

Confronting the Logic of the Nation-State

Transnational Migration and Cultural Globalisation in Germany

Regina Römhild

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The article explores the increasing gap between the cultural dynamics of transnationalisation in Germany and the national self-perception of the German society. While concepts of “in-migration” (*Zuwanderung*) and “integration” still stick to notions of the nation-state as being a “container” embracing and controlling a population and a culture of its own, the various processes of material and imaginary mobility across the national borders contradict and challenge this notion as well as its political implications. By drawing on the transnational life-worlds and the cultural productivity of migrants, anthropological research has made important contributions to render visible this challenge. It is argued, however, that an all too exclusive focus on migration may, in fact, rather conceal the wider effects of transnationalisation and cultural globalisation on the society and its cultural fabric as a whole.

*Dr. Regina Römhild, Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie, Universität Frankfurt, Grüneburgplatz 1, DE-60323 Frankfurt a.M.
E-mail: roemhild@em.uni-frankfurt.de*

Katja is 16 years old. She lives and goes to school in Frankfurt, in a quarter called “Gallusviertel”. Katja and her parents immigrated as “ethnic Germans” (*Aussiedler*) from Uzbekistan, a former republic of the Soviet Union. Katja, however, would not perceive herself as German; many of her friends, she says, “are Russians as well”. And moreover, a major part of her personal network is “Russian” – including cafés and clubs as well as other relatives all over Germany, but also back in Uzbekistan, in the village of her grandparents. At school, Katja shares the classroom with, in her words, “Turks” and “Yugoslavs”. One of her girlfriends, however, is Armenian – an important differentiation in Katja’s eyes, since the girl’s first name and appearance could easily be interpreted as Turkish. Yet, Katja insists on keeping some distance to Turks – although some sentences earlier, she had quite naturally counted the Turkish boys among her peer-group.

This first glimpse at Katja’s life-world (see Bergmann, Henrich, Kämper & Sprenger 2003) may illustrate what I want to describe and analyse in more detail in the following: the transnationalisation and cultural globalisation of German society due to the long-standing presence of immigrants and their social and imaginary engagements with the wider world. Katja and her peers are one of the reference points to the “transnational cultures” in the Frankfurt area that were the subject of a research project at the Frankfurt Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology.¹ With that project, we linked on to concepts of transnational research (see, e.g., Hannerz 1998) which are widely discussed in an international anthropological discourse – but as yet rarely employed in both public debates and scholarly research on migration in Germany². Here, migrants are still widely believed to enter a “German” cultural landscape to which they

have to adapt by way of “integration”. Their presence may render the fabrics of the society a “multiculture”, as the major narrative goes – still, that multiculture is perceived in localised terms: fixed within the confines of a German nation-state (see Vertovec 2001). That logic not only still informs the current politics of “integration”, it is also the implicit ingredient of those research agendas that tend to think of society and culture in terms of physically bounded, clear-cut territorial entities (see Pries 1997; Welz 1998).

From the perspective of transnational research, however, migration proves to be a project of mobility that connects people and places across national borders. Here, the main focus of research has been on migrant networks and diasporas spanning the globe and, thus, creating deterritorialised “transnational social spaces” (Pries 1997) and diasporic identities (Clifford 1994). Still, the further effects of transnational migration on the societies involved have as yet not received the same empirical attention. But transnational relationships, as Paul Kennedy and Victor Roudometof (2001) point out, are not confined to the firsthand social practice of migrants and diasporas. Rather, they have to be

“understood as manifestations of broader social trends ...; they are extending into and shaping the lives of people engaged in many other kinds of associations, clubs and informal networks as well as into cultural life at large” (p. 2).

Transnational migration not only mobilises migrants and their cultures; it also mobilises the cultural worlds of those resident citizens believed to be the “sedentary” backbones of the nation-states.

Extending the transnational paradigm into the wider context of immigration societies, entails, as I will try to show, a rather radical shift in perspective: It leads away from territorialised views on “multiculture” and “integration” and towards acknowledging the deterritorialising effects of a cultural globalisation perpetuated by the migration of people, things and ideas across distances. What comes into sight, then, are processes that challenge the nation-state at its most essential logic: that

of being in control of a people and a culture of its own.

