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Introduction: Transnational Processes and Practices in the Everyday Lives of Migrants and Non-Migrants in Europe

Contemporary migration research and public debate in Europe have concentrated primarily on migration from outside Europe, especially from Asian and African countries to Europe (Castro-Martin & Cortina 2015). This is especially noticeable when they concern transnational families and family reunifications (including marriage migration), and issues related to refugees and asylum seekers. Particular migrant groups and their descendants (e.g. Turks, Moroccans, Pakistanis, Somalis, Kurds), and especially Muslims, have attracted much of the attention, partly because they form a considerably visible and one of the largest migrant communities in many European countries.[1] However, issues such as migrants' integration into countries of settlement, experienced racism and discrimination, conceived and supposed cultural differences (e.g. in religion, marriage practices, gender roles etc.), and a political climate that supports more restrictive migration policies in many European countries seem to direct migration research towards a concentration on certain migrant groups and especially problem- and conflict-centered themes. This is not to say that the aforementioned approaches and issues are irrelevant and not worthy of research. The point here is that when research focuses merely on migration from other parts of the world to Europe, it may also simplify our understanding of the complexity of experiences of migration and issues of integration and belonging.

The articles in this theme issue thus contribute to the research literature which directs attention to migration and transnational flows and practices within Europe, meaning that the focus is mainly on transnational mobility and connections between two or more European countries, for example Estonia and Finland (see Siim, Telve) or migration to Sweden for example from Bosnia-Herzegovina or Croatia or other countries (see Povrzanović Frykman, Hieta). The research participants in these studies also come from even more diverse multicultural settings and backgrounds and live in multicultural families (see Čeginskas, Hieta) in which one or both of the parents are migrants and have been born for example in Belgium, France, Germany, or the United Kingdom. They thus have a wide range of backgrounds, be it their country of origin or their reasons for migration, such as labor, family, studies, or forced migration.

The authors of this theme issue represent disciplines such as ethnology, folkloristics, and cultural heritage studies. Their perspectives on migration and chosen research methods reflect approaches typical for cultural studies and anthropology. The viewpoint of everyday lives is highlighted throughout the articles. The focus is particularly on the individual and family level in lived transnational and translocal experiences and practices. While all the articles rely on ethnographic or semi-structured interviews, some authors also utilize other less frequently used methods, such as autoethnographic examples (see Povrzanović Frykman) or interviews with the researcher's own family members (see Čeginskas). In her article, Pihla Siim suggests the importance of more experimental approaches when interviewing children and researching their views on migration, for example including children's

drawings to better catch emotions, memories, and bodily experiences related to relocation that might be difficult to express in words.

Several articles in the issue also make a particular effort to avoid the ethnic lens or methodological nationalism, in other words, the tendency to accept as a given that a nation-state/society or ethnic group forms a natural social unit in analysis (see e.g. Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2003). In these studies (see Čeginskas, Hieta, Povrzanović Frykman), the participants were not selected on the basis of their shared ethnic, cultural, or national identification, but instead based on other denominators, such as having a bilingual or multicultural family background.

On the other hand, while being aware of the traps of methodological ethnicism and nationalism is important, places and nation-states still matter. Nation-states can either enable or restrict certain kind of migration and transnational mobility. For example, movement of people and objects between European countries that belong to the European Union is much less controlled and restricted by migration laws compared to that from outside Europe to European countries (Fassmann et al. 2009; Favell 2008; Fingerroos 2016). Siim and Keiu Telve show in their articles about Estonian migrants and (their) families how the territorial and cultural closeness of Finland and Estonia is an important aspect and has an impact on the organization of transnational and translocal connections (regular visits, plans to move and stay, keeping in contact with other family members) across nation-state borders. In these contexts, it is worth to note the importance of the specific connection between these two countries as well as the fact that both countries belong to the European Union. As previous studies have already shown, Estonian migrants experience less ethnic discrimination than many other migrant groups in Finland because of experienced and assumed similarities in cultural habits and the Finnish and Estonian languages, as well as the feeling of common ancestral roots. (See e.g. Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2002; on ethnic hierarchization of migrants, see Jaakkola 2009.)

