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CARIM-EAST – CREATING AN OBSERVATORY OF MIGRATION EAST OF EUROPE

Co-financed by the European Union

Qualitative Research in Migration Studies

Franck Düvell

CARIM-East Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2012/01



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CARIM-East – Creating an Observatory East of Europe

This project which is co-financed by the European Union is the first migration observatory focused on the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union and covers all countries of the Eastern Partnership initiative (Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and Russian Federation.

The project's two main themes are:

- (1) migration from the region to the European Union (EU) focusing in particular on countries of emigration and transit on the EU's eastern border; and
- (2) intraregional migration in the post-Soviet space.

The project started on 1 April 2011 as a joint initiative of the European University Institute (EUI), Florence, Italy (the lead institution), and the Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, Poland (the partner institution).

CARIM researchers undertake comprehensive and policy-oriented analyses of very diverse aspects of human mobility and related labour market developments east of the EU and discuss their likely impacts on the fast evolving socio-economic fabric of the six Eastern Partners and Russia, as well as that of the European Union.

In particular, CARIM-East:

- builds a broad network of national experts from the region representing all principal disciplines focused on human migration, labour mobility and national development issues (e.g. demography, law, economics, sociology, political science).
- develops a comprehensive database to monitor migration stocks and flows in the region, relevant legislative developments and national policy initiatives;
- undertakes, jointly with researchers from the region, systematic and *ad hoc* studies of emerging migration issues at regional and national levels.
- provides opportunities for scholars from the region to participate in workshops organized by the EUI and CMR, including academic exchange opportunities for PhD candidates;
- provides forums for national and international experts to interact with policymakers and other stakeholders in the countries concerned.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: <http://www.carim-east.eu/>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Remittances flowing from Ukrainian migrants working in high-income countries to Ukraine are an increasingly important source of extra income for migrants' families. Given the increasing size of aggregate remittance inflows, they are also expected to be a potential source of funding for the social and economic development of Ukraine as a whole. If remittances enhance investment in physical and human capital and thus boost productivity, they can help mitigate the possible negative economic effects of rapid population decline and the aging of the Ukrainian population. Yet the potential benefits of remittances are likely to be matched by potential costs. Thus, two main issues are of interest with regard to remittances in Ukraine:

- what are their benefits and costs for migrants' families, local communities, the Ukrainian economy and society; and
- how to harness their development potential while limiting any counterproductive side effects.

This paper directly addresses these two questions. It does so by reporting first results from an ongoing effort to assess the potential development and unwanted side effects of remittances in Ukraine. These results come from a survey of the empirical literature in Ukraine and other transition economies and are supported, where possible, by the author's contributions. The purpose of this work is to draw out evidence-based policy implications.

Given that data on migration and remittances in Ukraine is incomplete and unreliable, we make use of all existing data sources on private transfers sent to Ukrainian households: data quality is consistently poor, but, we assume that it has similar biases over time. And we focus our analysis on relative changes in remittance inflows over time rather than on their absolute magnitude.

What are the Main Characteristics of Remittance Flows?

- Personal remittance inflows to Ukraine were estimated by the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) at about US\$ 5,862 bln. in 2010, or 4.2% of GDP. Alternative expert estimates, some of which lack hard data, vary from US\$ 1.7 bln. to 54 bln.;
- the share of the net compensation of employees increased from 37.4% in 2007 to 57% in January-September 2011, whereas the second component of personal remittances – personal transfers – lost its relative importance;
- although bank accounts remain the major transmission channel for personal remittances to Ukraine, since 2007 they have been losing ground to international money transfers that accounted for about 40% of all transfers from January to September 2011;
- Russia, the US, Germany, Greece and Cyprus are the top five source countries of officially registered personal remittances to Ukraine. Whereas important destination countries for Ukrainian labour migrants such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are either at the bottom of the NBU list of countries or missing altogether. This may be explained, in part, by the informal nature of most transfers between migrants and their households in these countries. There is also the question though of the relatively small scale of total remittances transferred from this region compared to other countries. In these other countries cross-border transfers are not always related to migration, but rather to the minimization of income tax liability in off-shore zones;
- total remittance inflows to Ukraine are very responsive to changes in inflows from Russia that point to the heavy dependence of the Ukrainian economy on Russia. This is true not only in terms of international trade and finance channels but also in terms of remittances;
- over half of all remittance-receiving households in Ukraine are concentrated in western Ukraine. Densely populated and industrially developed eastern regions that have a common border with Russia, make up less than 20% of all recipient households (as of 2007). Most

remittance-receiving households belong to the middle and lower middle class (subjectively judged) and are to be found in urban areas, but not in the capital city;

- Ukrainians working relatively close to their region of origin and frequently visiting their household members are more likely to bring part of their earnings when they come back to Ukraine rather than sending money from abroad;
- female, unmarried, young, highly-skilled individuals whose families live in urban areas have a lower propensity to remit than their counterparts (based on a univariate analysis);
- labour migrants use a wide array of formal and informal mechanisms to remit money, ranging from electronic transfers through banks, money transfer companies and post offices to hand deliveries by the migrants themselves, friends/ relatives or by a third party (couriers, bus drivers and train stewards). The relative importance of these differs from country to country. The proportion of remittances sent to Ukraine through informal channels is estimated at from 15% to 200% of reported remittances.

How are the remittances used?

- Overall, remittances received from Ukrainian migrants are predominantly spent on essential consumption needs, the purchase of durable goods, improving housing conditions (either via purchase or the repair of a house/flat), education, and, less often, on repayment of debt, accumulation of savings, and medical treatment. Very few of the remittances received by households is channelled into business investment. We expect that investments in productive capital by household members and return migrants may increase only after the households' more-pressing consumption needs are satisfied and the Ukrainian business and investment environment has significantly improved;
- there are significant differences in the use of remittances depending on the age and gender of migrants and their household type (urban/rural). In the trade-off between current and future consumption young migrants and their household members tend to discount future earnings, preferring current over future utility. Unlike older migrants who can be eligible for publicly-provided pension provisions and other insurance-based payments, many young migrant workers are not insured by the state against future adverse conditions. At present, they tend to "free ride" at the expense of local taxpayers, putting an additional strain on public finances.

What are the positive effects of remittances?