Realities Against the German Idea of “Integration”

In contemporary Germany, Katja’s transnational way of life is not uncommon at all. And yet, it contradicts the official prospects of integration and co-residence in the immigration society. “Integration”, as it is still perceived also in more recent studies (see, e.g., Straßburger 2001), refers to the degree in which immigrant minorities adapt to a social and cultural landscape apparently dominated by a German majority. From that perspective, successful integration is measured in terms of cultural and social similarity between resident Germans and immigrants (ibid., 15). Katja, however, is connected to a transnational network, including “Russians” and non-Russian co-migrants; she prefers “ethnic”, i.e. non-German, clubs for meeting her friends. From a German outsider’s perspective, such orientation is widely considered an obstacle or even a wilful refusal of integration. Similar critique is directed at migrants who continue to make use of their non-German languages, engage in political or religious issues of their home-countries, read and watch non-German media, travel back home more regularly or even commute between the countries on transnational pathways. All these practices seem to confront the German idea of integration that expects people to settle in and stick exclusively to their new, German home.

Immigrants live in Germany, but also inhabit worlds of their own which are not confined to Germany. This notion seems to provoke deep anxieties in the German public. In an influential lead of the German journal *Der Spiegel* (4.3.2002), immigrants were accused to act against integration and establish “parallel societies” apart from the German mainstream. These “opaque”, uncontrollable communities based on other rules and strange customs are, then, considered potential refuges for criminals, terrorists and drug dealers. Behind such anxieties, however, lurks the ideal of the imagined community: the national home designed after the format of the small, face-to-

face world of the village. When it comes to culture, globalisation is widely understood as a threat to apparently solid common roots and identities. Yet, the home without globalisation, as it is invoked in such imagination, is rendered fictional by everyday reality.

In fact, Katja and her peers do live partly in “parallel societies” – if that means that their life-worlds are not only located in Germany and not only shared with Germans. Nevertheless, such life-worlds obviously belong to and shape contemporary social and cultural realities in Germany. Most of Katja’s peers come from immigrant families as well. They have either immigrated with their parents or were already born in Germany. Katja feels at home in the Gallus quarter although she liked Höchst more, another part of Frankfurt, where she used to live before: There, she says, are more of the Yugoslav and Russian hang-outs where she likes to go to meet her friends. Both quarters, Gallus and Höchst, are former workers’ neighbourhoods still telling of the Fordist past of industrialisation and now above average inhabited by immigrants. Here, Katja’s experience of being an immigrant is quite common. In her everyday context, it is not felt so much that elsewhere the “native Germans” claim majority rights. From Katja’s perspective, her classmate Anika is the exception to the rule: Anika was born in Germany as a German. In the multi-ethnic classroom, Anika, the native German, represents a minority. Many German parents prefer to send their children to other, less ethnically mixed schools outside the Gallus neighbourhood. From a German perspective, Katja’s school is stigmatised as being part of a multicultural “ghetto”; a position with low expectations for good education and social advancement. Anika’s mother tends to intervene whenever she thinks that her daughter gets caught up in some apparently ethnic discrimination. Anika’s classmates, in turn, strike back. When conflicts arise it may well be that Anika is named “potato”.

Whenever it comes to defining oneself against others, nationalities are an important category. But the migrant youth tends to meet again on the grounds of a common experience of immigration despite of different countries of

origin. The youngsters may, for example, talk about who is going where to visit his family during the holidays. Katja has been in Usbekistan. She was happy to see her grandfather there. Still, she now disapproves of the Usbekian village life since she has come to appreciate the many more possibilities to move about in metropolitan Frankfurt. The prospects of Usbekian youth seemed depressing to her. Up to now, Katja does not think of returning to that Usbekistan. She locates her future in Germany: After taking her intermediate school certificate she wants to become a professional receptionist.

Like Katja, many others are connected to social relations outside Germany. They may travel along these lines physically or by using the manifold means of communication, and sometimes in their imagination only. All of them deal with their own migrant history and with the places from which they or their parents have left. It is here, in this Germany inhabited by many others with similar experiences of the world that Katja feels at home.

