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Transformations over Time or Sudden Change: Historical Perspectives on Mass Migrations and Human Lives

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Abstract: Both migrations and attitudes towards them have deep historical roots. To pronounce the present migration and the economic crisis triggered by derivative bankers in the fall of 2008 as “new without historical precedent” overlooks the impact of patterns of the past on the present and prevents an understanding being reached of continuities and comparisons. It is not migrants who are “uprooted”, as some would have it, but historical memory is deliberately being uprooted. This essay starts by addressing the multiple problems of present-day debates about migration and historicising the perspectives. It critiques the anti-immigrant ascriptions, labels and ideologies. It goes on to present the data and discuss the geographies of migrant trajectories in the context of translocal, transregional, transnational and global connectivity. An integrative Transcultural Societal Studies approach will be proposed. The essay will then deal with migrant agency, that is the actions of migrants, criticising “victimization” approaches and argue that Otherness is a resource as well as a framework for exploitation. Remittances will serve as an example of the intersection between migrant agency and states’ needs. The conclusion will briefly place the present in the context of global inequalities, of the economic aspect and of anti-immigrantism, as well as the ideological national-essentialist aspect.

Keywords: Transcultural · Transregional · Translocal

1 Introduction

In times of economic crisis, banker-made and deregulation-induced, in the autumn of 2008 migration is said to have posed a problem; multiculturalism is pronounced a failure in Europe and the United States, but not for example in Canada. Politicians and talking heads are in a scramble for scapegoats – targets for popular wrath and fear. Statecraft and long-term strategies would address the underlying economic issues and societal consequences.

Migrations have deep historical roots – the history of humankind, in fact, is a history of migration. Those who pronounce the present migrations and the current crisis as “new without historical precedent” overlook the impact of past hu-

man mobility on the present. Europe's 19th Century demography was shaped by mass emigration, whilst its northern economies were typified by massive labour in-migration from its Mediterranean segment from the mid-1950s onwards. Only comparative approaches facilitate evaluation and interpretation. It is not migrants who are "uprooted", as public rhetoric and historians have proclaimed, but it is such ideologues who uproot public historical memory to manipulate it by brandishing anti-immigrant clichés.

I will start this essay by addressing problems relating to the debate currently underway concerning migration and by historicising perspectives. This involves a critique of anti-immigrant ascriptions, labels and ideologies. I will turn, secondly, to the empirical data on migration and discuss the geographies of migrant trajectories in the context of translocal, transregional, transnational and global connectivity. The recently much cited concept of transnationalism will be critiqued, and an integrative Transcultural Societal Studies approach suggested. Thirdly, I will deal with migrant agency and argue that migrants' "Otherness", a cause for exclusionary demands and for exploitation, is also a resource for insertion into labour markets and societies. I will criticise "victimization" approaches. In order to discuss the intersection of migrant agency and states' needs, I will discuss migrant remittances. Finally, I will briefly point to global inequalities, the economic aspect, and anti-immigrantism, the nationality-essentialist aspect, concerning present migrations and opposition to it.

2 Crosscutting thoughts and questions: Europe in the world

Globalization, happily touted by *Marshall McLuhan* in the early 1960s as all humankind interconnected in a "global village", was trumpeted by self-styled media "experts" in the 1990s as absolutely new, never seen before – and a threat to the highly-developed West (*McLuhan* 1962, 1964; *McLuhan* 1996). Scholars agree that "globalisation" emerged five centuries ago with Europeans' new-found capability to cross the Atlantic, then the Indian Ocean, and finally the Pacific Ocean (*Hopkins* 2002; *Iriye/Mazlish* 2005; *Mazlish* 2006). At the time of Columbus' voyage, European "discovery" in older parlance, to a continent known to others,¹ seafarers of the Indian Ocean and East Asian Seas had travelled their respective rims for two millennia. And, transcontinentally, the Asian-African-European and the separate North-Central-South American worlds had both been internally connected by networks of trading routes, whether by wagon, caravan or human portage. Migrations by individuals, groups and peoples were as integral to these exchanges as merchant voyaging. Medieval Europe, often considered as immobile and backward, was in fact characterised by a high level of mobility, cultural exchange and long-distance commerce (*Borgolte* 2009). As long as Europeans, "whites" in another categorisation, moved outbound, some 60 million of them in the single century from

