of overlapping circles of membership between two states. Transnational citizenship in this sense refers to an institutional transformation of membership and legal rights.<sup>1</sup> This transformation is not the result of international migration itself, but of changing normative conceptions of political community that respond to perceived challenges and opportunities created by migration.

Such an institutionalist perspective contributes also to the dispute over whether migrant transnationalism is really a historically novel and numerically significant phenomenon. Transnationalism has often been associated with migration patterns involving frequent movement between two states (see Dahinden in this volume) or with homeland-related attachments and activities among settled immigrants. These phenomena have been facilitated by new technologies of transportation and communication, but they were also strongly present in earlier migration waves, including the great transatlantic exodus from Europe to America around 1900 (Morawska 2001). By contrast, the proliferation of local voting rights for denizens,<sup>2</sup> of external voting rights for expatriates and of tolerated dual citizenship constitute, by any standards, both a historically novel and quantitatively significant trend (Bauböck 2003).

Describing and explaining this trend does not yet answer the normative question of how citizenship status and rights ought to be allocated in contexts of overlapping affiliations. In response to this question, I recently proposed a stakeholder principle (Bauböck 2007b). This idea deviates to a certain extent from Carens' (1989, 2002) earlier suggestion that citizenship ought to be derived from societal membership. If we regard societies as bounded by the territories of nation-states, then it becomes natural to associate societal membership with long-term residence, ignoring thereby the transnational aspects of migrants' lives. Once we accept, however, critique of this perspective as methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002), then there seems to be no way of determining stable boundaries of societies. At some level of

analysis, societies merge into a global human society. The geographic scope of transnational citizenship lies somewhere between a notion of society as a resident population inside a state territory and society as a global network of human communication and interaction. Several authors in our volume therefore use terms such as ‘transnational social fields’ or ‘networks’. But fields and networks are not political entities that can serve as addressees of claims to membership status and rights. Societal membership is then too vague a criterion for determining not only the claims immigrants have towards a host state, but also those of emigrants towards countries of origins. In contrast with societies, networks and fields, political jurisdictions and political communities are demarcated by territorial and membership boundaries, even when these overlap. I propose therefore individual stakeholding in the future of a political community as an explicitly political criterion for membership claims. Such a reference to bounded political units is indispensable for a normative critique of exclusionary as well as over-inclusive citizenship regimes.

Citizenship is a multifaceted concept whose many meanings are not exhausted by legal status, rights and duties allocated to individuals by states. The institutional perspective on transnational citizenship ‘from above’ must therefore be matched by studying the same set of phenomena ‘from below’. Transnational citizenship should then also be regarded as a political opportunity structure that enables or constrains individual choices about membership status and identities as well as collective claims about rights. This perspective on transnational citizenship from below opens up a broad research agenda ranging from naturalisation motives to diaspora involvement in homeland conflicts.

Finally, a third aspect should be added to the study of institutions and practices: discourses. As pointed out by Rogers Smith (2003), political legitimacy in every polity is generated through ‘stories of peoplehood’ that include not only narratives about economic advantage and political power, but also ‘ethically constitutive stories’ about collective identities and belonging. This is true not only for independent states, but also for various types of non-state polities.<sup>3</sup> We therefore need to trace as well the public discourses that construct transnational citizenship not merely as legal statuses and rights, but also as a significant way of belonging to a political community.

Bringing practice and discourse dimensions into the analysis of transnational citizenship creates a bridge to the study of diaspora. As I suggest in the fourth section of this chapter, diaspora should be understood as a politically mobilised claim about transnational citizenship, which can be pursued either by governmental actors from above or by non-governmental actors from below. In either case, diasporas are

created through discourses about transnational belonging to a political community.

Before further elaborating this interpretation of diaspora, I will sketch a broader framework for studying citizenship constellations that avoids, on the one hand, the statist biases to have plagued most political theory approaches and allows, on the other hand, to fill the normative gaps left wide open by sociological and anthropological accounts of transnationalism.

## 15.2 Citizenship constellations

Citizenship has generally been interpreted as a relation between an individual and a single polity. But, as discussion in the previous section has shown, this is clearly inadequate in contexts of migration. In order to understand the motives that migrants have for choosing a particular legal status or exercising a particular citizenship right, we need to look at the citizenship opportunity structure that is jointly produced by their countries of origin and settlement. The same broader framework is required for studying the impact of a change in citizenship status on migrants' socioeconomic position or political participation (Jones-Correa 2001, 2005; DeVoretz 2008; DeVoretz & Bevelander 2009). Instead of considering, as usual, only the effect naturalisation has in a country of settlement, we need to take into account also how it impacts migrants' opportunities in relation to countries of origin or even third countries. And these effects are sometimes not what one would expect: namely, that citizenship acquisition consolidates settlement in a destination country. Consider, for example, immigrants of Chinese origin naturalising in the United States and Canada in order to facilitate return to their country of origin with what they consider a privileged status (Ong 1999).

We need to understand more clearly that citizenship is not only a status of internal equality and entitlements within a polity, but also enables mobility across international borders (Bauböck 2009). The core of external citizenship is an unconditional right to be readmitted to one's country of nationality. This is not only the main reason why most migrants are reluctant to renounce their citizenship of origin when they apply for naturalisation; it is also a reason why individuals may be interested in activating an inherited external citizenship or in becoming citizens of a country that offers them easy naturalisation on grounds of ancestry or ethnic affinity. Dual citizens enjoy free movement rights between two countries and, for European Union citizens, this privilege extends to a much larger geographic area. In the EU, states that provide easy access to their citizenship for co-ethnic populations living abroad create EU citizens with admission rights in all other member states. Transnational

and supranational citizenships thus affect the opportunities of individuals in relation to several states, and also impact these states through the associated mobility privileges these statuses entail.