A recent study (Straßburger 2001) explored the current state of “integration” in Frankfurt. Integration was, again, defined as “cultural and social rapprochement between immigrants and native Germans” (ibid., 15). From that perspective, it seemed that the Gallus quarter is quite an integrative place: Here, the study found advanced progress in “social integration”, meaning that a considerable part of the immigrant population “participates in the social networks of the native citizens” (ibid., 25). These results, however, do not reflect Katja’s everyday life: Native Germans do not play any major role in her social networks and those of her parents and peers. Rather, Katja is integrated in one of those microcosms of the immigration society that have become typical for urban life in Germany. Such integration may be called “self-integration”, to use a term of cultural scientist Mark Terkessidis³: In Germany, migrants have to create own strategies to find themselves a social place in the society.

The German ideal of integration construes two manifest groups that are deemed to interact in terms of an “intercultural communication”: resident Germans on the one hand, and non-German immigrants on the other. The diverse

projects of self-integration, however, do not address Germans as interactive partners in the first place. Rather, they create forms of intercultural communication between migrants of the same as well as of different nationalities. Focussing, as it does, on only one of the many transnational intersections, the German perspective dismisses and renders invisible these other intercultural dynamics and their contributions to the German cultural landscape.

Katja's life-world confronts this national model of a two-way integration between Germans and non-Germans. She has come to Germany claiming the special status of ethnic German immigrants (*Aussiedler*) that is only granted to members of the German minorities in countries of the former "Communist Eastern Bloc"⁴. According to that immigration policy, Katja and her parents are Germans with full citizenship rights and German passports. However, Katja counts herself among the "Russians" in Germany, in her eyes she is a migrant like most of the others around her. Many of her classmates are born in Germany, but still considered "Turks" or "Yugoslavs" from a German perspective. And yet, they may also think of themselves in the same terms, although they may, at the same time, make use of the new immigration law and become German citizens by passport. Here, the apparently clear categories of non-German immigrants and resident Germans become blurred. On the one hand, migrants are also to be found on the side of the Germans: among them ethnic German immigrants, naturalised foreigners, and mobile native Germans who spend much of their professional or leisure time beyond the borders of the nation-state. Immigrants, on the other hand, may be living in Germany in the second or third generation. They are a stable component of German society to which they contribute in many ways, be they students, employees, employers, politicians or artists.

Comparatively, the number of "sedentary" Germans is decreasing – those Germans that still serve as the ideal of the national integration model. Less people than ever, though, will spend their whole life in the place in which they were born once. Transnational mobility has become quite a common feature of professional careers

in a globalising economy. In Frankfurt as elsewhere, multinational companies organise the global exchange of high-skilled migrants: On their way up the career ladder, German professionals move and work abroad, while foreign specialists render the local workplaces international (see Hintze, Mann & Schüler 2003). Another entry to a transnational existence is provided by tourism: As many other northern Europeans, Germans increasingly tend to establish second homes (see King, Warnes & Williams 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Römhild 2002; Waldren 1996) and family relations through marriage (Waldren 1998; Welz 1997) in the Mediterranean south.

However, not only migrants experience the transnationalisation of their lives. Increasingly, the world draws near also to those locals who do not move themselves. Generally, it enters local life-worlds by way of media and communication technology. More specifically, workplaces tend to transnationalise not only by way of an internationalisation of local staffs, but also by way of an enlargement of workspaces due to the globalisation of information, communication and economic relations. One such workplace at an international advertisement company has been studied ethnographically in the Frankfurt project (see Hintze, Mann & Schüler 2003). Here, the local marketing of global brands as well as the global marketing of local products require transnational know-how of diverse consumer cultures. Youth and leisure cultures, in general, are central resources for transnationalising local life-worlds. In Frankfurt, the Salsa disco has been one of our examples (see Papadopoulos 2003). Not only in terms of music and dancing, Salsa has become one of the major global popular cultures for aficionados/as from all over the world. In Frankfurt, Latinos/as, Germans and semi-Germans meet and identify on this ground, thus negotiating, practising and inventing Salsa culture on German dance-floors.