¹ Columbus himself was a skilled labour migrant from the declining Mediterranean economies to the expanding Iberian ones on the coast of the Atlantic.

the 1840s to the 1940s, migration was constructed as a civilising mission targeting “lesser” peoples, not white in the common colour scheme that looks at the surface, at skin, and not at the internal capabilities, emotionalities, and spiritualities (Hoerder 2002; Harzig *et al.* 2009). As long as this globalisation, coloniser-power imposed, remained profitable to Whites in the North Atlantic World, economic and intellectual elites depicted it as positive. At the turn of the 21st Century, with some or many perceiving global interrelatedness as detrimental to economies and peoples in the Atlantic World, it is presented as insidious and subversive of the West, with its dominant financial institutions, once industrialised and now service-consuming. Many of the present south-north migrants are descendants of ancestors exploited by Europe’s north-south migrants and the dependent economic structures they imposed. The 9/11 of the world economy in 2008, when bankers blew up global credit and investment relations, caused millions to leave home in search of sustenance and an income.

Migrants, recruited from the 1940s (US/Mexico) and 1950s (Europe) as “*guest-workers*” rather than as immigrants with access to citizenship, as “*arms*”/“*braceros*” or “*hands*” rather than as men and women with heads and hearts – were a mainstay of the white North Atlantic World’s economic development in the late 20th Century. They were invited to act as profit-yielding producers of surplus value. Since the repeated economic slowdowns turned into crises, they have been labelled as foreigners who exploit “our” social security systems, arrive without papers – our kind of papers – and are designated illegals, and therefore as criminals. Some, or indeed whole groups, of them are also labelled as terrorists. Let us remind ourselves that wherever colonising Europeans went, they arrived without papers, exploited local resources and were heavily armed with a white, Christian supremacy-based ideology that was as destructive of minds as it was destructive of lives using guns. As to terrorising: Vasco da Gama burnt a ship with Muslim pilgrims returning from the hajj to South Asia in order to sow fear and extort trading concessions; the Spanish, beyond the inadvertent dissemination of Eurasian germs, annihilated millions of Native men, women and children in the Americas through warfare and forced labour; the British acted as the largest drug-pushing power in the world in the “opium war” against China; Belgium’s King Leopold terrorised the peoples of the Congo region. As to destruction of ways of life and of human bodies and souls, infants and children included, Western bankers’ present speculation in unsecured derivatives – sanctified by self-interested rating agencies – was more explosive than any conventional weapons. According to *ILO* data from 2009, the consequences worldwide involve some 18 million men and women losing their jobs and some 200 million in developing countries being pushed into increased vulnerability and extreme poverty (*ILO* 2009; *Oxfam* 2010). Compared to the 9/11 World Trade Center crisis, which cost the lives of 3,000 men and women, hunger seems to spur only limited security measures – security which would ensure peoples’ basic survival.²

² The first 9/11, the US-backed bombing of the presidential palace in Chile by reactionary army officers in 1973, never attracted this level of attention.

Today's migrants may come without papers, which by law is a misdemeanour but not a crime. Only a miniscule fanatic-fundamentalist segment is armed. Before summarily labelling them as "Muslim fundamentalists", we need to remind ourselves that fundamentalism exists among Christians and Jews, but that it is then referred to as "orthodoxy". Whilst the vast majority of (heavily) armed Europeans heading for the colonised segments of the world wanted to force others to work for them, and the vast majority of criminal bankers feast on bonuses, most of today's northbound migrants want to work for a living, for food and for the education of their children. This was also the goal of Europe's millions of labour migrants from 1815 to 1914. Searching for food and decent lives, for chances to improve one's place in the world, and for prospects for the future, characterised migrant decision-making in the past, and continues to do so in the present.