Transnational and translocal perspectives on the everyday lives and experiences of migrants

The questions presented and discussed in these articles center around the concepts of transnationalism and translocality. Scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, such as geography, cultural studies, anthropology, history, and area studies and development studies, have employed these concepts to define territorial and socio-spatial interconnectedness not limited by national borders. The concepts are conceptually related as both have been used to define phenomena involving transnational mobility, international and internal migration, circulation of goods and people, material flows, and knowledge transfer. Both conceptual frameworks also pay attention to the parallel relations that people have to two or more states. (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013.) They have often been used as synonyms; however, several scholars have suggested that "translocality" is an umbrella term to describe particularly spatial connectedness or more "grounded transnationalism" (Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013; Grillo & Riccio 2004; Hedberg & Do Carmo 2012; Freitag & von Oppen 2010).

The transnational paradigm shift in migration and mobility studies has heavily influenced contemporary theoretical understanding of issues related to migration. The transnational turn in migration research took place at the beginning of the 1990s when anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton (1992) introduced a conceptual framework for better understanding contemporary migration and migrants' everyday lives. Before this theoretical paradigm shift, the focus in migration studies had been predominantly on migrants and their assimilation, acculturation, or integration into the country of settlement. The transnational approach changed the analytical focus so that it took into account the multiple and parallel attachments and cross-border contacts that migrants continued to keep after migration with non-migrants left behind in the country of emigration or within a diaspora. After Glick Schiller et al. (1992), many other researchers within mul-

tiple disciplines have made their contribution to the theoretization of transnationalism or transnationality (e.g. Faist 2000; 2013; Portes et al. 1999; Vertovec 1999).

Transnationalism, as a concept, is often used to refer to relatively durable social, cultural, political, and economic links, ties, events, and practices among individuals and groups which extend across national boundaries (e.g. Vertovec 2009; Faist et al. 2013). Some researchers, for example, do not regard shorter and more temporary border crossing activities such as tourist trips as transnational in their character. The modes or types of transnational contact may also vary in that some individuals engage in many transnational areas of social life while others are more selective in scope, depending on for example life cycles or settlement processes (Levitt 2001, 198–199; Vertovec 2009, 13).

The transnational approach does not form a coherent theory, but instead it can be conceived as a lens (Faist 2013, 9–10). This is also evident in the articles of this theme issue. Thus, at least four different stances on transnationalism can be found in the articles following Steven Vertovec's (1999/2009) definition: transnationalism as a *social morphology* (e.g. transnational families maintain social relationships and networks across borders; see e.g. Hieta, Siim, and Telve in this issue), as *a type of consciousness* (transnational consciousness marked by multiple identifications; see Čeginskas in this issue), as *an avenue of capital* (social and economic remittances, e.g. gifts; see e.g. Hieta and Telve in this issue), and as *a (re)construction of "place" or locality* (transnational social fields or social spaces; see Povrzanović Frykman and Siim in this issue). The stances are not necessarily contradictory to each other but they focus on different angles and layers of transnational phenomena.

As the articles in this journal describe, migrants' everyday practices and ways of belonging are often marked and informed by their localized experiences. The concept of translocality maintains a notion of geographical dislocation of individuals, while individuals' lives are also intersectional. Translocal belonging not only refers to a geographical locale or one's homeland, but it is also expressed through socio-spatial locations

and in representations of and identifications with cultural practices and normative systems (Yuval-Davis 2006). In these articles, translocality refers especially to the emergence and continuity of multidirectional and overlapping networks that facilitate the socio-spatial mobility of people, cultural practices, objects, and ideas. Applying a translocal perspective in ethnographic research enables a multilinear analysis of transnational processes that transgress boundaries. Such a multilinear perspective also helps to capture the diverse and often contradictory impacts of interconnectedness between geographical locations, institutions, and individuals. A translocal approach also helps to facilitate a non-Eurocentric understanding of global history, as current understanding of global history points out to processes of "entanglement and interconnectedness" (Freitag and von Oppen 2010, 1).