All these processes transcend and counteract the common ideal of an "integrated" society confined to a national territory. Rather, the migration of people and cultures is but one factor of the disintegration experienced by late modern societies in general, and it is one of the

major resources for the current globalisation of German culture at large.

Transnationalising the National Container Model

Ideally, nation-states are imagined as stable entities confined to a physical territory inhabited by a socially and culturally coherent resident population. This idea rests on the notion of states and societies as being territorial “containers” each keeping hold of its people and its culture (see Pries 1997; Vertovec 2001: 5). From this perspective, movements across national borders come as a threat to that apparently stable order. Sedentarism is the ideal of the container model, while mobility is considered the exception to the rule: an irregular state that has to be overcome in order to get back to normality. In that logic, migration has to be either a temporary project with fixed dates of arrival and return or an irreversible one-way travel from one container to the other, thus keeping the destabilising effects of mobility to a minimum. The main efforts of the nation-state vis-à-vis migration focus on effectively controlling mobility across its borders. These efforts especially include to fix on the national ground those mobile subjects who have managed to pass the border check points.

Migration, however, challenges the “nation-state-as-container” model in that it acts against its geopolitical effectiveness. The history of the “guest-workers” (*Gastarbeiter*) in Germany is but one example for the fact that projects of migration cannot be fully controlled by nation-states. Initially, the German system of “guest-work” based on the expectation that the majority of the recruited labour migrants would return back home after having their work done. But most of them decided to stay in Germany. Then, it was expected that those who stay would settle and integrate exclusively in their new German home. But also this expectation was not met in the desired way: The first generation of labour migrants did not break off the connections to their countries of origin in the Mediterranean. Rather, they kept contact with their families and, furthermore, continued to participate in local social and economic relations also from the

distance of their migrant homes in Germany (see Giordano 1984). While the logic of the nation-state considers such transnational networking as irrational, disloyal and disintegrative, it proves to be a rational practice, even a proper survival strategy, from the perspective of migrants facing unstable, discriminating conditions of work and existence in the “host-countries” (see Glick Schiller, Basch & Szanton Blanc 1997). For the German labour migrants, this holds especially true: For the long time of their being in Germany, they and their children were, officially, still identified as “guests” whose permits of residence depended on the decision of their “hosts”. Only in 2002, Germany belatedly accepted its factual status as an immigration society and discussed an immigration law that initiates first steps to facilitate applications for permanent residence and naturalisation for at least some of the migrant population.

However, the pan-European relations created by migrant networks across the national borders have widely remained invisible and, as such, unacknowledged. Beatrice Ploch (2000) reports on such relational practice in Cariati, a town in the Italian south. Cariati is connected to Germany by its emigrants and their participation in both places. Every year, at least once during the summer holidays, the migrants return to their hometown, visit their families and bring along money and ideas from Germany. Many of the newly built houses and the local construction sites are witnesses of their active presence in Cariati although being away most of the year. In turn, local feasts and other main events are co-ordinated with the migrants’ travel schedules in order to provide for their participation. The temporary returnees do not, as it is often maintained, enter the local scene as estranged “tourists”, but rather as fully engaged actors in the local public. Their being estranged from the local Italian culture due to their experience in Germany must, in turn, be considered a specific transnational cultural knowledge that challenges local discourses and practices. My own research in the south of Crete (Römhild 2000) provides another example of the migrants’ contributions to local life and development. Here, the coastal villages suffered from economic poverty thus forcing their

inhabitants to emigrate. Today, the same places are favourite destinations of a more sophisticated alternative tourism. This development would practically not have been possible without the migrants who invested in these projects both economically and conceptually. As elsewhere in the Mediterranean, part-time and permanent return migrants play a major role in creating “authentic” scenarios for cultural tourists (see Boissevain 1996), thus making use of their transnational cultural competence in terms of a “reflexive traditionalism” (Welz 2000).

These and other projects of transnational migration have contributed to the development of “multiple modernities” (ibid.) in the European “periphery”. Furthermore, the traffic of people, goods and ideas across the north–south divide has fostered a “Europeanisation from below” which creates imaginary landscapes and topographies rather different from those designed at the drawing pins of the European Union (see Römheld 2000). International migration is always a transnational project as well: It connects societies and cultures, thus rendering permeable the nation-state “containers” for the travelling of people, things and ideas.