The recent *sequence of profound crises*, touted as the reason why migrants should no longer be admitted, began in the early 1970s when a mega company, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), 100 % US-owned at that time, engineered the oil crisis of 1973 in order to boost profits; it involved subsequent other crises; and most recently the near collapse of the world economy caused by banking empires "too big to fail" in systemic terms or, in actor terms, by a few thousand speculators who are illiterate when it comes to understanding their own complex mathematical trading formulae. Standard legal procedure would have apprehended the culprits, rather than criminalising and marginalising migrants. Today's financial empires and their global casino capitalism, divorced from the "real economy" even in Western countries, surpass the state-built empires of the 19th Century in terms of their negative impact. Migrants, in contrast, impact only their own lives and the economic sectors in which they create value, as well as the society to which they add their human capital and cultural options.

Europe's people have lived over the centuries through a sequence of major elite-made crises: the trans-Central European Thirty Years War, 1618-1648; the trans-European wars, 1792-1815, fought between the reactionary, anti-revolutionary coalition of bloodline dynasties and imperialist Napoleonic stratagems; the 1914-1918 War, in which the axis powers relied on forced migrant labourers from Eastern Central and Eastern Europe, and the colony-owning Allies on forced non-white labour migrants from afar; and – globally – the Great Depression, 1929-39, and the World War of 1937 to 1945. In the first half of the 20th Century, Europe's national elites made the continent the major refugee-generating segment of the globe. This, *Michael Marrus* has argued, was a constituent element of constructing in ideological and military terms the monocultural modern nation-states on territories with a pluralist population composition: It "implied not only the naming of certain peoples as enemies of the nation, but also the expulsion [forced migration] of significant groups". Immigrants, recruited or, if coming of their own volition, admitted by dynastic regimes for their economic contributions, were recast as "alien" under the nationalist regime. Chauvinist politicians thought it "best to eject unwanted" minorities and reject allegedly alien migrants (*Marrus* 1985: 51; *Caestaecker/Moore* 2010). Placing 1930s European nation-states in a global context, it is necessary to underline the fact that, when hundreds of thousands were fleeing fascism in the 1930s, Japan's invasion

of China in 1937 generated one hundred million refugees in the single year. No refugee-generating crisis or mass dislocation producing war “erupted” (volcano-like) as received parlance has it; all were man-made and gendered, and statesmen and intellectual elites bore responsibility for them.

Elite-made crises and common peoples’ migrations are closely related. Whether as small as a local famine, for example in South-western Germany in 1816/17, or in the Horn of Africa region in 2011, or as large as the Great 1930s or the recent “high-class thieves”-engineered Depression (Taibbi 2010; *US Time Magazine* 8 Nov. 2010: 32), crises threaten life projects and often reduce family food intake below levels of physical survival. Most of the tens of millions of European men and women in the delayed 19th Century, 1815-1914, left a stagnant or even disaster zone in which they or their families did not have enough to eat, saw no chances to change their hierarchy-marred societies, and faced continuously low or even deteriorating standards of living. It made no sense to stay where a family’s investment into reproduction of adults’ labour power and upbringing of children was higher than any income that might be gained from waged rural or urban work. Migrants, in their own words, moved “to bread” or away from “Brotherschaft” (rule over their bread) (Hoerder 1986). Such systemic hopelessness is characteristic of segments of many impoverished emigrant-producing societies today. Impoverishment, in most cases, stems from global terms of trade and intra-societal inequalities, rather than from a lack of local resources. As today’s “voluntary” south-north migrants, 19th Century “voluntary” transatlantic migrants escaped from severely-constrained economic regimes to others with wider perceived options: from “known impossibilities to not yet known possibilities” (Nugent 1992). White Europeans moving before 1914 had no need of entry documents. A series of entry paper requirements, the “invention of the passport”, was elaborated by nation-states in the North Atlantic world only from the 1880s onwards, but mainly from World War One to the 1920s (Torpey 2000). These new restrictions created barriers and the new category of the “undocumented” emerged, to be renamed “illegal” in recent exclusionist parlance. People who satisfy the rules but do not fit within the quotas, or who are too poor to be considered acceptable by the receiving state’s gatekeepers, were excluded at the borders. To these institutional barriers imposed by States, the ideology of nationhood added cultural ones: other-cultured newcomers were categorised as “aliens” and as people with lesser rights.³ Furthermore, “entry requirement” could be a proxy for “not of white skin colour”. Nation-states demanded cultural assimilation, and their historians inscribed a newly-invented bloodline or genetic continuity into the resident nationals’ collective memory. At the turn of the 20th Century, drives for Germanisation, Austrianisation, Russification, and Americanisation and, at the