- Personal remittances are found to be pro-cyclical because of the economic crisis in the main source countries of remittances to Ukraine (particularly Russia and the EU). They reacted, however, less violently to the economic downturn in Ukraine than profit-driven private capital flows. Furthermore, due to the substantial depreciation of the hryvnia against the US dollar in the wake of the 2008-2009 crisis, remittances in the hryvnia and as a percent of GDP have actually increased during the crisis;
- as a sizable and increasing element in the Ukraine's balance of payments officially recorded personal remittances helped counteract depreciation pressure from a growing trade deficit, that considerably widened during 2005-2008, because of increasing prices in imported oil and gas, domestic demand growth exceeding output growth and eroding competitiveness. However, taking into account that remittances are an unsolicited, non-market, cross-border private transfers which often move through informal channels, their role as a source of foreign exchange should not be exaggerated;
- remittance-induced demand for consumer goods and real estate contributed to the growth of such sectors as the retail trade, construction, transport, financial mediation and insurance, real estate and legal activities, household and personal services, the food industry, the

manufacturing of furniture and construction materials, and thus this demand facilitated the restructuring of the Ukrainian economy;

- despite the fact that remittances are mainly used for consumption, they proved to be a powerful driver of Ukraine's GDP growth before 2006. However, they are less responsible for GDP growth than macro-economic stabilization and structural reforms, the recovery of output lost in the 1990s, in terms of trade gains and investment. Simulation results of the computable general equilibrium model reveal that the hypothetical Ukrainian economy in 2004 would have lost about 7.1% of potential GDP and private consumption would have contracted by 18%, had the amount of remittances been reduced by 70%, had the domestic labour supply increased by 5% and had total factor productivity declined by 10%. But these outcomes are very sensitive to input parameters assumptions;
- remittances have a considerable impact on financial development in Ukraine, at least through induced financial literacy among remittance-receiving households and the development of the formal financial system across the country. But their potential in expanding the supply of funds to the domestic banking system *via* saving accounts and, therefore, in fuelling growth through lending support to the SME sector is greatly underexploited due to low confidence in the banking system;
- remittances have positive effects on the welfare of recipient households: augmenting their income, financing essential human and housing needs, improving access to education, health care and other under-provided public goods, easing liquidity constraints, and insuring households against income shocks. As remittances were initially in foreign currency, they helped cushion remittance-receiving households against household insolvency in the wake of the 2008 crisis;
- remittances helped reduce poverty, particularly in backward areas that received the bulk of remittances. But strong economic growth in Ukraine in 2000-2008 and expansionary fiscal policy reflected in rapidly rising public-sector wages and social transfers since 2004 were the most important factors in reducing poverty;
- income earned abroad which was invested in education contributed to an increase in enrolments in higher education and an increase in the share of privately financed students. How these changes will affect the quality of human capital and labour productivity, given over-education and the skills mismatch in the Ukrainian labour market, is still an open question.

What are the negative effects of remittances?

- Remittance inflows in foreign currency (US dollars, Euros and Russian roubles) were, in part, responsible for the growing dollarization – both official (foreign currency accounts and loans in the banking system) and unofficial (household cash savings in foreign currency) – of the Ukrainian economy before the 2008 crisis. High dollarization is a reason for concern because it limits the effectiveness of monetary policy. It intensifies the negative consequences of fiscal deficits, and magnifies the vulnerabilities in the banking system in the event of an economic crisis and currency depreciation. The recent banking crisis in Ukraine confirms our line of argument: the high proportion of long-term foreign currency loans coupled with the depreciation of the local currency triggered an increase in non-performing loans that resulted in severe liquidity constraints in the banking system. This, in turn, set off a pronounced and ongoing credit crunch that held back the rapid recovery of the Ukrainian economy;
- remittances have played a decisive role in creating an inflationary spiral through their effect on household demand for consumer goods. Heavy remittance investment in real estate brought about a sudden increase in house prices in the remittance-receiving regions. As a result, active migrants have been forced to stay abroad longer to save more money than they had initially

planned, while households not having access to remittances have come under increased pressure to send family members abroad;

- remittances combined with the long-term absence of family members have negative social externalities such as poor school performance and psychological disorders in those children left behind; erosion of emotional ties between family members; the redistribution of gender roles, and often family disintegration; and social stratification in local communities;
- as the use of remittances for investment in higher education is often risky and unreasonable (moral hazard problem), it often adversely affects youth employability and contributes to a substantial skills mismatch in the Ukrainian economy. This, in turn, can have a long-lasting, adverse effects on human-capital formation in Ukraine, as it reduces the present stock of human capital through brain waste. But it also negatively affects the accumulation of human capital in the future by reducing private incentives to invest in education;
- remittances pose a “public moral hazard” problem by reducing political will to undertake necessary reforms and in miring Ukraine in a policy trap, with rent-seeking behaviour, state capture, weak rule of law, widespread corruption and a poor investment climate at its core.

Policy recommendations

- Here at the outset, we see that the development effects of remittances in Ukraine are often contradictory and contingent upon many factors, and there is still much that we need to know about the impact of remittances on Ukraine.
- There is the need to improve the data on remittances and to make it available to researchers, investors and other interested parties. Determining the scale of remittances is essential for making optimal policy decisions.
- There is a need to go beyond short-term desk studies and to invest in longitudinal and in-depth research on various aspects of remittances.
- The real challenge for policymakers is to design policies which harness the development potential of remittances, while limiting their counterproductive side effects. But primary efforts should be spent on breaking up the policy trap which is partly induced by growing remittance inflows. It would also prove wise to focus on:
 - encouraging remittance flows through formal channels;
 - introducing incentives for the productive investment of remittances and other incomes;
 - strengthening engagement in active policy debates on reducing legal barriers to labour mobility between Ukraine and EU countries and coordinating efforts in effective migration management, including such important issues as undocumented migration, cross-border human trafficking, the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, skills matching between migrant workers and jobs abroad, and the portability of pension, health, and other social benefits.

Preface

It is my strong belief that social scientists, in the broadest sense, should find out what actually goes on in society and how and why this happens; that they should aim to understand, in Hannah Arendt's terms, the meaning of words and actions, inform society about their findings and advise, if appropriate on the policy implications. Anthony Heath, fellow of the British Academy criticised those sociologists who were more interested in "theory" than going out and gathering evidence. He also castigated 'gurus' who wrote books about society without asking people questions (see *The Guardian* 21 June 2000). It was funny though that he never really conducted such research himself. Anyway, what I would like to emphasise is that leaving our offices, as inconvenient as it might sometimes be, and 'making our hands dirty', if I may use this metaphor, by 'asking people questions' about their lives and work, about the institutions they work at, about society and politics and about their beliefs and values is quintessential to social sciences.

Because of the very nature of the subject of migration research migration studies differ from other social science studies. The most obvious characteristics of the research subject of migration studies is the fluidity, instability and geographic mobility of the research subjects. This distinguishes them from the conventional subjects of sociological research which are often sedentary. Thus, studying mobile populations, people who come and go, involves specific challenges. First, the mobility of some parts of the population has consequences for statistical data gathering, for instance, because migrants do not necessarily register or deregister with the authorities or because they sometimes keep moving and disappear from the research sites. Thus research designs and methods have to be developed that suit the research subject. For instance, migration researchers often not only have to be prepared to travel where the phenomenon can be observed but also sometimes have to be almost as mobile as their research subjects. This has generated some methodological innovations to the field of social sciences as a whole.

