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Introduction to the thematic issue on „Socialization, family, and gender in the context of migration"

In the fall of 2007 the four editors of the thematic part of this issue of ZQF founded a French-German Colloquium dedicated to our PhD students, „Socialization, Family and Gender in contexts of migration". We had met one another through the International Sociological Association's Research Committee "Biography and Society" (which Daniel Bertaux had started as an ad hoc group in 1978). The four of us were doing research based on biographical narratives, and so did most of our PhD students.

We started to meet alternatively at either the University of Strasbourg or Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main for two to three days each semester, and colleagues of our departments joined our group, notably Prof. Dr. Helma Lutz, Prof. Patrick Watier, Prof. William Gasparini, Prof. Roger Somé[1]. We started our meetings by talks and debates on core concepts, such as "socialization", "generation", "transmission", "gender", "migration", "education", "citizenship", "ethnicity", "adolescence" – after all, we came from different sociological traditions and the concepts, as we soon realized, had taken up different meanings in French and in German societies. Moreover, even in the national contexts some of the most common concepts, such as "generation" were used differently by sociologists and in everyday life, and politicians and news media were defining terms and policies concerning migrants in instrumental ways, such as concerning asylum seekers.

We first focused on the concept of "generation", since we had all collected life stories with family members of several generations in migrant families and analyzed the relationships in their complexity. We questioned the widely spread view both in France and in Germany of a huge cultural gap between the generations of parents and children in migrant families (Attias-Donfut/Wolff 2009) and turned to the concepts introduced by Karl Mannheim in "The problem of generations", on the shared historical experience of members of a generation (Barboza/Lichtblau 2009).

By working together on the concept of historical generation we came to realize the difference between the collective perceptions of the arrival and settlement of migrants in France and in Germany. In Germany, migrants who had arrived since the 1950s were considered as "Gastarbeiter" who had come to work and would return to their country. But when they stayed and founded families, the law of descent (*ius sanguinis*) determining German citizenship still excluded even the

younger generations, up until the changes introduced in the law (towards *ius soli*) in 2000, when being born in Germany would give access to citizenship. This included the recognition of migrants' long-term settlement as a family and changed the concept of 'second generation' towards a more positive connotation, symbolizing the collective experience of the children or grandchildren of migrants obtaining the right to become full German citizens.

In France, in contrast, *ius soli* means that the children of migrants born on French soil *are* French citizens. However, a sizable part of public opinion questions their national belonging, maintaining that in order to become "really French", they would need to show their will and ability to 'assimilate' and forget about their family's descent. In contrast to Germany, the concept of 'second generation' is used to highlight the problems caused by these youths, whose integration seems impossible. Especially young men from poor urban districts are seen as potential troublemakers, rebels, and rioters, since their migrant parents would have been "unable to educate" them. The underlying tension was aggravated through the derogatory statements of Nicolas Sarkozy as (former) State Secretary of Interior. Police brutality, leading to the death of innocent youths triggered the nationwide 'banlieues' riots of November 2005. In this context, Emmanuelle Santelli (2004) and other sociologists proposed to abandon the politically loaded concept of 'second generation' and instead to speak about "Français descendants d'immigrés".

Migrant parents face a difficult problem: on the one hand, to have their children understand their own situation (in terms of place, class, and ethnicity), they would have to tell them why they emigrated and under which economic, political and social conditions they had to do so. They would also have to highlight the positive aspects of the host society, and they would have to teach them to be patient when confronted with discrimination and blatant injustice. But on the other hand, they would also have to try to pass on to them some knowledge and emotional connection to their country of origin, about which very little if anything will be taught at school. If, on top of that, there were wars and occupation in the past between the country of origin and the host country (as between France and Algeria, Germany and Poland), the issue of helping one's children to develop their own national belonging becomes very complex indeed (Delcroix 2009). How, for example, can parents explain to their children that they left their country for the one that had colonized or occupied it? In the contribution of Elise Pape, Ayumi Takeda and Anna Guhlich to this issue, there is, for example, the case of an elderly Moroccan man who explains to his grand-daughter living in Europe that even if France has colonized Morocco during a long period, it has been itself "colonized" by Germany during the last World War. This is just an example of the creativity required to communicate to the younger generation what is necessary for their understanding, while remaining silent on many other points.