Alongside the study of individual choices of citizenship status and of collective effects of citizenship arrangements, citizenship policy formation is a third object of research for which a constellation perspective generates new research questions and insights. We need to take into account how states linked to each other through large-scale migration flows react to policy changes in the other country. The sequence of reforms of citizenship policies in Turkey and Germany since the 1990s provides a good illustration of what I suggest calling 'interactive citizenship regimes' (Bauböck 2006). In the early 1990s, arson attacks in the German towns of Mölln and Solingen killed eight Turkish women and girls. Convinced that Turks in Germany would be fully protected only if they had German citizenship, the Turkish government reacted by changing its previous policy of discouraging naturalisation in Germany. But at the same time, Turkey wanted to strengthen its links to its largest expatriate community. In 1995 a 'pink card' was introduced that facilitated renunciation of Turkish citizenship by guaranteeing former Turkish citizens most of the rights they had prior enjoyed apart from the franchise. Yet, Turkish migrants apparently did not trust the value of this external quasi-citizenship and bided their time waiting for reforms that would allow for dual citizenship (Caglar 2004). In 1999, the red-green coalition government promised to introduce such reforms, but had to retract this crucial element of its citizenship reform proposal when the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) mobilised against it in a referendum in the province of Hesse. Turkish authorities reacted to this setback by exploiting a legal loophole that, prior to 2000, had not permitted German authorities to deprive German citizens of their nationality while they resided in the German state territory. A substantial number of Turkish migrants therefore renounced their citizenship of origin only temporarily in order to naturalise, but then reacquired it through the Turkish consulates. The new citizenship law that came into force in 2000 closed off this opportunity. Shortly before regional and federal elections in 2005, German authorities became active and deprived about 20,000 immigrants of Turkish origin of their German citizenship and franchise. This episode illustrates how states whose citizenship regimes have become entangled with each other through large-scale migration may act independently of each other to pursue their own political goals, but still become exposed to the other state's policy choices and may respond in kind.

Empirical research on citizenship should therefore move beyond single-country case studies and even beyond comparative approaches towards an analysis of citizenship constellations that involve several

states. A constellation framework is also relevant for addressing normative questions concerning how states ought to allocate membership status, rights and duties, how they should coordinate their policies amongst one another and how they may legitimately constrain individual choices and practices. In the previous section, I briefly introduced a stakeholder principle for answering the basic question of who has a moral claim to membership status in which polity. Introducing a transnational constellation perspective means that we need to go beyond this initial question. First, we have to develop principles for citizenship policies that do not only respond to moral claims of individuals, but that can also guide political decisions of different polities in such a way that they do not conflict with each other or produce unjustifiable burdens for another country. Second, we must not only reconcile the individual equality of citizens with the recognition of relevant group differences inside a single polity, but we also need to consider how a principle of equality applies between individuals who are positioned differently within a citizenship constellation.

Before addressing these normative questions, we need to further differentiate citizenship constellations. There are two basic types that have very different structural properties but are often connected to each other in ways that complicate both their empirical and normative analyses. So far, I have focused on transnational constellations formed by independent states with non-overlapping territories but partially overlapping memberships. The second basic type is a federal structure in which the territories and members of several polities are nested within a larger encompassing polity so that, in principle, every citizen of a lower level polity is also a citizen of the higher level one and vice versa. Both constellations produce multiple citizenship relations; in the first one, they are horizontally overlapping, while in the second, they are vertically nested (Bauböck 2001). Within nested constellations, we no longer consider only independent states but, rather, polities of different kinds. These include self-governing municipalities, federal provinces or autonomous territories within unitary states and at least one supranational polity, which is the EU. Not all these polities have a formally established status of citizenship that is called by this name and, in those that have it, such as the EU, there may be doubts about its substance (Wiener 1998; Weiler 1999). Yet, these are not justifications for the statist bias in citizenship studies that simply ignores the structure of rights, duties and membership in self-governing polities below or above the state.

### 15.3 Normative puzzles in complex constellations

The first normative question raised above concerned principles for coordinating membership decisions and the allocation of rights and duties between polities entangled in a common citizenship constellation. In a horizontally overlapping constellation formed by independent states, this need for coordination is obviously less pressing than in a federally nested one. We can, however, assume that the need will become stronger the greater the extent of overlap.<sup>4</sup> In a horizontal constellation, each state will have equal powers to determine its own citizens. The question is whether states can do so unilaterally without taking into account the other states' concerns. In its landmark 1955 decision in the *Nottebohm* case, the International Court of Justice endorsed a principle of 'genuine and effective links', in the absence of which states may not confer their nationality to another state's nationals.<sup>5</sup> This negative version of the stakeholder principle does not yet imply a positive duty to accept dual citizenship in cases of dual stakeholding. As pointed out in the first section of this chapter, although the number of states that do so has sharply increased, most do not recognise the transnational character of this status. Some maintain instead that their own citizenship takes priority wherever their citizens reside, which is obviously a principle that cannot be generalised without creating conflicts between states involved in a citizenship constellation. The alternative solution is to regard external citizenships as dormant and only the residential citizenship as active. But this solution fails to take into account justified claims of external stakeholding, which may include voting rights and diplomatic protection. This problem is even more obvious for denizens whose only formal citizenship status is an extraterritorial one. The upshot of these considerations is that there is a case for stronger norms in international law in order to coordinate citizenship policies between states.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast with horizontally overlapping constellations, vertically nested ones need not only coordination between levels of government, but a constitutional settlement that regulates their decision-making powers. As mentioned above, the basic principle regulating multilevel citizenship is that each citizen of a nested polity is also a citizen of the encompassing one and vice versa. This two-way linkage between levels of citizenship is characteristic of all federal arrangements. The linkage does not yet tell us which level of government has the power to determine citizenship for all other levels of the federation. In contemporary federal states this is now nearly always the federal level. Switzerland is the only current exception, since its federal law regulates only Swiss citizenship acquired by birth and certain minimum conditions for naturalisation, but leaves to the cantons and municipalities the power to determine under their own laws who will become a Swiss citizen.



Historically, we can also find a similar upward derivation from the constitutive unit to the federal level in the early US and German federations (Schönberger 2005). The same principle is applied to citizenship in the EU, with the important difference being that the EU does not even have the competencies to provide a regulatory framework for its member states' nationality laws. It would be tempting to go into more detail here and discuss whether the present lack of even purely coordinating powers at the supranational level is appropriate and sustainable.

Since our main concern here is transnationalism, I want to consider instead how principles applying to nested and overlapping constellations respectively interfere with each other where such constellations are combined. In the first section of this chapter, I described how states react to the growing incongruence between territorial residence and membership status by strengthening citizenship relations with emigrants and by granting denizenship to long-term resident immigrants. In a nested constellation, this horizontal differentiation of citizenship has the effect of creating an additional incongruence between citizenships at different levels by partially breaking the linkage between them.