The idea of return accompanies migrants on their routes although it may not be – at least not fully – realised. As an option, however, it creates imaginations and unconventional practices of a transnational social and cultural participation. Since migration is a multi-generational project, the experience of transnational relations and transnational households is not restricted to the first generation of immigrants. Very often, the children of the former “guest-workers” have been raised in Germany and in their parents’ country of origin, they have been to school here and there. Thus, also the second generation has, for the most, acquired first-hand knowledge of more than one society and cultural cosmos. And also they have created therefrom their own ways of positioning and identifying themselves in transnational social spaces.

According to the logic of the nation-state, however, such inhabiting of more than one home is a critical, even pathological exception to the rule. It is considered a tense state requiring a resolving decision. Not incidentally, migrants and especially their children were, for a long

time, believed to suffer from a fundamental identity crisis resulting from their shift from one culture to the other. Migrants, it was held, carry with them their “original” culture as a relic of that shift; the “baggage” (Vertovec 1996, 51) representing those primordial cultural roots which contrast to the cultural environment in Germany and, thus, produce feelings of estrangement and cultural conflict. According to the container model, culture is essentially relative to its territorial origin. Thus, alien cultural baggage must be considered problematic because of its apparent incompatibility with the “host culture”: It has to be either “erased” by way of assimilation or, more moderately, toned down by rendering it an appropriate contribution to the more folkloristic fabrics of multiculturalism. Not only assimilatory but also multicultural concepts of integration reproduce the nation-state-as-container model when they insist on the acknowledgement of common “core values” and “shared cultural meanings” (see Vertovec 2001: 9), thus reconstructing the imaginary of a national community spanning cultural differences.

As long as the physical shift from one society to the other is not complemented and finalised by an appropriate cultural shift, migrants were believed to have not really arrived in Germany. The common image of migrants as being torn between two cultural worlds and being stuck in a state of “in-between-ness” resulted from that notion (see Soysal 1999). Whole sectors of social work and intercultural education dedicated themselves to help migrants out of that apparently pathologic state by attempting to provide them with a new sense of belonging and new cultural roots in Germany. Behind such endeavour, however, lurks the actual cultural misunderstanding: It is the illusion of the sedentary that one needs to settle in one territory and one culture in order to find a final answer to the question of identity.

Sites of Cultural Globalisation

“We are Frankfurt Turks” is the programmatic title of an ethnographic study by Sven Sauter (2000). The statement is used by second generation migrants in order to describe their

self-positioning in a transnational cultural space which has no name in the language of integration. The pathway to that positioning leads through critical examinations of both the conditions of migrant life in Germany and the cultural world of the parents. As in the process of adolescence in general, “origin” and “belonging” are the main categories of that examination. Consequently, the Frankfurt Turks – as well as other “German Turks” – develop their own understanding of being Turkish: one that does not recall the rural heritage of their parents (as the first generation of “guest-workers” has often come from economically marginal areas of the Mediterranean) but rather expresses a self-designed marker of difference vis-à-vis the might of “Germanness” in this society. Frankfurt is the place, which requires or, also: enables that creative negotiation of origins and belongings. Being a Frankfurt Turk is a collective project involving many others with similar experiences. And it is not as much an “ethnic” project as it is lived and expressed within the wider context of contemporary German youth culture.

Such ways to identify with the city are common practice in all urban centres of migration. In Germany, they apply as much to Berlin as to Stuttgart, Munich or Offenbach. For Frankfurt, Gaby Straßburger (2001) has surveyed quantitative data: Two thirds of the young migrants asked in the study consider themselves Frankfurters, and about half of the respondents – some of them equally – feel attached to their parents’ countries of origin. Only one third, however, label themselves German. Does this mean, as it is suggested in the study’s report, that the “majority of the respondents are bounded to the German host society” (ibid., 23)? Is the city the lowest common denominator, enabling integration into German life – if not on national, then on local grounds at least? The Frankfurt Turks speak against this interpretation: Their Frankfurt is not German; it is not the city as part of the national republic they connect to, but rather the potentially transnational, cosmopolitan metropolis that provides the social and the cultural space for projects like theirs. While the German state seems to be still attuned to restricting itself to a national self-definition, its cities, at least, are about to turn into global

cities not only in economic but also in cultural terms.

