

Introduction: How We Think of Migration and Mobility

The ways in which we, as individuals, understand migration and mobility have deep implications for societies and politics as well as for institutions and everyday practices. This book deals with them in the form of a sociological study. At its core is the duality of migration and mobility, and a possible way to overcome it. My interest in this topic developed while I engaged in fieldwork in the autumn and winter of 2013/14. I left Germany and travelled to Canada to do the first part of my fieldwork, consisting of narrative interviews with people of Polish heritage, which I then continued in Germany in a second pass. During my stay in Toronto, I met Caroline, a thirty-year-old woman, in a café downtown in February 2014.¹ Interviewing her, I learned that she had emigrated from Lodz to Toronto with her parents when she was seven years old. She talked a lot about the circumstances that brought her family to Toronto and about her own experiences in the city. Retrospectively, I see her biographical experience of being a “migrant” of Polish heritage in Canada as corresponding to one typical *pattern of (im)mobility* I was to outline in this study. While I did not quite know then what it would turn out to be about, something Caroline said struck me because—I can say now as I write this introduction—it captured the problem I was to tackle:

“I don’t think I would ever leave Canada. I really like living here. Well, maybe for a year. My parents brought me here, and I cannot imagine leaving them here, do you know what I mean? I don’t think I can be a *second-time immigrant*. I’ve already immigrated once. I went through that.” (Caroline, born 1986 in Lodz, my emphasis)

1 I have changed all of my respondents’ names in order to guarantee their anonymity.

In this quote, Caroline conveys a lot about her understanding of migration and mobility. She makes two important points for what was about to become my research object.

First, she sees a causality between leaving Canada for good and thus becoming a *second-time immigrant* somewhere else. It seems as though Caroline's biographical experience of having "already immigrated once" was a painful one, one demanding sacrifices on her and on her parents' parts, one ought not to be repeated. After immigration, the family had to face several challenges, particularly at the beginning of their settlement in Toronto. Caroline remembers that she attended grade two without any knowledge of English. She was then put into an English as a second language class (ESL) where she got intensive English language lessons specially designed for non-native speakers. Despite being a "quick student to learn English," it was not until grade six that she felt comfortable speaking it. Before becoming fluent in English, she remembers having been picked on and even beaten up by "a bunch of schoolgirls" in the schoolyard. These childhood experiences, she stresses, are neither easy to understand nor to deal with. While she eventually mastered the English language, her parents still face discrimination due to their language mistakes, Caroline tells me. She clearly sees a "pressure towards immigration in Canada," even if it is—in her opinion—not like in Europe, but still "people here are prejudiced towards groups that don't assimilate." Caroline's unwillingness to become a *second-time immigrant* is likely linked to the pressure im/migrants face in their destination countries.

Second, while Caroline clearly refuses to (re-)emigrate, she does not exclude the possibility of a temporary stay abroad. It seems as though the pressure to which Caroline refers is less pronounced when it comes to those geographical movements other than what is widely known as "im/migration," the kind practiced by, for instance, highly-skilled mobile professionals, expats, or exchange students. Apart from the fact that these are highly skilled workers, and thus enjoy a different social position in the scale of global inequality than lower-skilled migrant workers, the main difference is the assumption that from the outset the relocation of their life center is not permanent, but temporary. Not only does Caroline emphasize the possibility of leaving Canada after initial migration for a restricted period of time, she in fact did so, completing a master's degree in The Netherlands. Apparently, she does not perceive studying in The Netherlands as a "migration" that would have made her a second-time immigrant. What she refers to is yet another fundamental aspect of social life in a globalized world: mobility. While both migration and mobility evoke different meanings they, in reality, are not so incompatible, as Caroline's life-path suggests.

In general, politicians and the media, as well as various scholarly works in the field of migration studies, define migration as Caroline does. Migration is often equated with permanent or long-term settlement in a “country of arrival” while mobility is understood rather as temporary. “Migrants” are often conceived of as being sedentary after an initial migration. Migration, it seems, requires leaving behind beloved people and places and building a new life in a foreign place. Also, this life should, if possible, be socially accepted by the new society, a social phenomenon widely known as “integration.” Integration as a term has been instrumentalized and politicized whenever the public discourse focuses on migrants. By now, migration and integration are inextricably linked with one another as concepts. Migrants are supposed to integrate into the society of “the country of arrival,” to participate in state’s institutions, particularly in its labour market as well as in its cultural and social life. It is a comprehensible ideal most often only addressed towards migrants and not towards non-migrants, even if the latter are not well integrated into the state’s institutions. Such discourses create the impression that integration is just an issue for migrants and (re)produce differences between “migrants” and “non-migrants” that lead to an institutionalized pattern of inequality. The second-time immigrant to whom Caroline refers in the quote is a person who needs to go through the migration and integration processes twice; each time s/he must start from scratch meeting various expectations in different geographical and national contexts. Caroline does not want to repeat this process once more. As we see, her example hints at specific discourses and theoretical positions on migration and mobility in interplay with biographical experiences of individuals who are commonly labelled as “migrants.” This is the issue I am about to tackle in this book.