The first break is that external citizens will generally not simultaneously be citizens of a province or municipality in their country of origin. This is so not only due to a monopoly of state governments in international relations, but also because, in democratic states, local and provincial citizenship is determined by *ius domicilii* instead of the combination of *ius sanguinis*, *ius soli* and naturalisation that regulates access to state-level citizenship. After some time of residence, citizens who have migrated inside the national territory automatically lose their local citizenship status and rights in their previous place of residence and acquire that of the place where they have settled without having to naturalise.<sup>7</sup> The same principle of automatic *ius domicilii* implies that emigrants who have left the state territory will no longer be counted as local citizens, but only as citizens of the state. Even this implication is, however, not without exceptions. A minority of states with external voting rights also extend them to sub-state elections, sometimes, as in Norway and Finland, with more restrictive absentee clauses for these compared to national elections (IDEA & IFE 2007: 4, 17, 234-245).

While external citizenship is generally disconnected from membership in sub-state polities, the latter can also expand their own residential citizenships beyond the membership criteria used at the state level. The local (and, in a few cases, also regional) franchise for third-country nationals can be interpreted as an assertion of a distinct conception of citizenship at a sub-state level. This is, once again, the outcome of an interaction between the transnational and nested features of citizenship constellations. In the absence of international migration, *ius domicilii* at the local level would apply only to native citizens of the larger state and

serve to maintain stability in a nested federation through complementary and mutually compatible principles for citizenship determination. If both states and municipalities had the capacity to determine local citizenship and voting rights through independent naturalisation procedures, this could lead to depriving members of the national *demos* residing in the territory of any local political representation. It is only with immigration from other countries that *ius domicilii* and naturalisation can be seen as alternative, rather than complementary, principles for citizenship attribution. Many local governments realise then that their conception of citizenship as automatically derived from residence is not compatible with excluding foreign residents who have not obtained citizenship at the state level. By turning them into fully enfranchised citizens at the local level, they partially break the link between local and state-level citizenship. Not all European constitutions, however, allow for this inclusive solution to the tension between transnational and federal constellations. The German and Austrian Constitutional Courts have struck down provincial legislation in Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Vienna that would have introduced a franchise for third-country nationals at the local level (Shaw 2007). The two courts argued that the federal *demos* must be homogenous so that the electorate is the same at all levels of government.<sup>8</sup> This interpretation of the German and Austrian constitutions rejects the accommodation of transnational citizenship and asserts a conception of the federal *demos* that is more unitary than the one we find in unitary states such as Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden.<sup>9</sup>

As these two illustrations have shown, the partial delinking of citizenship between levels is not an automatic consequence of international migration. Some states have opted for extending extraterritorial citizenship to provincial and local levels, while others have rejected applying the *ius domicilii* principle of local citizenship to third-country nationals. In liberal polities exposed to immigration and emigration, we see nevertheless a significant trend towards the double incongruence between citizenships at state and sub-state levels. This trend emerges as a largely unintended by-product of applying pre-existing principles of membership to the new migratory challenges. It adds another layer of complexity to the transnational expansion of state-level citizenship that generates increasing overlaps with the membership boundaries of other states.

The question of how to determine citizenship statuses in complex constellations is connected with a second normative problem of equality. In contrast with the subjects of empires, who had been divided into multiple ascriptive categories that were assigned different group privileges or duties, democratic citizenship is normatively understood as a status of equal membership in a self-governing polity. Certainly, even

for a traditional state-centred view, rights and duties are also not exactly the same for every citizen. Citizens below the age of majority cannot vote, women are rarely drafted for military service, poor citizens are exempted from paying income tax, social insurance benefits and welfare rights are differentiated according to contributions and needs. Moreover, women, disabled persons, racial, ethnic and religious minorities have obtained special protection against discrimination and some exemptions from general legislation that applies to other citizens. All these and other forms of differentiated citizenship can still be seen as emerging from a principle of equal respect and concern for all who are citizens of a single polity (Dworkin 1977). By taking into account individual affiliations to a plurality of polities, a constellation perspective transcends, however, the single state as the basic reference unit for equality. And it does so without replacing state-based citizenship with a similarly homogeneous conception of universal human rights grounded in the moral equality of human beings.

While there is a broad feminist and multiculturalist literature on differentiated citizenship, political theorists have so far hardly ever attempted to specify and contextualise how norms of equal citizenship apply beyond a single polity framework. I will illustrate this problem by outlining merely two of its many different applications: one that refers only to transnational constellations and a second that pertains also to multilevel citizenship.

Consider, first, external voting rights exercised by citizens residing permanently abroad. I have proposed elsewhere that a stakeholder principle may provide justification for such a transnational franchise, but that it also generally limits its application to a first generation of emigrants (Bauböck 2007b). In some countries that have introduced absentee ballots, this was done with explicit reference to a norm of political equality among all citizens independently of their country of residence.<sup>10</sup> In Belgium, external voting has even been made mandatory since it is also mandatory for citizens residing in Belgium (Lafleur 2008). But such an interpretation of equal citizenship is difficult to maintain since states cannot protect their citizens' civil rights outside their own territory nor provide them with social citizenship rights to public education, health care or poverty relief. Why should they then have an obligation to secure exactly the same rights to vote for external citizens as for those who live in the territory? Moreover, equality of electoral representation between domestic and external citizens is nearly impossible to achieve. In most systems, the electorate is subdivided into territorial constituencies on the basis of enfranchised voters (not of registered voters or actual votes cast). Do expatriates then have a claim to a number of representatives in a national legislature that is proportional to their numerical strength? Given the often very large numbers but

generally low electoral turnout of expatriates, such an interpretation of equality would lead to a huge over-representation of absentee voters. This is one reason most states do not create separate constituencies for external voters, but count their votes in the domestic constituency where they resided last.<sup>11</sup> I have argued that such a merging of external and domestic votes is also better justified than special representation, since expatriates should be seen as external stakeholders in the common good of the polity to which they are linked through biographic ties, rather than as an external minority with special interests that need to be represented in the legislative process (Bauböck 2007b: 2432-2435).<sup>12</sup> External stakeholders will also be self-selected. Not all persons who retain a citizenship of origin can be expected to engage actively with the domestic politics in their country of origin. Mandatory voting, which may be justified in order to enhance equality of representation among different classes of citizens (Lijphart 1997), clearly should not be imposed on expatriates. We could add further considerations about governments' duty to provide citizens with equal access to voting rights, which, again, do not apply in the same way to domestic and external voters. The conclusion is that even if one accepts the basic argument for introducing voting rights for expatriates, the principles of equal representation will have to be relaxed and differentiated in transnational elections.