Migration produces cultural globalisation. Locally, that translates to cultural pluralisation. The global connects to the local in diverse ways, thus fostering rather than levelling out the proliferation of cultures and differences (see Hannerz, e.g., 1996). Ayse Caglar (2001) and Levent Soysal (1999) present some views onto German scenarios of cultural globalisation in their respective studies on German-Turkish youth culture in Berlin. Here, German-Turkish Hip-Hop and Rap represent only the most spectacular developments that are, meanwhile, also acknowledged as part of the musical avant-garde by a mainstream German audience. The hip-hoppers, however, create their own connections to an Afro-American youth culture. Its cultural expressions are appropriated to and merged with local codes and styles. Band names like “White Nigger Posse” represent these imagined connections and express the experience of the fans to be the “blacks of Germany”. Berlin’s Kreuzberg and New York’s Brooklyn become virtual neighbours in a global cultural relationship. In the Frankfurt club scene, the young German-Turk known by his artist name “Tolga” illustrates still other musical ways to connect to the world (see Akkaya & Tews 2003). Tolga has come to perform Reggae after having been inclined to Hip-Hop before. Today, he creates his original compositions in a global network of Jamaican, north-American, German and Turkish musicians. The records are produced in both Germany and Jamaica, and in both places Tolga has become popular among the respective local fans of transnational Reggae music. Tolga connects to Jamaica on biographical grounds: There, he experiences invisible links between the colonial history of the Caribbean island and his own history – that of the Turkish labour migrants in Germany. His music draws on and expresses these links, thus translating and mixing different cultural “roots” to one imaginary musical source. World connections such as this one rely on transnational imagination providing for the creative recombination of distant origins and experiences in new cultural spaces.

Today, migrants, especially of the second

generation, increasingly make themselves heard in the German public where they engage in the political discourse with own positions. Their spokespersons are musicians, film directors or writers such as Feridun Zaimoglu who has rendered presentable the “kanak sprach” – a poetic version of migrant idioms (see, e.g., Zaimoglu 1995) – by his essays addressed to the bourgeois mainstream readers of German newspapers and weeklies like *Die Zeit*. Politically, the network “Kanak Attak” which serves as a platform for intellectual and grass-root migrant voices gains considerable attention for its provocative performances and interventions. Expressions of migrant opposition, however, are “aestheticised” and toned down by the interests of mainstream consumers. The language and the culture of the “ghetto kids” have, therefore, long passed the barriers of the ghetto on their way to enter and contribute to popular German culture.

While these more spectacular expressions of hybrid alterity are widely acknowledged, they may turn the perspective away from other, still invisible forms of cultural globalisation in Germany. Ayse Caglar (2001) contrasts the Berlin Hip-Hop scene with other, less known sites of German-Turkish culture: Cafés and clubs emerging right in the expensive spaces of the central city, thus positioning themselves within the urban mainstream rather than in the marginal outskirts of the migrant-dominated neighbourhoods. The clients of these places, however, are German Turks, many of them business people or other middle-class professionals who prefer to listen to Turk Pop as it is played as well in similar places in Istanbul or Ankara. The stylish ambience of these locations does not quote the ghetto, nor does it recall arabesque folklore. Rather, it re-imagines Turkey as an urban, modern, and European place in the world. Clubs like that exist in other cities as well, but the German public rarely notices them. The German “multiculture”, instead, produces and prefers other paradigmatic locations: e.g., that of the proverbial Greek around the corner staging Souvlaki, Sirtaki, Bouzouki and other requisites of tourist imagination. Such places dedicated to the taste of the established multiculturalism attract German,

but rarely Greek customers. Young Frankfurt Greeks disapprove of this invented nostalgia. They prefer other places resembling Saloniki or even New York-style urban Greekness rather than the prototype of a Mediterranean village.