Why it Poses an Issue and How We Can Tackle it in a Sociological Study

Human geographical movements have generated strong scholarly interest; they are reflected in the dynamic interdisciplinary field of migration studies and the growing field of mobility studies. Whereas both research fields and their agendas acknowledge that the nature of migration and mobility is complex and multi-faceted, they nevertheless represent separate scholarly traditions. Mobility studies constitute a relatively young “research paradigm” (Sheller/Urry 2006, Hannam et al. 2006, Urry 2007) while migration studies have a much longer scholarly tradition. For almost one hundred years, migration studies scholars have established many different approaches and schools of thought. These approaches are now often distinguished as being either “classical” or “new.” In addition to the strong impact of theories of incorporation (like assimilation, integration, multi-

culturalism) of the “classical” approaches; the transnational understanding of migration as one of the “new” approaches has gained popularity over the past 25 years. In its criticism of “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2002) and development of new research designs going beyond the national realm, the transnational approach shapes today’s research on migration in the social sciences and the humanities. Transnational migration studies explore recurrent migrants’ border-crossing activities keeping up ties with relatives in their country of origin, thus connecting both their country of arrival and of origin and thereby constructing new social fields or spaces (Faist 2010b; Glick Schiller et al. 1992, Portes et al. 1999, Pries 2008; o.a.).

Unlike migration studies, which focus on international movements seen as a permanent or long-term change of residence, mobility studies adopt a broader approach, one encompassing multiple flows and channels. Stephen Greenblatt argues in his Mobility Studies Manifesto:

“The physical, infrastructural, and institutional conditions of movement—the available routes; the maps; the vehicles; the relative speed; the controls and costs; the limits on what can be transported; the authorizations required; the inns, relay stations and transfer points; the travel facilitators—are all serious objects of analysis. [...] *mobility studies should shed light on hidden as well as conspicuous movements* of peoples, objects, images, texts, and ideas.” (2009: 250)

Migration studies remain crucial to the field of mobilities research (Hannam et al. 2006: 10). Indeed, the two scientific agendas overlap (Sheller 2011:1), as has been recognized by the more recent scholarship challenging the established methodological, conceptual, and empirical dualism of mobility and migration (Dahinden 2016, Findlay et al. 2015, Kesselring 2006, King 2002, King/Ruiz-Gelices 2003, Nowicka 2007b, Rogers 2007, Schrooten et al. 2015, Willis 2010). We observe an increasing use of the term *mobility* in the study and portrayal of migration; indeed, there is a discursive shift away from migration towards—the arguably less politicized term—mobility, used by, for example, the European Commission and other international bodies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2008) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2009) (King et al. 2016: 8). As I have already indicated, migration implies that migrants will remain in the “country of arrival” for a long period of time, perhaps for good. Mobility, however, signals that people may not stay put, but move on, either to their home country or onward to another one. The concept thus emphasizes relatively new forms of movements, such as long-distance

commuting, extended business visits, student exchanges, seasonal and circular migration, which blur the distinction between migration and mobility (ibid.: 9).