The second illustration for problems of citizenship equality concerns local voting rights in the EU. There are three different rationales for extending the franchise to non-citizen residents. The first justification is that member states have agreed to grant each other's citizens a local franchise as a matter of reciprocity. The underlying idea here is not an individual claim of EU citizens to local political participation. Rather it is, first, a general commitment of liberal states to secure their citizens' rights when they reside in other states and to be willing to grant the same rights to citizens of other states in their own territory. And, second, it is a specific commitment to promote the political integration of the EU through special privileges attached to EU citizenship.

The second justification is derived from freedom of movement as the core right of EU citizenship. The EU is committed to preventing the discrimination on grounds of nationality of EU citizens who make use of their right to take up residence in other member states. The institutions of the EU, and specifically the European Court of Justice, have interpreted this commitment very broadly as entailing general equality both in comparison with the rights of citizens of the member states where an EU migrant takes up residence and with the rights EU migrants have enjoyed previously in their member states of origin. This argument has also been invoked for justifying the privilege of EU citizens to vote in local elections in other member states. The dual rationale is

that making use of their mobility rights should not entail loss of the local representation they previously enjoyed and that they should not be discriminated compared to citizens of their host country (Shaw 2007).

A third justification builds on the ideas of stakeholder citizenship and differentiated membership criteria for local and state polities that I have outlined above. In this view, local citizenship is derived from residence, and municipalities should therefore give access to political participation and representation to all migrants who settle within their boundaries, independently of whether they are citizens of the encompassing state.

All three justifications converge in supporting the introduction of local voting rights for EU citizens by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. They lead to quite different conclusions, however, regarding how the underlying norm of equality applies to third-country nationals. The first interpretation does not provide any reason for a general inclusion of third-country nationals, but would justify extending local voting rights to citizens of certain non-EU states that have introduced a residence-based local franchise. For example, Portugal and Spain, whose constitutions emphasise a principle of reciprocity in international relations, have granted the local franchise to Norwegian citizens. The problem with this norm is that its consistent application would create a proliferation of special rights for immigrants depending on what rights their country of origin grants to citizens of the host state. Moreover, this differentiation of privileges would not be related in any plausible way to questions of immigrant integration and citizenship in the context of the receiving polity. Is it really plausible that the very few Norwegians in Lisbon and Madrid have a stronger claim to local representation than the many more Moroccans who live there? In the second interpretation, EU citizenship is primarily a bundle of transnational rights attached to free movement. Third-country nationals could then be included if they also enjoyed extensive free-movement rights and were covered by a principle of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality. In the EU, however, this is clearly still a utopian idea. Third-country nationals are subjected to extensive immigration control when entering the EU. The 2003 EU directive on long-term resident third-country nationals (EC 2003/109) has introduced limited mobility rights across internal EU borders for denizens, and the European Commission had for a while promoted the idea of a 'civic citizenship' for these third-country nationals that would have included local voting rights.<sup>13</sup> So this second rationale for local voting rights could, in principle, be extended to third-country nationals. Deriving such rights from the exercise of free movement, however, creates distinct justifications for the political representation of mobile and sedentary populations and raises the hurdles for the inclusion of third-country nationals.

The third justification appears to me more consistent and inclusive than the other two. It proposes that equality among members of a local polity should be interpreted in relation to local self-government, instead of being derived from a principle of reciprocity that pertains to international relations between states, or from a privilege of free movement granted to the citizens of a supranational union. In this view, local political communities should include all long-term residents, without distinction between native-born residents, citizens of the member state who have moved there from other parts of the country, EU citizens from other member states and third-country immigrants. Local citizenship would then have to be disconnected from both state citizenship and EU citizenship for the sake of ensuring equality in the local polity. Note that this argument for residential citizenship need not apply to state and EU levels, if we accept that citizenship acquisition in states should be derived from birth or consent and that in the EU, as in all federal polities with multi-level citizenship, citizenship at the federal level is not independent of citizenship in one of the provinces or states.

#### **15.4 Where is the nationalism in transnationalism?**

The theoretical questions that I addressed in the previous section emerge from an institutional perspective on transnationalism. Political institutions are ensembles of entrenched norms that structure the activities of governments and other political actors. Political theorists consider how these norms change, or ought to change, in response to transformations of contemporary societies. This perspective attributes agency to individuals as bearers of rights and duties allocated to them by political institutions, and it takes into account individuals' interests and identities in relation to the political institutions that constrain or enable their actions. But this view does not focus on collective action by non-institutionalised actors, which has been a core element in definitions of transnationalism in other disciplines. So how can we bring in the practice and discourse dimensions without neglecting institutional change?

A fresh look at the terminology can serve as a point of departure. The word 'transnationalism' ends with '-ism', suggesting thus that it refers to an ideology. The question is whether this ideology is to be understood as a variety of nationalism projected across borders or, rather, as transcending nationalism by widening the reference framework for political membership to the constellations described above.<sup>14</sup>

Reflecting in this way on the terminological appropriateness of the concept could lead to abandoning it altogether. There are two reasons for regarding transnationalism as a misnomer. First, the '-ism' sends a wrong signal. Inferring the meaning of transnationalism from its actual

use, we will find that it is mostly employed as an analytic concept in academic discourses and only rarely comes up in political discourses.<sup>15</sup> Transnationalism is, as Faist explains in the introductory chapter, an optic, but it need not be associated with any particular ideology. The proper answer to the posed question is that, as an analytical perspective, transnationalism has to account for both trans-border nationalism and nation-transcending conceptions of political community without being committed to either of the two. If transnationalism refers to constellations composed of a plurality of polities, then it must imply a rejection of methodological and normative nationalism. But this does not mean that it is necessarily allied to an alternative normative vision, such as cosmopolitanism or multiculturalism.

A second objection applies to the adjective 'transnational', which does not suggest an ideological stance but a structural quality. The problem here is that in most uses of the term, the political unit that is transcended by institutions, actions, discourses or flows is not the nation, but the state. It is certainly very common to regard nation and state as synonyms, but this stance reflects, again, a statist bias that privileges claims to nationhood by entities established as sovereign states over those of stateless nations and national minorities, and it ignores the nested constellations of pluri-national democracies, such as Belgium, Canada, India, Spain and the United Kingdom (Keating 2001; Gagnon & Tully 2001). If we want to avoid this implication, we could use the term 'trans-state' rather than 'trans-national' (Fox 2005: 172). This solution would create some additional confusion, however, in India or the US where the constituent units of the federation are called 'states' and the encompassing one is referred to as 'country' or 'nation'.