I have been researching migration in and too Europe for 20 or so years, mostly forced migration and irregular migration as well as migration policies and politics, doing exactly this, 'asking people questions', people who were migrants, smugglers, social workers or human rights campaigners, border guards, civil servants or policy makers on local, national, EU or international level. Usually, I apply qualitative methods, in-depth interviews, observations and photography, either because I conducted pilot studies on subjects that were not studied before, because the research subjects were difficult to reach or simply because for lack of funding. For instance, this year, I conducted 25 in-depth interviews with clandestine immigrants, mostly asylum seekers who were coming from Somalia and travelled through Ukraine, Turkey or Libya to finally arrive in the EU. I was aiming to find out how they managed to clandestinely cross border controls, why in this case border controls fail and thus understand the tension between individual aspirations and institutional goals.

In this paper I will look at some migration research and discuss methodologies, research designs, methods and analyses.

Introduction: American and European Migration Research

Migration research dates back at least to the 19th century, to the research of the rather crude quantitative theorization of Ravenstein (1885). Amongst the early qualitative works are Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918) seminal study of 'the Polish Peasant in Europe and America' analysing letters from Polish immigrants in the US sent to their relatives back in Poland, Lindberg's (1930) partly qualitative analyse of migration networks from Sweden to the US or Adamic' (1932) auto-ethnography of 'an immigrant in America'. Also Whyte's (1943) 'Street Corner Society' based on participant observation, was a milestone in migration research. Whyte lived in a slum of Italian immigrants in Chicago to explore the internal structures, hierarchies and functioning. Ever since, migration research, and notably

theorisations of migration, has been strongly influenced by the American case. US American science because of the country's history and identity as an immigration country has been particularly productive and often took the lead in analyzing and theorizing migration, such as network theory, migration system theory, transnationalism theory or integration theories.

There is however a danger that generalizing from what are ultimately US American case studies produces misleading results. The US American case is in fact rather special, first, because of the geography of America, it is a separate continent; second, its national identity as a liberal democratic immigration country; third, because of its role as the major global economic power and attraction; and fourth, because of its inevitably intercontinental and extremely diverse migration patterns. In contrast, Europe, first, geographically is an annex to the Asian landmass and neighbours another continent, Africa; second, Europe has a distinct history that differs significantly from that of the US, (spanning from colonialism, crumbling empires, two world wars and inherent massive destructions and loss of populations to the Iron Curtain and subsequently some reintegration), political philosophies and institutional cultures, the development of the European social model and its successful economic and political integration; third, Europe's population is ageing and decreasing; and fourth, its diverse national identities which have often produced xenophobic trends provides for a rather different case. Processes of Europeanization have been noted and are associated, amongst other processes, with the emergence of Eurocities linked together through distinct transportation systems (Eurostar, Easyjet, Ryan Air). These shape specifically European mobility patterns (Favell 2003) which result in a distinctive and comprehensive European migration space (Morokvasic & Rudolph 1994, Morawska 2001). Finally, a specifically 'European dilemma' over migration and welfare, nationhood and citizenship has been identified (Schierup, Hansen & Castles 2006).

To illustrate the scientific implications three examples shall be given. (1) Studies into large scale Mexican migration - because of the specific profile of Mexican migrants as low-educated and low-skilled rural catholic people - can hardly produce theories that can be one-to-one applied to large scale migration and integration of much better educated urban Poles or rural but Muslim Turks and Moroccans in Europe. (2) Geographic and labour market mobility of US Americans is considerably higher than of their European counterpart. As a result, US Americans are more likely to respond to changes in the supply-demand structure for labour and move where the vacancy is, hence local demand for labor is more likely to be filled by resident workers. Europeans are less mobile, vacancies are more difficult to fill with resident workers, and hence a demand for more mobile workers is created who inevitably come from outside the European Union. (3) According to different migration experiences and national identities specific political models addressing the inclusion of immigrants have been developed. The concept of segregation was related to the analysis of the exclusion of Black Americans, the assimilation model is based upon the analysis of European immigration to the US who retain few no trace of their cultural heritage, otherwise US American politics reflect a *laissez faire* approach to the incorporation of immigrants but is principally based on the *jus soli*, i.e. granting rights on the basis of being born in the country. In contrast, many European countries historically often and sometimes still do applied *jus sanguinis*, i.e. that rights are based on ethnic descentance.

Finally, the history of migration is off course distinctly different, the US are per se an immigration country whilst European countries are characterized a hugely diverse histories, first, in comparison with each other and across history and often transformed from one migration characteristics to another. For instance, Ireland was for long an emigration country, by the late 1990s it turned into an immigration country but from 2008 has become an emigration country again. Germany too was for long an emigration country; after 1960, it became an immigration country and from the mid 2000s it again became a net emigration country. Also, the net migration balance between pairs of countries often changed value.

Namely qualitative European research contributed significantly to the identification of migration types and patterns. For instance, the concept of 'ethnic migration' has been made fruitful to analyze movements of ethnic Germans, Turks and Greeks and of movements on the Balkan and in post-Soviet

countries. The now popular typologies of pendulum migration, shuttle migration and cross-border commuting are derived from European case studies (e.g. Morokvasic 1994). And also the concept of transit migration through a range of countries until a final destination is reached is largely derived from processes observed within the context of immigration to Europe and in response to the restrictions found in this part of the world (Düvell 2006b). Also historical categorisation, for instance associated with the fall of the Iron Curtain, the subsequent re-emergence of a European migration space and thus of movements dubbed as 'new migration' from the East into Western Europe are very European categories (Koser&Lutz 1998).

This shall illustrate that theories derived from specific cases in one part of the world cannot simply be applied to other parts. And this lesson may well apply to EU and the Eastern European, CIS and Central Asian countries. So there is a health warning to not simply adopt the theories derived from US or western European migration research but recognize what differences there might be in the eastern European case and consider whether and how this might impacts on migration theories.

Diverse studies

Migration studies are integrated in the wider research in the different disciplines, demography, geography, economic, sociology, politics etc but they are also sometimes perceived almost as a discipline or studies in its own right. Thus migration research is partly integrated and partly disintegrated from other research. Migration research covers hugely diverse issues, such as labour migration and forced migration, transnational practices and human smuggling, social integration, identity and cultural interaction, and migration management and law enforcement. As a consequence, research has become rather specialized, even sub-studied, notably forced migration and refugee studies (see for instance Jacobsen Landau 2003) and migration policy studies (for example, Betts 2011) have emerged. Migration research also touches upon a wide range of wider social matters, such as globalization, crises, climate change, ageing, international relations, European integration, state, welfare and labour market, racism, gender, family, and social cohesion. Research in each of these field poses particular methodological and ethical challenges and there is no one size if research that fits it all.