While mobile orientations and practices are increasingly empirically observed in research on migration, the migrants' receiving societies continue to discursively frame migration as a one-way street, often as a "threat" calling for integration, control, and the maintenance of national identity (Faist 2013, Schrooten et al. 2015, King et al. 2016, Bigo 2002). As Schrooten and his colleagues (2015) point out, the negative connotation of migration is—particularly in the European context—omnipresent in the media as well as in policy-making. With the exception of the "highly-skilled," those who are—to use Faist's (2013) expression—"wanted and welcome," national authorities encourage the internal mobility of their citizens while discouraging newcomers to enter the territory. One example is the "long summer of migration" (Hess et al. 2016) or the events, pejoratively labelled as "refugee crisis," which started in the summer of 2015 when millions of refugees fled war and terror in Syria and Afghanistan and entered Europe. As a reaction, the European Commission proposed the introduction of an emergency relocation quota system and an EU-wide resettlement scheme, obliging each country to resettle a certain number of refugees according to its capacities. Many European states raised objections to this proposal. The objections were based on the perception of incoming refugees as an extra burden and on the conviction that they would stay forever. The refugees were seen as a danger to these countries' citizens who would "have to 'share' some of their benefits with new participants to their society." (Schrooten et al. 2015: 2) Refugees were thus portrayed as a potential threat to the welfare state and to the cultural integrity and security of the destination countries (ibid.). Popular media and right-wing political parties reinforce this image, a phenomenon to be found across all EU-member states, and more recently in the USA, where the populist billionaire Donald Trump won the elections and just became the 45th president of the United States. But one thing remains largely forgotten: in reality, not all "migrants" stay put.

While certain public figures, e.g., (media) reporters and politicians, contribute to the negative construction of migration, the academic discourse in migration studies also underpins these developments. In the past, migration scholars have questioned the negative image and stereotyping of "migrants;" yet, they have done so without challenging the "sedentarism of migration," thus contributing to the negative construction of migration. Janine Dahinden examines, from a critical perspective, *a-priori* naturalizing categorizations used in research on migration and integration (2016). To take national units as the lens of social science analysis for granted, or in other words the critique of "methodological na-

tionalism,” she argues, suggests that migration studies are inherently linked to the logic of the modern nation-state and its corresponding institutional and categorical effects while being blind to this entanglement (ibid.: 3). The formation of modern nation-states went hand in hand with the development of an institutional state-migration apparatus differentiating migrants from citizens and institutionalizing these differences. There are, for instance, state structures that regulate the border-crossing movements in terms of border controls, visa regimes, and migration- and integration laws, which create the label “migration” and other migration-related categories. As Dahinden points out, the migration-related categories, however, can only make sense within the very same logic:

“The category of ‘foreigner,’ for example, only makes sense within a nation-state logic, namely in dialectic with the term ‘citizen;’ the label ‘migrants’ solely acquires significance in relation to ‘non-migrants.’ And the category ‘people with a migration background’ can only be thought of in relation to a supposedly natural multi-generational rootedness within a national territory.” (2016: 3)

The category of “persons with a migration background” (*Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*), is common in German-speaking countries; it illustrates the boundary work done by naturalizing categorizations as many people who fall under this category are often citizens of the state in which they reside, but are nonetheless excluded from the national imagined community (Elrick/Schwartzmann 2015, Dahinden 2016). Germany, for instance, facilitated the resettlement of people with German ancestry from the Soviet Union on the basis of the *ius sanguinis* principle after World War II, and many so-called ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*) were given the right to enter the states’ territory. Even with citizenship, ethnic Germans are still “othered”—this is a good example of how to create categorizations *ad absurdum*. What is more, migrants from Turkey—even in the second or third generation—had little chance to naturalize in Germany until the year 2000. With the introduction of the category of “persons with a migration background” in the Mikrozensus survey in 2005—a comprehensive statistical census in Germany—the number of people considered as having a migration background in Germany doubled (Pries 2015b: 36) and with it the number of those likely to be excluded from the national imagined community. These categories are not only used by statisticians, but they affect people’s everyday lives. With the emergence of nation-states and the migration apparatus, Dahinden argues, a powerful normalization discourse of migration-related differences developed, rendering these categories particularly powerful in everyday life. This discourse essentializes categories, making them appear “natural” while

individuals incorporate these ideas during socialization: “migrants are always [understood] in contrast to non-migrants and the ‘ethnic, cultural self’ [is] considered to be fundamentally (culturally) different.” (ibid.: 4) Migration studies came into being exactly within this context. The difference between migration and non-migration is the *raison d'être* of migration research. As a result, migration studies are the product of the institutionalized migration apparatus and also an important producer of a worldview according to which migration-related differences are predominant. Dahinden rightly questions the category of “migration” *per se* and pleads for the “de-migrantization” of research on migration and integration. This study endorses this plea.