All this, and much more, is contained in the concept of *transmission between generations*: a concept that covers a wide range of micro-processes of communication efforts. Inasmuch as such efforts are explicitly oriented to help one's child to shape his or her life path, they may be referred to as "generational work" (Inowlocki 1993, 2013). As to the children, very often they might not respond directly to what is offered to them by their parents. However, in the long run it may turn out that they did in fact pick up some of what was passed on to them by their parents, however integrating it into something of their own making that serves them as a valuable resource. Such a process might be called "transmission en équivalence"

(Bertaux/Bertaux-Wiame 1988). Therefore the cultural gap between generations in migrant families does not necessarily imply a break of the transmission.

In each family history, cases of transmission may be found; but every family – as a microcosm with its own micro-culture – seems to have its own style. Transmission is in turn only one aspect of the parental work of *socialization*. In migrant families however, socialization works both ways: not only from parents to children (as in Durkheim's conception), but also from children to parents (as in Piaget's conception). In fact children will quickly become more knowledgeable about the host society than their parents, due to their formal and informal socialization through school and peers. Again, there are differences between France and Germany: In France, parents can put their children from age 3 to 6 into the Ecole maternelle (pre-school) free of charge. While it is not compulsory, 94% of children do attend it. Thus migrant children learn to speak French from very early on, and they get well prepared to start primary school. In Germany by contrast, quite a number of children stay with their family until age 6. Migrant children therefore may have learned very little German before entering primary school, which is a handicap for their future school achievement. Later on, however, it is much easier for youths in Germany than in France to enter an apprenticeship, and then to find employment.

In our seminar discussions, our common language was English but we also resorted to French and German – and sometimes Italian and Turkish – to discuss and clarify. Many of the students had migrated themselves or had come to either Strasbourg or Germany for their PhDs; later on, several did their PhDs as cotutelles between Strasbourg and Frankfurt, or with another university.

At each meeting, two or three PhD students presented their ongoing research with regard to what was relevant to them at the time, from their proposal, questions of methodology, sampling and methodical approach during different phases of their research, to their interview transcripts and observational protocols, and then also drafts of chapters and conclusions[2]. There were about 12 PhD students from Frankfurt and 12 from Strasbourg to begin with and as they eventually concluded their doctorates new students joined. It proved very helpful for the "socialization" into our bi-national (or rather multinational) seminar that there were several "generations" of students cooperating with one another. Many of those who concluded their PhDs still join our meetings as post-Docs whenever their new obligations permit.

A few years ago, we started to discuss the possibility of a joint publication among the participants of our seminar. The contrastive comparative method based on grounded theory proved helpful in discovering common topics, and ideas emerged on how to work together on joint articles by focusing on transnational issues and trans-disciplinary perspectives. Papers were written, discussed in our colloquium and re-written. We are very grateful to the editorial board and the editors of ZQF that they accepted our concept. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their very helpful suggestions.

In two cases, PhD student and supervisor wrote joint articles, taking a comparative view on their respective research. One contribution is by one author only, however, it was discussed in the seminar. We are particularly grateful to Muriel Dudt, Elise Pape and Christoph H. Schwarz for their support with the editing.

In retrospect, we can see how our transnational mode of working and reflecting in combination with our comparative debates of core concepts of interpretive sociological research called into question certain presumptions related to the nation

state. Debates on the national level were carried forth differently in our ongoing transnational discussion. The national framework can be restrictive as to accepting an interpretive approach such as autobiographical narrative interviews/récits de vie. When there is a joint recognition for what is seen as important in migration research, namely the ethical (or political) choice to consider migrants not merely as 'objects' being tossed about, so to speak, by the urgent and insistent pressures of poverty and necessity in their own country and by changing immigration policies and their somehow erratic implementations, but to rather see them as *subjects in their own right*, trying to steer a course – *their* course – in the middle of stormy seas. As persons who knew perfectly well *where* they wanted to go; who were aware that the journey would be very difficult; but who had decided to take the risks involved, in the hope that they could face them. In short, as *subjects* (that is, philosophically or theoretically speaking, a person with *consciousness* and *will*) who was trying to steer his/her course of action towards a precise goal amidst gruelling difficulties, unforeseen obstacles, and general hostility.

For a sociologist to gain empirical knowledge about *what people do* in such situations to carry out their life project(s) against all odds, a key concept is *course of action*. The English language is much clearer and more helpful here than either French or German. What our seminar members were aiming to study were the *courses of action* of migrants before, during and/or after their migration, based on the narrative accounts and by a reconstructive analysis.

There is much more to say about courses of action. For instance, they deserve to be examined social class by social class. Following a school curriculum to its completion; looking for a good job; moving from salaried to (non-precarious) self-employment status; buying a flat or a house; planning a tourist trip; helping one's child to achieve good grades are typical examples of middle class courses of action.