In short, translocality can be defined as "being identified with more than one location" (Oakes & Schein 2006a, xiii). Brickell and Datta (2011, 4) have used translocalism to develop an agency-oriented approach to localities and mobilities. They and several other scholars have drawn on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and social fields to address individuals' simultaneous situatedness across different localities.

Maintaining transnational family ties

One relevant theme in this volume is related to maintaining transnational family connections and ties (see Hieta, Siim, Telve), and the construction of "familyhood", in other words the feeling of collective unity and being related, in situations where one or more family members live separated from each other in different nations-states part or most of the time (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002, 3). Family is for most people all around the world a highly important social institution and a unit that at its best offers welfare, emotional interdependence, and mutual support for its members. It is also a source of identity. In transnational family settings, the sense of unity and emotional closeness that bridges the territorial and spatial distance is produced and reproduced via reciprocal

visits, frequent correspondence, memory recall, and exchange of gifts and goods. In her article, Maja Povrzanović Frykman suggests that objects that migrants carry, send, receive, and use over nation-state borders should not be seen only as cultural identity markers or generators of cultural meanings. Instead, she highlights that practices and lived experiences that involve objects can significantly contribute to the (re)production of transnational social ties.

As is shown in Siim's and Hanneleena Hieta's articles, distance itself is not an obstacle to keeping up the family feeling (also Holdsworth 2013). New information and communication technologies (ICTs), internet and social media applications, applications for computers, and mobile and smart phones have facilitated the intensity and chances of being in contact with family members and created familiarity across greater distances far more efficiently than was possible in earlier decades (Körper 2012, 13; Tazanu 2015; Vertovec 2009, 14–15; see also Häkkinen 2016). However, communication technologies do not determine how they are actually used as the uses of technology are always socially constructed and defined (Kivisto 2003, 15–16). Despite the development of ICTs and their better availability, material assets and income level still influence decisions related to family relocation and maintaining family connections (see Hieta, Siim, Telve). Not everyone uses ICTs to the same extent since there are inequalities related to media consumption and access to adequate media. There can be a shortage of material resources or a lack of necessary media literacy skills to use modern communication technologies (Madianou & Miller 2012, 71). In Siim's and Hieta's articles, the interviewees raised an important issue by pointing out problems related to virtual closeness and restricted access to new technologies such as Skype, especially among elderly family members, often grandparents.

The intergenerational perspective of family ties is brought into the discussion in different ways in the articles. Siim, for example, when studying children's experiences of a translocal way of life, also scrutinizes negotiations between children and parents on mobility and transnational everyday practices. In this way, family is not understood as a coherent unit but rather as consisting of multiple subjectivities and experiences. Also in Victorija L.A. Čeginskas's and Hieta's articles the idea of a family as a linguistically and culturally uniform entity is challenged. Hieta concentrates on examining bilingual families in Finland and especially on how relationships between children (living in Finland) and their grandparents living abroad are maintained and how transnational care is shown through gifts (as "care packages"), visits, and phone calls. These are important in strengthening family ties, creating positive childhood memories for the grandchildren, and transferring knowledge on cultural traditions.

Multilocality and simultaneity of being and belonging in multiple transnational social spaces and places

Recent researches have pinpointed the need to challenge binary thinking behind concepts, and instead to study migration in such a way that mobility and immobility (or stasis) as well as local and transnational connections are seen as interconnected aspects of everyday living (Glick Schiller & Salazar 2013). One of the main benefits of concepts such as transnationalism and translocality is that they make it possible to examine and capture the simultaneity of engaging in both locally and transnationally oriented activities and connections. In many studies, it has also been underlined that integration or assimilation into the country of settlement and maintaining transnational ties are not necessarily incompatible or opposite to each other. This highlights the intertwined nature of transnationality and integration, its "both/and" instead of "either/or" character. (Kivisto 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004.) As Vertovec (2009, 78) has put it: "Belonging, loyalty and sense of attachment are not parts of a zero-sum game based on a single place." This idea also suggests that being "more transnationally oriented" does not mean that a person is "less integrated", and vice versa, so that a "more integrated" person would have fewer transnational ties and attachments (see Vertovec 2009, 78). Hieta's preliminary findings

among multilingual/multicultural families support this theoretical statement. While her interviewees continued to maintain close ties with other family members outside Finland, they also had strong attachments to Finnish society, for example through a Finnish spouse, work, studies, language, and/or social contacts.