Thus, migration is both an interesting social phenomenon to investigate and, also, a discourse that needs to be challenged—and mobility studies is a good way to do so. On the one hand, scholars in this field do not tire of emphasizing the dialectical relationship between mobility and immobility, as mobility only exists through immobility and vice versa (Urry 2003, Hannam et al. 2006, Adey 2006), implying that favouring one “state” over the other is pointless. On the other hand, mobility studies help to make sense of migration phenomena through a critical reflection on taken-for-granted migration-related categories. Such an approach may even lead to a break with some aspects anchored within the normalized migration apparatus. Adopting approaches from migration studies and taking into account research perspectives from mobility studies, I introduce a new analytical concept in this book, the “mobilities perspective,” to uncover the plurality and broad spectrum of geographical movements that individuals experience as significant biographical constellations of (im)mobility. With it, I aim to bring the constructivist approach of mobility studies into the field of migration studies. The “mobilities perspective” acknowledges the fact that individuals actively create and give meaning to their geographical movements. Methodologically based on biographical research (the life story approach), the “mobilities perspective” aims to reimagine experiences of (im)mobility in the lives of those individuals labelled as “migrants” by examining how they narrate and construct their (im)mobility experiences as meaningful occurrences in their life course. Such a shift in perspective opens up ways, I argue, of understanding even those (im)mobility constellations that neither fit into the “classical” nor into the “new” approaches in migration studies.

Drawing on biographical narrations, I propose another reading of individual trajectories by examining whether and how individuals constitute mobility or immobility experiences. In order to do so, I explore the lives of those who are embedded in migratory and transnational contexts but whose biographies are often characterized by geographical movements and mobility experiences that go

beyond the traditional categories of migration. More precisely, my aim is to examine why and how “migrants” go immobile or mobile and with what consequences: how (im)mobility comes into being, how (im)mobility is itself in movement and transition, and how other realms of social life come into being through (im)mobility. Further, in deploying the “mobilities perspective,” I question the linear and binary logics on which many migration conceptualizations are built. As I indicated above, we must not forget that migration is a highly politicized and controversial topic. Whenever I can, I draw parallels between theoretical approaches and empirical insights to political developments throughout the book. In order to moderate and deconstruct migration-related statements that have become highly politicized, we need to be aware of the “politicization of migration” and recall it whenever relevant in our works.

What’s at the Core

The core of the book consists of the *patterns of (im)mobility: immobility, transmobility, and cosmobility*. The patterns of (im)mobility are a typology and are the main result of this study—the work of analyzing and interpreting the biographical material I have gathered during my fieldwork. The present study is, first and foremost, an empirical investigation, in which I focus on the diversity of (im)mobility experiences in the lives of those who are usually referred to as “migrants” or as “persons with a migration background.” Although I chose one particular migrant group as the sample of this study—young adults of Polish heritage like Caroline—I am very aware of the fact that it is a heterogeneous group whose members have emigrated at different points of time, under different conditions, with different motivations, to different destinations. For the latter, however, I have also restricted the places of destination and thus the places of my fieldwork to Germany (Berlin) and Canada (Montreal, Toronto). I chose these countries because their migration regimes cannot be more different: Germany follows an assimilationist migration and integration policy while Canada is known for its policy of multiculturalism, but in both countries the share of people of Polish heritage is relatively high. In Germany, there are about sixteen million “persons with a migration background” within a total population of approximately eighty-one million. Persons of Polish heritage make up ten per cent of all “persons with a migration background,” of whom about hundred thousand live in Berlin (Mikrozensus 2015). Canada is widely known for the ethnically diverse composition of its population of approximately thirty-five million. Persons of Polish ethnic origin have surpassed the one million mark according to the most up-to-date Canadian census (Statistics Canada 2017, see also 2013). Estimates

suggest that there are approximately fifty thousand ethnic Poles in Montreal and approximately two hundred fifteen thousand in Toronto (*ibid.*).

There has been already much research done on the migration of Poles into Germany. The transnational approach proved to be particularly fruitful in this regard (Glorius/Friedrich 2006, Glorius 2013, Nowicka 2007b and 2013, Palenga-Möllenbeck 2005 and 2013, Miera 2001 and 2008, a.o.). In the Canadian context, however, research on the so-called “Polish-Canadians” is less widespread in migration studies than the research of Poles in Germany.² Selecting two countries, and three metropolitan cities as centers of the empirical investigation means that the life courses of my respondents differ due to the contextual conditions they face, which, in turn, has an impact on their (im)mobility experiences. Certainly, the question as to whether potential differences result from the diverging migration policies in both countries is particularly relevant. I will tackle this question by opening up comparative perspectives through contextualization within the interpretative discussion of selected life stories, rather than providing a “classical country-comparison.” In a Weberian sense, I understand the patterns of (im)mobility as a result, and at the same time as a means, of revisiting migration; something that I am to demonstrate in this book. Empirically, the patterns confirm that so-called “migrants” are often sedentary after initial migration, while they also emphasize that domestic and multiple international mobility experiences are empirically observable and relevant, though they cannot be grasped by current statistics because, as Cyrus argues, statistics cannot represent the mobile conditions since they follow a different logic (2000: 89), a sedentary one, I would add. Thus, statistics can only remain incomplete, although in reality migration and mobility are not mutually exclusive. The patterns of (im)mobility call attention to the deficit in the current scholarship as I underline in my literature review, when I deal with “classical” approaches such as assimilation, integration, multiculturalism as well as with the “new” approaches of transnationalism, diaspora, and cosmopolitanism in migration studies and, more importantly, when I relate them to the field of mobility studies. Similarly, the patterns highlight certain notions of (im)mobility that are implied in the established migration approaches and how they correspond to the empirical reality of (im)mobility in migratory contexts, enabling me to draw theoretical conclusions

