

Conclusion: How to *Rethink* Migration and Mobility

The study is an example of how two (formerly) separate scholarly traditions—migration studies and mobility studies—may complement each other when they are combined in empirical research. Every study that generates new sociological insights, all the more in the field of migration studies, has political implications and thus it potentially has a political impact, too. As scholars, we have to be cautious on that score, I believe, as to enter the field of migration studies is essentially to enter into a politicized terrain. We face an ongoing dilemma, one that blurs the boundaries between policy-relevant and policy-driven research. Each study is prone to political instrumentalization and our results can be used in ways that we might not agree with. Attempting to mitigate the risk, I have formulated a plea as to how we need to rethink migration and mobility based on my reflections about what taken-for-granted assumptions of migration research my study challenges. My propositions evoke political implications, which I will ultimately enunciate as I understand them.

Challenging Taken-For-Granted Assumptions

How can we make sense of movements? The study gives us the following answer: we can make sense of movements as *patterns of (im)mobility*, and they certainly affect how we understand migration. More precisely, the patterns—notably the mobile ones (*transmobility* and *cosmobility*)—question several assumptions that are widely taken for granted in migration studies. Concretely, I plead to

- 1) Rethink the inherent sedentarism of the category of “migrant generation” and acknowledge its failure to fully take into account those migratory experiences that include various mobilities

The patterns challenge the widely-used (scholarly) practice of categorizing “migrants” into generations, which is strongly linked to a sedentary understanding of migration. Yet neither do the individuals nor their extended families always settle permanently in one “country of arrival” after initial migration. Instead, complex mobility flows occur in the trajectories of both my respondents and their parental (or otherwise previous) generations. Such cross-generational mobility experiences complicate the categorization into “migrant generations,” because they clearly go beyond a one-time event of a uni-directional change of one’s center of life. They signal that emigration from one country does not necessarily mean permanent immigration to another, but that there may be complex mobilities “in between” generations.

To illustrate, I take the family relations of my respondent, Francis, as an example. After his grandparents fled Poland during World War II, Francis’s mother was born in Kenya, which means she would be categorized as a 2nd generation migrant (in Kenya). She grew up there but moved to Canada once she met her future husband, Francis’s father. Already at this point, the categorization to a “migrant generation” becomes blurry: while a “2nd generation migrant” in Kenya, how would she be categorized after having moved to Canada? Does she become a “1st generation migrant” upon her arrival in Canada, or does she remain a “2nd generation migrant”? Let us go a step further in Francis’s story. His parents are in Canada. They start a family and have him. How is Francis to be categorized into a “migrant generation”? Would he be a 2nd or 3rd generation migrant? At some point in Francis’s life, he moved back to Kenya, and a similar question arises. Does he become a “1st generation migrant” as he is new to Kenya? All this to say, the category loses its analytical use once complex mobilities occur.

- 2) Rethink the essentializing binary of “country of origin” and “country of arrival” in favour of the relational concept of *travelling origins*

The patterns of (im)mobility deconstruct this division because they have empirically exposed that “migrants” often cumulate two origins, constructing two countries as their “original” ones. The patterns thus point to the *accumulation of origins*. Once individuals, who accumulate more than one origin, practice recurrent mobilities, the paradoxical situation emerges in which their “origins” travel just as they themselves do. The individuals choose which context of their *contextual self-understanding* they put forth based on their geographical location. I have conceptualized this phenomenon as *travelling origins*, emphasizing that “origin” is constructed and expressed *contextually* and *situationally*.

- 3) Rethink the methodological, conceptual, and empirical dualism of “migration” and “mobility” in favour of a more empirically-close symbiosis

Last but not least, the patterns of (im)mobility show a combination of domestic (national/internal) and international relocations of individuals’ center of life in the course of their lives. Different geographical movements have, without a doubt, varying impacts upon people’s lives, but it is often unproductive to split mobility up into internal versus international movements as is currently done in migration studies. Many of my respondents do perceive internal relocations, such as moving out of Quebec, as similar to international (border-crossing) movements. The routes of “migrants” often imply both: internal migration as well as commuting might occur before, during, and after international mobility takes place (Schrooten et al. 2015: 13). The trajectories under study reflect a variety of movements, and this diversity is notable between different respondents as well as within the routes of each respondent—so, between the patterns and within the patterns. Factors defining the mobility experience can emerge *ad hoc*, yet the original intention can always be changed on the way. This is crucial when we think about the connotations of the dualism between migration and mobility: while “migrants” are often perceived as unskilled, as a threat to the welfare state, as people who need to integrate; “mobiles” are often highly skilled or students, and they do not face the same pressure. Not least because “mobility” is assumed to be temporary, while “migration” is assumed to be permanent. My research shows, however, that we cannot always make a clear distinction between “migrants” and “mobiles,” because sometimes they are “mobile migrants.”

Political Implications: How to Accommodate Mobile Migrants?

Putting various mobilities to the fore in research on migration, I hope to contribute to the deconstruction of the social stereotyping and negative hierarchizing of those called “migrants.” Not least, challenging some of the migration-related categories is to ultimately take a step forward toward “de-migranticizing” research on migration and integration (Dahinden 2016). The most crucial step in this direction, however, is to tackle the issue politically. Essentially, the study’s political implications target the idea of how to accommodate “migrants” under the condition of mobility. This idea—as I see it—carries a different political meaning than the “classical” approaches, but more importantly the integration policies resulting from them would need careful reconsideration as the question arises: how can national societies integrate “migrants,” knowing that they do not necessarily stay? Some would agree that sedentary models (such as the “classi-

cal” approaches) are not sufficient to help us find a way; others may even wonder whether these “migrants” need to be integrated at all (Schrooten et al. 2015: 14). There are many open questions, but one thing is for sure: the patterns of (im)mobility have an effect on patterns of incorporation as the latter become diversified when individuals continuously practice post-migration mobilities. First empirical clues about how the patterns of incorporation may change are my respondents’ attempts to integrate into more than one geographical, political, and social space. “Mobile migrants” often pursue a project of “multiple” or “multi-local integration”—a result contradictory to Essers’ statement of “multiple integration” hardly being a realistic empirical case. On the contrary, the study shows that my respondents are not unsuccessful in their efforts, even if they are confronted with divergent expectations of integration coming from different (nation-)states. The pattern of transmobility especially stresses that the other country of “accumulated origins” requests integration requirements not only towards non-nationals but also towards “estranged nationals”—emigrants, who have not been fully or even not at all socialized in the (classical) country of origin as they have lived in the “country of arrival” for a certain amount of time. Some of us may think that “integrating into the country of origin” is a contradiction in terms, yet under the condition of mobility in migratory contexts, we must reckon with requirements of integration directed at such mobile individuals from different places. How can multi-local integration be conceptualized, organized, and politically supported then? These questions need to be put on the political agenda because they require political action: it is time to develop new ideas, new concepts, and new plans about how to facilitate “multi-local” integration without turning “mobile migrants” into—to use Caroline’s words—*second-time immigrants*, over and over again.