At the most abstract level of analysis, we might need a term referring generally to institutions, actions and processes that transcend the boundaries of political units while, at the same time, linking specific units together into a bounded constellation. One could then introduce an entirely new term by calling these 'trans-polity' phenomena.<sup>16</sup> They would not only include constellations of independent states, but also horizontal ones between the constituent units of pluri-national democracies as well as relations between stateless nations and their diasporas.

Refining the vocabulary of academic research in these ways can be a useful exercise when it becomes necessary to highlight distinctions between the various kinds of trans-polity relations. One should also avoid, however, introducing too many new terms into a well-established field of study, especially if referring to phenomena commonly described by a widely accepted terminology. Terminological battles tend to be tedious and unproductive, and an attempt to purge the literature on transnationalism of its core concept would be a waste of energy. A more promising strategy is to enrich its meanings through analysing the

different contexts in which it applies and to introduce new terms only as needed for further specifications.

Instead of casting aside transnationalism for reasons of terminological purity, we could make more productive use of its ambiguities by taking seriously this question: where is the nationalism in transnationalism? This is now no longer a conceptual question but an empirical one.

Although transnationalism does not conceptually entail nationalism, nationalist claims are frequently articulated and mobilised within transnational constellations. Contrary to a widespread assumption, nationalism is not always aiming for congruence between national-cultural boundaries and state borders. Nation-building may be confined to sub-state territories (without ever crossing the threshold to secessionism), and it may extend beyond state borders by attempting to bind together populations in a homeland territory and abroad (without trying to remove the borders between them or to bring external kin populations back into the homeland).

We also need to consider how transnational citizenship is not merely a bundle of rights, but may be invoked and involved in nation-building projects. In this respect, the early literature on migrant transnationalism has often assumed that any process that transcends state borders will thereby also promote transition towards an age of post-nationalism (e.g. Basch et al. 1994; Soysal 1994). As a focus on sending-country governments makes immediately clear, from their perspective, the promotion of transnational ties is rather linked to an ideology of nation-building beyond borders. The terminological problem becomes then quite obvious since, in this view, emigrants have crossed the state border but remain inside the national community.

What has been largely missing so far is an effort to synthesise the literature on migrant political transnationalism with that on territorial nationalism and the relations of homeland minorities with external kin states (see Waterbury in this volume). Brubaker's pioneering work in this field has described a triangular constellation involving nationalising states, national minorities and their external homelands, which is frequently found in Central and Eastern Europe (Brubaker 1996).<sup>17</sup> This triangle is structurally isomorphic with the one between host countries, immigrants and sending states that characterises migrant transnationalism. It should then not be difficult to compare the two constellations and to consider also possible interferences and combinations between them.

The first lesson to be learned from bringing together two separate fields of study is that migration is not a necessary condition for transnational political ties, which can be generated in both constellations. Yet, it is also important to distinguish them, since it makes a big difference whether the relation to an external homeland has come about through



the movement of people across borders or of borders across people, and whether their situation in the 'hostland' is one of recent arrivals and territorially dispersed immigrants or of a settled minority that has lived continuously in a particular territory over many generations. How relevant are these distinctions for explaining phenomenologies of nationalism in both contexts and for normatively evaluating claims to transnational citizenship?

In both constellations, governments and political parties in external kin states or countries of origin have frequently used nationalist rhetoric, but host country governments have reacted to these quite differently. The crucial question is whether trans-state nationalism can potentially raise claims that could threaten the territorial integrity of the state, which is much more likely in the case of homeland minorities than of territorially dispersed immigrants.<sup>18</sup>

This makes the normative question of legitimacy of claims raised by, or on behalf of, homeland minorities with external kin states more complex than that about analogous demands by migrants. I have suggested elsewhere that there is a normative trade-off between territorial autonomy and transnational citizenship (Bauböck 2007a). If a nationalising state transforms itself into a pluri-national democracy that grants its homeland minorities territorial autonomy and power-sharing in institutions of central government, then such arrangements pre-empt or weaken simultaneous claims by nationalist minority elites to represent a diaspora in need of protection by a neighbouring kin state.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as political debates within the Hungarian minority in Romania illustrate (Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox & Grancea 2006), it is not always a foregone conclusion that territorial autonomy is the solution preferred by most members of such minorities. There are several possible orientations for minorities separated from a homeland state through a new or restored international border. They can opt for short-term emigration to the kin state, they can decide to stay but conceive of themselves as a diaspora linked to that state, they may abandon their external ties and re-imagine themselves as a domestic ethnolinguistic minority or they may finally decide that their best option is to assimilate into a dominant national identity of their country of residence. Ideally, alternative projects of cultural identity and political affiliation should be able to compete with each other for democratic support under the condition that they respect the rules of the game, including legitimate concerns about territorial integrity of, and friendly relations, between states.

Analytical distinctions between the two transnational political constellations are thus important for explanatory and normative purposes, but they are frequently blurred in real world cases. Moving borders may trigger migration flows of those who do not want to end up as minorities in a nationalising state. And ethnic cleansing may have effects

similar to those of moving borders. More than 300,000 ethnic Turks who were pushed out of Bulgaria in 1989 have established themselves in western Turkey. After becoming Turkish citizens, large numbers have reclaimed their Bulgarian citizenship and today, from outside the country, provide electoral support for the political party representing the Turkish minority in their former homeland (Özgür-Baklacioglu 2006). Here the Brubakerian triangle is expanded into a quadrangle. The fourth corner is a migrant origin group settling in the previously external kin state, but still using its transnational citizenship in order to sustain links with the co-ethnic minority in their previous homeland.