³ In dynastic states, migrants, especially if they arrived in groups, were able to negotiate entry and often aid for re-settling and establishing themselves to become producers and taxpayers. The model case is constituted by the Huguenots. Once they had accepted the new ruler (usually by oath), they became „subjects“ like other residents and could retain or adjust their culture and language at their own pace.

turn of the 21st Century, the hate campaigns waged against cultural pluralism, are products of national exclusiveness and supremacist convictions. The anti-Semitism of the past has become the anti-immigrantism of the present. Are national belongings so brittle as to be contingent on an external enemy to maintain their internal coherence?

3 Geographies of migration: translocal, transregional, transnational and global

Migrants are characterised in the public debate by state/culture of origin, “Turks in Germany” or “Algerians in France”. This provides collective ascriptions and suggests the role to be played by states in migration, economies that push people out on the departure side and admission barriers on the arrivals side. Such language usage, firstly, does not permit any reflection of processes of acculturation: from Turkish immigrants in West Germany via Turkish-German to Germans of Turkish cultural background. Secondly, it unquestioningly assumes migration to take place primarily between states as a whole. Data have never supported such constructions. “East Indians” in “Great Britain” are men and women from particular regions and localities of origin, and they migrate to specific municipalities in England. People from German-speaking Central Europe heading for the United States and Canada in the 19th Century did this too. Statewide geographies demand regional differentiation; state borders, on close analysis, appear as permeable and as borderlands rather than the clear-cutting borderlines (*Hillmann 2007*).

To escape from the “nation to ethnic enclave” approach of both culturally-conservative political restrictions and traditional migration studies, the concept of “transnationalism” was “introduced” in the early 1990s and quickly became a catchword. The concept, again a historicisation is called for, has an almost century-long history (*Patel 2004*) and one renowned migration historian has asked somewhat exasperatedly, “What’s new about transnationalism?” (*Foner 1997: 371*). However, most migration historians have described the transborder cultural continuities without conceptualising transnationalism, but have restricted their analyses to bordered ethnic enclaves. The authors of the 1990s concept, who were anthropologists, studied US-bound migrants from the Philippines and refugees from US-supported dictatorships in Latin America. They assumed that “transnational” connections were new and that cultures extended state- or nationwide. They overlooked the many languages spoken in the Philippine regions, islands, cities and hinterlands and the exclusion in Central American states of many Native Peoples from status as “nationals” (*Glick Schiller et al. 1992*). *Steven Vertovec* (1999) has commented on the term’s “conceptual muddling”. A sophisticated version has been explicated by social scientists such as *Thomas Faist* and Canadian scholars *Lloyd Wong* and *Victor Roudometof* (*Faist 2000: 195-241; Wong 2002*).

Empirical accuracy and conceptual clarity indicate that, rather than trans-*national* trajectories, trans-*state* border crossings occur. This distinction is central to an analysis, since “nation” is a cultural category and “state” is one of political insti-

tutions. The two concepts are not only not congruent but, to some degree, even contradictory: Democratic states – in theory – treat each and every person as equal before the law, regardless of culture, gender, class or age, while nations accord privileges to cultural majorities over cultural minorities – the latter term being a 19th Century invention by the gatekeepers of the nation (*Hoerder* 2011).