Methodology in migration research

Research methodology is about the underlying theoretical assumptions, or sometimes ideologies, in other words the epistemology that guides the actual research. Two principle approaches can be distinguished, emic and etic approaches (see Pelto and Pelto 1978). In emic research (from phon + emic) the inquirer derives categories for data collection after interacting with participants in the setting. In etic (from phon + etic) research the categories for data collection are decided before entering the field or laboratory. In etic research it is known what to look for, in emic research the field and the subject is not known. Second, migration research can be conducted from the position of a negative perception of migration focusing on the costs of migration for social cohesion or welfare systems, or it can be deduced from the position of a positive perception of migration, for example, by emphasising the economic and cultural benefits of migration. An almost archetypical historical example is the contrast between Goubineau's (1853) believe that migration racially degenerates the host societies and Park's (1928) idea that migration is an agent of progress.

As a methodological principal, I propose, first rooting migration research in history, i.e. in longitudinal perspectives. For instance, usually, migration research focuses on specific points in time, like the late 20th century. It then appears as if net migration balance between the rest of the world and Europe is positive and that Europe is the main destination for many international migrants. If we take a historical perspective we find that for several hundred years Europe was an emigration continent and that net migration was negative. At present, there are around 50 million immigrants in the EU, that seems significant but from 1400 to 1900 around 50 million people had emigrated from Europe. This

not only illustrates that net-emigration and net-immigration are rather balanced but also that the calculation of net-migration changes if we take a historical perspective.

Second, I suggest linking migration research to wider social research and theories, like processes of globalisation and economic and political integration, international relations and social change. Migration, because it is cause and consequence of wider social processes, is not and cannot be analysed as separate from other social, economic and political issues. So far, migration research is not well integrated to other research, may this be international relations or criminology. Indeed, there is a danger that if we consider migration as an isolated phenomenon it often appears exceptional and problematic but if we consider migration as just another element of global interaction migration appears and integral part of processes of social change and progress.

Third, I would advise acknowledging the often transnational level of migration, to acknowledge the fact that migration involves an emigration, sometimes a transit, and an immigration country or locality and thus has implications for both ends, sites, spaces and societies of the migration process. For instance, conventional research often only applies a container model, notably individual nation states, and as a consequence misses out on important processes that occur between or beyond this sphere. Accordingly, migration research is best conducted by transnational networks that link together the emigration and the immigration experience.

Fourth, I suggest taking some comparative perspective, either between localities, countries, regions or continents, or at least to embed individual cases in the wider global processes. For instance, in refugee research we often find reference to the hundreds of thousands of people claiming asylum in the EU, or OECD countries. Thus, the prevailing perception is that most refugees head north, or west. Instead, from a comparative perspective we find that most refugees flee to developing and southern countries and it is these countries and not the west that bear the brunt of the global refugee crisis.

Fifth, migration affects the local, national and global level. This means that migration occurs globally, but is categorised and regulated by national legislation whilst subsequently affecting local people and communities. For instance, in the 1960s, large numbers of people have migrated from India to the UK; their legal status was determined by UK immigration law but their presence was felt on the level of local economies communities. Therefore, I suggest acknowledging the multiple levels of migration and linking the level on which research is conducted to the other levels.

Sixth, it is important to accept that structure often impacts differently on different genders and that social behaviour or individual attitudes and values may be different for men or women. For instance, migration law may structurally favour men and discriminate women or the demand for specific types of labour may favour women, like domestic workers reject men, notably if these are low-skilled. Thus, we should be aware of this in our research, take gendered perspectives and study, analyse and compare genders separately.

Seventh, migration research mostly considers only one aspect of the migratory behaviour of human beings and that is why people actually move, and the determinants and facilitators of this. Research rarely asks why people do not move and what the constraints to mobility may be. This is a rather biased approach which produces biased results and researchers need to be aware of this.

And eighth, strictly speaking migration is nothing else but human geographic mobility, meaning the movements of human beings in space. Such movements are shaped by politics, respectively the political borders of nation states; accordingly, migration is determined as internal or international migration. Thus, politics have a crucial impact which under current conditions must therefore be considered a political construct. In addition, migration often is a hugely politicised issue often raising significant controversies. Finally, migrants' opportunities, performances and behaviours are shaped and determined by the immigration and residence rights they are refused or granted. For these reasons, I suggest to taking into account the political construction of migration and to acknowledging the political climate at the time of the research.

These methodological considerations have consequences for the research design and the choice of the research methods.

Research design

The design, or strategy, of a research project is concerned with translating methodology into methods; it bridges methodology with methods and thus considers which methods to apply in order obtain the data required for the research project.

Migration involves significant numbers of people, institutions that regulate or fail to regulate migration, and the people who determine and staff these institutions. Migration research is conducted through various methods such as surveys, qualitative interviews, observations, oral and written testimonies or photographic evidence; it often also involves policy or discourse analysis.

Qualitative research designs

Qualitative research can be defined as ‘a form of systematic empirical inquiry into *meaning*’ (Shank 2002: 5, italics FD). It is applied to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. Principally, qualitative research enables scholars to study real people in real situations, notably interaction on micro-level (Blumer 1969), and thus mapping social worlds. This enables to produce an analytic description of a complex social organization or process rather than a test of theory (see McCall & Simmons, 1969, 3-5).

Qualitative migration research is often identified with sociology, anthropology and ethnography, and with geography but also with market research. Originating in anthropology, qualitative field research traditionally refers to a practice in which researchers spend longer and sometimes repeated periods of time living within a culture in order to study it. The term has been adopted to describe occasions where researchers spend significant time - hours, days or weeks - observing and/or interacting with participants in areas of their everyday lives. This contrasts with questionnaire-based research or surveys (quantitative data collection) in which interaction with respondents is limited to a conventional interview on the basis of a questionnaire and where interaction is thus limited in time.

Qualitative or ethnographic research is defined by Knapp (1979) as:

an initially exploratory and open-ended approach to the research problem; (b) intensive research involvement of the researcher in the social setting being studied, as observer and in varying degrees as a participant; (c) the use of multiple intensive research techniques, with emphasis on participant observation and key informant interviewing; (d) an explicit attempt to understand events in terms of meanings held by those in the social setting; (e) an interpretive framework which emphasizes the important role of context in determining behaviour and events within a functional system; (f) a research product in written form-an "ethnography"-which interprets events ...and describes the setting in sufficiently vivid detail so that the reader "knows what it feels like to be there" (p. 119).

And in Willis and Trondman's words (2001: 1), ethnography is ‘family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents’ meaning observations and in-depth interviews.