Mexican migration into the border regions of the US illustrates yet another mixed case where recent flows of labour migrants replenish or recreate an originally autochthonous native minority. Mexican rhetoric about building a global nation through emigration (Smith 2003) has invoked the annexation of Mexican territory by the US in the mid-nineteenth century and the presence of a native Chicano population in the American South-West. Taking such rhetoric all too seriously, Huntington conjures up a scenario in which Hispanic immigration into this area could eventually transform it into a US Quebec (Huntington 2004), which, for him, seems to be a quite horrible prospect. This prognosis can be easily dismissed since there appears to be a persistent language shift towards English-only among third-generation descendants of Hispanic immigrants, and there is little credibility or political support for territorial claims that would revise the 1848 Treaty of Hidalgo. But there are harder cases, too, such as the Russian-speaking populations in Estonia and Latvia. Should they be seen as immigrants, as colonial settlers or as national minorities separated from their homeland through secession (Kymlicka 2001: 76-79)? Such different ways of constructing minorities create or undermine legitimacy for claims to external as well as domestic citizenship raised by representatives of these minorities.

### 15.5 The proliferation of 'diasporas'

Bringing back nationalism into the expanding academic field of transnationalism studies creates a bridge between an institutionalist approach to transnationalism and a focus on practices, movements and discourses. This move makes it also possible to create an analytical space for the notoriously vague and overstretched concept of 'diaspora'.

Classic definitions of diaspora discussed in this book by Faist, Bruneau, Paerregaard, Weinar, Waterbury, Koinova, King and Christou and others include several elements that apply just as much to transnational migrant communities (Vertovec, Van Hear & Pieke 2004: 3). So

let me consider which among these elements may provide criteria that could distinguish the two phenomena. I suggest that there are only four, and that three among them fail in the end to draw a clear enough distinction.

First, diaspora has been associated (also etymologically) with traumatic dispersal of a group from a common territorial origin towards multiple destinations. Second, diasporic communities resist full assimilation into the host society and maintain collective group identities across multiple generations. Third, diasporic communities create and maintain lateral ties across political borders between the various locations of settlement. Fourth, diaspora groups strongly orient themselves towards an external homeland and can be mobilised for political projects relating to the future of this homeland.

The first criterion is clearly not a sufficient one, since many refugee populations whose origin lies in coerced migration and who have been dispersed across various receiving states have blended into their host societies and no longer conceive of themselves as diasporas. The historic fact of traumatic dispersal will certainly shape personal identities among all first generations of coerced migrants, but this does not mean that they will always regard it as a public and collective identity associated with political claims. For their descendants, who have not experienced these events in their own lives, it all depends on the parental stories they grow up with and on their identification as a distinct group of origin in the society where they have been born. The first criterion is not even strictly necessary, since groups whose migration was not traumatic and coerced may eventually mobilise as diasporas in response to trouble in the homeland. During the Kosovo War of 1998-1999, many migrants who had left the country as Yugoslav guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s raised funds for financing resistance against the Serbian forces, and quite a number of their sons volunteered to fight in this conflict. Finally, the criterion of territorial dispersal does not apply at all to 'diasporas' that live in their traditional regional homeland but have been separated from an external kin state through shifting international borders.

The second criterion, the persistence of diasporic identity across multiple generations, is therefore the most obvious candidate for distinguishing diasporic identity groups from the more ephemeral phenomenon of migrant transnationalism. For the latter, in order to remain alive over multiple generations, the groups involved in transnational networks need to be constantly replenished through new first-generation migrants. When source countries are no longer sources of new flows, or when these flows are cut off by immigration control in the receiving country, then migrant transnationalism is likely to fade away, as it did in the US between World War I and the 1960s. Diasporic

identities are then phenomenologically distinguished from transnational ones through their capacity to be passed on to subsequent generations in the absence of new immigration from the same origin (see King & Christou in this volume). This is, however, merely a description that begs the question of how to explain such intergenerational resistance to full assimilation.

A similar point applies to the third criterion of lateral links across multiple places of diaspora settlement. Migrant transnationalism is generally structured as a relation between singular countries of origin and of destination. Even if migrants from the same origin settle in many different destinations, their transnational activities are primarily directed towards a country of origin where they have family ties, where they send remittances, in whose politics they take an interest and to which they may plan to return for retirement. Except in cases where their family networks are spread over several host countries, lateral ties to nationals in other countries of destination are of little interest to ordinary migrants. It is members of political, economic and religious elites claiming to represent these groups who may have interests in, and the necessary resources for, forging such links (see Paerregaard in this volume). As research on transnational claims-making and mobilisation of migrants in Europe has shown, their networks across borders are usually quite weak even in the politically integrated EU, and the primary addressees of claims remain member state governments (Guiraudon 2001; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005). So the question is, again, why do diasporic efforts to forge strong lateral ties succeed in certain cases? What explains their emergence and persistence against background conditions for migrant transnationalism in liberal democratic societies that are not conducive to the stabilisation of diasporic identities?

The fourth criterion does not provide an answer, but raises the right kind of questions that could provide one. If we consider diaspora as a political project, then we have to explain it not so much in terms of historic origins of the group, but of elite interests and ideologies. An explanatory theory of diaspora will, in this respect, be no different from theories of nationalism. Diasporas have to be invented and mobilised in order to come into existence. What we need to look for are current conditions that provide incentives for elites to mobilise a constituency around a diasporic identity and that explain success in terms of independent motives of these constituencies to support such projects.

In analytic terms, the second and third criteria are *explananda* rather than *explanantia*. We can use them to identify diasporas in a descriptive manner, but they need to be explained, and the first criterion of traumatic dispersal is insufficient as an explanation. The second and third criteria will once again come up within the fourth as goals rather than

conditions. Diaspora as a political project must strive for intergenerational continuity and build lateral links. These two political goals have to be achieved to make good on the claim of coherent group identity and to mobilise group members for a transformation of the homeland through external influence or return. Explanations for the second and third features will have to combine external causes, such as persistent segregation in the country of settlement, with internal characteristics of the group, including economic resources or an ethno-religious tradition that supports endogamy and a strong sense of shared identity and provides elites with symbolic resources for mobilisation. The fourth feature of diaspora adds to these structural explanations a crucial element of agency. The emergence of diaspora is merely facilitated, but not determined, by any of the structural factors listed above, and is thus a contingent outcome of collective agency. Analysing diaspora from an agency perspective requires examining not only the group's elites and their projects, but also their opportunity structures shaped by other agents, including governments in the country of settlement and the external homeland.