Research, without exception, shows that migrants move between localities and regions rather than between whole states and societies. Around 1900, 94 % of US-bound migrants from Europe's many regional cultures headed for friends and kin according to the declarations they made at Ellis Island. So did southern Chinese migrants moving to the Southeast Asian Diaspora, and so do today's African migrants to France or Britain. They come from a particular location of socialisation in a specific regional economy and arrive in a delimited social space where trusted acquaintances know that jobs are available that are commensurate to their skills or lack of them. They migrate to options allowing them to earn a living on local labour markets, and may also appreciate a more open state and societal institutional setup. Such specific connections between surplus and scarcity of labour are embedded in regions whose economic context and migratory practices socialise young people, i.e. potential migrants. Aggregate data generated by nation-states have not only hidden these specifics, they have also eliminated women from the data by labelling them as dependents without any agency of their own, and thus mere "associational migrants" (*Bilsborrow/Zlotnik* 1992; *Boyd/Grieco* 2003; *Morokvasic* 1984; *Harzig* 2001).

Empirically and analytically, migration researchers study translocal and transregional movements in the context of nation-state legal frameworks. Such contexts were only established by states towards the end of the 19th Century. Nation-state narratives are often no more than the respective state's elite-produced stories – gatekeeper versions with a profound impact on the acceptance or rejection of migrants and on their cultural expressiveness. We need to remind ourselves that "Barbarians" were – and seemingly still are – those of another language, unable to communicate with the hegemonic culture. Those who were socialised within the hegemonic culture usually do not bother to learn migrants' languages. At least "facilitators", whether in firms' personnel departments or in social work and admission bureaucracies, could help migrants to come to terms with institutions and cultural practices by being bilingual. Resident-migrant interaction in the streets, on shop-floors, and at other meeting places may reinforce or challenge national histories and their exclusionary or inclusionary practices. To combine the empirically-sound translocal and transregional with the – often frame-setting – transnational or trans-state, the over-arching concept of "transcultural" designates the range of options at different levels of social spaces.

A "Transcultural Societal Studies" approach combines empirical data with interpretive theorisations. Culture is a complex system acquired in the process of childhood socialisation that includes tools, spoken and body language, arts and beliefs, created in gendered, class- and age-specific versions by human beings who must provide for their material, emotional and intellectual needs in order to survive. Transcultural capability denotes the ability to live in two or more cultures and create

border-crossing cultural spaces. Strategic transcultural competence involves conceptualisations of life projects in more than one society and choice between options. Transculturation is a process through which individuals and societies change themselves in contact zones by negotiating diverse ways of life into a dynamic, plural new whole which, transitory like all societies, will be changed by means of subsequent interactions and input by new migrants.⁴ People, be they resident or migrant, male or female, *proact* according to lifeplans, act out their life projects or, at a minimum, *react* to circumstances on a day-to-day basis. Non-migrants do so within the limits of their monocultural capabilities circumscribed by stationary lives, whilst migrants do so by virtue of multiple capabilities acquired through their mobility between several locations. Such societal cultural spaces are located within structures and institutions of a *polity* – the fixed, if evolving, aspect. When crossing an *interstate* border, people move into another *society* with dynamic norms, discourses and practices. When problems occur – fundamentalist impositions, constraining job markets, or explosive racism – the structural faultlines and the hitches in transculturation projects need to be addressed. Any imposition of limitations, of barriers and borders, by exclusion, labelling or confining slows down interaction and acculturation. Politicking creates problems that strategic policy-making might avoid.