2 There is a Canadian-Polish research institute in Toronto that collects and preserves documents concerning the life and work of Polish immigrants to Canada, eventually creating a source base for research; but, then again, comprehensive research on this group is rather hard to find. For further information, see the website of the research institute: <http://www.canadianpolishinstitute.org>

from the empirical study. The main contribution of this study, however, is to combine migration- and mobility studies with one another, and subsequently to reduce the methodological, conceptual, and empirical dualism of mobility and migration in order to ultimately make a step forward towards “de-migrantizing migration research.” (Dahinden 2016)

Structure of the Book

This book is about the experiences of my respondents, like those of Caroline, which I translated into a sociological study. The book consists of three distinctive parts: I will review the relevant literatures, concepts, and the methodology and methods I used in PART I before I present the *patterns of (im)mobility* at the heart of this book in three interpretative chapters in PART II and in one results chapter in PART III.

In *chapter one*, I discuss the state of the art of research in migration and mobility studies. I review both literatures and highlight their difficult relationship to policy-making. The literature review of migration studies consists of mainly two theoretical strands: selected “classical” approaches (ch. 1.1), and selected “new” ones (ch. 1.2). I will then review the main contributions to the field of mobility studies, and, most importantly, I set out to explicate what the “mobilities perspective” on migration entails (ch. 1.3). The *second chapter* presents the methodology I draw upon. I elaborate on how I approached my field (ch. 2.1), introducing the methodology of biographical research and the method of autobiographical interviewing. I explain what kind of data this approach is able to create and how I can grasp the mobilities of individuals through their biographies. After having finished fieldwork, I examine the characteristics of the sample and I point out how I am to construct an “ideal-typical” typology of the *three patterns of (im)mobility* and which life stories I have chosen to share in this book (ch. 2.2). I see both chapters as the conceptual and methodological framework to reconstruct the *patterns of (im)mobility*.

Chapters three, four, and five are the core of this book. In these chapters, I present the interpretation of selected biographical narratives and the results I draw from it. Beforehand, I insert a short *excursus*, discussing the role of Poland as a typical “emigration country” and delineating the Polish immigration into the two destinations of Germany and Canada. For a sociological study, dealing with (im)mobility in the context of Polish migration, it is essential to understand the specific relations between Poland and Canada, on the one hand, and Poland and Germany, on the other. These different histories continue to frame the contemporary social realities of Polish migrations to Germany and Canada. In my readings of my respondents’ life stories, however, I examine important biographical con-

stellations and their *post hoc* reflections, which I relate to the theoretical approaches I have highlighted in my literature review. The interpretations of selected life stories—those of Anja, Sandra, Janusz, Oscar, Malinka, and Francis—serve to illustrate each of the three patterns: the pattern of immobility (ch. 3), the pattern of transmobility (ch. 4), and the pattern of cosmobility (ch. 5).

Chapter six deals with the patterns as results, which—from a sociological perspective—are not random. First, I demonstrate how I can utilize the patterns of (im)mobility to revisit migration by proposing a new reading of the theories in the field (ch. 6.1). Second, I discuss the empirical results more broadly in terms of their temporal, spatial, and social dimensions (ch. 6.2). Third, I reflect on the study's theoretical contribution, emphasizing how different mobilities are treated within migration literatures, and I highlight the fruitfulness of the “mobilities perspective” and its bearing on migration (ch. 6.3).

I conclude the book with a plea to rethink migration and mobility on the basis of what taken-for-granted assumptions of migration research my study challenges and on the political implications it evokes.