Beyond Im-migration: The Perspective of a Transnational Germany

It is in such locations and social networks that the transnationalisation and the cultural globalisation of Germany take place. There are a lot more of these – still waiting to be acknowledged as a constituting part of contemporary German cultural dynamics. Many of these practices are rendered invisible because of their irregular and “illegal” status: among these the circular migration of eastern European non-EU-citizens who are forced to transcend the borders of “Fortress Europe” by way of tourist visa or au-pair-contracts (see Hess & Lenz 2001; Cyrus 2000). Other practices, however, are still as invisible although they unfold on legal grounds. Here, it is the neglect of research agendas and immigration concepts to recognise and adapt to the de-territorialising effects of migration on the German cultural dynamics at large.

In Germany, the image of the unskilled “guest-worker” with rural Mediterranean origins has dominated and shaped the common perception of immigrants for a long time. Such perception has put forth paternalist implications inscribed in the integration model: Migrants and their cultural “baggage” are considered a pre-modern, even “uncivilised” challenge to the German society which, in turn, is enabled thereby to think of itself in terms of a modern, democratic epicentre of western, European civilisation. This polar view has been re-invoked in the recent debates on “integration” fostered by the threat of the events on September 11, 2001. Migrants, again, are subsumed under the label of the “uncivilised” Other, now with the Muslim fundamentalist in the front of that image. This focus not only blanks out the factual differentiation of the migrant population that has substituted the dominant role of the former “guest-worker” by a heterogeneous spectrum of high- and low-skilled immigrants and refugees as well as the socially diverse descendants of

the labour migrants. The focus on the threatening migrant Other has also called forth new phantasmata of the omnipotent nation-state effectively controlling its borders and the population confined within them. It is an illusion, however, to believe in the success of such efforts to lock up the national “container” against the world. The experience of national as well as EU-European policies to close down the frontiers shows that all such endeavour only provokes the invention of new strategies to overcome the set borders. In fact, national and European politics of separation coproduce the practices which, then, set out to cancel their effects (see Rogers 2000). And it is even more difficult to control ideas that travel along with people but also on their own via communication channels. The confrontation with a globalised terrorism may rather be seen as but one, though extreme, experience of the irreversible entanglement of western societies with the contradictions and conflicts of a global hegemony.

Transnational anthropology has contributed to revise the vision of the controllable immigrant who ends up as an immobile wanderer fixed onto new national grounds. Still, the new image of transnational mobility as a stable project in its own right can be misleading when it is restricted to the migrants’ life-worlds only. Here, the predominant focus of transnational research on migration studies comes as a problem since it tends to create the impression that it is only the migrants who move while the societies involved remain untouched by that mobility in their midst and across them. Such impression, however, only reenforces the notion of the container state that provides for the set order of those settled within. From an enlarged perspective, migration is only one, though major force of mobilising the cultural and social fabrics of the societies at large. It seems, thus, necessary to grasp of migration as being a dependent as well as an influential part of more general processes of transnationalisation that all contribute to deterritorialising local life-worlds whether in economical, political or cultural terms. This also entails that migrants need to be counted among the regular personnel of the social formations under study. A rather exclusive focus on migrant networks and dia-

sporas, instead, contributes to the common construction of migrants as being the exceptional mobile Others to the regular, sedentary residents of the nation-states.

The transnational cultures in which migrants engage unfold on deterritorialised grounds, meaning that they draw on multi-local and even imaginary sources and relations. At the same time, however, they localise on the social grounds of the nation-states, thus contributing to their cultural pluralisation and globalisation. Being localised in the social fabrics of German culture at large, transnational migrant cultures are not confined to the limits of what multiculturalism grasps as the diverse microcontainers of “ethnic communities”. Rather, they tend to become the cultural stuff that is communicated and made use of for the invention of new “communities of ‘taste’, shared beliefs, or economic interests” (Kennedy & Roudometof 2001: 22). World cities, with their high numbers of diverse personnel from all over the globe, are especially predestined to become transnational “market-places” (see Hannerz 1996, 127 ff.) in that they facilitate the availability of cultural material from other locales for the “improper” use of mixing and matching, thus transforming the “authentic” into the “creolised” or “hybrid” (see Römhild 2002).