Scholarly analysis requires that attention be paid both to complex cultural and institutional settings and to whole lives. Ideal-type Transcultural Societal Studies integrate the study of society and its patterns and institutions (“social sciences”), all types of its representations (“discursive sciences” or humanities), and the actual practices (“way of life or habitus sciences”) in the context of legal, religious and ethical norms (“normative sciences”), the somatic-psychic-emotional-spiritual-intellectual characteristics of individual men and women (“life sciences”) and the physical-geographical context (“environmental sciences”). They analyse “becoming”, the historical dimension, “being” in the present and aspirations for the future – and thus include not only a gendered but also an intergenerational approach. They study processes rather than constructions labelled as unchanged from times immemorial, and development rather than the fixed or the stagnant (*Hoerder 2010*).

As non-Eurocentric world-system approaches have made clear, the local and regional need to be connected to global economic and political hierarchies and networks. Since decolonisation the coloniser-colonised division of the world has been replaced by a colour-coded global apartheid in which the wealthier, whiter populations live off underpaid labour in poorer countries with workers of colours-of-skin other than white (*Richmond 1994*). Such working men and women assess the known structural impossibilities at the location of work and evaluate options at those locations where the products of their labour are sold. What does an exploited

⁴ The concept of transculturation emerged from work done by Latin American and Canadian scholars from the 1930s to the 1950, but in scholarship of the hegemonic core of knowledge production and interpretive discourses concepts of assimilation to national cultures (Chicago Men’s School of Sociology) by “uprooted” migrants (Oscar Handlin, Harvard) remained dominant.

woman, sewing clothes for consumers in wealthier “Western” societies in a factory at the Thailand-Myanmar border, think or envision while calculating how to dress herself and feed her children from her meagre wages?

Most research into migrations past and present failed to focus on gender. However, the implicit association of the term “migrant” with men, especially in labels like “transatlantic proletarian mass” or plantation belt “coolie” migrations, is and always has been wrong. Past migrations involved men and women, the “proletarian” transatlantic ones in a gender ratio of 60 to 40 to the 1920s and 50 to 50 since the 1930s. Today’s so-called “feminisation” of migration reflects the shift from industrial to service economies in the wealthier segments of the world, not a sudden *new* presence of women. It also reflects the demise of male-centred views and research. The designation “feminisation” also reflects that (1) women increasingly account for more than half of the total of migrants, and that (2) in the framework of family economies as well as individual life projects more women leave first given the structure of labour markets and job options at potential destinations. They reflect (3) that child-care and emotional work in the families of origin need to be redistributed – more to female kin than to men, fathers included. Studies of present-day domestics and caregiver migrations have become legion since the 1990s – most written by women scholars while men continue to work more intensively on industrial, allegedly male migrations (*Hoerder/Kaur*, to appear in 2013).

4 Transcultural migrant agency in a global perspective: options, otherness, gender

While, in the 19th Century, assumedly male migrants have been said to go in search of “unlimited opportunities” – the billboard slogan of US manifest destiny ideologues –, today’s migrant women are often considered as victims, and numerous studies have substantiated exploitation and harassment (*Anderson 2000*). However, this victimisation paradigm ascribes passivity to women. African slaves, who definitely were victimised, still built vibrant cultures in Brazil and the Caribbean, albeit under extremely constraining circumstances. If all Filipina domestics and caregivers were victims of a capitalist service economy imposed by rich societies, how could they create social spaces of their own in Hong Kong, Rome or elsewhere?

To capture migrant agency, scholars need to focus on individuals. Ruptures, with mothers leaving children behind to support them from afar, are experienced individually and in families. Individual actions and strategies include a migration habitus and supportive translocal networks in many societal contexts. The recent global financial crisis has exacerbated the constraints imposed on lifeplans. As *Christiane Harzig* has argued, migrant strategies in the context of constraining structural and racial-ethnic-gender ascriptions may be analysed in terms of “Otherness as a cultural resource”. Just as whiteness is a resource (*Harris 1993*), “otherness is one of the most substantial and tangible aspects of socio-cultural capital” for migrant domestic and caregiving workers. In a dialectical relationship, being different facilitates both access to a segment of a foreign country’s labour market – which is

the migrants' goal – and their exploitation – which is a consequence to be avoided wherever possible. Migrants sought and continue to seek entry to receiving societies' specific, limiting labour market segments as a pathway to a society as a whole which will provide better options than the society of birth at a point in the future when they have established a base through hard work. Female service workers, excluded from standard immigration entryways, seek (perhaps degrading) jobs as a stepping stone to improved lives for themselves and their families. They "are hired precisely because they carry a different cultural baggage".⁵