However, people living under working class conditions have other priorities. A majority of them lives under the constant threat of unwelcomed events that would severely disrupt the fragile balance – or equilibrium – of their way of life. Hence many of their courses of action belong to the *preventive* type, that is: their ultimate purpose being not so much to try and reach some given goal, but to avoid a given negative event to happen. An event such as losing one's job; falling victim of an industrial accident or some health hazard at work; getting into a level of debt that would become unbearable; losing one's housing; having one's son get involved by older pals into some delinquent behaviour; and so on. One very substantive difference with middle class persons is that unlike them, they usually have little or no savings to mobilise in case of disaster. Also, while middle class people will have access to credit from banks, which will greatly facilitate the realisation of all and every one of their reasonable projects, working class people in need of credit will face considerably higher difficulties. In fact, as Catherine Delcroix has pointed out, they tend to live in *discredit* by the simple fact that they hold working class jobs; and for working class immigrants, this is even worse. Courses of action thus appear, in a constructivist perspective at least, as central, strategic parts of what constitutes society.

According to our research experience, the biographical method is the most adequate way to identify *processes* inscribed into migrants' life experiences. What are the reasons for spending extended time on the analysis of each case? And what is it in a single case that we can count on as a basis for generalizing? The analysis of biographical narration was motivated by a fundamental methodological problem which both Cicourel (1964) and Habermas (1967, 1981) encountered. The problem

these authors tackled was the uncontrolled relationship between social theory and social data, for example the supposed "correspondence" between social reality and statistical records, or statements of interviewees. The "truth" of social data was more often than not a product of the conditions of collecting and analyzing them. This consideration led Habermas to the conclusion that the chronologically reordered content of a narration is less interesting for social research than the "perspective of possible interpretation" (Habermas 1967, p. 167ff.)

But how can autobiographical analysis escape the trap of being restricted to subjectively represented life worlds? As our approach to biographical narration shows, the focus of analysis is not the reconstruction of intentionality as it is represented in an individual's life course, but the embeddedness of individual lives themselves in social macro-structures, such as hierarchically controlled social situations and other heteronomous social conditions leading to exclusion (Apitzsch/Inowlocki 2000).

Given that biographies are not only constructed by individuals, but also constituted by objective factors of very definite realities, we can gain access not only to the experience and views of the concerned social groups, but also to the ways in which macro factors impact on biographies. The biographical method makes it possible to analyze how individuals acting within the complexity of structural-objective factors and social policies are socialized in specific directions, which in turn directly affect their occupational development, their strategies adopted against exclusion and towards integration. The point is that the processes and mechanisms of biographical "exposure" of oneself to the world, both as experienced and as accounted for, do not take place "outside of" interaction and communication. However, since the predominant sociological theories are either biased towards rationalist or intentionalist interpretations, the more interesting phenomena of the biographical reproduction of social structures often tend to be overlooked.

All of the PhD projects that were and continue to be conducted in the framework of our joint seminar reflect the dedication to biographical perspectives on life experience, its reflection and evaluation. What should also be mentioned is the spirit of cooperation, discovery and friendship among our seminar members that made these joint contributions possible. Out of our discussions new transnational issues in migration research emerged, and we are continuing our seminar presently by doing research on "Socialisation, families and gender in contexts of migration. Biographical policy evaluation of language regimes and language acquisition in France and Germany", a thematic network for young researchers funded by the Université Franco-Allemande – Deutsch Französische Hochschule (UFA-DFH)[3].

We would like to give a short overview of the articles in the thematic part of this issue of ZQF. In their contribution on "Transnational Biographies", Ursula Apitzsch and Irini Siouti discuss how the biographical reconstruction of migration processes has also led to discover biographies as *the sites* of transnational spaces. Based on a case study of second-generation Greek immigrants in Germany, a young woman's transnational advancement through education is reconstructed in terms of trans-generational subject practices to overcome exclusion on the national level. The authors show that only a methodological transnational framework enables a reconstruction of these subjective and generational resources.

In their article on "Intergenerational transmissions in transnational families and national affiliations", Catherine Delcroix and Elsa Lagier present three cases of families in their transnational arrangements and belongings, between Togo, Ghana and France; between Algeria and France; and between Morocco and France, to discuss different styles of parenting under specific historical and political post-colonial/post-protectorate conditions. They show the importance of the parents' community belonging and of their narrative transmission of their migration project to open up transnational spaces and belongings for the younger generation.