Still, a distinction can be made between ethnographic and sociological qualitative research. Notably in anthropology ‘intensive research involvement’ is required, meaning that the researcher spends several weeks or even months in the field he or she aims to study in order to get access to the field, to identify gate openers, to observe certain practises and identify relevant interviewees. In sociological fieldwork, and once access to the field is established or straightforward research is more targeted and no further fieldwork, notably no observations might be necessary and the interviews can stand alone. In the later case, the disadvantages of a ‘short-term stay’ are compensated by more rigid sampling (see below).

Qualitative research is applied in certain conditions and serves particular purposes.

First, qualitative research is applied to new fields of research where nothing or only little is known, as it is the case, for example, when exploring new types of migration. It is then of a rather exploratory character, notably to identify the main issues.

Second, qualitative research is applied where the conditions for quantitative research are problematic, as, for instance, in migration studies in countries in the global south where statistics are insufficient.

Third, qualitative research is applied when the phenomenon studied is too small to be studied by quantitative means, like a small specific group in society such as the mafia or political leaders, or, as in the case of migration research, elite immigrants, irregular immigrants, transit migrants or human smugglers.

Fourth, qualitative research is applied when the research subject is too difficult to reach for a quantitative study, such as drug dealers or again irregular immigrants.

Fifth, qualitative research, like observations and in-depth non-focussed interviews, are particularly valid for discovering the unknown and thus unexpected. Therefore it sometimes 'is intentionally unstructured so as to maximize discovery and description rather than systematic theory testing' (Bersson 1978), therefore, it is particularly helpful when studying new or mixed migration movements.

Sixth, qualitative research aims at identifying not the quantitative dispersal of patterns and types but the patterns and types itself, notably of (a) behaviour and strategies, including decision-making processes, (b) experiences and (c) motives, values, beliefs and perceptions and causal relations between them.

Seventh, qualitative research aims to capture the research subjects' unique voices, hence their individual expressions, ideas and emotions, as far as this is possible. This is particularly important if we deal with people from other cultural backgrounds, who attach different meaning to terms or actions which will only be possible to discuss in in-depth interviews.

Eighth, qualitative research is required to study how respondents understand, interpret and respond to survey questionnaires, thus to identify flaws in quantitative research. For instance, through qualitative research we found out how respondents tick survey questions for their 'race', as in the UK, where ethnic Turks tick 'white', Asian, or even Black, if they identify themselves with the kind of discrimination this category experiences. We also know that emigrants do not always like to accurately respond to the 'country of birth' question, for instance, because they left in anger and like to leave this issue behind.

Finally, qualitative research might be favoured for practical reasons, notably because it can be cheaper or it might be that there are no suitably trained staff in a given country to conduct a sufficiently good quality survey. Finally, qualitative research, i.e. a sufficient sample of qualitative interviews can be realised with a relatively short period of time and can thus generate quick results.

In addition, long qualitative migration research, notably ethnographic research has been dominated by single case studies and snapshot designs. It is, however, increasingly recognised that case studies, notably if based on just one case only provide specific insights that only speak for themselves but may neither be generalisable nor provide enough data to facilitate theoretical conclusions. In order for a case study to have value that goes beyond describing the exceptional it cannot stand alone but must be seen in conjunction with other case studies.

To sum up, qualitative research is particularly helpful if quantitative data is either not available or unreliable. Qualitative research can and is often combined with quantitative research, either that it precedes a survey, e.g. to identify the main issues or vice versa that, if the territory is broadly known, a survey can be conducted and then the findings followed-up and deepened by qualitative research. Qualitative research does not primarily aim to provide quantitative results - though in certain cases qualitative data can also be quantitatively analysed - but qualitative results; it does not aim to establish the numerical dispersal of patterns but the patterns itself. Thus the aim is obtaining a complete overview over the range of patterns and categories in a certain field. In any case, qualitative migration research, not principally but due to certain practices, sometimes displays lack of rigidity, some bias in

the research questions or interview style (e.g. suggestive questions), sample problems (e.g. convenient sampling) limited validity and methodological problems related to ethical dilemma (see for e.g. Jacobsen & Landau 2003).

Complex research designs: mixed-methods and multi-sited

From the discussion so far it follows that migration research should be (a) historically grounded, (b) embedded in global processes, notably in processes of global social, economic and political change, (c) conducted on multiple levels and (d) gender-sensitive. This requires a diversification and combination of methods, notably multi-level, multi- or mixed method and multi-sited research designs¹, some inter-disciplinary and an overall holistic approach.

One option are multiple sites or multiple cases research designs² as only these, in contrast to single case research designs as only through these the researcher will be able to ‘build theories from case studies’ (Eisenhardt 1991).

‘Multiple cases are a powerful means to create theory because they permit replication and extension among individual cases. Replication simply means that individual cases can be used for independent corroboration of specific propositions. This corroboration helps researchers to perceive patterns more easily and to eliminate chance associations. Extension refers to the use of multiple cases to develop more elaborate theory. Different cases often emphasize complementary aspects of a phenomenon. By piecing together the individual patterns the researcher can draw a more complete theoretical picture’ (Eisenhardt 1991: 620).

In migration studies comparative multi-case studies have become popular; typically, these two or more cases, for instance, different countries (bi- or multinational design), different nationalities or different (legal) categories of migrants. Increasingly often, also multi-sited research designs are applied meaning that research is conducted in more than one site, for instance, of one nationality or category of migrants but in several cities or countries. These sites can be similar, like large cities, or they can be different like the capital, a city and a town. This enables comparison between various locations in order to discover similarities and differences and thus identify factors that are general to a phenomenon and factors that are specific to a location. More specifically, ‘multi-sited fieldwork ...offers advantages for gaining access to members of multi-sited networks and explaining the effects of place on a variety of outcomes’ (Fitzgerald 2010: 5). Multi-sited research designs are particular useful to overcome what has been criticised as ‘methodological nationals’ (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002), accepting the nation state as sole unit of analysis and instead combine sending and receiving country research into one framework (see *ibid.*) There is a certain problematic trend, however, to always compare the same set of countries or cities, like France and Germany, or only capitals and leave smaller countries towns or villages unresearched. This results in a certain national and urban bias of migration research.

Another option is multi-method designs combining various qualitative and/or quantitative methods (see Creswell 2008). It thus bridges the chasms between qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed method design are particular use full to (a) elaborate on the qualitative and quantitative dimension of a phenomenon, (b) to ‘investigate the recursive relationship between agency and structure’ (Findlay 1999: 50) and to carve out multi meanings of one and the same phenomenon (*ibid.*). For instance, the Eumagine which studies how perceptions of peoples’ living conditions in middle or low income countries and their images of possible destination countries combines a medium-scale survey, 2,000 questionnaires per country, with in-depth interviews and ethnographic fieldwork to follow up on the

¹ Tashakkori and Creswell (2007: 3-4) define mixed methods as ‘research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods’.

² For case studies in genera see Byrne & Ragin 2009.

survey findings and deepen our understanding of the relevance of perceptions in migration decisions. Also the Norface funded '500 Families: Turks in Europe' project applies a mixed methods approach.