While some of that cultural material may be re-cycled and commodified in line with the interests of popular culture, other such material appears to be less appropriate to the demands of the market, thus remaining in the realm of the invisible practices of migrant and exile communities (see Akkaya & Tews 2003). Cultural globalisation is, thus, a selective and hierarchical process of featuring some at the expense of other cultural connections to the world. Transnational cultural brokers or “expressive specialists” (see Hannerz 1996, 130) play a crucial role in communicating, blending and commodifying local cultures of diverse origins for the cultural market-place of the global city. Such expressive specialists may contribute to the emergence of transnational cultures from very diverse backgrounds: They include, e.g., the German director Wim Wenders whose film “Buena Vista Social Club” has laid the ground for the current German “salsamania”,

or Feridun Zaimoglu whose “Kanak Sprak” has spread out into German and semi-German inventions of kanak comedy and music as well as into everyday idioms, or spiritual leaders who provide for the transnational communication of religious knowledge into the German esoteric landscape or localise transnational religions such as Islam or Buddhism for the use of migrant believers and German converts (see, e.g., Hoffmann 1997).

Transnational cultures localise in synagogues, meditation centres and mosques, in classrooms and workplaces, in organisations and initiatives, in clubs and bars. Here, the separation between migrant and non-migrant actors becomes blurred. At the workplace, transnational professional cultures (e.g., in the IT- or advertising business) emerge which create and draw on their own “local” knowledge transcending the national codes and languages of their personnel. In political networks, not only migrants engage for the sake of their home countries but also Germans connect with non-Germans across national borders in long-distance issues movements such as NGOs (see Blank 2003). And finally, the sites of youth and leisure culture provide many possibilities to link up to transnational cultures on local grounds, be it in the Salsa disco or in the informal networks of neighbourhoods and peer-groups.

Still, it would be misleading to think that cultural globalisation resembles the common notion of “intercultural communication” as taking place in ethnically mixed settings providing for a face-to-face understanding of “Otherness”. Rather, much of the impact of transnational migration on the German cultural landscape takes more indirect, informal routes, which shape the everyday experience of all residents without necessarily being localised in personal relationships. The emergence of transnational “socosapes” (see Albrow 1997) links people to different parts of the world, thus creating virtual neighbourhoods on a global scale, while local neighbours inhabiting diverse sociosapes may be, literally, worlds apart from each other. The transnationalisation of lifeworlds, thus, does not diminish but rather proliferates diversity and anonymity in local

relationships. And, apart from a common vision of “multicultural” harmony, also apparently distant conflicts enter the local on transnational pathways.

Processes of transnationalisation and cultural globalisation challenge the nation-state’s claim to represent the only social framework and the only source of belonging for its citizens. With respect to migrants, dual citizenship is one suggestion discussed as a possibility to appropriate their legal status to their transnational lives and identities (see Vertovec 2001: 12 pp.). Since migrants, however, are not only inclined to co-connect to their original homelands but, furthermore, develop multiple and even imaginary transnational allegiances it may be more adequate to think of “flexible” (Ong 1999) or “post-national” (Soysal 1994) notions of citizenship. Still, a similar question can also be posed with respect to the “native” residents of nation-states: In what way does their social framework and their sources of belonging change due to the transnationalisation of their national homes? The request for “integration”, originally meant to address migrants only, may turn out to challenge the natives as well: How are they prepared to adapt to and integrate in the changing, heterogeneous and contradictory world around them?

Notes

- 1 The project “In-between spaces – diagonal connections. Transnational cultures in the Frankfurt area” was part of the “Learning by researching” programme at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology. Under my direction, 16 student researchers went out to study eight fields, which covered as diverse transnational settings as a multi-ethnic peer-group or the urban Salsa scene, the globalised workspaces of an international advertisement company or the ideas and strategies of the constructors (architects, city planners, investors) of Global City Frankfurt. Fieldwork was conducted in summer and autumn 2001. The results of the project are to be published in 2003 in the Institute’s series “Kulturanthropologie Notizen”.
- 2 For a critical view on German migration studies from a transnational perspective, see Pries 1997.
- 3 See Terkessidis’ statement in the German daily *taz*, 12.1.2001.
- 4 For more details on this specific immigration policy, see, e.g., Römhild 1998; 1995; 1994.

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