In "Three Women in a City: Crossing Borders and Negotiating National Belonging", Elise Pape, Ayumi Takeda and Anna Guhlich discuss national belonging departing from the case study of three women who have migrated to the same city in Western Germany during their life course. The analysis reveals the profound impact of the socio-historical contexts the women came from on their construction of national belonging, but also on the transmission processes to their children. It is mainly through passing on their mother tongue and reshaping their conception of national belonging over time that the women manage to establish strong ties to their children. By articulating different lines of belonging such as religion, ethnicity, gender or "race", they contribute to the redefinition of (trans-)nation building processes.

In their article on the "Intergenerational transmission of trajectories of suffering in precarious environments. Researching the younger generations' strategies of reinterpretation", Sarra Chaieb and Christoph H. Schwarz discuss in how far such processes provide resources that foster agency or in how far they rather constitute barriers to individuation. Readers will realize that the two cases compared here vary to a strong degree – not only regarding the context but also the data form and the age of the interviewees. Thus, the article can moreover be seen as a methodological exploration regarding casing and comparison in qualitative research, and in how far such unusual contrasts allow to fathom the spectrum of the ubiquitous and sometimes paradoxical phenomenon that is intergenerational transmission, in order to further develop its conceptualization.

Anıl Al-Rebholz discusses how negotiating gendered identification practices constitutes a central aspect in multicultural social processes and how struggling against hierarchical gender norms becomes central in understanding the biographical work undertaken by migrant women both in majority and minority contexts. In her article on "Socialization and Gendered Biographical Agency in a Multicultural Migration Context: The Life History of a Young Moroccan Woman in Germany", based on the analysis of an autobiographical narrative of a young woman, she argues for a biographical focus both in socialization theory and in studying agency.

Based on biographical narrative interviews with three migrant women, the article of Muriel Dudt, Andreas Oskar Kempf and Agnieszka Satola on "Experiences of Migration as a Space for Reflection: Renegotiating Gender Roles in Family Relationships" illustrates how migration experiences can lead to a reflection on gender roles. Including various motivations for and trajectories of migration as well as different family arrangements and work experiences throughout migration, the comparison of the three cases depicts the change of the roles of all women in their families. Access to material resources, partly under great sacrifice, and the comparison of different life contexts and gender regimes trigger an ambivalent process of reflection on gender relations. Not only could the reorganization of gender rela-

tions be rather incomplete or with the return require strong legitimization; it could also to a large extent be transmitted to the next generation.

Janina Glaeser and Monika Kupczyks' article "Caring for recognition – young women on their way" traces the biographical pathways of two migrant care and domestic workers in Germany. The analysis of the case studies reveals that biographical resources, language skills, aspects of class, nation state policies and expectations of the future intersect within an emancipation process. Although paid care and domestic work is exercised only in a temporary way it plays a crucial role as it leads to long-term migration.

Based on two case studies of adolescent daughters of migrant and mixed families in Bavaria (Germany) and in Veneto (Italy), "Becoming women: awareness of migration and double loyalty" by Miriam Gigliotti and Laura Odasso aims to study how the daughters solve the conflicting interactions between contents of transmission and socialization. Focused mostly on gendered interactions and on a sense of belonging, the reflection investigates if and how structural elements (such as family configuration, national context and migration trajectories of parents) impact on the continuity and discontinuity in passing on values and other sets of information. In different geographical and socio-cultural contexts as well as in different family patterns, parenting and adolescent dynamics reveal common features. By pointing out the restructuration that adolescence imposes in life courses, we show that it is the meaning given to the parental experience of migration that entails a specific form of "loyalty" due to emotional and juridical (de) nationalized belonging, as well as to previous experiences of socialization and discrimination. The authors widen the concept of migration classically employed in academia by introducing the innovative concept of "migration of contact".

In their article on "The national framework in international migration: continued importance in times of constant challenges" Eran Gündüz and Johanna Probst analyze issues of citizenship, immigration and asylum policies and procedures in French-German contexts. They show how notions of national belonging and the nation state have remained highly significant in these contexts and ask about the consequences for researchers, especially in a bi-national comparative study. They argue that analyzing national aspects and properties of social phenomena should not fall under the verdict of methodological nationalism but on the contrary can prove important towards understanding the varying relevance of national belonging and citizenship for subjects who have neither the legal nor the material means to move about freely.

Notes

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2 In our research workshops, we proceeded similarly to the concept of Anselm L. Strauss on the "arc of work" of the consecutive research steps of each PhD project (Riemann 1987).
3 There are approximately 30 Post-Doc researchers, PhD and Master students and senior researchers from both universities participating in this thematic network.

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