Also Ann Singleton (1999), for example, suggests combining statistical with policy analysis. She promotes combining quantitative with qualitative data, notably with in-depth studies to (a) use qualitative small-scale studies to identify the flaws of quantitative categories and large-scale data sets, (b) develop new categories that, other than administrative categories, can be applied and measured across various countries, (c) to use statistical data only 'as indicators of emerging trends, rather than as accurate quantitative measurements' (ibid. 157) and thus use quantitative data for qualitative purposes.

'The subject matter of international migration is cross-national in scope, whilst international migration statistics are the products of national government ministries, administrations and statistical institutes. The counting tools used to measure ...the movement of people across borders are limited, conceptually, linguistically and within the legal definitions applied by each national jurisdiction' (ibid: 156).

The disadvantages of mixed methods lie in the time and budget required for this and therefore such projects may not always be possible. However, mixed methods seem an increasingly influential trend in migration research

Probably ground-breaking was the Mexican Migration project in the US combining quantitative and qualitative with longitudinal and historical research. Such complex designs have two major advantages, (a) they enable to conduct quantitative and qualitative data and combine quantitative with qualitative analysis, (b) they enable some triangulation of results, thus if results of both methods are the same the findings point to higher validity and thus some generalisability, but if results differ this points to short-comings in either method. And (c) mixed methods may succeed to generate explanations and support interpretations that one method alone may not bring about.

Methods, Research Techniques and Tools

Research methods are the actual techniques and tool used to generate the data required to address the research questions. The main methods of qualitative research are (a) participant and non-participant observation, (b) in-depth interviews, (c) focus groups and group discussions, (d) document analysis and (e) photographic evidence.

Choice of site

In qualitative research, the choice of the research site is probably more important than in quantitative research, first, because specific phenomena such as irregular migration, or clandestine border crossing can only be studied at specific sites and second, because sampling is more complicated and thus a sufficient number of interviewees may not be available at any site. But the researcher not only needs to be at the right site, he or she also needs to be there at the right time. For instance, certain economic activities or certain forms of migration, such as clandestine border crossing may only be observable at certain periods of the year or even only at a specific year. This implies that choice of site requires prior knowledge which could be acquired from a literature or media survey, from expert interviews or from a pilot visit to the respective country or region. In any case, it may not be possible to determine the research site prior to starting the research; therefore, some flexibility needs to be in-built into any such research.

Access to the field

In any case, research begins with gaining access to the field and subsequently identifying interviewees. A good strategy will always be first to identify and conduct interviews with experts. These will often not only be able to introduce the researcher to the field but will also map all or some relevant actors.

From these, or alternatively to these, further individuals, so-called gate-openers, can then be identified or chosen who could introduce the researcher to the field and thus facilitate access to interviewees. In migration studies such gate-openers will often be representatives of international organisations, notably UNHCR, or representatives of NGOs, either migrant support agencies or migrant and refugee community organisations or otherwise outstanding figures of the respective social group. Once their trust and support is won, and that is an issue in its own right, these may then refer the interviewer to some clients who are willing to be interviewed. In any case, the interviewer's credibility in the eyes of the gate-keeper or interviewees can be crucial, notably in the more sensitive fields like forced or irregular migration research. Interviewees with no or little empathy or attitudes that are considered detrimental to the interviewees' interests would probably fail to get access to the research subjects (also see Legard et al. 2006).

There are, however, certain precautions to be taken. First, it is relevant which gate-opener to choose, because being identified with a particular person, for instance, of a particular ethnicity, religion or political faction might as a consequence bar access to interviewees of other background. For instance, in London a study on health care to Turkish immigrants once failed because the first gate-opener chosen was Alevi and member of the minority group, the interviewer was then identified with the Alevi minority group and members of the majority Sunni group refused to participate in the research. Second, gate-keepers can be powerful enough to also prevent access to the field. This happened to me once when a social worker prevented me from accessing her client group, unaccompanied minors arguing that research interviews would be damaging to the mental health of their clients. Third, one specific gate-keeper may only know and is thus only able to refer to only one specific category of people. But in order to avoid a bias more than one gate-keeper, ideally three or more should be chosen. For instance, if the gate-keeper is an NGO representative then the researcher is likely to only identify those individuals who require certain social needs so that they approach an NGO and/or who are courageous enough to approach a NGOs. Therefore, the sample is likely to be biased. Fourth, such gate-keepers might also be powerful members of their community. If they would participate in the actual interview, for instance, because they offer to act as interpreters, they could influence the interviewee and thus distort the interview.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews and observations are the backbone of ethnographic fieldwork (see Legard et al. 2006). In-depth interviews would be wrongly described as 'conversation with a purpose'; instead they are - in abstract terms - sophisticated methods of extracting data from data holders. The 'trick', however, is to create an atmosphere that is as colloquial and comfortable as possible as to allow the interviewee to come forward with the information that is the aim of the interview. Sometimes, it pays to use certain tools like a maps or pictures to inspire, to help the interviewee to memorise or to put events in the according order. In-depth interviews can be structured biographically (biographical interview, see Iosifidis & Sporton 2009), hence asking migrants for their situation in the country of origin, factors that lead to their decision, the actual migration and subsequently the integration process. It is considered the 'least possible intervention by the researcher' (ibid: 102) and thus bringing out the purest, most comprehensive and holistic version of data. They can, however, require several sessions and may thus be rather time-consuming. An alternative are semi-structured or focussed interviews (Merton & Kendall 1946) concentrating on just one or a few aspect of the migration experience, such as the journey or the labour market integration (Massey 2009). Such interviews are often only loosely structured, have no predefined depths or order though they should follow some interview guidelines. These are not only a back-up for the interviewer but also important tools to conduct comparable interviews.

Technically, in-depth interviews are best conducted face-to-face though in times of global migration and in case of a huge dispersal of the target group IT-based interviews, i.e. over telephone, might be considered.

Observation

Observations are a method frequently used in qualitative research, usually in combination with other methods, notably in-depth interviews. A distinction is made between participant and non-participant observation. Often, however, both are confused and what is called participant observation rather is non-participant. Observations may precede in-depth interviews, like obtaining some impressions and ideas about the field in order to support identifying issues to ask in in-depth interviews, they may accompany or follow an interviews phase, for instance, to conduct data on the environment of the site where interviews are conducted or to verify information given by informants. In any case, observations may involve some or all of the following:

making an ethnographic record, making descriptive observations, making a domain analysis, making focused observations, making a taxonomic analysis, making selected observations, making a componential analysis, discovering cultural themes, taking a cultural inventory, and writing an ethnography (see Spradley 1980).