Different scopes of connectedness, multiple attachments and multilocality, and ways of being as well as ways of belonging (see Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004) are thus discussed in the articles in this theme issue. In her article, Čeginskas concentrates on the issue of transnational identification and multiple belonging in multilingual and "multicultural" families. She examines how individuals whose parents have different nationalities and who live outside their parents' countries of origin negotiate their multiple bonds and identifications across European nation-states. She shows that an awareness of plural and mixed attachments within and outside her interviewees' homes and environments makes it difficult for them to identify only with one single linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or national background.

While Čeginskas's interviewees identify themselves first and foremost as Europeans, Telve's informants, Estonian commuters, whose main focus in Finland was to work, showed only little interest to create contacts and deeper emotional or social attachments to larger Finnish society. Interestingly, the commuters also distanced themselves from other "migrants", although they had continued their mobile lifestyle, commuting between Estonia and Finland, for several years. The narratives of Estonian migrant workers reveal that they are satisfied with their mobile lifestyle, but still they would prefer to live in the same country with their family. Often it is the case that the rest of the family relocates after the husband has worked abroad for some months or years. However, in these families, the children have experience of a mobile life from a very young age as they travel back and forth between Estonia and Finland to visit relatives and other extended family.

In Siim's study of Estonian families who live in Finland, on the other hand, transnational and translocal connections are actively maintained with family members in Estonia but attachments to Finnish society are also seen as relevant; for example, the children born in Estonia have local, Finnish friends or learn the Finnish language. Siim shows how negotiations within families about plans to travel between Finland and Estonia or staying in these two locations are also closely related to local contexts and everyday life activities, for example the children's school year cycle and holidays. The decision to live a transnational family life is often influenced by the family's children or youth, as they are often a motivation for migration, i.e. to seek a better life for the family and future generations. The decisions concerning moving, staying, and traveling that families constantly make and negotiate are thus simultaneously based on and intertwined in the everyday living contexts and circumstances of both localities. Siim's and Telve's articles, both focusing on Estonian commuters' and families' mobile lives between Estonia and Finland, bring forward the importance of contextuality and show how differences in interests to be involved and attached in different social spaces and family situations may vary greatly.

In her article, Povrzanović Frykman shifts the focus from ideas and discourses of belonging to being and especially to the material layers of everyday transnational practices. She points out the importance of broadening the standard focus from social relations and identities to everyday objects in transnational and translocal settings, and especially to the way in which they shape everyday practices and lived experiences of migrants. Her findings show that objects can create meaningful connections that help migrants to overcome the segregation between different locations and transnational spaces.

To conclude, the articles in this theme issue shed light on why migrants choose transnational lives, what aspects shape the transnational practices they engage in, and how they simultaneously maintain economic, cultural, and family connections in multiple localities. They show the importance of grass-roots-level and context-specific (ethnographic) research that is able to catch everyday life experiences and small moments that make transnational everyday living tangible.

NOTES

1 It is beyond the purpose of this introduction to give a comprehensive overview of contemporary research literature that focuses on migration issues. For studies that concentrate more on media and public discussions and representations of Muslims in Nordic countries, see e.g. Andreassen 2005; Keskinen 2009; 2013; Martikainen et al. 2008; on migrant families and family migration, see e.g. Peltola 2014; Säävälä 2013; and on transnational marriage research, see e.g. Beck-Gernsheim 2007; Häkkinen 2016.

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KEYWORDS