The migrant's interest in entering a society with wider options matches the employer's interest in finding a worker from another culture to carry out tasks which native men or women refuse to undertake under the conditions offered. For receiving societies, the otherness hides the intra-societal hierarchy of class. In contrast, a migrant woman's cultural difference permits her "to situate herself outside ... [the receiving society] which inevitably places her at the bottom. She may take recourse to the knowledge about her own social position at home and to her being essential [through remittances] to the family's survival. She may also have a strong sense about her own culture's superior food habits and child rearing practices." Women need such resilience because: "The race-class-gender systems of 'importing' cultures (North America, Europe, Middle East) provide for ready access to stereotypes in order to structure and organise historical 'knowledge' and present 'experience'. Cultural markers are attached to the women" (*Harzig* 2006). In Italy, for example, women from the Philippines are considered suitable for caretaking and more highly-skilled household work since they are Catholic and speak Spanish or English (in addition to Tagalog), while Somali women (being black and coming from Italy's former colony) are considered inferior (*Chell* 1997). Employers were and are aware of women's resilience and often label them as too independent or unruly.⁶

Migrants move to labour market *segments* – nowhere are all jobs open to them – in most of which they do not compete with native-born workers because the latter shun their country's 3-D sector (dirty, dangerous and often degrading work), or because the receiving country's education and training systems cannot meet demand (software programmers and nurses, for example). Their Otherness facilitates access to segments in which they are highly skilled – though a male-societal categorisation labels all domestic work as "unskilled". In this classification scheme, the laying of bricks – masonry – is skilled work, whilst raising a child and managing a household is unskilled. From their income migrant women support the part of their families staying behind. Are they sending money "home"? Home, too, is a highly debatable ideological construct: Home may not only be an uninteresting place, it may also

⁵ Industrial employers sometimes bore the cost of recruitment and travel to obtain a reliable labour force; domestic workers often receive help from sympathetic employing women in negotiating bureaucracies and in language acquisition.

⁶ Migrant women's position is often extremely difficult in the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon and Egypt, and of the Gulf States because of multiple discriminations due to gender ascription, religion, skin colour, language and cultural background to name only a few (*Jureidini* 2008).

be unsafe, unfair and unjust – characterised by discrimination and violence against women. One female migrant whose “home” was a tradition-reinforcing religious community once tersely noted that there were “no bars or visible exits” (Toews 2004: 53).

Those who depart and send remittances permit their economically marginal family to stay – they help brothers, sisters and parents to avoid having to migrate. Ideally, remittances even help consolidate family status and thus reduce migratory potential in marginal economies or economic sectors – the very goal of exclusionists in receiving societies. Nationalists have decried the sending of remittances as being detrimental to the economy of the host – or increasingly *host-ile* – society in which the migrants live. Such dead-end thoughts never mention the other side of the economics of migration: Each and every migrant, man or woman, arriving in working age, transfers his or her human capital to the receiving society and creates social capital. Since the society and family of birth invested in their upbringing and education, the host/hostile society receives this capital infusion for free and, in addition, receives taxes from the newcomers on whom it never spent a cent for education and training. In economic terms, migration is development aid from lesser developed to more highly-developed societies and economies. Migrant labour and taxes are integral to the economies of receiving societies across the globe, remittances – in addition to the individual and family function – help avoid the collapse of whole sending states’ economies: Were remittances to cease to arrive in Mexico, the Philippines and Bangladesh, this would lead to state bankruptcies which, in turn, would lead to a skyrocketing propensity to migrate.