Observations may, for instance, involve sitting on a bench at Odessa's famous 7th Kilometre market and observe migrant workers' role, identify the types of jobs they do, working hours, hierarchies of work, relations and interaction with other market participants, encounters with the authorities. Participant observation may involve sitting in the office of a migrant support agency and follow and contribute in some limited way to the work with their clients and thus gather information that only becomes apparent to the researcher because of his intensive involvement in the site.

Focus group and group discussions

In addition to individual interviews focus groups (Merton & Kendall 1946) and group discussions are helpful to find out about internal power structures, about majority and minority views, to discuss unclear issues, and in particular to reconstruct the emergence of beliefs and decisions. Such discussions may inspire some interviewees to come forward and also tell their story; they can trigger responses like, 'my experience was the same' or 'no, my experience was different', thus they immediately point to similarities and differences. Also group discussion have their own dynamics and may bring about issues that would not otherwise come through, for instance, because certain issues are not know to the researcher he or she does not ask for these and thus in individual interviews potentially relevant information could get lost. Finally, certain individuals will be more open when talking in a group whilst others will be more silent. Thus combining individual interviews with group discussions will almost always generate additional data.

Photographic evidence

Margaret Mead, a leading social anthropologist, has introduced the camera as a tool in research methods. She always took a camera to her fieldwork, used photographs not as mere illustrations but as records and demonstrated the value of visual data (photographs) for research (see Jacknis 1988). As a matter of principle, I always take a small digital camera with me which enables me to discretely take pictures without pointing a huge and maybe intimidating instrument on people. Photographs either support in-depth interviews or observation but can also stand alone. For instance, I use photographs to document the environment in which interviews were conducted, to get further evidence on the living and working conditions of interviewees and to later contextualise the interview. Photographs, however, do not only support other data or act as proves but can speak for themselves. For instance, in course of my research on migration from Ukraine I was guided by a local through a street of detached houses and was explained which member of that household work in which country. I took pictures of all houses, matched them with the information I received on the household to establish certain patterns between the countries people were working and the type of houses, respectively improvements. Still, choice of objects, i.e. sampling as well as subsequent interpretation of photographic images question the often assumed objectivity of such data.

Of course, I also use photographs to illustrate my dissemination; I have prepared whole presentations along a dia show, this is particular helpful in case of a non-expert audience but also in teaching.

Samples and Sampling strategies

Sampling is the systematic process of selecting units of people, events or documents to be interviewed, observed or analysed. Samples can be individuals, events or documents. Sampling for qualitative purposes is different from sampling for quantitative purposes; this is because the aim of the sample is not a numerically representative sample but a comprehensive sample. Namely purposive, quota or theoretical sampling is applied.

Qualitative research has developed specific sampling strategies, their main aims are to (a) generate the data requested, (2) to acquire a complete variation and (c) to avoid repetition of data thus avoid incomplete, arbitrary or biased samples.

Sampling strategies

First, *purposeful/selective* or *theoretical sampling* can be applied (see Coyne 1997). This means that either a sample is designed that suits the purpose of the study, thus specific individuals with specific characteristics, experiences or views are sampled. Or a sample is designed for the generation of theory and in constant close reflection of the need for what type of data is required. Nevertheless, the sample should be reasonably representative and reflecting the assumed composition of the group that to be studied. Hence it should be stratified with the view to cover the various characteristics that are considered relevant, age (different age cohorts) , gender (50 percent men and 50 percent women), skills level, duration in country (six month, twelve month, 3 years etc), immigration status (workers, students, family members, irregular immigrants) etc.

Second, *snowball sampling* is applied, meaning that from an entry point, notably a key person in the group to be studied further interviewees are identified through referral (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981). This is particular useful if the target group is small or hard to reach, as with some types of migration or migrants, or where standard sampling is considered ineffective, as in case of migration network research. Accordingly, there are two types of snowball samples, network samples or rare population samples (see Thompson 2002). It is important though to use more than one entry point, ideally there should be three. This to in order to avoid (a) snowball bias that is that people in one 'snowball' often belong to a network, have similar characteristics are thus more likely to behave similarly, and thus (b) to avoid repetition of findings. Quotas can be applied to 'snowballs', for instance, to interview only two or three further recruits per chain. The risks are to undersample those who are attached to only small or no networks.

Third, in order to avoid too much repetition in the sample - this could either point to a certain sampling bias, indicate that a certain location or indeed the theme has been exhausted - researchers may, within reason, first sample according to their sampling strategy. But at some point in their research they need to reflect on their sample so far, identify repetition and gaps, and in response change their sampling strategy to identify individuals with backgrounds, experiences or views not already covered. Thus, other than in quantitative research some flexibility and innovation in sampling might be required.

If written evidence is the main source of data, such as parliamentary or other minutes, e.g. from NGO meetings, leaflets or personal letters the usual sampling methods should be applied too. Often, this will be purposeful or theoretical sampling. Nevertheless, such data is often unstructured and the researcher will be confronted with a large amount of data which is often only partially relevant to the study; though in discourse analysis smaller samples can be acceptable, notably where common forms of discourses are studied (Breakwell et al. 2006: 374). To such samples either policy analysis or discourse analysis can be applied.

Sample size

Samples sizes in qualitative research differ considerably from quantitative research samples. Whilst a representative quantitative sample usually is in the order of $N=1000$ the sample size in qualitative, notably in ethnographic research can be as small as $N=1$. They must be large enough to display a maximum variation but small enough to still facilitate qualitative and narrative analysis (Sandelowski 1995).

Experience in migration research has shown that usually a carefully designed purposeful stratified sample of a size of $N=20-25$ in any one site of one category of people of the same immigration or other status is sufficient to generate data with sufficient variation; larger sample sizes will often only generate duplications of already found varieties. Larger samples would be required, however, to study more than one social group or site ($N=X \times Y$), to also identify quantitative trends or even facilitate quantitative analysis, as in ethno-surveys. However, even a sample size of $N=1$, notably if based on multiple interviews with one and the same interviewee conducted over a longer period of time can prove sufficient to identify the relevant issues (see, for instance, Sayad 2000).

Typically, the aims are not to find out about the quantitative dimension of social issues, like *how many* people do or believe this or that, but *what* people do or believe. Hence, it aims to find out about cases, which 'typically consist of complex narratives' (Tavory and Timmermans 2009) and patterns.

Problems

There are various problems in qualitative research that researchers need to be cautious of. First, certain groups are difficult to access, second, sample bias from interviewees' self-selection, third, the interviewer influence or bias, fourth, becoming too active in participant observation, fifth, suggestive interview questions, sixth, quality differences in the interviews (some interviewees tell more than asked, other hardly tell anything which can affect comparability, see Spradley 1979), seventh, interviewees do not necessarily tell the truth (e.g. Dean and Whyte 1958), eighth, bias if fees are paid, ninth, certain issues are ethically sensitive, e.g. if vulnerable populations are involved and require according precautions, tenth, related to this is the impact on the researcher, who can be vulnerable too; eleventh, distortion from using interpreters; and twelfth, the limited validity of 'snapshot designs'.