These external homelands not only provide a reference point for diasporic projects pursued abroad, but also often host the primary agents supporting such projects. Diasporas are not merely created by minority elites in countries of settlement but also by homeland country governments.<sup>20</sup> The latter may, as Israel does, promote the ingathering of a pre-existing diaspora and strengthen a sense of diasporic condition among those who decide to stay as a means of mobilising political support abroad. Other homeland countries also use the language of diaspora to extract economic resources from a reference population of emigrant origin established abroad, as many South and East Asian states do (Skrennty, Chan, Fox & Kim 2007). For homeland governments and political parties, the building of diaspora abroad is often instrumental for mobilising domestic political support through posing as defenders of a larger national community (see Waterbury in this volume). Where external groups are granted citizenship and voting rights, these constituencies outside the homeland may even determine the outcome of domestic elections (Bauböck 2007b; Kovács 2008).

Next to ethnic entrepreneurs in emigration contexts and homeland political actors, international organisations and EU institutions have emerged as a third, and most unlikely, type of collective actor using the terminology of diaspora for instrumental purposes. In their case, the goal is to promote contributions by groups of migrant background to the economic development of countries of origin, often with a view to reducing emigration pressure there (see Weinar in this volume).

This proliferation of actors promoting different meanings attributed to the concept show that, from a sociological perspective, Brubaker

(2005: 12) is right: 'We should think of diaspora not in substantialist terms as a bounded entity, but rather as an idiom, a stance, a claim.' Comparative political scientists and political theorists will, however, be more interested in conditions for mobilisation and the impact of successful claims than merely deconstructing the discursive uses of 'diaspora'.

While the other three criteria highlight empirical contrasts between transnational and diasporic phenomena that can often be blurred, the fourth one shows that the two concepts also work in qualitatively different ways. Diaspora is an evocative political term, whereas transnationalism is primarily an academic concept that refers to a set of empirical phenomena and a perspective that groups them together and suggests a framework for studying them.

With all these caveats, we may interpret the four criteria considered here as *differentia specifica* that distinguish the phenomenology of diaspora from that of migrant transnationalism. From this perspective, diaspora emerges as a special case of transnationalism whose deviation from the more common patterns of migrant transnationalism and incorporation is in need of explanation. Yet, as I have argued, if the fourth criterion provides the crucial key for an explanatory account, then diaspora can also be used as a much broader concept that encompasses not only migrant transnationalism, but applies to many other phenomena, too.

Let me explain. Under some conditions a claim that is made using the language of diaspora may succeed even in the absence of one, two or all three of the other criteria. If diaspora is essentially understood as a political project, then we cannot rule out in advance that political entrepreneurs using the language of diaspora in a widely overstretched and metaphoric way may eventually succeed in forging and mobilising a corresponding collective identity among a sufficiently large group. And if they do succeed, then their using the language of 'diaspora' will have created a socially significant phenomenon that will be called by that name (King 1998: 8-11).

Understanding the performative quality of the term 'diaspora' (Ragazzi 2008) should lead neither to dismissing it as pure fiction nor to accepting at face value all claims made on behalf of diasporas. Instead, we should regard this necessary deconstruction as merely a first step towards analysing conditions under which the image of diaspora catches the imagination of a target audience and prompts individuals to sacrifice many of their other interests in order to bring about a social formation that mirrors the image.

I have already mentioned conditions that may bring about a diasporic transformation of a group of migrant origin that does not share an experience of traumatic dispersal. We need to relax the second criterion of intergenerational continuity as well, since diasporas may recruit active

members who have no common ancestral roots with the core group (e.g. through intermarriage or religious and political conversion). There may even be conditions under which the reference to a territorial homeland, which can be demarcated on a geographic map, is replaced with a virtual homeland that exists as a mythological realm in the narratives of elites and in their adherents' minds. Consider the case of politically mobilised orthodox Muslims, among whom there may be a substantial number of converts, who develop a primary identity as members of a global Islamic community. In their minds, this *umma* is characterised by horizontal solidarity among its members across many different places of settlement, and membership entails an obligation to work towards creating a future 'House of Islam', an Islamic polity whose territorial borders are as yet unspecified (Mandaville 2001).<sup>21</sup> If all these features resemble the self-description of other diasporic projects, on what grounds could one reject using the term when analysing such claims? There are good reasons for reluctance (or at least for putting 'diaspora' in inverted commas) as long as such claims are merely fantasy projects without sufficient social and political support. But if and when they are successfully mobilised, then it is perfectly appropriate to apply the category of diaspora also as an analytic one. Refusing to do so would indirectly strengthen an essentialist conception and the reification of other groups who are then accepted as 'real' diasporas because of their historic origin and orientation towards a precisely defined territory as contrasted with the merely 'imagined' diasporas.

This leads me to a somewhat paradoxical conclusion. We should, on the one hand, avoid overstretching the concept by sticking the 'diaspora' label onto all transnational political or religious networks and activities. Doing so would single out one particular strategic project of collective identity formation from a broad range of possible ones and would wrongly assume that all individuals involved in transnational formations will naturally conceive of themselves as members of intergenerational communities whose primary identity refers to origins in an external homeland. Only a small subset of transnational political formations fits this description of diaspora. On the other hand, diaspora as a political project may succeed in mobilising individuals in a variety of contexts and none of the three descriptive characteristics of traumatic dispersal, lateral links across destinations and intergenerational continuity is a strictly necessary condition for such a project to succeed. The term 'diaspora' should then also be used to analyse groups politically mobilised for a diasporic claim independently of whether any of the general descriptive characteristics are present.

This dual use of diaspora as a category of research still allows for reigning in conceptual overstretch. 'If everything is constructed, then anything goes' is a bad motto for serious academic research. Scholars

must not confuse their task with that of political entrepreneurs. They should not issue academic licences to invent diasporas by stretching the concept to those phenomena that neither match the descriptive characteristics nor refer to sufficiently supported political projects.

## 15.6 Conclusion: The hot transnationalism of diaspora

The political theory perspective on transnationalism that I have sketched in this chapter emphasises the structural transformation of political membership and boundaries often neglected in accounts of transnational citizenship that focus on political practices, mobilisations and discourses. The challenge of transnationalism to the core institutions and boundaries of democratic polities has not yet been fully understood. Abandoning methodological and normative nationalism is only a first step. The more difficult task ahead is to work out how democratic norms of inclusion and equality apply within constellations with a plurality of polities that are no longer fully separate. When doing so, we will have to accept strongly differentiated citizenship statuses and rights as well as highly asymmetric relations between political units and levels.