Agency of migrants has been central in and for states unable or unwilling to provide options for sustainable lives. Europe’s states of the 19th and early 20th Centuries, and many decolonised African, Asian and Latin American states in the present, are neither citizen-based (“sovereignty of the people”) nor protective of citizens (human rights principles). They have been and they remain labour-exporting states, setting target levels for annual departures in the present or, like Great Britain in the past, exporting people considered costly by state bureaucrats: unmarried women, orphaned children and disabled former soldiers. The receiving states, too, do not live up to the fundamental tenet of an equal citizenry: Labour migrants and internally disadvantaged people, with few exceptions, are classified bureaucratically as persons enjoying fewer rights, or even as being of lesser value.

5 Conclusion

Crises may slow down actual migration: Those even further impoverished lack the ability to pay the transaction costs for the move, whilst those who still can move may wait for better conditions on the labour market. In the transatlantic migrations, each downswing in the US economy was followed by a decline of in-migration from Europe. Crises may also accelerate migrations – those with no jobs or even daily sustenance may see no other option but to struggle to reach societies “richer” than their own, i.e. those which (seem to) provide more job options. If only some of the

200 million poor, made even more precarious by the recent crisis, see on a television screen the amounts of food and luxury in the “first world”, it does make sense to join those societies, difficulties along the route or lack of entry papers notwithstanding. Western investors migrate to China because they expect better returns on their investment capital; common people migrate in search of better job opportunities in Europe or North America, or in cities closer to their societies of birth, to achieve better returns on their human capital.

Though much of the present anti-immigrantism has been spurred by the crisis of 2008, a comprehensive transcultural, historically-informed analysis is able to identify an ongoing, deepening global crisis: The gap between the wealthiest and poorest countries of the globe had doubled by 1995 when compared to 1960: The richest 20 % of the world’s population were almost 60 times better off than the poorest 20 %. This chasm continues to grow (*Hoerder 2002: 516*).

The colour barrier in migrant admission, abolished in North America in 1962 (Canada) and 1965 (US), and breached in Europe by reverse colonial/post-colonial migrations since the 1960s, has been re-established as “global apartheid” through global terms of trade (*Richmond 1994*). Many post-decolonisation, independent states have failed to create conditions that permit sustainable lives. Global racialisation strategies of restricting access to worldwide natural resources, or to specific countries’ social resources, cannot be countered by building a new “iron curtain” along the US southern border or a Fortress Europe with barriers along the Mediterranean and its Eastern borders. Two million men and women or more – sometimes with their children – migrate internationally every year, but not always south-to-north, to countries offering wider perceived options. In many migrant-receiving societies – and, take note of connotations: these are migrant-need societies – discourses of fear of the Other are instrumentalised to detract from analysing and relieving the root causes of migration. In the decades which have passed since the end of the Second World War, unequal terms of trade have been imposed by globalised Western capital on less developed, poorer countries. The decades-long antagonistic spectre of the “Free West” and the Communist bloc is gone and thus, in view of the emerging economies of Brazil-Russia-India-China (BRIC) another “clash of civilizations”, an external enemy, is being invented by intellectual gatekeepers, too monocultural to deal with diversity and multiple options. Islam is being targeted, and *Bernard Lewis (1990)* and *Samuel Huntington (1997)* among many others engage in politics of identity: “Who are we”? Is Western – German, French, US American – identity so brittle, so vague, or so undefinable that a devilish Alien Other – once witches, now multiculturalism, gypsies, Mexicans – is needed to keep it from falling apart? Is an outer wall rather than internal achievement – human rights and social security for example – the glue or the straight-jacket that holds societies together?

As scholars, we may reveal obstacles to migrant women’s, men’s and children’s participation; as politically-active citizens, we may improve their access to societal resources; as beneficiaries of global inequalities, I argue that we have a mandate to do so.

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