In qualitative research, as well, as in quantitative research potential respondents' agreement or refusal to participate in a study may distort the sample and thus the results. For instance, it may be that certain types of respondents like those who did not succeed in their project may refuse or at least are harder to convince than others or that due to limited language proficiency of the interviewer interviewees from other language groups are left out of the sample. The first scenario is probably less likely because there will also be people who despite their negative experiences like to share or even complain about these. The second would require additional interviewers or interpreters. Alternatively, the researcher must critically reflex sampling and be transparent about such bias. This may then not be a principle problem; it impacts on the generalisability of the findings which may only speak for the sampled group. If this is made clear such a biased sample might not undermine the findings as such but only limits generalisability.

In order to obtain or control for the truthfulness of data researchers need to establish trusted relations with the research subjects (see Douglas 1976), the plausibility of accounts can then to some extent be tested through comparison with other accounts. In certain types of migration, like refugee migration, irregular migration, transit migration or clandestine entry obtaining accurate or comprehensive accounts from informants can be difficult or even almost impossible. Either because informants do not wish to disclose their irregular practices or because the field is considered a pitch, as in asylum so that informants rather play to perceived rules. The researcher then has various options, to accept that s/he studies this game rather than what is actually going on, to demonstrate to the interviewee that s/he already knows what is going on and that there is no need to give false evidence

and/or to interview migrants once they have realised their goal, like after they have entered the EU clandestinely, hence when the need to lie has diminished.

Remunerations for interviews may change the accounts provided. If interviewees receive a payment they may (a) feel obliged to deliver an adequate interview and (b) feel obliged to meet the assumed researcher's expectations. Accordingly, they may be tempted to present a more colourful, more exciting or more radical account than they would otherwise do and thus might divert from the truth.

In certain cases, interviewees may try to use the research to transmit certain messages, for instance, through exaggerating or inventing certain aspects. For example, asylum seekers interviewed about reception conditions might comply bitterly about conditions in order to turn the interview almost into a campaigning tool.

Participant observers rather play a role than actually fully engaging in the processes they aim to observe; they rather participate in order to merge with their research subject and thus minimise their recognisability as outsiders with the view to avoid the distorting influence of the presence of researchers whilst on the other hand they must always keep distance to the research subjects or processes they observe as to remain independent observers (see Gold 1958). In other words, they are not supposed to become actual participants, as suggested by action research, as this would impact on, change and thus distort the actual event that is observed. The challenge, however, is to actually maintain this role; notably in researching vulnerable populations, such as unaccompanied minors, this will not always be possible. Instead, the researcher might be tempted or even ethically compelled to intervene. Therefore, some independent frequent supervision is advisable.

Often, fieldwork is conducted only once and therefore at a specific point in time. Thus changes over time, like changes in the economic or political situation of sending or receiving countries, disruptions of the usual conditions, such as crises or changes in the aspirations and thus decision-making processes are not captured in such research. This not only prevents to analyse the dynamics of certain processes, such as decision making in migration or changing strategies and paths but also limits the generalisability of any findings. The solution could lay in longitudinal or repeated field visits capturing continuity or change. This, however, is often prohibited by funding constraints.

Flexible research

Qualitative research often starts from various uncertainties and subsequently encounters unexpected problems. For instance, the final decision on the research site can often only be made after some pilot visit to the region or country, gaining access to the field might be more time consuming or impossible which requires search of alternatives, different methods may produce different results which require some additional enquiries, in-depth interviews often produce unexpected results which may require additional research and indeed result in changing one's assumptions or even strategies. In order to respond to such challenges the researcher needs to be able to respond flexibly and adjust research design, research tool or time-frame to these realities.

The researcher

The characteristics and abilities of the researcher are also probably more important than in quantitative research. First of all, flexible research requires some adaptability on the side of the researcher. Second, other than survey-based questionnaires in-depth interviews require good communicators and emphatic interviewers. Third, often, it is an advantage if interviewers have some street credibility, meaning that they have a background that can win trust of gate-keepers, this could be a non-academic background or some proven record in advocacy. Fourth, characteristics such as gender, ethnicity or age may also be important. Male interviewers may not be able to identify female interviewees, notably of these are of a different ethnic background, such as Muslim women; Sunny interviewers may not succeed in

identifying Shia interviewees and so on. Thus, the choice of a suitable interviewer can be crucial for the success or failure of research.

Often, migration researchers need to work with interpreters. This raises additional issues such as the quality of ad hoc translation, interpreter influence on the interview situation or power of the interpreter. In any case, the researcher will be best advised to record and afterwards retranslate the interview as to avoid the shortcomings of ad hoc translation. If recording is not possible, e.g. because it is refused by the interviewee and thus only notes could be taken, ideally by the interviewer *and* the interpreter, these should be transcribed by the researcher but corrected and complemented by the interpreter.

Data analyses methods

There are up to steps in transforming data into intelligible accounts, description, analysis, interpretation and, if appropriate a normative discussion or judgement of the findings (see Wolcott 1994). Qualitative data requires specific methods to analyse such data, these are content analysis, policy analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and historical methods of analysis.³

Notably the emic approach is closely related to *grounded theory* (GT) by Glaser and Strauss (1967). GT is based on systematic conceptualization, similar to hermeneutics, on constant interaction between research and theorising and on constant comparisons with similar and distinct research areas. At the core are explicit, transparent coding procedures, now also applied to computerised analysis (see below) which represents a more rigid approach to qualitative data analysis.

It is worth noting that certain data, notably information collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews, given that a sufficiently large number of interviews, as for instance in an ethno-survey (Massey 1987) has been conducted can still be used for quantitative analysis

Tools

Collecting and analyzing qualitative data using manual methods can be messy and time consuming and faced with volumes of materials, finding themes and extracting meaning can be overwhelming. Therefore, qualitative research software like NVivo helps people to manage, shape and make sense of such data. It does not do the thinking but provides a workspace that enables the researcher to work through the data.

With purpose built tools for classifying, sorting and arranging information, qualitative research software gives more time to analyze materials, identify themes, glean insight and develop meaningful conclusions.

Computers are useful for administrative functions and at arranging and sorting data. What computers can't do is think like a qualitative researcher. But the fact that computers don't think is not a limitation at all; in fact, it leaves the researcher doing what they most want to do - the thinking (Gill Ereaut, quoted in QSR International 2011).

Still, the analyst needs to code the qualitative data according to a code book, considerable experience is required to identify codes; and second, thorough consideration is required for coding data as mistakes or short-coming will undermine or distort analysis.

³ Data analyses is a separate issue that diverts from the main focus of this paper, research methodologies and methods and thus not elaborated further.

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