This unfinished agenda for an institutionalist political theory of transnationalism should not detract from the second task, which is to understand transnational constellations not merely as an opportunity structure for individual choices, but also for collective action. This is where the study of diasporas becomes important. Instead of artificially separating diasporas from transnational networks and communities through definitions that reify particular group identities, we need to understand diaspora as the contingent outcome of political mobilisations within transnational constellations.

The political theory perspective on transnationalism may be called a 'cold view' for the two reasons spelled out in the fourth section of this chapter. It focuses on institutional change and the top-down allocation of status, rights and duties by established political authorities rather than on individual agency and social movements. And, moreover, it uses the concept as an analytical tool for describing a complex social reality rather than, in a normative sense, as a value or goal that ought to guide political decisions and actions. Diaspora differs from transnationalism on both counts. It is a 'hot' concept that refers more often to collective identities and actions of non-state actors than to established institutions (even when it is promoted by the latter), and it has proliferated through political mobilisation more than through academic discourse. Within the broader academic field of transnationalism, diaspora adds thus a focus on the politics of passion (Walzer 2004; Mouffe 2005).



We may therefore conclude that the study of diaspora fills the gap left open by institutionalist perspectives that fail to capture the discursive and practice dimensions of transnationalism. Yet, the study of diasporic mobilisations also takes us beyond the sociology and anthropology of ordinary transnational practices that sustain economic, cultural and family networks across borders. Moreover, hot diasporic politics differ from the 'banal transnationalism'<sup>22</sup> of migrant-sending states that regard their expatriates as an asset for their economic and political goals. Originally referring to victim groups of nation-building projects, the concept of diaspora is today often invoked in contestations of state-based collective identities and existing political boundaries.

Understood in this way, the study of transnational citizenship and diasporic identities can be seen as complementing each other, rather than as providing alternative interpretations for the same phenomena. Consensus on this point will be hard to achieve, but it would help avoid confusion in the conversation across disciplines.

## Notes

- 1 In a thoughtful review of the literature, Fox warns against stretching the concept of transnational citizenship too far beyond this core towards thin and civil society based conceptions.  
Only a high-intensity, rights-based definition of transnational citizenship holds up well. By this definition the term refers to dual or multiple citizenships that are grounded both in enforceable rights and in clearly bounded membership(s). (2005: 194)
- 2 One could object that, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, many US states had even granted foreign nationals voting rights in federal elections (Raskin 1993; Hayduk 2005). As pointed out by Spiro (2008: 92), however, these were generally not conceived as rights derived from residence, but as privileges for 'declarant aliens' who had formally declared their intention to become citizens.
- 3 Smith (2003: 19-31) applies his notion of peoplehood to a wide variety of entities that includes states, regional unions, provinces and even NGOs and religious communities, but does not explicitly consider transnational formations.
- 4 Consider, for example, the Romanian-Moldovan constellation. According to a 2003 estimate, about 40 per cent of the Moldovan population also possess Romanian, Russian or Israeli nationality (Iordachi 2004: 257), with the lion's share going to Romanian-Moldovan dual nationality.
- 5 *Liechtenstein v. Guatemala*, 1995 I.C.J. 4, 1955 WL 1; 315-324.
- 6 The most comprehensive treaty so far is the 1997 Convention on Nationality of the Council of Europe, which, as of 13 August 2009, has been signed by 28 states and ratified by nineteen.
- 7 Switzerland is again an exceptional case where even long-term settlement in another canton does not automatically lead to a change of cantonal citizenship.
- 8 For Germany see BVerfGE 63, 37 (Schleswig-Holstein) and BVerfGE 63, 60 (Hamburg), 31 October 1990; for Austria see VfGH G218/03, 30 June 2004.

- 9 Unsurprisingly, Germany and Austria are also among the few remaining states in Western Europe that resist the trend towards tolerating dual citizenship in cases of naturalisation.
- 10 This was the principal argument used by the Austrian Constitutional Court for striking down a law that had required ordinary residence in Austria as a precondition for voting in federal parliamentary and presidential elections (VfGH G218/88, 16 March 1989).
- 11 External voters elect their own representatives in eleven out of 115 countries that have some provisions for external voting. The European cases are Croatia, France, Italy and Portugal (IDEA & IFE 2007: 28).
- 12 For a different view see Spiro (2006).
- 13 *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on a Community Immigration Policy*, COM (2000) 757 final (22 November 2000); *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Immigration, Integration and Employment*, COM (2003) 336 final (3 June 2003).
- 14 According to Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004: 1177):  
 what immigration scholars describe as transnationalism is usually its opposite: highly particularistic attachments antithetical to those by-products of globalization denoted by the concept of “transnational civil society” and its related manifestations.
- I think that this assessment is based on a superficial reading. The use of the concept in migration studies differs from that in social movement studies exactly by combining universalistic and particularistic interpretations without, however, always spelling out the tension between them.
- 15 This is broadly confirmed by Weinar’s analysis in this volume of discursive uses of ‘transnationalism’ and ‘diaspora’ in international organisation documents, with the important exception of UN documents that use the former rather than the latter terminology.
- 16 I have not found any prior use of the term ‘trans-polity’ in this broad sense, although it has been occasionally used by historians when referring to polities in eras before the emergence of the modern state. It seems that the political philosopher David Owen and I have developed this idea independently of each other (personal communication 12 February 2009).
- 17 The best-known examples are relations between Romania and Slovakia, their Hungarian-speaking minorities and Hungary and between the Baltic states, their Russian origin populations and the Russian Federation.
- 18 Even in the case of irredentist minority nationalism supported by an external kin state, the reaction of the state into which the minority is at present incorporated is not always to defend territorial integrity at any price. As the British Northern Ireland policy illustrates, the attitude of a centre’s elite towards the spectre of territorial shrinkage depends very much on the dominant conception of nationhood at the centre and the degree of incorporation of the minority’s homeland into a hegemonic conception of the political community (Lustick 1993; Lustick 2001).
- 19 Laitin (1998) calls such groups ‘beached diasporas’.
- 20 The relationship between diasporas and external homelands is not only often characterised by political tensions, but may also undergo what Safran (2009) calls ‘role reversals’, with returnees still perceiving themselves as diasporas and external countries of settlement assuming the role of homelands where diasporic authenticity can be better preserved.
- 21 This is one illustration of a broader phenomenon that Cohen (2009) aptly calls ‘liquid homelands’.
- 22 The reference is to Billig’s (1995) concept of ‘banal nationalism’.



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